

LEVEL-O CERTIFICATE COURSE IN CRICKET COACHING

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Lecture 30: How to Coach

Hello everyone. Today we will discuss our general topic: how to coach, a session that is especially valuable for all cricket coaches. Whether you're working with batters, bowlers, wicketkeepers, or fielders, there are fundamental principles that every coach should keep in mind. It is essential to recognise and work with the natural tendencies of each cricketer. These innate characteristics—ranging from technical skills to personal traits—should be acknowledged and nurtured rather than suppressed. Moreover, if you aspire to build or advance your coaching career, one of the first steps is to change your mindset. Traditional techniques have their place, but as the game evolves, so must our methods. The same square cut you taught last year might require different applications today because shot selections and strategies adapt alongside the sport.

In addition, the majority of coaching sessions should be dedicated to skill development. Whether building a technically sound batter, a precise bowler, a sharp wicketkeeper, or agile fielders, focused skill sessions are key. For instance, while coaching batters, you must consider every aspect of their technique—from their stance to their grip. The stance forms the foundation of a successful shot, and even slight errors in grip can affect shot direction, power, and consistency. Specific shots, whether vertical or horizontal, such as the square cut, sweep, or various driving strokes, must be honed through repetition and fine-tuning. Using feeding drills, robotic throwers, or even manual ball throws can help a batter master stroke technique. In all of these, addressing the technical details is paramount.

However, technical coaching does not exist in a vacuum—it must be balanced with attention to the players' mental and emotional traits. Personal interviews and psychological evaluations are critical because every player is unique. Some players are introverted while others are extroverted, and intrinsic motivation levels vary from one child to another. By conducting thorough personal interviews and having players maintain a diary of their daily progress and experiences, coaches can gain valuable insights into each player's personality

and motivation. This individualized approach will allow you to tailor sessions to meet the specific needs of each player, ensuring that they are not only technically proficient but also mentally prepared to perform under pressure.

Ultimately, the goal of coaching is to help players develop their natural abilities and to nurture their growth both on and off the field. Coaches need to constantly adapt their techniques and mindset, keeping in mind the evolving nature of cricket. As your players observe international stars—such as Steve Smith, K. Rahul, or Rishabh Pant—their goals will naturally align with the objective of scoring runs and making an impact on the match. It is your role to facilitate this growth by focusing on fundamental techniques while also addressing the psychological aspects of the game. With dedication to skill sessions, personalized coaching, and continuous self-improvement in your methods, you can help your players reach their full potential on the cricket field.

Cricket coaching involves a systematic approach to skill development for both batting and bowling. When it comes to batting, players should begin by focusing on attacking techniques before advancing to defensive skills. This includes learning front foot drives and strokes initially, and then progressing to front foot and back foot defences. It is crucial to provide players with the freedom to play according to the merit of the ball during practice sessions. Allowing young players to play freely fosters their confidence and enables them to develop their natural ability to judge the ball without fear.

In bowling, the emphasis should be on pace bowlers' run-up techniques. A straight run-up is preferable to an angled one, as common issues like body trunk lateral flexion, open front foot positioning, and the head or body falling during the run-up can be mitigated. Developing a smooth and efficient run-up helps bowlers build momentum and deliver the ball consistently. Additionally, bowlers need to learn the basic grip and release of the ball, starting with foundational techniques before attempting grips used by international players. Proper grip mechanics and controlled release, guided by finger positioning, are essential for mastering these skills.

Building a solid bowling action is equally important. Coaches should focus on the three recommended bowling actions—side-on, front-on, and semi-front-on—ensuring players maintain consistent arm and body positioning during delivery. Alongside this, players should be introduced to various release positions such as round-arm release, top-of-the-head release, and past-vertical release. Drills can help players execute releases accurately and effectively. Loading drills are another vital component, where players learn proper

hand positioning and elbow direction before the ball is delivered. Avoiding backward loading beyond the head ensures delivery efficiency.

For spin bowlers, developing a permanent and effective run-up is critical. A spinner's run-up phase includes back foot landing, body angle adjustments, and position refinements. Coaches must ensure that spin bowling actions are accurate to prevent suspected throwing. Action building guides spinners in aligning their bodies correctly for effective spin delivery. Spinners should practice releasing the ball from the top of their head to enhance consistency. Regular spot bowling drills improve accuracy and minimize short-pitched deliveries. Furthermore, spinners need to be taught how to use the crease effectively, whether bowling from the popping crease or the bowling crease, to capitalize on different strategic positions.

Coaching cricket requires a focused approach, emphasizing various techniques and drills for specific players. Effective use of the crease is a critical skill. Players should practice bowling from designated markers on the crease, such as the 9th or the 1st, to enhance their precision. In spinning drills, the fundamental ability to spin the ball is key. Players must undergo sessions aimed at improving their spinning skills, with loop drills incorporated to refine the technique. Novice spinners can start with basic drills, while experienced ones can work on advanced loop drills to further sharpen their abilities. Loading is another significant aspect, particularly for up-spin, where adjustments may be necessary for optimal performance.

Leg spinners have unique requirements. Their angled or diagonal run-up must be perfected using tools like threads or measuring tapes to define the path. Leg spinners need to focus on jogging, running, and proper loading to ensure accuracy. Action building plays a vital role in addressing any technical issues. Release loops are critical for leg spinners, as improper release affects the turn and bounce of the ball. Spot bowling drills, in both open and restricted areas, help enhance accuracy and control.

Left-arm spinners mirror the techniques of off-spinners but require specialized training to adapt to their unique style. Their run-up should align with the umpire and stump, and building an effective action is essential. Release drills and spot bowling exercises are crucial, with an emphasis on using the crease efficiently. Spinning drills help left-arm spinners refine their technique, while loop drills, particularly for natural spinners, improve the ability to deliver impactful spins. Loading adjustments may also be necessary for maximizing their rotation.

Wicket-keeping is another specialized skill set requiring attention to crouching, footwork, and glove work. Proper posture is essential, with the body weight balanced on the balls of the feet. Timing is critical; the wicket-keeper must rise at the right moment to intercept the ball effectively. Footwork drills such as the skip and crossover methods are vital for improving mobility. Glove work involves techniques like underarm throws, high catches, and cross catches, practiced in progression from stationary to moving ball drills.

Fielding drills focus on ball handling and include techniques like the long barrier, one-hand pickup, and short-hand throws. Players start with stationary ball exercises and progress to dynamic drills involving moving balls. Sessions must also address batting setup, grip, and shot execution. Horizontal and vertical shots require precision, and proper grip of the ball, especially for spinners, is vital for effective delivery.

Overall, coaching sessions should cover batting, bowling (including fast bowlers and spinners), wicket-keeping, and fielding comprehensively. Coaches must tailor their training based on the player's natural ability and needs, avoiding overloading them with information. While a coaching license provides foundational knowledge, it is crucial to apply techniques judiciously to avoid demotivating players or negatively impacting their performance.

Coaching should be adaptive, incorporating updated techniques, regulations, and routines. By focusing on refining skills across all departments—batting, bowling, wicket-keeping, and fielding—coaches can ensure the holistic development of players and enhance their overall performance.