

BAGS

FACEOFF!

They hold the key to or, more accurately, kit for everything. From coffins to cabbage sacks, cricket storage comes in all shapes and sizes, with a bewildering number of options widely available. In an effort to make the process of bagging a bag that little bit easier, AOC unzips the info on four of the very best.

NEXT MONTH...
HELMETS

We run the rule over the best crash hats money can buy. Have your say at www.aconline.co.uk

EDITOR'S OVERVIEW

Most bags these days have more pockets than a snooker hall, but that doesn't necessarily mean you can fit more in them than the old canvas tool bag uncle Jack used to toss over his shoulder on a Sunday afternoon. Similarly, size isn't everything. Whilst an eight-inch clutch is never going to accommodate the gear of even the most amateurish of amateurs, a holdall the size of the Mary Rose doesn't do you, your arms or your wallet any favours, and is likely to make you pretty unpopular in the pint-sized changing room of your local club.

As such, our picks for this month's page not only recognise the storage needs of the 6'3" keeper-batsman, but take into consideration the quality, economy and ergonomics of design, understanding of the cricketer's needs and, importantly, ease of packing - the bane of every cricketer's post-match routine.

AERO BAG

PRICE: £85

THE BAG

The brother of Aero's Alpha Bag, the Stand Up still measures up at 90cm x 35cm x 35cm. The bag is very manoeuvrable, easily stored and fits into cars of all sizes. Obviously, the main requirement for a stand up bag is that it actually remains upright when loaded with kit and, for this reason, Aero utilise a square design in their bags that gives them their trade mark 'wheelie-bin' appearance.

WE SAY

Simple but very, very effective, economy of design is this bag's best feature. An internal divider allows for two distinct cavities, the larger one for pads, bat and clothes, the smaller one for helmet and gloves. Unlike most other bags there are just three additional pockets - and that's all you need! Surprisingly lightweight for a bag with such a solid frame, this is, quite simply, the best stand up option available and our favourite bag. What's the opposite of a waste of space? Answer: Aero.



For further information on Aero equipment go to www.aerocricket.com

BEST BAG

SS's ratings:

THE LOWDOWN

SIZE	POCKETS
9/10	9/10
LOOKS	DESIGN
8/10	10/10

TOTAL: 36/40

GRAY NICOLLS PLAYERS BAG

PRICE: £100

THE BAG

A spacious multi-pocket wheelie bag designed for the aspiring pro, this bag employs solid walls and is designed to take up less space in the changing room. Designed in consultation with Gray Nicolls professional players, it has been developed with the top cricketers in mind and includes compartments for helmet, footwear and clothing. A concealed padded bat compartment holds two bats. A retractable handle lightens the load.

WE SAY

Superficially similar to the UZI APX, the Players bag is, unlike the offering from Newbery, specifically designed as an upright bag. Great pockets inside and out, including a valuables pouch big enough to house our enormous office wig, this is another bag with two bat pouches. There is a Tardis-like quality to this offering from Gray Nicolls - it looks big but it packs even bigger - and it looks good too. Another quality product from a quality manufacturer.



For further information on Gray Nicolls equipment go to www.gray-nicolls.co.uk

SS's ratings:

THE LOWDOWN

SIZE	POCKETS
9/10	9/10
LOOKS	DESIGN
8/10	9/10

TOTAL: 35/40

KOOKABURRA PRO UPRIGHT CRICKET BAG

PRICE: £80

THE BAG

Launched this year, when the demand of the market for a slightly more sophisticated product was recognised, this bag uses a combination of the large storage pouches and the massive internal locker-style compartment. Incredibly compact, this bag is sure to continue the trend away from the hard storage cases that have been the choice of many players in recent times.

WE SAY

Innovative deployment of internal and external pockets makes this bag a particularly flexible storage option, with two bat pouches, two padded batting sleeves and integral clothing and footwear pockets providing space for everything a cricketer could ever possess. Heavy-duty wheels are a big plus, but this feels like a bag that can't decide whether it's best on two legs or four. An upright design that occupies minimal space in the dressing room, it is not as square or stiff as some of its competitors which for me was a minor criticism. Nevertheless, this is a great all-round bag.



For further information on Kookaburra equipment go to www.kookaburra.biz

SS's ratings:

THE LOWDOWN

SIZE	POCKETS
8/10	8/10
LOOKS	DESIGN
8/10	9/10

TOTAL: 33/40

NEWBERY UZI APX BAG

PRICE: £59.99

THE BAG

A large top-quality bag with retractable 'suitcase' handle, the APX measures up at an impressive 96cm x 42 cm x 38cm. With padded bat sleeves on both sides and four additional pockets, all storage needs are covered. Like the Model T Ford, the bag comes in any colour as long as it's black.

WE SAY

This is a massive animal! In fact, if anything it's a little too big. Great looking, brilliantly designed (what else would you expect from Newbery?) but it really is a monster. A classic lie-flat design, this bag will, nonetheless, stand up to save space in the dressing room and has the perfect selection of pockets. A superb piece of kit but if you don't have a car, you may want to think twice before committing to this behemoth.



For further information on Newbery equipment go to www.newbery.co.uk

SS's ratings:

THE LOWDOWN

SIZE	POCKETS
8/10	10/10
LOOKS	DESIGN
8/10	9/10

TOTAL: 35/40

