



Junior cricket

coaching manual



Primary
school



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coaching manual contents



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Introduction

Junior cricket
coaching manual



“We wish to change our nation’s children by instilling in them the desire to be more active, not just now but for all their lives. We aim to achieve this by teaching each child a competence in and passion for at least one sport. This we will do by building a sports coaching culture for our children ...”

Many factors in modern society have resulted in children and adults becoming increasingly inactive and this has had an alarming effect on their health. Regular physical activity plays an important role in the prevention and treatment of many lifestyle-related diseases such as coronary artery disease, strokes and type 2 diabetes (non-insulin dependent diabetes). Sports are a great way to encourage children to get more physically active and healthy, and that’s why Discovery Vitality has developed a series of sports manuals for primary schools in South Africa.

The purpose of the Junior cricket coaching manual

This manual provides teachers and coaches with relevant information on how to coach cricket so that children get the maximum benefits from playing the sport – getting physically active, healthy and fit. The focus of the manual is on developing **the basic skills needed** for juniors (up to the age of 12) to become competent cricket players. The main focus is on **providing exercises and drills** to help you plan your practice and develop skills, rather than to give a comprehensive framework of the rules and tactics of the game.

Professor Tim Noakes of the Sports Science Institute of South Africa has a dream to make South African children the fittest in the world by 2020. He believes that through initiatives like the Vitality Schools Programme we can reach this goal. You too can play a part in making this vision a reality!

Introduce your learners to the exciting game of cricket

Cricket is a very popular sport that appeals to children of all shapes and sizes. It involves running, batting, fielding and bowling and other movements that build fitness of the heart and lungs. It also stimulates balanced muscular development for growing bodies.





Understanding the game

The aim of cricket

The aim of cricket is to score more runs than the opposing team, or to bowl out the opposing team before it reaches the target of runs set by your team.

Two teams of 11 players take turns to bat and bowl. The players that are batting try to score as many runs as they can by hitting the ball around an oval field. The other team must get them out by bowling the ball overarm at the stumps at either end of a 22-yard (20,12 m) area called a pitch. The bowling team can get the batsmen out by dismissing them in several different ways (see pages 68 - 69). Once the batting team has reached the end of its innings, the side that was bowling will come in to bat and the side that was batting will field and bowl.

Refer to page 77 for a definition of cricket terms used in this manual.

Safety

Cricket is a game where a hard ball is thrown at a person at a high speed, so there is a risk of injury. Nevertheless, this risk is greatly reduced if the coach and players take proper safety measures. Here are some precautions you can take to ensure your players' safety:

Warm up: Sprains, which are one of the most common forms of cricket injuries, can be prevented by adequately warming up before a game. Refer to page 6 for a list of warm-up activities to prepare players for games.

Another important piece of equipment is a first-aid kit, which should always be at hand when a game is in play. If players get injured, make sure that they receive the correct treatment before they return to the field.

The field: Injuries in cricket can also be prevented by checking the field of play for any hazards such as broken glass, nails and other sharp objects.

Heat: In hot conditions the body can lose 2–3 l of fluid through perspiration in an hour. A game of cricket can go on for several hours, so it is important to make sure that you have adequate supplies of water available for players. Also ensure that players wear hats and that they use sunblock.



Planning your practice

Practice frequency and duration

When trying to encourage children to participate in sport, it is essential that sessions are fun. Training is not necessarily about quantity, but rather quality, so we suggest that you have two one-hour sessions a week.

Putting the practice together

As the coach, use your imagination and creativity to get the most out of your practice time. It is recommended that you stick to a framework that will help you cover all the important aspects of cricket training. The table below summarises the framework for how to set up a good practice session:

Skills	Description and principles	Length
Warm-up*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective is to prepare players physically and ease them into activity Should be done with the cricket bat and ball – more enjoyable and helps skills development Should be lively, fun, engaging and instructional 	10 minutes
Skills development and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific attention is paid to individual players and skills training Skills include batting, running between the wickets, bowling and fielding 	30 minutes, consisting of six of the available drills (see Activities section)
Warm-down*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity to get all players together at the end and reinforce what was learnt during the practice Also helps to ease players out of activity 	5 minutes
Total: 60 minutes		
All phases have drills and training games you can use to make sessions fun and enjoyable for your players while also helping you teach the skills properly. The drills are explained in the following sections.		



Warm-up activities

These warm-up activities should be fun and ease players into activity. Skills should not be coached during this phase of the practice, and there should be very little talking except to encourage players to perform the drills safely and correctly. Feel free to adapt the drills and create new ones to suit your players.

Simon says

This is a game where players move according to instructions. It eases players into the training session.

Set up

- Form a 20 - 30 m circle using cones.

How to do the activity

- Have players jog around the outside of the circle
- Shout instructions such as 'left', 'right', 'up' and 'down'
- If you shout 'left', everyone must touch the ground with their left hand
- If you shout 'right', they must touch the ground with their right hand
- If you shout 'up', they must put both hands up and jump in the air
- If you shout 'down', they must touch the ground with both hands.

Progression

- Change things around – shout 'left' and they must touch the ground with their right hand, 'down' and they must jump up in the air, and so on.

Piggy in the middle

Set up

- One player stands in the middle of a circle formed by five other players.



How to do the activity

- One of the players forming the circle throws a ball to the player in the middle
- The player in the middle catches the ball and throws it to the next player. This next player then throws the ball back to the player in the middle, who then throws it to the following player
- The drill continues until 10 catches have been completed by each of the players forming the circle.

Progression

- Start off using tennis or slaz balls to build players' confidence and then progress to a hard ball.

Ball-passing

Set up

- Players stand in a circle.

How to do the activity

- A ball is passed clockwise around the circle
- When the coach shouts 'change', players start passing the ball anti-clockwise.

Progression

- To make the game more difficult, introduce at least three different kinds of balls, such as soccer, rugby, cricket and/or tennis balls
- When players are more confident at passing and catching, introduce a golf ball.

Positions in the diagrams
that follow:

F = Fielder

B = Batsman

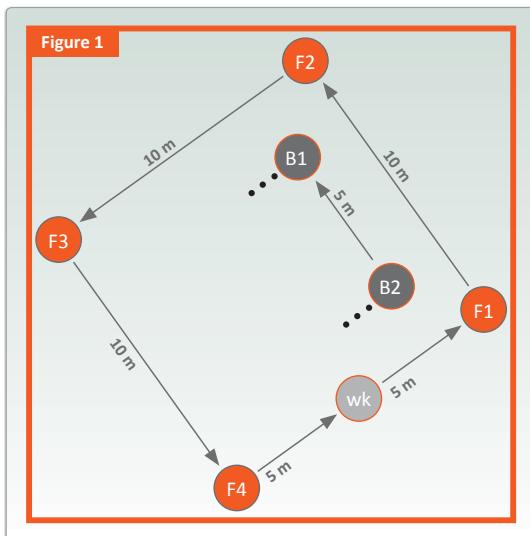
WK = Wicket-keeper

C = Coach.



Team catching and run-out game

This game develops cricket skills like catching, throwing and running between the wickets.



Set up

- Set up according to Figure 1 above with a distance of 10 m or less between fielders (depending on players' abilities) and a distance of 5 m between positions B1 and B2.

How to play the game

- The game begins with the wicket-keeper throwing the ball to the first fielder
- As this happens, the batsmen immediately set off to complete two runs between positions B1 and B2
- Fielders must try to get the ball back to the wicket-keeper before the batsmen complete the two runs
- In order to do this, the ball must be thrown and caught by all four fielders and then returned to the wicket-keeper
- The batsmen must complete the two runs to avoid being run out.

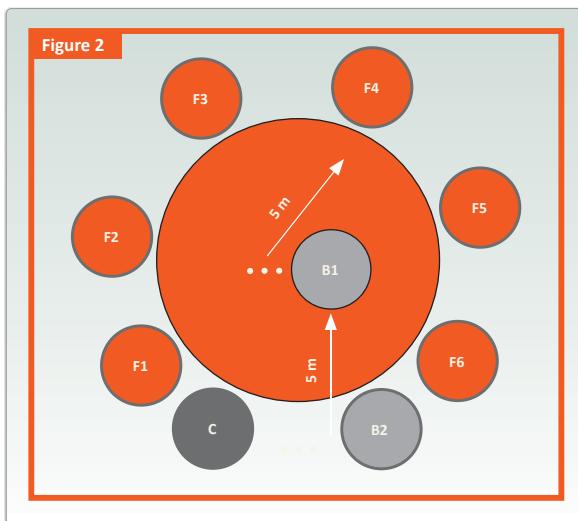


Progression

- Instead of throwing and catching, players can use rolling and ground-fielding so that the game continues non-stop until the batsmen are run out
- Adjust the length of the pitch so that there is a close race between the ball and the batsman.

Circle cricket

This game develops cricket skills such as batting and fielding. Batsmen must use proper technique and strokes and learn the right tactics to score more runs, like hitting the ball into gaps and only playing balls that are necessary to play.



Set up

Set up according to the figure above, with a distance of approximately 5 m between fielders.

How to play the game

- The coach bowls to the first batsman, who hits the ball and runs to B2
- At the same time, the second batsman runs to B1, slides his bat over the line and turns to face the next ball. The coach then bowls the ball to him
- This continues and the batsmen retire after they have each scored five runs



- The fielders must limit the number of runs scored by anticipating where the batsman will hit the ball
- If the fielder catches the ball without a bounce after it is hit, the batsman is out
- Fielders must attempt to run out the batsman by returning the ball quickly to the in-fielders or by trying to hit the stumps directly
- Fielders can surround the batsman, but they must keep out of the 5 m circle (see Figure 2)
- If a batsman is run out, the next player comes in to bat.

Progression

- Increase the number of runs the batsman can get before having to retire
- Increase/decrease the number of fielders, the size of the circle and the running area so that there is a close race between the ball and the batsman.



Skills development and training

Skills development and training should be the focus of your practice sessions so that the basic skills of cricket can be taught. The aim with young players is to spend about 70% of the time focusing on skills development and only 30% on competition. This way, drills are fun and stimulating and not too competitive.

It is important that players don't wait in lines where they get bored – you should have a 'no queue' policy during your practices!

Make it a priority to teach the skills on both the left and right sides so that players become equally capable on each side. Remember to get creative.

Attributes of a good player

A good cricket player has attributes that include:

- Speed
- Strength
- Power
- Hand-eye coordination
- Balance
- Agility
- Flexibility
- Endurance.

Cricket skills

Skills for cricket include batting, bowling and fielding.

Batting skills include:

- Good balance
- Hand-eye coordination
- Anticipation.

Bowling skills include:

- A good run-up, which involves:
 - Equal stride pattern
 - Up and down arm movements
- Gather (see page 25)
- Strong legs to absorb back-foot and front-foot impact
- High release
- Forward momentum and follow-through
- Good aim.

Fielding skills include:

- Speed
- Agility
- Good depth perception
- Strong arm
- Good judgement
- Anticipation and reaction.



Cricket skills

Teaching correct technique

Batting

The basic technique for batting requires the correct grip, stance, step and backswing, and knowing how to play defensive and attacking shots.

Grip

One way for a player to obtain the basic recommended grip is to lay the bat down on its face (flat side) with the handle facing him and then pick it up with both hands close together in the middle of the handle. The Vs, formed between the thumb and index finger of each hand, are aligned between the splice and outside edge of the bat. The top hand grips the bat tightly and the bottom hand is loose.



Stance

Young cricketers should be advised to adopt a stance which they find most comfortable.

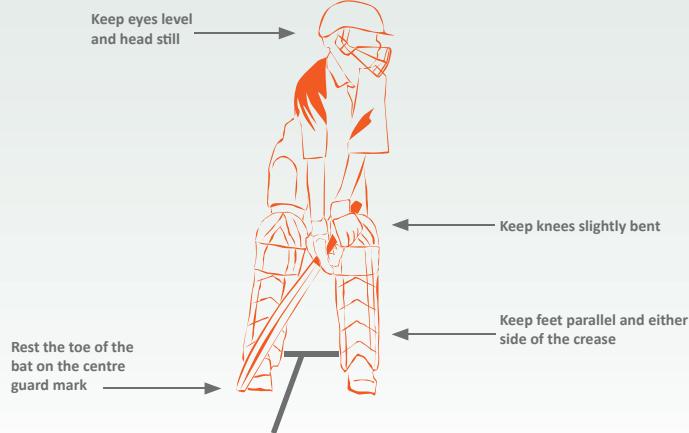
Figure 4a



Figure 4b



Figure 4c





The following is an explanation of how to teach the correct stance:

- The batsman should position his head so that it does not affect his balance. It should be upright and in the bowlers' channel
- Eyes should be kept level
- Shoulders should be slightly open for better head position
- Hands should be positioned in line with, but slightly away from, the front pad
- Hips should be directed side-on to the bowler
- Make sure that the knees are relaxed and slightly bent to allow for better movement
- Feet should be shoulder-width apart, aligned straight and parallel to the popping crease
- The bat should be kept on the ground behind or in between the feet
- Ensure that weight is on the balls of the feet and evenly distributed between the right and left legs.

Benefits of this stance:

- The body is in a position that allows for quick and easy movement, and a more efficient forwards and backwards motion
- There is better balance of the body during the shot
- The body is relaxed.

Step and backswing

As the bowler runs in, the batsman prepares to strike the ball by taking a step and swinging the bat upward.

The following is an explanation of how to teach the step and backswing:

- Use the top hand to lift the bat up in the direction of second slip (for fielding positions, see Figure 41b on page 71)
- The top of the backswing is reached when the step is completed
- At the top of the backswing the wrists cock (especially the wrist of the top hand), the bat face opens up to point and the back elbow is relaxed (not tucked in)



- The backswing should not be lifted too high or the batsman will take longer to return to the hitting position and may end up being late for the shot
- On the downswing, the bat needs to come through in a straight line with where the batsman aims to hit the ball.



Defensive and attacking shots

The objective of all batsmen is to score as many runs as possible and to not go out in the process. They should be able to score boundaries off the bad balls and defend the good balls, and try to get as many 1s and 2s in between as possible.

Batting can therefore be divided into defensive and attacking shots. To defend balls, batsman can play either forward or backward defensive shots. Attacking shots include drives and horizontal shots.

Defensive shots

The forward defence and backward defence are vertical bat shots where the bat is swung vertically at the ball.

Forward defence

This is one of the most important shots and is played to a ball that is pitched up and in line with the stumps.

The technique is as follows:

- Take a big step forward
- Do not push out at the ball, but rather allow the ball to come to you and then play it under the eyes
- When playing the shot, the bat needs to come through with the full face of the bat presented to the ball



- The bat should be placed at a downward angle to keep the ball on the ground
- The top hand should be in control when the shot is played
- Weight must be over the front foot
- The back leg must be straight and the front knee bent
- The bat should be next to the pad of the front leg, leaving no gap
- Note the position of the back foot in Figure 6b.

Figure 6a



Figure 6b



Backward defence

The backward defence is played to a short pitched delivery. Here it is important that the batsman moves his back foot back and across the stumps and keeps his head in line with the ball. The technique is explained below:

- Move the back foot back and across to cover the off stump
- Stay up on the toes with feet together, remaining side on to the bowler
- Head must stay forward
- From the top of the back swing, the bat must swing straight down, making contact with the ball in front of the body
- On contact, the bat should be at an angle facing down to the ground with the top hand in control.

Figure 7a



Figure 7b



Attacking shots

Front foot drives

There are four main drives: the straight drive, off drive, on drive and the cover drive. All the drives are played to full-pitched deliveries, but they are played to different lines:

- The off drive is played to a ball pitched full and on or just outside off stump
- The on drive is played to a delivery pitched on leg stump
- The straight drive is played to a full-pitched delivery on middle stump
- The cover drive is played to a ball pitched full and outside off stump.



The front foot drives can be taught in the following way:

- With the step and back swing, move your front foot out towards the ball and play down the line of the ball
- Use the same body position as the forward defence, with the weight forward over the front foot
- From the top of the back swing, bat straight through the ball with the top hand in control
- Use either a check or full swing – a check is when the batsman does not do a full follow-through but punches the shot with firm wrists; a full swing is when the batsman plays a full follow-through on the drive
- For the full swing, the hands finish high and maintain a '9' shape.

Figure 8



Horizontal bat shots

The cut shot and pull shot are horizontal bat (cross-batted) shots where the arms are extended for maximum power.

The cut shot

The cut shot is played to a ball that is short pitched outside of the off stump. It should not be played to balls that are too close to the off stump or too full. The action is a cutting movement across the body with the bat.



It can be taught in the following way:

- The step and backswing is back and across the stumps covering off stump, with the head facing towards point
- Keep feet apart and remain on the balls of the feet
- Cross-bat full swing of the bat (ie swing the bat horizontally at the ball)
- Swing from high to low to keep the ball on the ground so the player doesn't get caught out
- The bat face should be slightly closed at contact and the arms should be fully extended.

Figure 9a

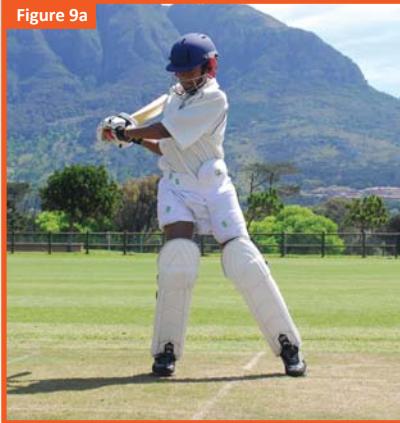
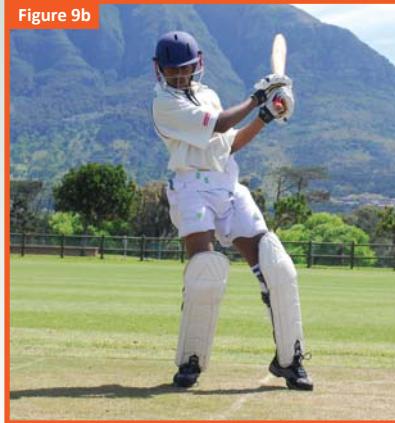


Figure 9b





The pull shot

This stroke is an attacking shot and is played to a short-pitched delivery that bounces between waist and chest height on the leg side. This shot is played to a spin bowler or medium pacer. It should not be played to a fast bowler.

The technique is as follows:

- The step and backswing is back and across the stumps covering off stump
- Weight must stay centred
- The head must not move with the feet
- Keep feet apart and remain on the balls of the feet
- Extend the arms and hit the ball with a full swing of the bat
- Swing from high to low to keep the ball on the ground so the player doesn't get caught out. It is advised that you do not teach young players to pull through the air, as this is more appropriate for high-school coaching. It is important that young players first learn to pull on the ground through this area (better players will do this naturally)
- The bat face should be slightly closed at contact and the arms fully extended.

Figure 10



Taking guard

On arriving at the crease, the first thing the batsman should do is take guard so that he gets a sense of where he is in front of the stumps.

The following is an explanation of how to take guard:

- Hold the bat upright with the bottom tip touching the ground
- The side edge of the bat faces the umpire who is standing at the other end of the pitch
- There are three common guards the batsman can take: leg, middle and leg, and middle/centre (middle/centre is a good position for young players to take)
- Once the umpire has given the batsman the position of his guard, the batsman must mark the pitch with his boot or the bottom of the bat so that he knows where he is in relation to the stumps.

Figure 11a

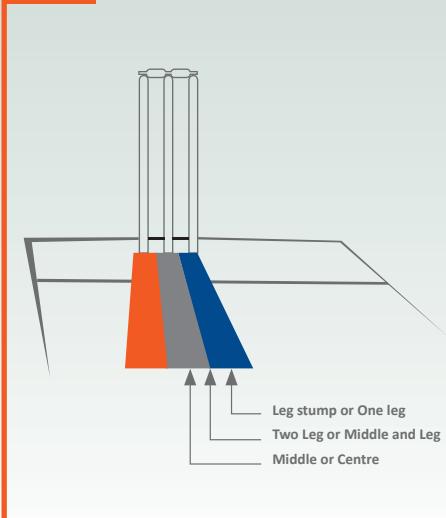


Figure 11b





Running between the wickets

Running between the wickets in cricket requires good technique gained through experience, as well as the batsmen's ability to trust one another's judgements when making a call for a run. 'Calling' and 'running and turning' are aspects of running between the wickets that must be considered when coaching this skill.

Calling

- Use loud and clear calls: 'yes', 'no' and 'wait'
- Know who has the responsibility to call. It is the striker's responsibility to call if he can see where the ball has gone, whether it is in front of or behind the wicket. The non-striker only calls if the striker cannot see where the ball has gone
- Players need to take responsibility when running to the danger end
- Be ready to accept calls
- Don't hesitate.

Running and turning

- When the bowler is preparing to bowl, the non-striker must back up (walk out of the crease as the bowler releases the ball) so that he is ready to run
- If there is no run available, the non-striker must quickly return back to the crease

Figure 12a



- Run in straight lines off the centre of the pitch
- Carry the bat with both hands whenever possible
- Face the fielder when turning
- Get low to increase speed when stopping and turning
- Ground the bat, sliding it across the popping crease as the run is completed.

Figure 12b



Figure 12c



Figure 12d





Bowling

The bowling action is a smooth and continuous motion that begins from the moment the bowler leaves his mark at the start of his run-up, until he slows down to a stop at the end of his follow-through. For coaching purposes, we have broken it down into the following fundamentals:

- Grip
- Run-up
- Gather/Bound
- Back-foot impact
- Front-foot impact
- Release
- Follow-through.

Fast and medium-pace bowling

At U12 level, the coach should control the number of overs bowled by a player in a practice session, as well as a game.

For this age group, a limit of two four-over spells is recommended with a break of one hour. Bowlers should not bowl for more than 30 minutes for each practice session. This should consist of five minutes of light, reduced-pace bowling, followed by 25 minutes of speed (coach-controlled) bowling.

Grip

- The ball is gripped between the first two fingers and the thumb
- The index and middle fingers can be held together, but it is best to keep them slightly apart
- The thumb should be on the seam
- The ball should not be too deep in the hand.

Figure 13a



Figure 13b



Run-up

- It is called a run-up! Do exactly that
- Make sure feet follow a normal running pattern
- Keep hands above the waist
- Keep arms close to the body (not swinging across it)
- Lean the body forward.

Figure 14a



Figure 14b



Gather/Bound

The jump is probably the most important part of the bowling action because it sets up the rest of the action.

- Jump forward
- Do not lean back excessively – in fact, rather lean slightly forward
- Start with hands below the shoulders and move them gradually higher
- Keep the head and body upright.

Figure 15a



Figure 15b





Back-foot impact

The alignment of the back foot, hips and shoulders taken at back-foot impact / landing is the most important consideration here. The body could be positioned side-on, front-on or semi-open to the batsman.

Side-on

- Place the back foot parallel to the bowling crease at impact
- Align hips and shoulders towards the wickets and 90 degrees to the back foot
- Look over the front shoulder
- Lean back slightly
- The front foot should point forward.

Figure 16a

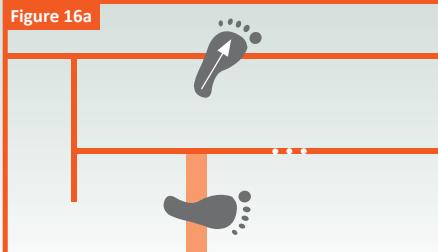


Figure 16b



Front-on

- The back foot lands pointing straight down the wicket
- Align hips and shoulders towards extra cover and 90 degrees to the back foot
- Look inside the front arm.

Figure 17a

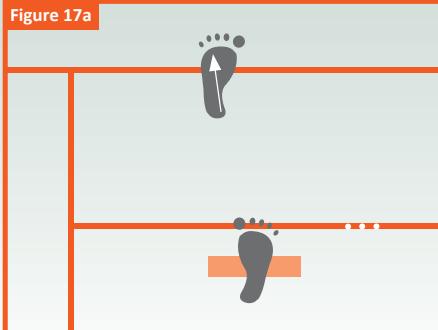


Figure 17b



Semi-open

- The back foot lands pointing towards fine leg (ie 45 degrees to the bowling crease)
- The front foot points to first leg slip
- Align hips and shoulders towards cover and 90 degrees to the back foot
- Look just inside the front arm.

Figure 18a

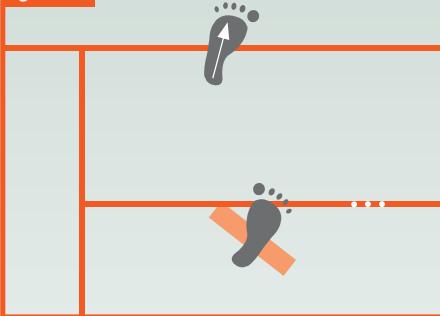


Figure 18b





Figure 19a



Front-foot impact

- Brace the front leg to support the rotation of the shoulders
- Rotate the shoulders vertically towards the batsman.



Figure 19b



Figure 20

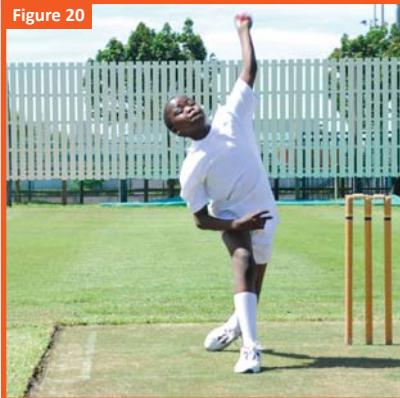


Figure 21



Release

- Release the ball from the highest possible point
- Place the wrist in the correct position for the desired delivery.

Follow-through

The follow-through helps to slow the body down, prevent injury and assist in accuracy.

- Follow through straight
- Make sure that shoulders and arms follow through completely.

Spin bowling

It is recommended that spin bowlers vary the pace and flight of the balls they bowl so that batsmen will struggle to read the delivery. Spin bowlers can be divided into two groups:

- Finger spinners – off-spin (the ball bounces and spins into the right-handed batsman)
- Wrist spinners – leg spin (the ball bounces and spins away from the right-handed batsman).



Finger spin

The off-break is a type of delivery the finger spin bowler bowls most of the time. This can be right arm off spin, which spins the ball into the right-handed batsman, or left arm off spin, called left-arm orthodox and spins the ball away from the right-handed batsmen. The technique is as follows:

- The ball is spun by the index finger
- To generate spin (rotations) on the ball, rather than simply putting the ball out there, the bowler must be energetic in the delivery
- More bounce in action
- Side-on action
- Short delivery stride
- The pivot (when the back leg and hip drives over the front leg) is caused by the straight back hip and knee drive, which puts more spin on the ball
- Release the ball from a good height.

Figure 22a



Figure 22b



Wrist spin

A right-handed wrist spin is known as the leg spin. This makes the ball spin from right to left on the pitch at the point of delivery. It spins away from the leg-side of the right-handed batsman.

A left-handed wrist spin is known as left-arm unorthodox spin bowling and spins sharply towards the leg-side of the right-handed batsman.

- The ball is spun by the ring finger
- Side-on action
- The jump is key
- Long delivery stride
- Strong shoulder rotation with hip and knee drive
- PEP – power, energy, pivot (when the back leg and hip drives over the front leg).

Bowling lengths

Bowling lengths will vary according to the height of the bowler, the speed of bowling and the state of the pitch. The following diagram shows the various lengths a bowler can bowl.

Figure 23a

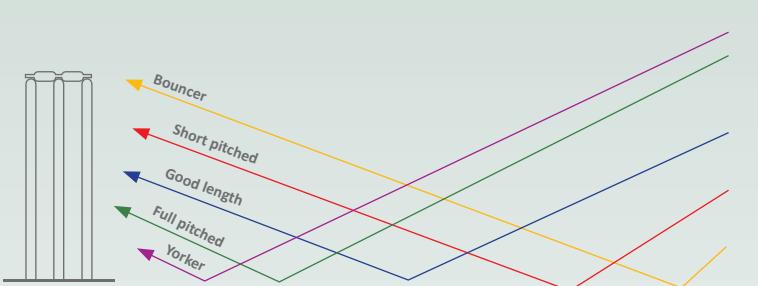
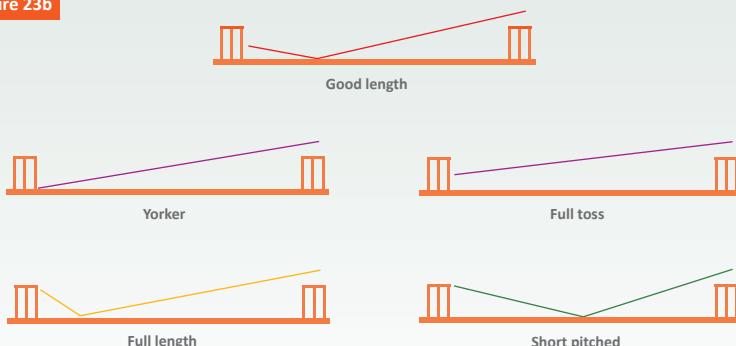


Figure 23b





Fielding

A player will probably spend more time fielding in cricket than batting or bowling, so it is important that coaches make this aspect of the game fun and exciting to learn. Fielding practice sessions should always be done at a high intensity and should prepare players for match situations.

Skills required for various fielding positions

- Specialist slip fielders need fast reactions and an acrobatic agility to take catches that may come quickly and from various angles
- Expert cover fielders need speed and agility to cut off potential boundary shots and throw the ball fast and accurately over the stumps to the wicket-keeper
- Deep fielders have good judgement for high catches and a strong throwing arm to return the ball quickly and prevent boundaries
- The wicket-keeper has special skills that are unique within any cricket team. He stands behind the wickets and catches all balls that pass the batsman.

Cut-off players

Most junior players are not able to throw directly from the boundary to the wicket-keeper, so a cut-off player is used.

The cut-off player positions himself between the player fielding the ball and the pitch. Once the ball is fielded, the fielder throws it to the cut-off player who then throws the ball to the keeper or bowler. This is called a relay throw.



Backing up

Another important point with regards to fielding is backing up. When a throw comes into a bowler or keeper, the ball might slip past him and miss the stumps. When this happens, in order to prevent more runs from being scored by the batsman, a player should back up behind the bowler or wicket-keeper (ie the player should stand roughly five to 10 metres behind the wicket-keeper or bowler so they can gather in the ball should it go past the stumps and the keeper or bowler).

The side of the field the throw is coming from will determine which fielder will do the backing up. For example, if the ball is hit to the off side and is then thrown to the bowler's end, the fielder at mid on should do the backing up behind the bowler. The following tips can be used to teach backing up:

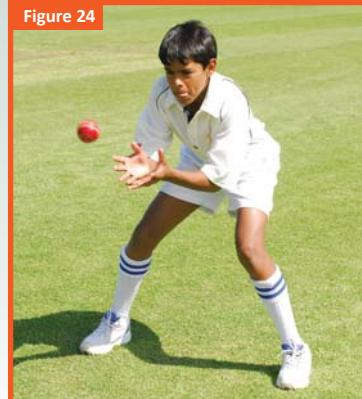
- Expect every ball to come to you
- Unless you are in a close catching position, walk in towards the batsman as the bowler runs in to bowl
- Always back up in case a team mate misses the ball
- Keep an eye on the ball at all times
- Release the ball as soon as it is fielded and return it to the wicket-keeper or bowler
- When you are about to throw, line up your feet with the target
- Create straight lines
- Vision: determine where to throw the ball
- Make sure you are comfortable when fielding
- For safety purposes, warm up properly before fielding (keep the arm healthy)
- Maintain speed and accuracy.

Close catching

For close catches it is very important for fielders to focus on the game and the ball. They should remain still while keeping an eye on the ball as it leaves the bowler's arms and goes onto the bat. The following is an explanation of how to teach close catches:

- Generally, fingers should point downwards with the hands forming a cup shape; however, when the ball is at roughly chest height, it will need to be caught with fingers pointing upwards
- Always use two hands
- Keep eyes on the ball
- Keep the head still with eyes level.

Figure 24





High catching

There are two methods that can be used by players to take high outfield catches. Both are equally effective and should be practised often.

In the first method, the fielder's hands must be cupped under the ball at eye or chin level with the elbows tucked in towards the sides. The hands should not be pushed out to meet the ball, but rather the fielder should relax and allow the ball to drop into his hands with fingers pointing down (see Figure 25a).

In the second method, the elbows should be pushed away from the body with the palms of the hands facing upwards. The hands, with fingers pointing up, should be positioned above eye level so as to allow the player to watch the ball as it lands in his hands (see Figure 25b).

Figure 25a



Figure 25b



High catching can be taught as follows:

- Get in line with the flight of the ball
- Form a cup quickly with fingers pointing either up or down
- Keep eyes on the ball
- Catch the ball in line with the eyes
- After catching the ball, cushion it against the chest (you must have 'give' when you catch the ball; avoid catching it with 'hard hands').



Ground fielding

Defensive fielding

Defensive fielding is important for saving runs and ensuring that the ball does not get past the fielder. The long-barrier method, explained below, is the best technique for this kind of fielding.

- Run quickly to get in line with the oncoming ball
- Bend the knee of the leg nearest to the ball until it touches the ground (it should be placed next to the heel of the other leg)
- Right-handers should tuck their left knee against their right heel and use both hands to pick up the ball
- The extended leg that is flat on the ground provides the last line of defence should the hands fumble the ball
- Make sure that the left ankle is flat on the ground so that it can also be used to stop the ball.

Figure 26



Attacking fielding

Attacking fielding is important for taking catches and getting batsmen out.

- As the ball is struck, remain perfectly balanced and in a low, crouched position with the weight on the balls of the feet
- Pick up the line of the oncoming ball and move quickly to the non-throwing side of the ball (ie for a right-hander, the non-throwing side will be the left side of the ball)
- At the moment of pick-up, the body should be at a 90-degree angle to the ball with the opposite foot to the throwing arm out in front – the left foot in front of the right foot for right-handers. This makes it easier to release the ball quickly on the next step.



Throwing

- The fielder picks up the ball just in front of the right foot, with the left leg out in front and the non-throwing arm outstretched at shoulder level pointing towards the target
- The body weight should be transferred from the back foot to the front foot as the throw is completed
- The throw should be aimed at the wicket-keeper's gloves and should not bounce before it reaches him.

Underarm throw

This type of throw is used for positions close to the bowler or wicket-keeper.

- Keep an eye on the ball and stay in a low body position
- Feet should point in the direction of the throw
- The foot on the side of the throwing arm should be forward (the right foot for right-handers)
- Release the ball in the direction of the stumps, extending arm and hand out towards the target while maintaining a low body position
- There should only be a very slight backswing in the release.

Overarm throw

This type of throw is used for positions further away from the bowler or wicket-keeper (ie positions on the outfield).

- The ball will come in fast, so you need to get into a position that allows for fast movements in all directions. The best position to get into when expecting the ball is the split step
- The forearm of the throwing arm should be set up at 90 degrees to the upper arm and shoulder
- The palm of the hand must be facing away and the ball gripped across the seam
- The arm should be on a vertical plane at release (vertical release)
- Create straight lines to target
- Vision: look at where you intend to throw the ball
- Maintain balance
- Don't rush or arms will drop.



Figure 27a



Figure 27b



Figure 27c



Wicket-keeping

The wicket-keeper is probably the most important fielder in cricket. This player makes the fielding team look tidy by moving quickly to the stumps and catching the ball cleanly. He plays a crucial role for running out batsman, and is also in an ideal position to guide bowlers as to the strengths and weaknesses of batsmen.

Wicket-keepers have to apply all the different aspects required in fielding (fitness, agility and anticipation). They must also maintain a high level of concentration, enthusiasm and positioning.

Positioning

The wicket-keeper should position himself so that he has a clear view of the ball and can take it at about waist height. The ball should not bounce in front of the keeper before he catches it. If this does happen, it is because he is standing too far back and needs to move slightly forward.

Standing back and standing up

When the wicket-keeper is standing back, he is positioned further back from the stumps ready for balls from fast and medium-pace bowlers. Standing up, on the other hand, is when the wicket-keeper is right up close to the stumps, in a good position for stumping. If the wicket-keeper is highly skilled, he will adopt this position for balls from spinners or even medium-pace bowlers.



Standing back

Stance:

- Stay slightly crouched
- Keep feet about shoulder-width apart
- Position body to the off side of the batsman
- Keep weight on the balls of the feet
- Make sure that hands are relaxed.

Figure 28a



Figure 28b



Taking the ball when standing back:

- Keep the head and body behind the line of the ball
- Keep the hands low
- The body rises with the bounce of the ball
- Fingers point in a downward direction
- The keeper watches the ball into his hands and takes the ball on the inside of the hip.

Standing up

Stance:

- Stay crouched but comfortable
- Position body slightly to the off side of the batsman
- Keep weight on the balls of the feet
- Hands should be relaxed.

Figure 29



Glove work

Another important aspect of wicket-keeping is glove work, which helps the wicket-keeper to make a clean catch of the ball. When catching the ball, the wicket-keeper should position his gloves either towards the ground, the sky or to the side, depending on the height and direction of the delivery. In order to do this, the keeper needs to stay alert and keep his eyes on the ball right from the moment the ball leaves the bowler's arms.

Activities

All the activities can be used to help you design practices for your team. See the diagrams for more instruction on how to teach each activity. As you grow in experience and knowledge, you'll be able to modify some of these activities and make them more challenging and exciting for players. Pay very close attention to the proper technique for each activity.

Activity summary

The table below shows all the activities explained in the following section, indicating which skills can be taught using each activity.

Skills	Batting			Bowling	Fielding	
Drill letter and name	Basic technique	Basic cricket strokes	Running between the wickets	Basic technique	Basic technique	Wicket-keeping
A. Running relays			✓			
B. Running on the pitch			✓		✓	
C. Balance	✓					
D. Front-foot driving		✓				
E. Back-foot defence		✓				
F. The cut shot		✓			✓	
G. The pull shot		✓			✓	
H. The hook shot		✓			✓	
I. Rock and bowl				✓		
J. Gather and explode				✓		
K. Pulling down				✓		



Skills	Batting			Bowling	Fielding	
Drill letter and name	Basic technique	Basic cricket strokes	Running between the wickets	Basic technique	Basic technique	Wicket-keeping
L. Walk and bowl				✓		
M. Run up and bowl				✓		
N. Multiple ball throws					✓	✓
O. Piggy in the middle					✓	
P. High catches					✓	✓
Q. Ground fielding					✓	
R. Field and underarm throw					✓	
S. Sprint off					✓	
T. High balls						✓
U. Off side and leg side takes						✓
V. Pairs cricket	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Positions in the diagrams for the activities:

F = Fielders

B = Batsman

WK = Wicket-keeper

C = Coach

T = Thrower

☰ = Stump

△ = Cone

● = Player.

Batting

A

Running relays

Set up

- Divide players into two equal groups and have them line up one behind the other in their groups, as shown in Figure 30 below
- Set up a cone 10 m away from each group
- The players will need to carry their cricket bats for this activity.

How to do the activity

- When the coach blows the whistle, the players at the front of the line must run to the cone opposite their group and then back again
- All players should complete two singles facing a particular direction (off or leg side)
- Once the first player has completed his two singles, the next one begins
- The team that completes this the quickest, wins
- Encourage players to swap the bat between the left and right hand while running so they can get into position to face the next ball when reaching the stumps. If a player fails to change hands while running, the single does not count and he will have to start from the beginning.

Figure 30





Running on the pitch

In this activity, players practise running between the wickets with a partner out on the pitch.

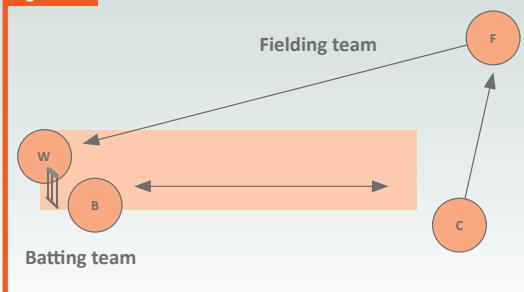
Set up

- Divide players into two groups, with one team batting and the other fielding
- The fielders stand on the boundary of the field (± 40 m from the pitch).

How to do the activity

- The coach rolls out a ball to the fielding team
- As the coach releases the ball, the first batsman in the batting team sets off for two runs, turning and changing hands in the correct manner
- At the same time, the fielder attempts to pick up the ball, pass it to the keeper and run out the batsman
- Once the batsman has been run out, the next batsman and keeper come in to play.

Figure 31





C

Balance

In cricket it is very important to have a firm base of support and balance when playing all strokes.

Set up

- Place a cone on the batsman's off side in front of him and another one on the off side behind him, and then two cones straight and one to the leg side
- The cones should be placed approximately a metre away from him in each direction, depending on the batsman's height or size of stride
- Place a ball on each cone.

How to do the activity

- The coach shouts out which ball the player should attempt to hit
- As the player steps forward to hit the ball, the coach should look out for the following:
 - Is the batsman's head over the ball?
 - Is his front foot next to the ball?

Variation

- Instead of hitting a stationary ball on a cone, the coach can throw underhand to players to play off, straight and on drives
- Soft balls such as tennis or slaz balls can be used to build players' confidence.



Front-foot driving

There are three ways to teach players how to execute the front-foot drive. The following sequence should be used:

- a) Stationary ball
- b) Dropped ball
- c) Lobbed ball.

a) Stationary ball

Set up

- Place a ball on a cone in line with middle stump.

How to do the activity

- The batsman steps forward and hits the ball through in line with middle stump for a straight drive

Figure 32



Progression

- Start off with the ball in front of the player and progress to the positions for the off drive and on drive
- Set up multiple cones and then instruct players to hit the different cones in order (on, off, cover and straight drives).



b) Dropped ball

How to do the activity

- The batsman stands in his position at the crease
- The coach or a partner drops a ball from shoulder height for the batsman to play the various shots he needs to practise.

Figure 33a



Figure 33b



Figure 33c



Figure 33d



c) Lobbed ball

How to do the activity

- The coach stands about 10 m away and lobbs a ball to the batsman.

Progression

- Start off using tennis or slaz balls to build players' confidence and then progress to cricket balls.



E

Back foot defence

The main aim of this drill is to teach young players to protect their wickets and leave wide balls that are not on the stumps.

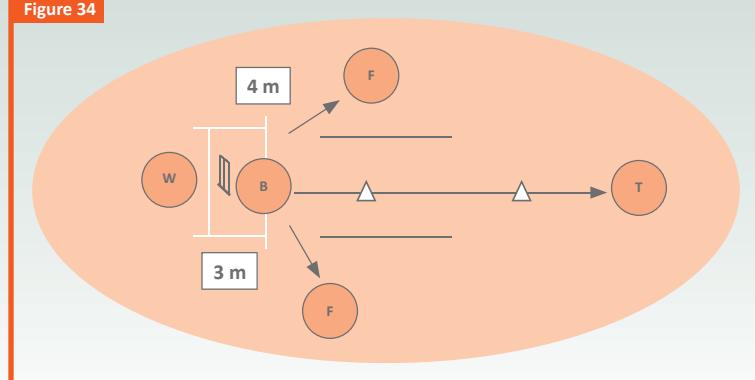
Set up

- Set up the session as shown in the picture below
- The target area the thrower must aim at should be marked out using cones
- The thrower should be about 10 steps away from the batsman and should indicate to the batsman when he will release the ball.

How to do the activity

- Each player gets about 10 throws and, if the player hasn't been bowled or caught by the fielders, they then rotate clockwise
- Ideally, there should be two or three rounds where each player gets a chance to practise the shot.

Figure 34



F

The cut shot

Set up

- The batsman's target area is about 10 m wide with the outfielders about 15 m away from the batsman
- Set out a cone the thrower can aim at in order to increase the accuracy of his throw.

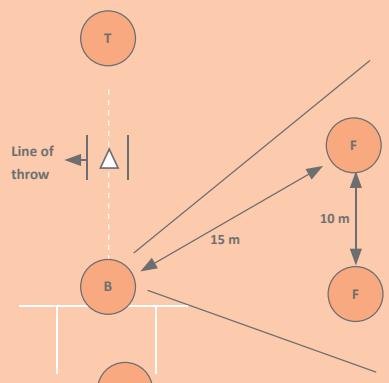
How to do the activity

- The thrower needs to throw the ball as a full toss between waist and shoulder height
- The batsman must play the cut shot towards the fielders
- Each player must have a decent opportunity to practise fielding in each position (F), so make players change positions after every 10 balls
- There should be three or four rounds of this.

Variations

- Use tennis or slaz balls and progress to cricket balls when players are more confident
- Instead of having a thrower, a high tee may be used from which the batsman can hit the ball.

Figure 35





G The pull shot

Set up

- The target area is about 10 m wide with the outfielders about 15 m away from the batsman
- Set out a cone the thrower can aim at in order to increase the accuracy of his throw.

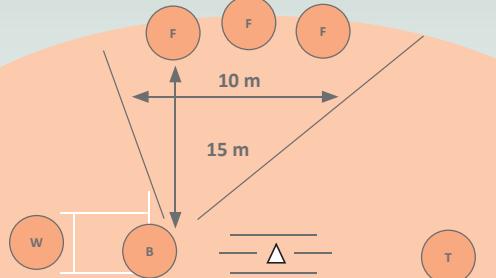
How to do the activity

- The thrower needs to throw the ball as a full toss between waist and shoulder height
- The batsman must play the pull shot towards the fielders
- Each player must have a decent opportunity to practise fielding in each position (F), so make players change positions after every 10 balls
- There should be three or four rounds of this.

Variations

- Use tennis or slaz balls and progress to cricket balls when players are more confident
- Instead of having a thrower, a high tee may be used from which the batsman can hit the ball.

Figure 36



H

The hook shot

Use the same activity as for the pull shot, but move the cones slightly behind square and have the thrower pitch shorter balls.

Bowling

When teaching young players how to bowl, it is a good idea to break the action up into separate steps.

I

Rock and bowl

How to do the activity

- Stand sideways with the feet shoulder-width apart, the front arm held up high and the bowling arm beside the back leg
- The bowler rocks his weight from back to front leg as the arm comes over straight and close to the ear
- The bowling arm follows through across the body and the other arm pulls down past the hip.

J

Gather and explode

The aim of this activity is to teach the player to release the ball with a straight arm, and also to focus on the direction and length he is required to bowl.

How to do the activity

- The bowler's feet are together, his hands are against his chest and his front knee is lifted
- As the bowler begins to step forward, the arms unfold, the left arm is held up high and the right arm, with the ball, is rotated past the hip and upwards past the ear.



Pulling down

How to do the activity

- Stand with legs apart and the toe of the back foot on the ground
- Lift the left arm up high so that you are looking at the target from behind your elbow
- With the ball next to the back knee, pull the left arm down with the elbow coming past the hip, and swing the bowling arm over straight and release the ball.



Walk and bowl

How to do the activity

- Stand a few steps away from the bowling crease
- Step forward with the left leg, then the right leg and then again the left
- Then bring the right leg across to land parallel with the crease so the body is in a side-on position
- The left arm is pulled up high and then pulled down as the bowling arm comes over.



Run up and bowl



How to do the activity

- The run-up is measured by starting with the feet on the bowling crease facing the opposite direction to the target
- Run away from the crease and, when it feels right, jump and bowl. Note where the back foot lands and mark this spot. This should be done with the eyes closed
- Pace the number of steps out from this point to the crease and record this for future reference.

Fielding

N

Multiple ball throws

Set up

- Cones are set out in a diamond shape with a ball placed on each one
- Divide players into one group of wicket-keepers and another group of fielders.

How to do the activity

- The wicket-keeper stands over a cone with a stump in front of him
- The fielder runs out picking up the balls in a set order and throws them towards the stump and keeper as quickly and accurately as possible
- Once they are done, the next wicket-keeper and fielder have a turn
- Continue the drill until you feel the skill has been done properly.

Variations

- Increase the number of balls in the drill
- Change the order in which the balls are picked up
- Use both underarm and overarm throws
- Vary the number of stumps that need to be hit.

O

Piggy in the middle

Set up

- One player stands in the middle of a circle formed by five other players.

How to do the activity

- The players on the outside of the circle throw catches to the player in the middle. This player continues to throw the ball to the next player until 10 catches have been completed.



High catches

How to do the activity

- Instead of the coach hitting high balls, get players to work in pairs and throw high catches over various heights and distances to each other.

Progression

- The coach hits balls in the air while shouting different commands, such as 'left hand only', 'clap twice' or 'touch the ground'
- Whatever command the coach shouts, the player must follow it before taking the catch
- The coach could even shout two commands for a single catch.



Ground fielding

Set up

- The coach and wicket-keeper stand at one end of the field
- Place a stump in front of the keeper
- The fielders will stand in a queue about 20 m away from the coach.

How to do the activity

- The coach rolls a ball along the ground to the first fielder
- Once the ball has been picked up, the fielder throws it to the keeper at the stump
- The fielder then proceeds to run around the stump while the coach throws the ball out to the next fielder
- After running around the stump, the fielder goes to the back of the queue and the next fielder comes in to receive the ball from the coach
- Do six rounds of this activity.



R

Field and underarm throw

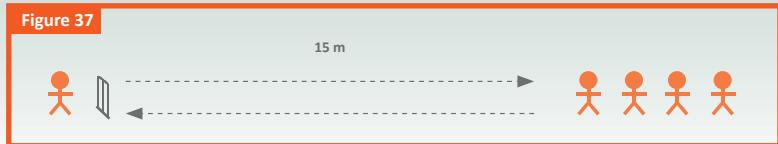
Set up

- One player stands behind a stump and four or five others stand in a queue 15 m away.

How to do the activity

- The player behind the stump rolls out a ball which is fielded by the player at the front of the line
- This fielder then throws it underarm back to the player at the stump, and then runs to replace this player
- The player who was behind the stump now joins the players at the other end of the field
- Do 8 - 10 rounds of this activity.

Figure 37





Sprint off

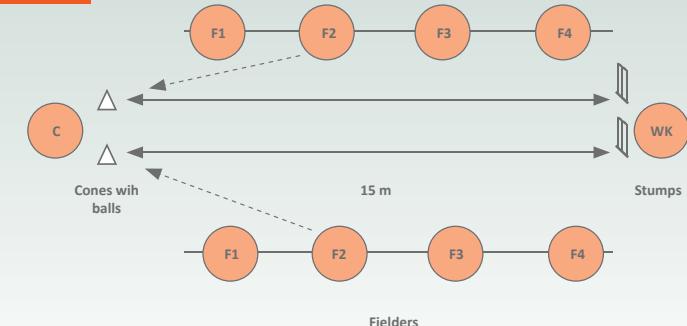
Set up

- Divide players into two equal groups of fielders
- Place them in lines opposite each other and assign numbers to them
- Set out two cones with balls on them, and two stumps 15 m away in the opposite direction.

How to do the activity

- The coach calls out a number
- The player assigned to this number runs to collect the ball and throws it in to the keeper who throws it back to the coach, who then places the balls back on the cones
- This player then returns to his place in the line.

Figure 38



Wicket-keeping



T

High balls

How to do the activity

- The keeper stands in a crouched position
- The coach hits the ball into the air and the keeper turns, calls for the ball and attempts to catch it
- Repeat for 10 catches.



U

Off side and leg side takes

How to do the activity

- The keeper stands crouched behind the stumps and the coach stands halfway down the pitch in front of the stumps
- The coach can either throw the ball on the bounce into the keeper, or hit it with the bat so the keeper takes the ball at waist height
- This can be done with 10 balls on the off side and 10 on the leg side, with the keeper standing at various distances away from the stumps.



V

Pairs cricket

Pairs cricket is great for the all-round development of cricket skills.

Set up

- Set up according to Figure 39 on the right. For ages five to eight years it is preferable to have a distance of approximately five metres between fielders, and the full size of the field can be used for older players.

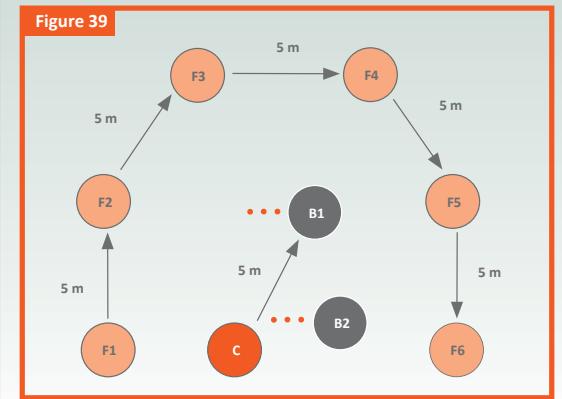
How to do the activity

- The batsmen work in pairs and have a set starting score of 100 runs
- Every run scored is added to the starting score
- If they lose a wicket, five runs are deducted and the batsmen change ends
- After four overs, the batsmen retire and the next pair takes over
- The coach should play the bowler role, but can throw the ball.

Variations

- Develop this into a full-scale match between two sides of eight players, one batting and one bowling:
 - Each batting pair has four overs each
 - Every fielder must bowl at least one and a maximum of four overs in a 16-over match
 - Wides and no balls count as two runs for the batting side, but no additional balls should be bowled in Pairs cricket.
- Introduce zonal hitting, where the batsmen can only play the ball to the off side or the leg side.

Figure 39



The Warm-down

A good way to wrap up the session is a light warm-down, which includes reinforcing key skills and aspects of the session. For the warm-down, you can use some of the activities that were included in the warm-up. You can also give homework so learners can practise on their own. This can consist of developing one of the skills you've taught them that day, such as fielding, bowling, batting or running between the wickets. (See the General coaching manual for more information on the warm-down.)

Putting it together

We helped you put a practice session together by providing a number of examples of drills and activities you could choose from for your practice. Remember that these are guidelines only and you should feel free to adapt the drills and create new ones depending on your players.

Evaluation

One of the coach's most important tasks is to evaluate players. At every practice session you will watch and observe, looking for players who are learning and those who are battling with certain skills.

For you to be a successful coach, it is absolutely vital that you constantly notice which of the players are struggling with skills so you can address problems early. Typically, these problems involve difficulty in executing the key components of a skill and a tendency to fall back into bad habits (like not gripping the ball correctly when bowling, or not holding the bat in the correct hand when running between the wickets, etc).

The checklist on the following pages is a summary of some of the key coaching points that were explained in detail in the skills and activities sections earlier. We recommend that you pay very close attention to all the skill descriptions, and use the checklist as an evaluation for individual players.

Checklist

Batting		Yes	No
Grip	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Are the Vs, formed between the thumb and index fingers of each hand, aligned between the splice and outside edge of the bat?Does the batsman's top hand grip the bat tightly and is his bottom hand loose?		



Batting (continued)

		Yes	No
Stance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is the batsman's head upright and in the bowler's channel?• Are his eyes kept level?• Are his shoulders kept slightly open, allowing for better head position?• Are his hands positioned opposite the knee of his front leg, slightly away from the pad?• Are his hips directed side on to the bowler?• Are his knees relaxed and slightly bent to allow for better movement?• Are his feet placed shoulder-width apart, aligned straight and parallel to the popping crease?• Is the bat kept on the ground behind or in between his feet?• Is his weight evenly distributed between his right and left legs?		
Step and backswing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is the batsman's top hand used to lift the bat up in the direction of second slip?• Is the top of the backswing reached when the step is completed?• At the top of the backswing, do his wrists cock (especially the wrist of his top hand)?• Does the bat face open up to point?• Is his back elbow relaxed (not tucked in)?• Is the backswing lifted up to a height that allows the batsman to quickly return to the hitting position?• On the downswing, does the bat come through in a straight line with where the batsman aims to hit the ball?		
Forward defence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does the batsman take a big step forward when playing the shot?• Does he allow the ball to come to him?• Does he play the shot under his eyes?• When playing the shot, does the bat come through straight with the full face of the bat presented to the ball?• Is the bat placed at a downward angle so the ball is kept on the ground?		

Batting (continued)		Yes	No
Forward defence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is his top hand in control when the shot is played? • Is his weight over his front foot? • Is his back leg straight and his front knee bent? • Is the bat next to the pad leaving no gap? 		
Backward defence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the batsman move his back foot back and across to cover the off stump? • Does he stay side on to the bowler? • Does he stay up on his toes with his feet together? • Does his head stay forward? • Does the bat swing straight down from the top of the backswing, making contact with the ball in front of his body? • Is the bat at an angle on contact, facing down to the ground with his top hand in control? 		
Drive shots	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the batsman move his front foot out to the ball when playing the shot? • Does he play down the line of the ball on the step and backswing? • Does he use the same body position as the forward defence with his weight forward over his front foot? • Does he bat straight through the ball from the top of the backswing with his top hand in control? • Does he use a check or full swing? A check is when the batsman does not do a full follow-through but punches the shot with firm wrists. (A full swing is when the batsman plays a full follow-through on the drive.) • Do his hands finish high and maintain a '9' shape for the full swing? 		
The cut shot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the batsman's step and backswing back and across the stumps covering off stump, and his head facing towards point? • Are his feet apart and his weight on the balls of his feet? • Does the bat do a horizontal full swing at the ball? • Does he keep the ball to the ground by swinging high to low? • Is the bat face slightly closed at contact? • Does he fully extend his arms on the follow-through? 		



Batting (continued)		Yes	No
The pull shot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the batsman's step and backswing back and across the stumps, covering off stump? • Does his head stay still while his feet move? • Are his feet apart and his weight on the balls of his feet? • Is the bat face slightly closed at contact? • Does he fully extend his arms on the follow-through? • Does he keep the ball to the ground by swinging high to low? • Does the bat do a horizontal full swing at the ball? 		
Running between the wickets		Yes	No
Calling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the batsman use loud and clear calls: 'yes', 'no' and 'wait'. • Does he know whose responsibility it is to call? • Is he ready to accept calls? 		
Running and turning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As the bowler prepares to bowl, does the non-striker back up or walk out of the crease as the bowler releases the ball so that he is ready to run? • If there is no run available, does the non-striker move back to the crease quickly? • Does the batsman run in straight lines off the centre of the pitch? • Does he carry the bat with both hands whenever possible? • Does he face the field, where the ball is, when turning? • Does he get low so as to increase speed when running and turning? • Does he ground the bat by sliding it across the popping crease as the run is completed? 		
Bowling		Yes	No
Grip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the bowler grip the ball between his first two fingers and thumb? • Are his index and middle fingers slightly apart on the ball? • Is his thumb on the seam? • Is the ball not too deep in his hand? 		
Run-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do the bowler's feet follow a normal running pattern? • Are his hands kept above his waist? • Are his arms kept close to his body (not swinging across)? • Does he lean his body forward for the run-up? 		

Bowling (continued)		Yes	No
Gather/bound			
Back - foot impact	Side - on	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the bowler jump forward? • Does he avoid leaning back too excessively? • Does he start with his hands below the shoulders and move them gradually higher? • Does he keep his head and body upright? 	
	Front - on	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the bowler's back foot placed parallel to the bowling crease at impact? • Are his hips and shoulders aligned towards the wickets and 90 degrees to his back foot? • Does he look over his front shoulder? • Does he lean back slightly? • Is his front foot pointing forward? 	
	Semi-open	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the bowler's back foot land pointing straight down the wicket? • Are his hips and shoulders aligned towards extra cover and 90 degrees to his back foot? • Does he look inside his front arm? 	
Front-foot impact		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the bowler's back foot pointed towards fine leg (ie 45 degrees to the bowling crease)? • Does his front foot point to first leg slip? • Does he align his hips and shoulders towards cover and 90 degrees to his back foot? • Does he look just inside his front arm? 	
Release		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the bowler release the ball from the highest possible point? • Does he place his wrist in the correct position for the desired delivery? 	



Bowling (continued)			Yes	No
Follow-through		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the bowler's follow-through straight? • Do his shoulders and arms follow-through completely? 		
Spin bowling	Finger spin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the ball spun by the bowler's index finger? • Does he bowl with a side-on action? • Does he take a short delivery stride? • Does he release the ball from a good height? 		
	Wrist spin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the ball spun by the bowler's ring finger? • Does he bowl with a side-on action? • Does he take a long delivery stride? 		
Fielding			Yes	No
Close catching		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do the fielder's fingers point downwards, with his hands forming a cup-shape? • Does he use two hands to catch the ball? • Are his eyes kept on the ball? • Is his head kept still with his eyes level? 		
High catching		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the fielder get in line with the flight of the ball? • When the ball comes, does he quickly form a cup with his hands by pointing his fingers either up or down? • Does he keep his eyes on the ball? • Is the ball caught in line with his eyes? • Does he cushion the ball against his chest once he catches it? 		
Ground fielding	Defensive fielding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the fielder run quickly to get in line with the oncoming ball? • Does he bend the knee of the leg nearest to the ball so that it touches the ground? • Is his knee placed next to the back of the heel of his other leg? • Does the right-handed fielder tuck his left knee against his right heel and use both hands to pick up the ball? • Is his left ankle flat on the ground so that it can be used to stop balls? 		

Fielding (continued)		Yes	No
Ground fielding	Attacking fielding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As the ball is struck, is the fielder perfectly balanced and in a low, crouched position with the weight on the balls of his feet? • Does he pick up the line of the oncoming ball and move quickly onto a line near the non-throwing side of the ball? • Does his body remain perpendicular to the ball when it is picked up? • At the moment he picks up the ball, is the opposite foot of his throwing arm ahead of his other foot – the left foot ahead of the right foot for right-handers? 	
Throwing		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the bowler's left leg out in front and his non-throwing arm outstretched at shoulder level pointing towards the target? • Is his body weight transferred from his back foot to his front foot as the throw is completed? • Is the throw aimed at the wicket-keeper's gloves and does it reach him before it bounces? 	
Underarm throw		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do the fielder's feet point in the direction of the throw? • Is the foot on the side of his throwing arm forward? • Does he maintain a low body position and extend his arm and hand out at the target as he releases the ball? 	
Overarm throw		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the fielder in a position that allows for fast movements in all directions? • Is the forearm of his throwing arm set up at 90 degrees to his upper arm and shoulder? • Is the palm of his hand facing away and does he grip the ball across the seam? • Is his arm on a vertical plane at release? • Does he create straight lines to target? • Does he maintain balance and avoid rushing so that his arm doesn't drop? 	



Wicket-keeping

			Yes	No
Standing back	Stance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does the wicket-keeper stay slightly crouched?• Are his feet shoulder-width apart?• Is his body positioned to the offside of the batsman?• Is his weight kept on the balls of his feet?• Are his hands relaxed?		
	Taking the ball	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are the wicket-keeper's head and body behind the line of the ball?• Are his hands kept low?• Does his body rise with the bounce of the ball?• Do his fingers point in a downward direction?• Does he watch the ball into his hand, taking the ball on the inside of his hip?		
Standing up		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does the keeper stay crouched but comfortable?• Is his body positioned slightly to the off side of the batsman?• Is his weight kept on the balls of his feet?• Are his hands relaxed?		

Appendix: Rules, positions and equipment

Rules of the game

As cricket is a complex game with many rules, we will not be able to include all of them here. Instead, we have included all the rules we consider most important for coaching children between the ages of eight and 12 years.

Managing a game

The game is controlled by two umpires on the field of play. One umpire stands behind the wicket at the end where the bowler is bowling, and the other stands in a position referred to as square leg (for fielding positions see Figure 41b on page 71).

Umpires are required to use various signals to communicate with players, as you will see in the pictures below.





Figure 40f



Figure 40g



Figure 40h



Figure 40i



Figure 40j



Starting the game

Before the game commences, the two captains of the opposing teams take to the field and toss a coin to decide which of the teams will bat or bowl first. It is usually the home captain or coach who flips the coin and the away captain or coach who makes the call. The winner of the coin toss then decides whether his team will bat or bowl first. This is usually discussed between the captain and coach before the game.

The umpire's job begins when the batsman comes in to take guard (leg, middle and leg and middle, as explained on page 21). Once the batsman has marked it out, the umpire needs to tell him how many balls are left in the over and inform him of the bowling style. The batsman only needs to know if the bowler is going over or around the wicket and if he is bowling with his right or left arm.

The bowler should not bowl until the batsman is ready.

Runs

A batsman scores a run by hitting a ball and running across the length of the pitch. A run is scored each time one length of the pitch is run – so if the batsman and his partner complete two lengths of the pitch, two runs are scored.

Fours and sixes

If the batsman strikes the ball and it passes over the boundary with at least one bounce, the batsman is accredited with four runs. If the ball is hit in the air and lands on the other side of the boundary without a bounce, six runs are added to the tally of the batting team.

Extras and byes

In cricket, runs may also be scored without the batsman hitting the ball. These fall into the category of extras. If the wicket-keeper fails to stop a ball that has not touched the batsman's body or bat and the batsman completes lengths of the pitch, then byes are scored. That is, one run is awarded for every length of the pitch completed and four runs are scored if the ball crosses the boundary.



Wides and no balls

If the ball is bowled beyond the batsman's reach and he cannot play a legitimate cricket shot, the delivery is deemed to be a 'wide' delivery. One run is then added to the batting team's total.

An umpire may call a 'no ball' if the bowler fails to keep any part of his front foot behind the bowling crease when bowling. If the heel of the bowler is touching the line, or if the bowler's back foot cuts the line of the return crease, this is also deemed a no ball (see Figure 42 on page 72). A no ball may also be called if the delivery fails to bounce and reaches the batsman above waist height.

For a no ball, one run is added to the batting team's score. If any runs are scored off the no ball, these runs will be added to the batsman's tally as well as the team's total, but the no ball will still be added as an extra run.

For both wides and no balls, the delivery is bowled again, so there may be seven or eight deliveries in one over.

Getting out

The batsman can be dismissed in several ways:

Bowled: This happens when the bowler bowls the ball and it hits the stumps and knocks off the bails. If the ball hits the wicket and the bails remain in place, the batsman is not out.

Caught out: After the batsman hits the ball the fielder catches the ball before it touches the ground, while the ball is still in the field of play. It is also out if the ball comes off the batsman's hand or glove, or below the wrist that is holding the bat, and is caught by a fielder.

Run out: This happens when the batsman attempts to make a run and the fielder removes the bails with the ball at the end the batsman is running to before he reaches his crease.

Hit wicket: This happens when the batsman stands on or hits the stumps when he is in the process of trying to hit, hitting or trying to avoid the bowled ball or he sets off for a run. If this happens, the batsman is given out.

Stumped: This happens when the wicket-keeper dislodges the bails with the ball in hand when, in attempting to hit the ball, the batsman moves out of his crease.



Leg before wicket (LBW): The aim of this rule is to prevent batsmen from using their bodies rather than their bats to stop the ball from hitting the wicket to avoid being bowled out. Simply put, the rule holds that a batsman will be out LBW if the umpire believes the ball would have gone on to hit the stumps had it not first hit the batsman's pad or body.

When making the decision of whether the batsman is out LBW, the umpire needs to take several factors into consideration:

- The batsman should be given out if:
 1. The ball struck the batsman on the pads or body in front of the stumps and it was pitched in line with the stumps; and
 2. The ball hit the batsman outside the line of the off stump and the batsman made no attempt to hit the ball. So long as the ball was going on to hit the stumps, the batsman is out.
- The batsman should not be given out if:
 1. The ball bounces outside leg stump. Even if the ball was going on to hit the stumps, and even if the batsman made no attempt to hit the ball, he can still not be given out in this case;
 2. The ball hit the bat or the hand holding the bat before hitting the pads or body;
 3. The bowler bowled a no ball; and
 4. The ball hit the batsman outside the line of the off stump and he made a genuine attempt to hit the ball.

Positions

Cricket is played between two teams with 11 players on each side. Each team has a twelfth man who may be called upon if one of the players gets injured. The twelfth man can only take part in the fielding and may not bowl, act as captain or keep wicket. At junior level, with prior consultation with the other coach, both players may be able to play (ie one could be selected to bat and the other to bowl and field).

Fielding positions

Fielding is just as important as batting and bowling. The fielders can restrict the number of runs scored by the batting team, thereby putting their team in a better position to win the game.

All 11 of the fielders take the field together and are placed by the captain or coach in their respective positions. The most common positions are mid on, mid-off, cover, deep cover point, point, midwicket, square leg, third man and fine leg (see Figure 40a on the next page).

One of the players is also required to play wicket-keeper. His position is behind the wicket of the on-strike batsman. The wicket-keeper has a specialised role that is not usually changed during the game (unless he is injured). The wicket-keeper is also the only fielder who is allowed to wear special gloves and pads to cover his legs.



The fielders can be categorised into three basic positions (or distances from the batsman):

- Close catchers who are in positions of slip and gully and take short, sharp catches. (There are others such as short leg and silly point, but the ones mentioned here are the ones necessary for coaching children up to the age of 12 years)
- Middle-distance fielders who are placed about 20 m away from the batsman. They walk in while the bowler runs up in order to prevent singles and affect run-outs (eg point, mid on and square leg)
- Boundary fielders who are placed in positions like fine leg and third man. They are also required to walk in with the bowler, prevent boundaries being scored and take high catches.

Figure 40a

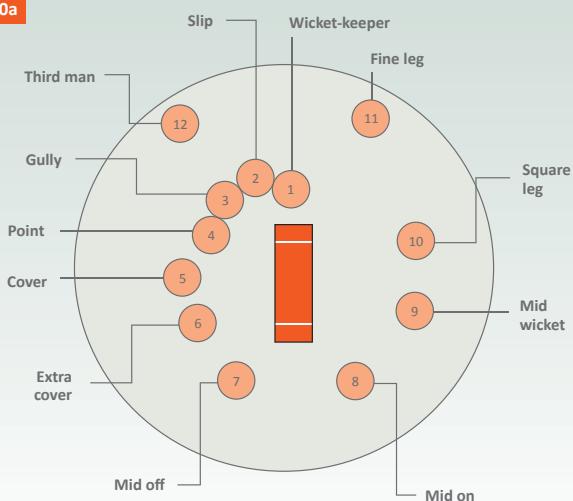


Figure 40b

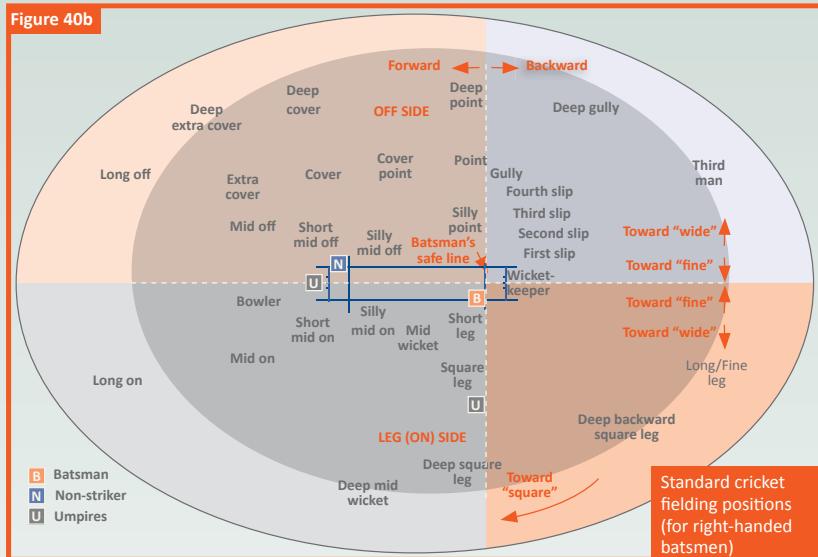
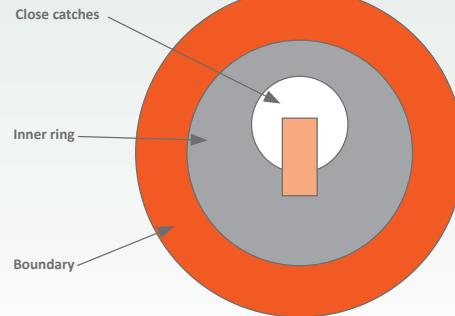


Figure 40c



Fielding positions in terms of distance from the batsman



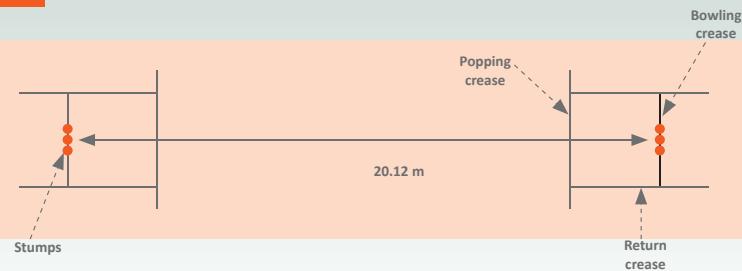
Playing field

Cricket is played on a grass field of variable size and shape (round or oval). The main area of action on the cricket field is the pitch.

The size of the pitch varies according to the age of the players. For instance, U11s play on a 18.29 m pitch, U12s and U13s play on a 19.2 m pitch, and children over the age of 13 play on a pitch that is 20.12 m long (see Figure 42 below). Pitches can either be synthetic or turf pitches.

Wickets are placed at either end of the pitch. Each set consists of three wooden stumps placed in a straight line and two wooden cross-pieces placed on top of the stumps, which are referred to as bails. The wickets are required to be 22.86 cm wide and the stumps should be 71.1 cm above the ground. When all three stumps are placed in the ground they need to be close enough together to prevent the ball from passing between them.

Figure 42



Equipment

Balls

A leather ball is used, which differs in size according to the different age groups. For U11s and U13s, 135 g balls are used during the game, while heavier 156 g balls are used from U14 upwards. There are many other balls available for young cricket players where leather balls are considered unsuitable. For instance, plastic balls can be used to help players develop skills when they are afraid to catch or bat with a hard cricket ball. Slazenger (Slaz) balls may also be used for this purpose.

Protective gear

As mentioned previously, none of the outfielders except the wicket-keeper are allowed to wear any form of protection on their hands. He is required to wear special protective gloves (see Figure 43a on page 75) and may even wear inners underneath the gloves for added protection. The wicket-keeper is also required to wear pads while fielding. These are generally smaller than the usual batting pads as the keeper needs to be able to move relatively quickly across the field. Another important piece of equipment for the keeper is a protector (see "Protectors" on the next page).

Bats

Cricket bats are made from wood (mostly English willow or cashmere willow). For senior players bats may vary in length, shape and thickness to suit individual differences. When selecting bats for juniors there are a few important factors to consider:

Length: The ideal length for a bat is the inside measurement of the batsman's trousers. Bats that come up to the batsman's hip will disrupt his technique.

Weight: It is very important that young players choose bats that are light-weight. A way to gauge if the bat is the correct weight is to ask the child to lift the bat with his non-dominant hand and to hold it out horizontally for one minute. If this can be done without effort or difficulty, the bat is the correct weight.

Batting gloves

Batting gloves help batsmen grip their bats and also serve to protect their hands. Players should choose comfortable, well-fitting gloves.

Pads (leg protection)

Pads are worn by both batsmen and the wicket-keeper. Batting pads are generally made from light-weight materials so that it is easier for the batsman to run. Pads should be selected according to the type of ball used. Pads need to be the right size: if they are too small they won't provide adequate protection for players, and if they are too big they may hinder the player's ability to run between the wickets.

Helmets

The helmet provides protection for the skull and face. Helmets are made from light-weight fibreglass and the grill is made from metal. The grill of the helmet should be adjusted so that the space between the top of the grill and the peak of the helmet should be smaller than the ball.



Protectors

These are made from durable plastic and come in a large range of sizes. This piece of equipment should be obtained by every team member, and players should be encouraged to wear them when batting. Wicket-keepers are also required to use this piece of equipment. The protector is worn underneath a snug undergarment to keep it in position.

Your coaching sessions will also need

- A whistle
- A set of cones
- Baseball mitt.



Figure 43a



Figure 43b



Figure 43c



Figure 43d



Figure 43e



Figure 43f





Figure 43g



Figure 43h



Figure 43i



Figure 43j



Figure 43k



Figure 43l



Glossary of terms used in cricket

All-rounder: A player adept at both batting and bowling. In the modern era, this term can also refer to a wicket-keeper who is good at batting.

Appeal: A loud call to the umpire to give the batsman out. The call is usually “Howzat!”

Around the wicket or round the wicket: A right-handed bowler passing to the right of the stumps during his bowling action (vice versa for left-handed bowlers).

Bouncer: A fast, short-pitched delivery that rises up near the batsman’s head.

Boundary:

1. The rope that demarcates the perimeter of the grounds.
2. Where there is no rope, the perimeter of the grounds can be used to indicate the boundary.
3. Sign boards, marked tyres, cones or even bricks can also be used to demarcate the boundary.
4. The boundary is used to determine four runs and six runs collectively.

Bye: A run that is made without the ball touching the bat (eg leg byes). For more detail, see page 67.

Century: An individual score of at least 100 runs, a significant landmark for a batsman.

Crease: One of several lines on the pitch near the stumps (the popping crease, the return crease and the bowling crease; see Figure 42 on page 72). It usually refers to the popping crease.

Dead ball:

1. The state of play in between deliveries in which batsmen may not score runs or be given out.
2. Called when the ball becomes lodged in the batsman’s clothing or equipment.
3. Called when the ball is (or is about to be) bowled when the batsman is not yet ready.
4. Called when a bowler aborts his run-up without making a delivery.
5. Called when the batsmen attempt to run leg byes after the ball has struck the batsman’s body, but is deemed to have not offered a shot.

Dot ball: A delivery bowled without any runs scored off it, so called because it is recorded in the score book with a single dot.

Duck: A score of zero. The batsman goes out without having scored a run.

Extras: The batsman scores runs without having hit the ball.

Four: A shot that reaches the boundary after touching the ground, so called because it is a score of four runs to the batting side.

Guard: This is the first thing the batsman will ask for when he arrives at the wicket. He will ask the umpire for the position of the stumps and mark this with his bat or foot (see page 21).

Half century: An individual score of over 50 runs.

Handled the ball: A batsman can be given out if he wilfully handles the ball while in play.

Hat-trick: A bowler taking a wicket off each of three consecutive deliveries he bowls in a single match (whether in the same over or split up into two consecutive overs, or two overs in two different spells, or even spread across two innings of a test match or first-class cricket game).

Hit the ball twice: This happens when a batsman, after he strikes the ball or it is stopped by any part of him, wilfully strikes the ball again. If this is done intentionally, the batsman is out.



Innings: The team that is batting has a set number of overs in which to bat. The end of the innings is reached either when the allotted overs are finished or when all the batsmen are out. When this happens, the side that was bowling comes in to bat and the side that was batting will take the field.

Keep the strike: On the last ball of the over, the batsmen arrange runs so that one of them will face the first ball of the next over. It is referred to as 'shepherd the strike' when they continue to do this to protect a less skilful batsman.

Leg before wicket (LBW): A way of dismissing a batsman. In brief, the batsman is out if, in the opinion of the umpire, the ball hits any part of the batsman's body (usually the leg) before hitting the bat or the hand holding the bat, and would have gone on to hit the stumps. (For more detail, see page 69).

Leg break: A leg spin delivery which, for a right-handed bowler and a right-handed batsman, will turn from the leg side to the off side (it usually spins away from the batsman).

Leg bye: Extras taken after a delivery has hit any part of the body of the batsman other than the bat or the gloved hand that holds the bat. If the batsman makes no attempt to play the ball with the bat, leg byes may not be scored.

Leg side: The side of the field behind the batsman as he takes his stance at the wicket (the left-hand side for right-handed batsman).

Maiden over: An over in which no runs are scored off the bat, and no 'wides' or 'no balls' are bowled. It is considered a good performance for a bowler and maiden overs are tracked as part of a bowling analysis.

Not out: If the team's innings is over and the batsman has not been dismissed, he is said to be 'not out'.

No ball: An illegal delivery – usually because of the bowler overstepping the popping crease – in which an extra is scored for the batting side. (For more detail, see page 68).

Obstructing the field: A batsman wilfully obstructs an opposing fielder either by word or action.

Over: The delivery of six consecutive balls by one bowler.

Over rate: The number of overs bowled per hour.

Over the wicket: A right-handed bowler bowls to the left of the stumps, and vice versa for a left-handed bowler.

Popping crease: One of two lines in the field where the wickets are positioned (the other line is the bowling crease). A batsman who does not have either the bat or some part of his body touching the ground behind the popping crease is considered out of his ground and is in danger of being dismissed as 'run out' or 'stumped'.

Pull: A shot played to the leg side to a short pitched delivery between mid-wicket and backward square leg.

Rotate the strike: The batsmen look to make singles wherever possible in order to ensure that they are both continually facing deliveries and making runs. The opposite of this is 'farm the strike'.

Round the wicket: This is when a right-handed bowler bowls to the right of the stumps. The opposite of this is 'over the wicket'.

Run out: A dismissal by a member of the fielding side who breaks the wicket while the batsman is outside his crease in the process of making a run.

Run rate: The average number of runs scored per over.

Runner: A player from the batting side assisting an injured batsman in running between the wickets. The runner must wear and carry the same equipment as the batsman. The injured batsman still needs to stay in his ground. Both the injured batsman and the runner can be run out.

Short run: This happens if the batsman fails to ground his bat behind the popping crease while making a run.

Sightscreen: A large board placed behind the bowler beyond the boundary, used to provide contrast to the ball and aid the striker in seeing the ball when it is delivered. Typically it is coloured white to contrast a red ball or black to contrast a white ball.

Striker: The batsman who faces the deliveries bowled.

Stroke: An attempt by the batsman to play a delivery.

Stump:

1. One of the three vertical posts making up the wicket ('off stump', 'middle stump' and 'leg stump').
2. A way of dismissing a batsman.
3. The term 'stumps' refers to the end of a day's play.

Target: The score the team batting second has to score to beat their opponents. This is one run more than the tally of runs scored by the team batting first.

Timed out: An incoming batsman must step onto the field of play within two minutes of the last batsman being dismissed.

Twelfth man: Traditionally, this is the first substitute player who fields when a member of the fielding side is injured.

Wide: A delivery that passes illegally wide of the wicket and an extra is scored for the batting side. A wide does not count as one of the six valid deliveries that must be made in each over; an extra ball must be bowled for each wide. (For more detail, see page 68.)

Yorker: A (usually fast) delivery that is pitched very close to the batsman. The intent is for it to bounce exactly underneath his bat or on his toes in the block hole. A perfectly-pitched fast Yorker is almost impossible to keep out. A bad Yorker can turn into a half-volley (too short) or a full toss (too full).



Discovery has endeavoured to ensure that all the information contained in this manual is accurate and based on credible clinical and scientific research. Discovery cannot however, be held responsible for any injury, loss or damages that may result from reliance on the information, and, by utilising the information, you specifically waive any claim you may have against Discovery in this regard. You are advised that each individual has their own unique clinical make-up and while the lesson plans were designed with all individuals in mind, some may respond differently to others. You are therefore advised to take due caution when participating in any of the activities recommended.

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