

Cricket Coaching Resource

Bowling

The single most important issue when coaching or being coached is to encourage a player's love of cricket.

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©

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Bowling Program Specifics

1.0 Bowling Technique

1.1 Focus

Decide where you want the ball to land and keep your eyes on that target. This will help keep your head still and balanced throughout your action. There are six main points within the basic bowling action.

1.2 Back Foot Landing / Alignment

When landing in your bowling position the back foot should be parallel to the bowling crease. Both shoulders and feet are aligned towards the target upon the landing of back foot at the bowling crease. ie. Side on to the target.



1.3 Front Arm

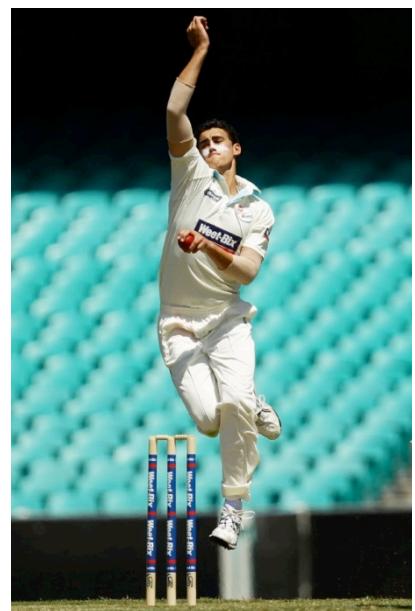
The front arm is high and straight – a straight line could be drawn through the high left arm down through the back leg /foot that is parallel to the bowling crease.



1.4

Eyes

Eyes look behind the front arm at a point you want the ball to land.



1.5 **Bowling Arm / Wrist**

1.5.1 As the bowling arm comes over it brushes your ear. Bowling arm starts from chest and straightens at the lowest point and continues to rotate up past your ear before release. The front leg should remain as straight as possible. Wrist position ensures fingers are behind the ball and release the ball with a flick of the wrist towards the target imparting backspin).



1.5.2 The last point of contact with the ball when bowling fast is with the tip of the first and second fingers.

1.6 **Follow Through**

- 1.6.1 The follow through goes down past the outside of the front leg. The back hip comes through with the bowling arm and shoulder.



- 1.6.2 This follow through will encourage the bowling shoulder to lead the bowler off the wicket causing as little damage to the pitch as possible.

1.7 **Breathing**

In addition to the 3 main points outlined it is important to keep breathing throughout the bowling action, which keeps the muscles and body as relaxed as possible. To hold ones breath is to tense muscles that need to function to their maximum capability and at speed and is the major cause of injuries when bowling. To understand the importance one should just hold ones breath and see how tense the neck, shoulder and stomach muscles are for example, all of whom have important roles in the bowling action. Extra effort when bowling is produced by consistent breathing and speed of execution rather than holding ones breath in the belief we are stronger.

2.0 **Run up**

2.1 **Length / Angle**

- 2.1.1 Run up should be long enough to generate enough rhythm/speed to enable a bowler to perform as they plan.
- 2.1.2 Could have two markers. One to start from and one to hit when stride length is required to be consistent.
- 2.1.3 Angled run ups are designed to assist bowlers to get into a side on position. The more angled the run up the easier it is to get side on but harder to stay off the pitch.
- 2.1.4 Develop set routines at the start of your run up as this is the foundation (batting stance equivalent) of the bowling performance.

2.2 **Acceleration**

- 2.2.1 Accelerate smoothly into delivery.
- 2.2.2 A run up should allow the bowler to bowl at the desired speed or impart the desired spin or swing or changes of pace etc.

- 2.2.3 If a run up is too fast then the bowler will strain to control the important components of their action. If the run up is too slow then the bowler is under pressure to generate additional arm speed which puts the technique of the action under pressure.
- 2.2.4 A run up should allow all parts of the action to be executed as planned and impacts significantly on all 6 components of the action.

2.3 **Head Still**

- 2.3.1 Head remains steady and balanced throughout action including the run up.
- 2.3.2 This allows the bowler to have their major focus on where they want to land the ball.
- 2.3.3 Also the keeping of the head still allows the body to perform naturally without any compensation needing to be done in an attempt to avoid injury.

2.4 **Lean Forward**

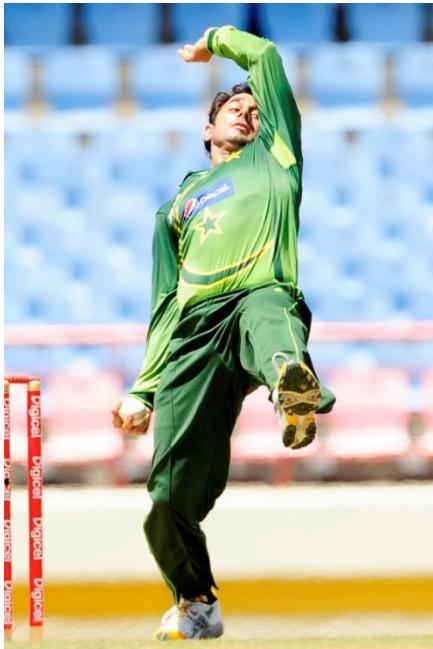
- 2.4.1 Maintain a slight lean forward when running in to bowl.
- 2.4.2 This allows the bowler to be best prepared to get into the best possible side on position side on position without leaning backwards.



- 2.4.3 Keeping this leaning forward position when getting into the side on position allows the straight bowling arm to swing underneath the bowlers bowling shoulder and over past the ear (all perpendicular to the ground) and into the follow through without the bowlers body getting in the way.



2.4.4 The body getting in the way stems from the bowler running in to the bowling crease to upright therefore making it harder for a channel to be created under the bowling shoulder. The upright position tends to make the arm go out and around the body making it difficult to keep the arm straight. This mistake early in an action starts the process of the body having to compensate by leaning back and or arching thus leading eventually to unnecessary injuries.

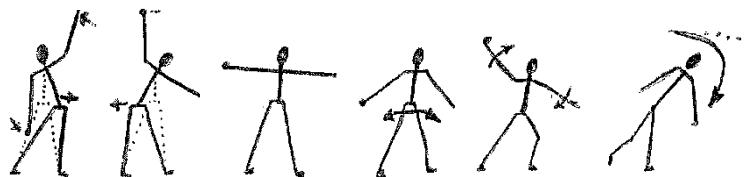


Bowling Techniques Notes:

3.0 Bowling Practices Process

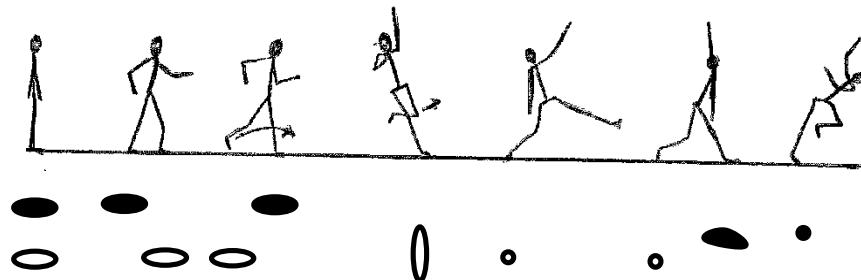
3.1 Rock and Bowl

- a. Start with back foot parallel to the bowling crease with feet slightly wider than shoulder width apart.
- b. Both shoulders and hips and feet are aligned towards the target (Side on).
- c. Front arm high and bowling hand by the back leg.
- d. Eyes level and looking at target outside front arm.
- e. Rock your weight from the back to front foot (2 times).
- f. Arms rotate 180 degrees in sync with transfer onto front foot.
- g. The ball is released on the 3rd rock forward – with front arm being pulled strongly down past the left hip followed by the bowling arm brushing past the ear and following through fully.



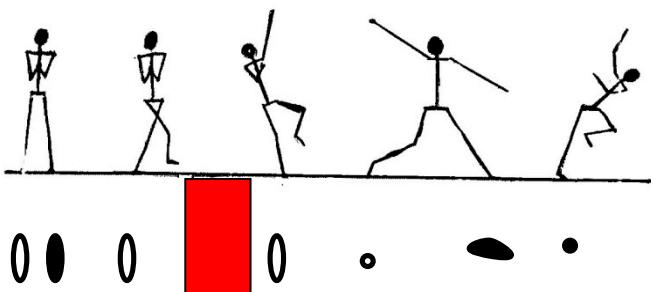
3.2 Walk Up and Bowl (foot prints to tread)

- a. Start chest on 3 paces from delivery stride.
- b. Step right, left, right (side on) and bring left leg up and across the body to create side on alignment of hips and shoulders.
- c. When moving to side on get front arm high and bowling arm to the chest.
- d. The front arm is pulled strongly down past the left hip followed by the bowling arm brushing past the ear and following through fully.



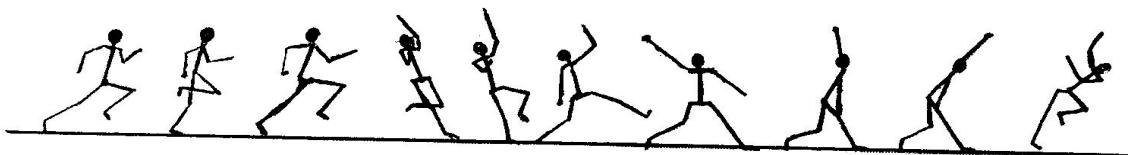
3.3 Jump the Stream and Bowl

- a. Start as in 'Walk up and bowl' and jump into a side on position.
- b. Ensure feet, hips and shoulders are aligned.



3.4 **Run Up and Bowl**

- a. A useful drill for developing and measuring your run up and delivery action.
- b. Gradually build pace and distance into run up and delivery.
- c. Start from a given point and run with your eyes closed, when it feels right jump and bowl as above.
- d. Have a partner mark where the feet land.
- e. Repeat the process, always starting from the same point until a pattern emerges.
- f. Use walking steps or a rope to measure the distance of the run up for future use.



3.5 **Closed Eyes Bowling**

- a. The aim is to experience “feel” and “rhythm”.
- b. Bowl from a few paces with your eyes closed.
- c. Get a partner to provide feedback if necessary.

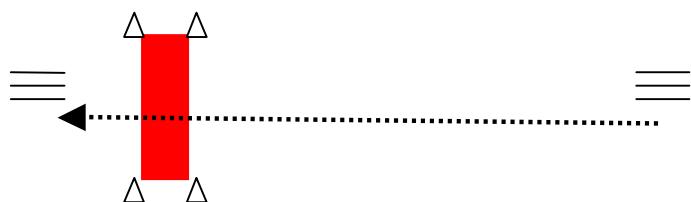
3.6 **Channel Bowling**

- a. Set up some cones and place them down the pitch in a channel.
- b. The bowler aims down the channel. eg. Off stump or 4/5 stump line.
- c. Vary the positioning of the channel. eg. Bowling to a left hander or narrow the width to increase the challenge.
- d. Record your scores in sets of 6.



3.7 **Bowling Length**

- a. Place 2 lines across the pitch at the selected length.
- b. The bowler aims to land the ball between the 2 lines.
- c. Vary the length. eg. Yorker, bouncer etc or narrow the width to increase the challenge.
- d. Record your scores in sets of 6.



3.8 **Target Bowling**

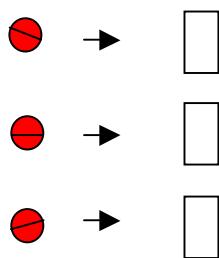
- a. Place a marker down at a given line and length.
- b. The bowler aims to land the ball on the marker.
- c. Vary the length. eg. Yorker, bouncer etc or reduce the size of the target to increase the challenge.

d. Record your scores in sets of 6.



3.9 **Wrist Work**

- a. Stand 2 metres from a wall
- b. Place a target on the wall at approximately the same height as your release point
- c. Select a type to delivery to practice. Eg. Inswinger, outswinger
- d. With bowling arm at its highest point flick your wrist so the ball is propelled towards the target
- e. Observe the position of the seam in its flight.
- f. Vary the distance you are standing from the wall. A red / white ball may also be useful along with a ball with the sides removed.



3.10 **Mastering Stock Delivery** – e.g. in swing, outswing etc.

3.11 **Changes of Pace / Variations**

Changes of pace and bowling positions on the crease should also be included into these practices as all deliveries should be targeted to a line and a length no matter what the speed.

Bowling Practices Process Notes:

4.0 Technique Monitoring

4.1 Cue Cards

- 4.1.1 These are your personal cards that keep key points upmost in your mind. They should cover the things that you think are most important mentally a good method of keeping focused on the correct information is to develop Cue Cards that ensure what we are thinking about is the information that has been decided is best for each one of us individually. Different Cue Cards can be developed for different situations.
- 4.1.2 The following Cue Card is one a player might keep to read on a bus or in a hotel room before setting off to the ground or when one is getting nervous the night before. Reading Cue Cards settles nerves as when we refocus on things we know will work for us we tend to relax more. What we are doing is replacing fears with things we know work for us.

4.2 Example Cue Cards

- 4.2.1 An example of a bowling Cue Card might be that a bowler keeps in their bag might be;

- Run Up
 - Keep bent over
 - Accelerate smoothly
 - Head still and level
- Delivery
 - When landing in your bowling position the back foot should be parallel to bowling crease and shoulders aligned
 - Left arm high
 - Eyes look behind the left arm at a point you want the ball to land
 - As the bowling arm comes over it brushes your ear
- Follow Through
 - The bowling arm goes down past the outside of the front leg
 - This follow through will lead the bowler off the wicket
- Strategy / Delivery Variations
 - Bowl to field
 - Yorkers
 - Change of pace
 - Different positions on crease
- Preparations
 - Before Game
 - Warm ups – rock and bowl – focus on technique above x 12
 - Jump the stream and bowl x 6-10 – focus on side and front arm high
 - Run up and bowl to wicket keeper x12-18
 - Work through different deliveries – stock, slow, position on crease ,RH/LB batsmen
 - Pre Spell
 - Warm up arms and body – swings, action rehearsal x 10 in over before
 - Bowl 2-3 balls to mid off

4.2.2 An example of a Cue Card a bowler may have in their pocket might be;

- Bent over in run up
- Head and arms high in action
- Follow through
- Bowl to field
- Yorkers
- Change of pace
- Different positions on crease

5.0 Bowling Plans / Strategies

5.1 Warm Up

5.1.1 This is about getting the blood flowing and briefly going over techniques.

5.1.2 To get too warmed up is to waste energy and most bowlers warm up and then go and sit down for 15 minutes and walk out onto the ground and then two bowlers only bowl for the next 45 – 60 minutes.

5.2 Develop a Plan for the Over

This will be influenced by:

5.3 The Condition of the Pitch

5.3.1 If the pitch is seaming or spinning then short of a length delivery just outside off stump is good.

5.3.2 If the pitch is seaming or spinning then pitching the ball slightly fuller encouraging a drive is a variation and the reason why slips (close in fielders) are part of a well set field.

5.4 The Batsman's Strengths and Weaknesses

5.4.1 No matter what the batsman's strengths are the short of a length ball just outside the off stump is hard to play.

5.4.2 Strengths can be weaknesses and could be tested out early in a batsman's innings and then avoided later on.

5.4.3 However a lack of patience is the major cause for batsmen to get out and should be a focus of all captains, bowlers and fielders.

5.4.4 Therefore stopping batsmen from scoring tests patience and the short of a length ball just outside off stump is risky to score off in most conditions.

5.4.5 Yorkers early on are difficult to play for any batsman.

5.4.6 All batsmen struggle with subtle well-disguised changes of pace.

5.5 The Situation of the Game

5.5.1 The short of a length ball just outside the off stump is the hardest ball to play.

5.5.2 At any stage Yorkers are hard to play especially early in an innings and in the last overs of a run chase.

5.5.3 Variations of speed and delivery position on the bowling crease also cause concern no matter the situation of the game is.

5.6 Condition of the Ball

- 5.6.1 If the condition of the ball is such the swinging and seaming the ball is difficult then short of a length just outside off stump is difficult to play.
- 5.6.2 Yorkers are always difficult.
- 5.6.3 Changes of pace and changing delivery position on the bowling crease are also always difficult for batsmen to cope with.

5.7 Fields that are Set

- 5.7.1 If there are a number of slips then a bowler should pitch the ball up and just outside the off stump predominantly.
- 5.7.2 If the off side is packed then outside the off stump is the target area.
- 5.7.3 If there is two out on the leg side then a short ball once an over might be an option for a quick bowler.
- 5.7.4 If there are fielders round the bat for spinners then pitching the ball up (short of a length) just outside off stump should be the focus.
- 5.7.5 If long on and long off are back then full and straight is the focus for a bowler. (In this case mid wicket and cover should be straight as well).
- 5.7.6 If fields are straight on the off side with five on the on side then short of a length and into leg stump is the focus.

5.8 How Batsmen Get Out

- 5.8.1 Most batsman get out due to a ‘decision making’ mistake rather than a great delivery so forcing them into that mistake is the key to bowling
- 5.8.2 Batsman mainly get out caught behind (slips) or LBW which generally is caused by playing back when they should have played forward or playing forward when they should have played back. Therefore a batsman should never get comfortable just playing on the back foot or the front foot
- 5.8.3 The above information points clearly to short of a length just outside the off stump being the most difficult delivery to play not matter what format of the game or stage of a game. However if the pitch is seaming or spinning then slight variations of length challenges a batsman’s ability to make the correct decision.
- 5.8.4 Changes in line also create confusion in the mind of a batsman. A bowler should bowl from different positions on the crease changing the calculations a batsman has to make. Bowl one or two balls per over from wider or closer on the crease.
- 5.8.5 Subtle well disguised changes of length and pace are important.
- 5.8.6 A well-directed short(er) ball (quicker ball than normal) keeps a batsman guessing as to whether they will play back or forward.
- 5.8.7 Yorkers are always difficult to play especially early in a batsmen’s innings.
- 5.8.8 Changes of pace are the most difficult single issue on all surfaces for a batsman to contend with and should always be used as part of a bowlers plan no matter what the situation or game format.

Bowling Strategies Notes:

6.0 Bowling Planning Templates

6.1 Cue Card Development

Full

- Run Up
 -
 -
 -
 -
- Delivery
 -
 -
 -
 -
 -
 -
- Follow Through
 -
 -
 -
 -
 -
- Strategy
 -
 -
 -
 -
- Delivery Variations
 -
 -
 -
 -
- Preparation
 - Before Game
 -
 -
 -
 -
 - Before Spell
 -
 -
 -
 -

Cue Card Development

Brief

-
-
-
-
-
-

In the field / before spells

-
-
-
-
-

During walk back to mark

-
-
-
-

_____ (Add your own)

-
-

6.2 Bowling Plan Template

Batsman's Name:

What I know about the batsman
(strengths / weaknesses)

-
-
-
-

The decision of what field to use from the play book for each batsman, stage and pitch condition should be made by the coach (mainly), captain and bowler and will be a major influence in what deliveries are bowled. That group of people will have some/limited knowledge of the pitch conditions therefore will have some idea of what any required slight changes of length might be required. While the line of a delivery rarely changes, depending on the speed and bounce (spin) of the pitch a bowler will alter slightly the types of deliveries bowled to a specific batsman. For example if the pitch is likely to seam and bounce then bowling to the batsman's strengths early on which might be the hook stroke, might be a good strategy. If the pitch flattens quickly then short pitch deliveries in stage 2, 3 and 4 may only provide momentum for the batsman. Specific decisions should be made to move through the stages and should be made out in the field in consultation with the Captain and perhaps senior members of the team.

	Pitch Type	Seaming Pitch or Ball Swinging	Flat Pitch	Spinning Pitch
Stage	Time in Innings	Delivery Types	Delivery Types	Delivery Types
Stage 1	Getting Started Play Book Numbers	- - - - - - -	- - - - - - -	- - - - - - -
	Pitch Assessed Play Book Numbers	- - - - - - -	- - - - - - -	- - - - - - -
	Establishing Command Play Book Numbers	- - - - - - -	- - - - - - -	- - - - - - -
	Maximise Opportunity Play Book Numbers	- - - - - - -	- - - - - - -	- - - - - - -

