

Hitting the Seam



COACHES ASSOCIATION

The Official Newsletter of the ECB Coaches Association

Tel: 0121 440 4332 Email: coaches.association@ecb.co.uk

working from within the ECB Coach Education Department Tel: 0121 440 1748 Email: enquiries.coacheducation@ecb.co.uk

Warwickshire Cricket Ground, Edgbaston, Birmingham B5 7QX Web: www.ecbca.co.uk www.ecb.co.uk



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WHAT IS WORLD CLASS?

Sir Ian McGeechan has coached four Lions teams, as well as Scotland, Northampton and Wasps. He is widely regarded as one of the sharpest brains in sports coaching.

In February his extraordinary career in sport was recognised by Her Majesty the Queen when he collected his Knighthood at Windsor Castle. He recently presented his thoughts on coaching to a cricket

audience for the first time at the ECB CA conference.

Tim Dellor picks out some of the key messages that emerged.

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“World Class” is an oft quoted but difficult to define statement. What is “World Class”, how do you create it, who has it, and when can you spot it? Sir Ian McGeechan is obsessed with it. Spend even a short amount of time in his company and it quickly becomes apparent he has devoted many an hour to the search for this sporting Holy Grail. Everything he does and says is underpinned by a desire for “World Class”.

His coaching philosophy is crystal clear. “As coaches we should have the information needed to develop players at our finger tips”, says McGeechan. “The players need to understand everything is about them. We need to allow players to perform. All we want really is the ability to make the best decisions for the players”.

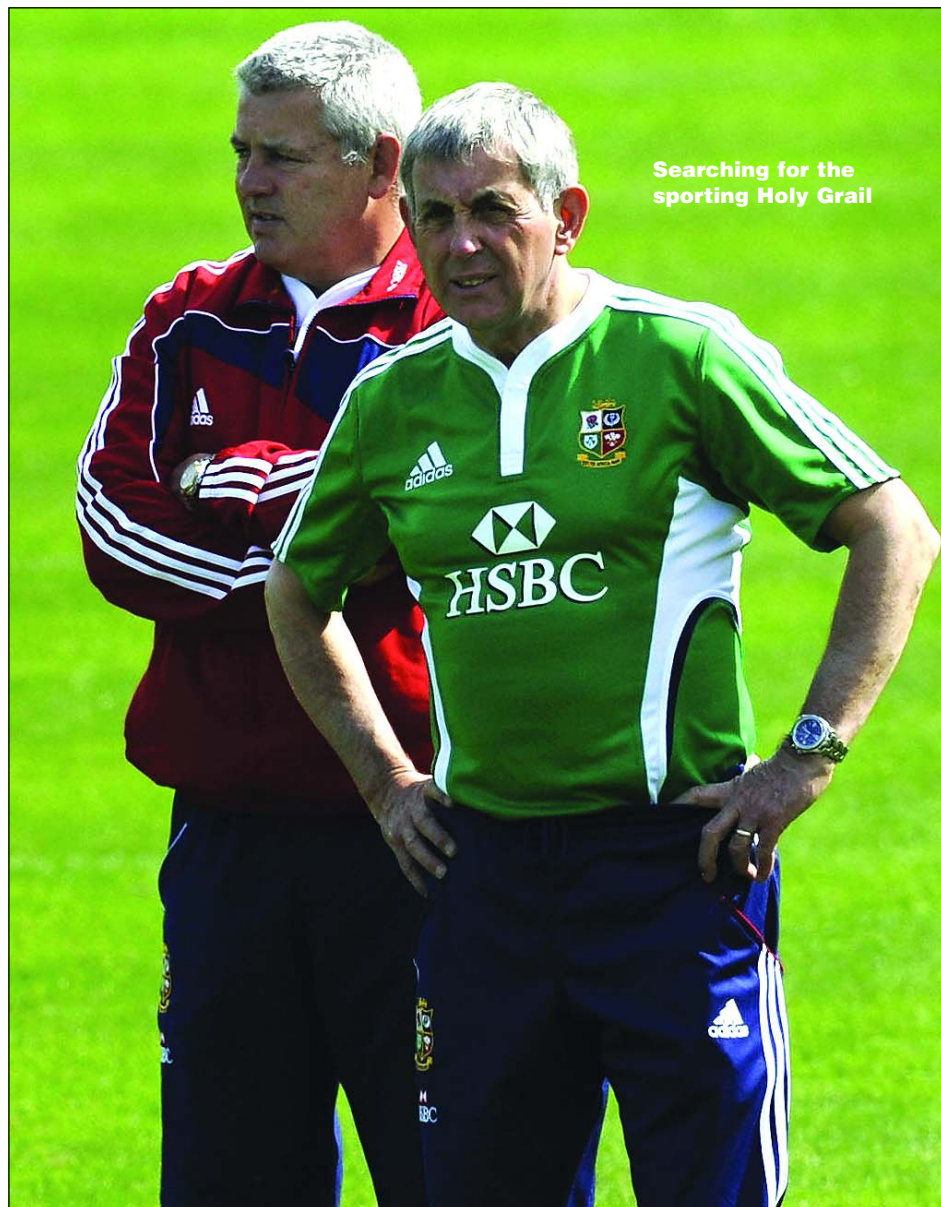
In the hurly burly world of sport it is easy to forget this most simple of premises; that coaching is only about giving players the best chance of success. McGeechan is a master of team coaching, having enjoyed success blending the most diverse squad in world sport into an effective single unit. He clearly relishes the challenge of putting together a group of players who spend most of their time trying to break each other while wearing their national shirt during the Six Nations. Managing The Lions is a unique team coaching challenge.

“There’s no doubt it’s crucial to get players to rely on each other, and understand their individual roles and responsibilities. As a coach your real buzz comes when two minds are working together. They say the best teams are bigger than its individual parts, and they’d be right”.

Nowadays, with acres of newspaper columns to fill and hours of air time to broadcast, every move and utterance from coaches is scrutinised. In professional sport the role of the coach has become glamorous, to the point of enrolment to the celebrity circuit. McGeechan sidesteps that potential professional pitfall as deftly as he jinked by opposing centres during his highly successful playing days. For a man who has achieved so much he is remarkably down to earth.

“Within the team you can’t have players with egos. You have to give everything to the team. I’d apply that to coaches as well. If coaches have big egos it can lead to problems”. He is clearly in his role because of a love for rugby, sport and sports people, rather than all the fame and fortune which is so alluring to some.

Perhaps his views are unsurprising when you consider his upbringing. He, like so many of his generation, learnt sport in the informal way on the streets of Leeds. For a man who has made his name as one of the



Searching for the sporting Holy Grail

leading brains in rugby, his passion for other sports, and particularly cricket, is unusual.

“Cricket was my first love as a schoolboy”, admits McGeechan somewhat sheepishly. “I went to the Yorkshire nets. My Maths master got Bill Bowes from the bodyline series to come and watch us play cricket. On the back of that I got invited to the Yorkshire nets for three or four years to bowl my left arm seam. The nets were at Bradford Park Avenue. I use to travel two nights a week from Leeds. If Geoff Boycott wanted someone to bowl at him we were the ones wheeled in to bowl at him for twenty minutes. An hour and a half later he was bollocking you for not bowling the right delivery that he wanted. You’d get this diatribe of swearing from the batting end. It was good because you could see just how good they were”.

This all round sporting experience as a youngster has helped him form strong opinions on how we should get the best from the next generation of stars. “There

was some research carried out in Australia looking at decision making and leadership. It revealed a multi sport background produced the best decision makers, which I found interesting. A lot of the Australian rugby league and union players played cricket and Aussie rules. Certainly up to the age of 12 we should be encouraging our youngsters with a multi-sport approach”.

Elite level coaches are often less qualified to talk about grassroots sport. Their expertise is working with already finely tuned athletes. In McGeechan we have an exception though, because in the pre-professional rugby era he would spend his time teaching PE at secondary schools. His views on developing young athletes are based on direct experience rather than hearsay and rumour. The hot potato of “win at all costs” V “learning through experience” at recreational and junior level is clearly one McGeechan has mulled over.

“As a teacher I’d say winning is less of a priority, but as an individual I hated losing. Not everyone can win. You disappoint some

by saying that’s the only outcome – at Test level it is. You need players and coaches to develop. They say when you want to pick the real competitor at school you pick the person who comes second, because he knows how to deal with defeat and manage it. They often become the ones who really take off. The ones who get it all too easily are the ones who actually don’t always progress to where you think they should be. You have to handle defeat. If it becomes such a paranoia you lose the ability to win properly. It’s important to celebrate and enjoy every win”.

McGeechan has a clear idea in his mind of the character he needs in his elite level players. He constantly refers to the rare “Test Match Animal”. Getting the right characters in a team who can handle the big stage is central to his thought process.

“The Test Match animal knows what to do under pressure at crucial moments. They deliver when it matters. They don’t make mistakes. They have a single minded animal instinct which says this needs to be delivered now and it’s them understanding they must deliver this now”.

Dealing with pressure sorts the men from the boys, (and just as relevantly the women from the girls). Every sporting star has to possess a capability to deal with pressure. McGeechan holds the firm belief coaches can help players in this respect. “This business about under pressure is why I don’t think you should complicate things for players. If you’ve got clarity and they understand it then you’re back to the basics and they know at this point in the game I need to do this”. “Clarity” is a word McGeechan uses a lot. Typically he has a mechanism in place to help him gain clarity on rugby matters. He takes his dog for a walk. Reviewing ones own performance as a coach is essential for personal development and to ensure the players are getting the best possible information and support.

“At the end of a day I like just going away for an hour. I just shut off from everything and take the dogs out for a walk. I have a little notebook I keep in my pocket. When something drops into place I’ll make a little note of it. For me it’s been very important I can do that. It allows me to clarify thoughts as I switch off. It helps get clarity in my own mind and then I can tell the players exactly what I want”. In short it is thinking time. Judging by the clarity with which McGeechan speaks, his dogs must have been well exercised over the years.

Getting away from the hustle and bustle of the team environment is easier said than done. As a coach it takes discipline to escape for an hour to gather thoughts.

“You have to take on board people’s views and listen to people. Sometimes when you’re leading off the field you have to take on what everyone’s doing. You’ve got to say how in the long term are we going to do something that will have an impact on the game? Off the field you’re not just leading the players but the staff around you as well. Have you got the confidence and honesty in the staff around you? You need to take in different views on all sorts of different issues and build a trust and honesty amongst the coaching staff and the players”.

With this in mind when it comes to assembling a rugby squad he obviously invests as much time and energy into selecting his coaching staff he will be working alongside as he does the players who will be taking the field. “You don’t particularly want people around who think the same way”. He is more interested in getting a coaching staff together who compliment each other.

Many great captains over the years have subsequently struggled to make the tricky transition to great coach. What is it McGeechan looks to get from his on-field leaders, and does it differ from what he is looking for from his coaching team?

“A captain has to lead by example and must have the respect of his own players. It also helps if he has the oppositions respect. Ian McLaughlan had a presence and there was real respect for him. A captain needs the respect, but you have to be able to work with him, and be on the same page as him.

“A good captain will look at the way the game is going. You want players to determine what to do on the pitch. Martin Johnson could assess what was needed for the team while the game unfolded. That’s a great captain. He could read the game and act accordingly. You want to bottle that. Great captains assess where

you are in the game and what is required”.

The notion of players making correct decisions is as relevant to cricket as it is in rugby. Amidst the cut and thrust of a Twenty20 game players have to make instinctive tactical decisions, not unlike a rugby player during an eighty minute match. Despite all his opinions and gathered intelligence though, he is clearly a big believer in silence being golden.

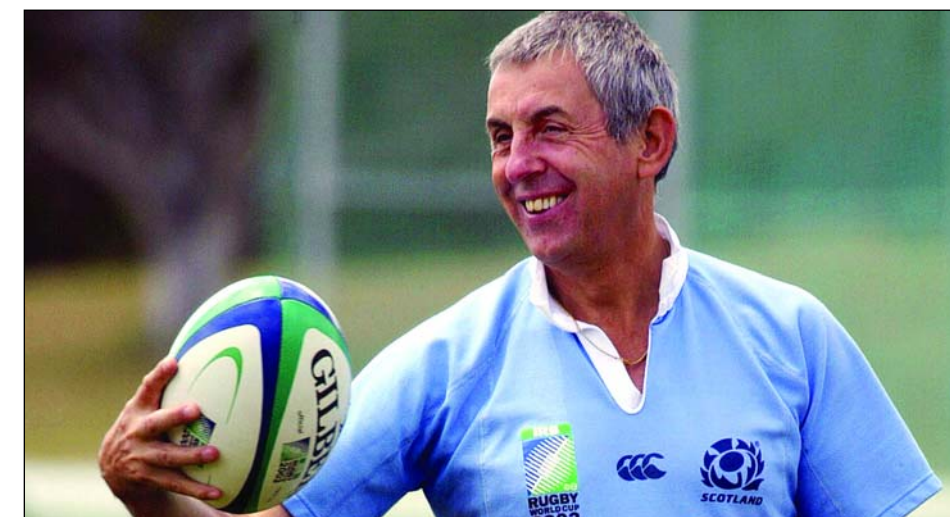
“Maybe five times in my coaching career I’ve been able to leave it completely to the players. You want to get to a situation in either training or match play when you’re about to tell the player, but the player gets there first and says it themselves. You can sit back. For me that’s the most satisfaction you can get as a coach. They’re there and they know what they’re about. It’s a great feeling”. No unnecessary words, interventions, or tinkering. He loves nothing more than letting the players master and then take control.

“As a coach I think it’s important to say if you think it’s on - go for it. Flare needs to be encouraged, and you’ve got to set up the environment right to encourage that”.

It sounds so easy, so straightforward and so basic, but sticking to the philosophy when leading an army of staff and players must be difficult.

“You can kill them with information and support. Sure, there are lots of support staff, but they’re in place to give the players the best chance of success on the pitch, not take responsibility away from them. It’s old school you might say, but the key is communicating.

“A world class support staff takes all the hassle away from the players rather than over burdening them with information. I want the staff to bring clarity to the team”. Arrrrr yes, “World Class” and “Clarity”. I think they’ve already been mentioned.





ETERNAL SPRING HOPES

The cricket season is finally here. And as we prepare to play the first games of 2010 the scent of optimism is in the air like the smell of a freshly mown outfield. For at least a few weeks of the year all our teams could be world-beaters.

As coaches and players we are all filled with the unshakable conviction that this could be our year. All the hours spent in cold sports halls and the months of planning will finally pay off.

Of course as the season unfolds there will be winners and losers and there will be

championships and relegations. The challenge facing us as coaches is to make sure the positives outweigh the negatives.

The goals and targets you set your team will help shape your season. For most teams a target of winning every game is

unrealistic. To fall short of such exacting standards has a negative and lasting impact on team morale and performance. Therefore we need to make sure that our goals are not measured simply in win/loss statistics. Which is not to say that we shouldn't be ambitious or demand high standards. It is more the understanding that success and failure are about more than results.

As coaches of young people in particular we are responsible for the cricketing development of our players. Therefore the process is as important as the outcome. Think not just about where you want to get to but how you are going to get there.

This means that as well as setting goals for outcome and performance try and come up with process goals. For example the long-term outcome goal maybe to win the league but think, what do you need to do to achieve that? Process goals can be technical - I want all my



players to improve their core fielding skills such as a powerful over arm throw in order to save 20 runs per game, tactical - we are going to develop our ability to put the other team under pressure by taking quick singles, physical - we are going to improve our speed over 22 yards by developing our fitness or mental- we will look to develop our concentration to make sure our team bats for the full amount of overs.

As with all goals try to make them measurable, specific and get your players to help drive the goal-setting, recording and evaluating process.

Think of our how the areas you have earmarked can be trained and improved. Use small sided games, conditioned net sessions and open wicket practices. At this stage of the yearly training cycle we are entering into the competition phase. This will affect the make-up of your sessions and the areas you look to improve. With most of the technical work likely to have been done pre-season now is the time to start looking at how players utilise those skills on the field.

Look to develop and test technique by putting players under pressure and introducing match scenarios. For example place batters and bowlers under increased pressure by conditioned nets with realistic match situations, targets and consequences eg 'when you are out you are out' or if the bowlers fail to take the wicket within an

allotted time they are replaced. Encourage bowlers to set fields and mark these using cones placed in the netting.

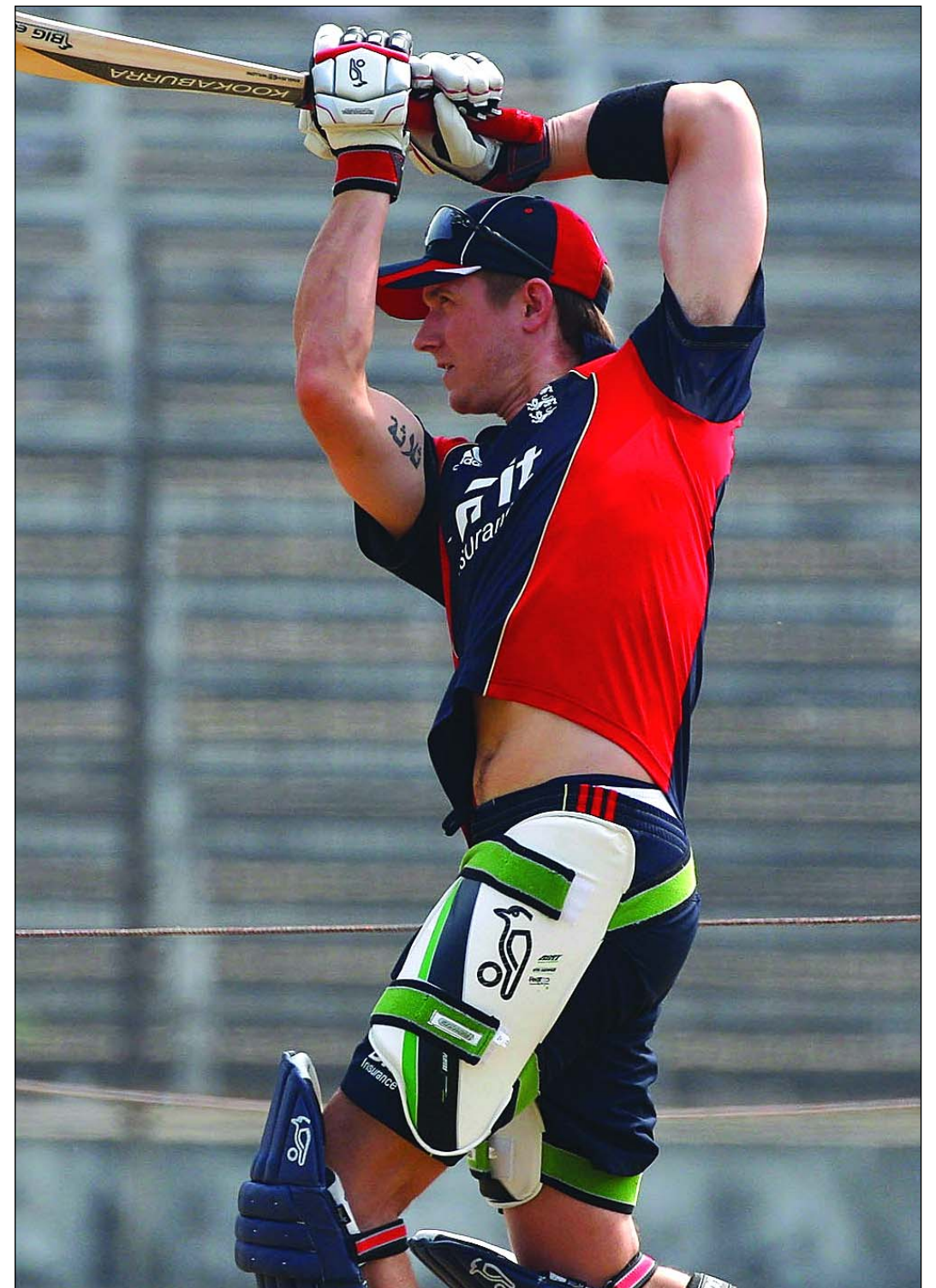
For fielders, put them into competitive situations - whether it is a one-handed pick up race vs a team of batters or whether it is a sudden-death style catching competition. Ways of adding pressure could include

introducing consequences for failing to reach a target, bringing in an audience or increasing the physical demands of the practice.

Record the outcomes of your practice sessions and keep evaluating both your own and your team's performance. It may be necessary to reassess goals during the season and this should be done in agreement

with your players.

The next few weeks may help shape your season but they certainly won't decide whether it will be a success or failure. As long as your players enjoy their cricket and continue to develop their skills in a safe and supportive environment then, whatever your goals and aspirations you are already on to a winner.



Character, Captaincy and Leadership at the ECB CA National Conference

400 plus delegates from across the globe descended on Warwick University earlier this year for the ECB's bi-annual Coaches Association Conference.

The theme was **Character, Captaincy and Leadership** and guest speakers ranged from England coach Andy Flower, England Women's captain Charlotte Edwards, Mike Gatting and a veritable who's who of top sporting brains.

These included psychologist Dr Steve Bull who has been an integral part in the England set-up and the inspirational former Lions rugby coach Sir Ian McGeechan.

Over the course of a captivating weekend coaches from all rungs of the coaching ladder hung on the speakers' every word. Outside the lectures they set about putting the cricketing world to rights by sharing their own wealth of ideas.

From the academic theories of psycho-physiologist John Neal to the down to earth personability of England women's coach Mark Lane the conference showcased a wide-range of coaching styles, ethos' and opinions.

But above all the conference highlighted the fact that there isn't one simple answer to becoming a good coach. In fact there are many. Take a look at some of the top coaches in sport and you will find a myriad different personalities, methods and mindsets.

From the raw passion of the Sir Alex Ferguson's notorious hairdryer treatment to the quietly spoken analysis of Duncan Fletcher, great coaches come in many different shapes, sizes and styles.

As coaches we are magpies and the best are, to a man, unashamed thieves - stealing the best ideas, drills and traits of the coaches they work with and adding their own personal slant.

With the wide range of speakers on show the conference had something for absolutely everybody and it was reassuring to realise that while there is an important place in sport for science and academic theory some of the most important ingredients are, on the face of it, the most simple. As a number of guests alluded to, sometimes honesty, trust and an ability to communicate with individuals can be as crucial as an encyclopaedic knowledge of tactics, psychology or physiology.

Each and every coach went away from Warwick University with notebooks full to bursting and heads buzzing with ideas ready to try out in the new season.

With a massive thanks to the Devon Coaches Association here is a round-up of the key moments, messages and observations from the 2010 ECB CA Coaches Conference.

John Neal : What makes successful leaders and teams?



Given the tough task of following key note speaker Sir Ian McGeechan was psycho-physiologist John Neal. As his title suggests John's work focuses on the link between body and mind in forming positive behaviours. He is renowned for his work in both the corporate and sporting worlds. John is currently a tutor at Ashridge Business School and an advisor to the MCC. In the past he has worked with Middlesex CCC, big businesses and both the ECB and the West Indies Cricket Board.

John's lecture was aimed at coaching elite players and discussed the behavioural strategies for winning and success. His theory boiled down to 8 common behaviours he identified in all top performers. Dubbed Acceler8 the main factors John recognised were curiosity, futurism, awareness, focus, IQ (Intellectual intelligence), EQ (emotional intelligence), system and coaching.

John's research shows that elite performers are curious and challenge norms and people. In essence he said top performers are like the child playing cricket in the back garden that dreams of being the next Freddie Flintoff. They are motivated by possibility not probability. He described them as 'atmospheric visionaries' who dream first and work out the smaller goals and objectives that will help them get there afterwards.

He said that elite performers seek the opinions of people they trust and respect but often just want to know 'what is wrong'. He said that while coaches focus on telling their athletes the positives, former Olympic rower Sir Steven Redgrave had a ratio of 1 positive comment to 9 negative ones. He said as coaches we need to be prepared to tell it like it is but remain objective.

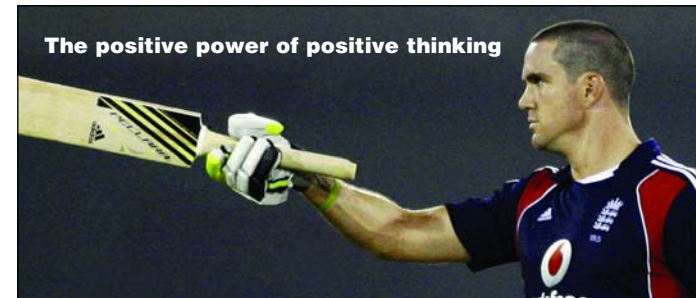
John recognised that top performers share the focus and drive to assess what they need to do make themselves the best they can be and will make sacrifices to pursue this.

He said elite players perform well under pressure and that top players need to develop both emotional and intellectual intelligence to achieve success.

Performers develop their own picture for successful performance and John encouraged people to consider why they are good at what they do rather than what they can't do.

Finally John asked coaches to consider the influence a coach can have on performance. He broke it down as, external factors 40%, relationship with players 30%, tools and technique 15% and luck 15%.

He finished by underlining the importance of the relationship between coach and players in achieving success and asked coaches to consider how this can be developed.



Michael Caulfield : The art of the obvious - how psychology works in the dressing room



Michael Caulfield is best known for his work with Sussex CCC and Middlesborough Football Club. His lecture focused on the role of psychology in improving the performance of both players and coaches. Michael says that above all else it is vital to know what kind of individual your player is if you are to get the best out of them. In his experience of working with top sportsmen he has divided these into two main types of people.



One is a person who uses 'The Positive Power Of Negative Thinking' for instance the jockey Tony McCoy with whom Michael has worked.

He said that with some players negative thoughts can be a positive thing because they use a fear of failure to motivate them, and make them more determine to succeed .

The other kind of person is someone who uses 'The Positive Power Of Positive Thinking', for instance Kevin Pietersen. This type of person likes to be told they are a worldbeater. They need regular re-assurance and like to have dreams to aspire to. Michael said there are some players that like the stats before a game and others who are happy to turn up on the day and get on with it.

He emphasised that it is absolutely crucial to know which type of player you are dealing with in order to give them the support they need and stressed the need to listen carefully, to keep things simple and to never ignore the obvious.

In summing up Michael quoted Sir Alf Ramsey who said: "They won't remember what you said. They won't remember what you did. But they will always remember how you made them feel."



Other speakers on the first day included **Stuart Barnes** - a Gloucestershire CCC coach who works with ECB elite players and sports psychologist **Dr Will James** who also works with the ECB. They joined forces to give a practical workshop on **Developing street wise bowlers**.

Sports scientist **Dr Simon Timson** discussed his work developing a new talent pathway for cricket. He spoke of the value of identifying the stars of the future and brought the conference up to speed with the live testing that took place last year.



Philip Relf: Building positive character traits in young batters and fielders

Kent CCC Academy Director Philip Relf's session focused on the different practical tools at a coaches disposal when working with academy standard players.

Using examples from coaching sessions he had delivered Phil discussed the ways different players react to practice methods and styles of coaching.

He talked about the importance of building up a thorough picture of your players. This includes their character traits and their sporting and family background as well as their technical ability.

He spoke of a partnership between player and coach where the player drives their own development with the coach as a constant observer, prompter, questioner, challenger and sounding board.

He picked out several key traits to focus on and ways for coaches to explore and test them out. These included commitment and resilience. Phil said coaches should test players and find out what commitment means for them.

On resilience, Phil warned that over-coaching can lead to dependence upon the coach, which may cause problems during the match. He challenged coaches to find out whether their

players have the desire to succeed? How do they perform when out of their comfort zone? Are they prepared to make changes and learn from their mistakes? How do they perform in different levels of cricket?

Phil recommended coaches manipulate the practice environment to create pressure situations. He said this can be done by adding consequence, audience, or competition. He asked coaches to observe how players behave in tough situations and emphasised the importance of taking players out of their comfort zones.

Phil also suggested a number of drills to improve concentration including using a thin bat without wearing batting pads although he warned there may be health and safety issues with that. Even when taking players out of their comfort zones he said a session should always finish with a good shot.



Finally he said young players should be surrounded by good role models and the coach should get to know the person not just the player.

Philip closed the session by saying that: "Coaches may be able to enhance a player's character traits but not change them, although they may be able to change the player's attitude".

Nigel Redman : Ways to build team spirit to improve performance

Former England rugby player Nigel Redman is the head of elite coach development with the Rugby Football Union. Using a combination of anecdote, theory and personal experience Nigel proved that as coaches we can learn as much from other sports as we can from our own. Despite drawing exclusively on rugby for

his workshop, his beliefs, philosophy and practical methods are just as applicable to cricket.

As coach of England's academy Nigel's vision was to breed a culture of winners. To do this he developed a philosophy which included improving decision making, zero tolerance on poor technique and to see challenges as opportunities. To test this philosophy and develop his players Nigel used small-sided games and explored the themes within them. The idea was to create decision-making within a pressured environment.



Another key area Nigel explored was in challenging players to make their own choices and to take risks to improve. As part of this he encouraged players to feel comfortable making mistakes as without making mistakes there is no progress.

Nigel's philosophy was backed up by strong discipline and attention to detail in all of the key performance factors eg physical, mental, technical, tactical and lifestyle.

And while Nigel stressed the importance of a clear vision as a coach he said it is crucial to align yourself with that vision. Nigel cited 12 rugby premier club coaches who all said they wanted three phases of play before creating an opening. The statistics showed that 0% achieved their vision.

He said that authentic coaching is created through games - with an open-ended outcome and coaches shouldn't be too regimented in their approach.

It is clear that Nigel not only challenges his players but continually challenges himself as

a coach. In response to a challenge from RFU chief Rob Andrew to win the under 20 world cup and six nations he quite literally tore up the rule book.

After initially asking players to come up with their own core values Nigel scrapped the whole list believing they were too much like rules. Instead he decided to live without rules and create true values. Although this approach had its ups and downs - notably during a late night drinking session that got out of hand - Nigel found that the players responded to the extra responsibility of free choice and decision making. He enforced the importance of making the right choices as a team by fining the whole squad for the drinking incident rather than just those involved.

Another thing Redmond stuck rigidly to was the long-term goal and the need for development over short term success. He gave examples of when his team had stuck to their philosophy and attacking game plan in the face of match conditions that were not conducive to their style of rugby. And despite this not reaping short term success Nigel and the team went on to become the country's most successful squad at this age group.

Another issue Redmond had to deal with in achieving his vision was to bring the best out of the captain. He said the mood of the team is reflected in the mood of the captain. His captain said all the right things but his body language and behaviour told a different story. Nigel secretly filmed him and showed him this to try and elicit a positive response.

This again tapped in to the main theme of Nigel's talk which was to develop the team culture through challenging individual's responsibility and decision making.

He finished by using the analogy of a music mixing desk to depict a team's default position- all the settings start in one place. He challenged coaches to challenge the default position of their team, to change their players' culture and achieve success.

Dr Steve Bull : The Coach as leader; clarifying the fundamentals

Dr Steve Bull (pictured far right) has a CV which reads like a who's who of successful sporting teams and leading commercial companies. He has worked with the England cricket team, Britain's Olympians and a number of FTSE 100 companies.

His session gave coaches an inspiring insight into their role as a leader through five simple 'fundamentals' of coaching.

His interactive session focused on 'leadership' and how coaches have to understand themselves, their players and the relationships within a team -including coaching and support teams. Doing these things well, Steve argued - will bring out the best in players and teams and enable high performance in any context.

In addition to the five fundamentals Steve began by outlining two overarching principles.

Firstly, there are many different ways to lead. From Duncan Fletcher - a thoughtful analyst, to Peter Moores - a high energy innovator and Geoff Cook - a caring helper.

Secondly, Steve underlined the fact that cricket has changed and will continue to change.

Steve Bull's five fundamentals for coaches as leaders are:



- **Manage your own pressure well** - you should be a calming influence and able maintain consistency in your performance. Be aware of your body language - it will, even subconsciously, give away 'pressures'.

- **Work hard at managing people** and relationships between them - you must adapt your style to different people, depending on their character. Emotional intelligence is vital in a coach - watching, listening to, talking with and understanding players.

- **A vision and a set of values** to guide your approach - a clear goal helps establish player behaviour, responsibilities and work ethic. Coaches must be clear about the non-negotiable issues.

- **Communicate with real clarity** - It's very difficult to over-communicate, but very easy to under-communicate. The general rule is to repeat something 7 times - being clear each time.

- **Build strong leadership partnerships**, especially with your captain - It is essential that there is a solid reliable alliance between coach and captain (e.g. Flower and Strauss). This can also apply to sub-captains - of bowling teams, of fielding and batting teams. Steve Bull said that, within the 5 'fundamentals', there are a number of different styles - as illustrated above. He said it was vital for coaches to know themselves and their own style and said this could be considered the sixth fundamental.



Charlotte Edwards and Mark Lane : Winning after Winning

An Ashes victory, a world cup win and an undisputed spot as the number one ranked nation in international cricket. It has been an incredible two years for England Women's cricket since Mark Lane took over the helm. Together with captain Charlotte Edwards they have brought unprecedented success to the women's game.

The pair told the conference about their journey from first coming together just a week before the First Test of the Ashes against Australia through to world cup glory. From that baptism of fire in the Ashes the duo have formed as close and formidable a working relationship as there is in the game.

They put the secret of their success down to creating the right environment within the squad. This has been built up through a combination of honesty, belief and trust. Early on in their relationship Edwards and Lane held a team meeting and outlined their goals and how they thought they could achieve this. They recognised that a key factor was that the squad had to be open to criticism from each other, be honest and open about their feelings and open themselves up to new ideas.

From here Lane and Edwards set about laying down rules for the squad to follow and improving player responsibility and accountability. While Edwards led from the front by example Lane developed his relationship with the squad and allowed his passion and enthusiasm to rub off on them. From this solid foundation the team have gone

from strength to strength winning numerous titles along the way including the Ashes and the world cup. For all the academic research, scientific ideas and multi-layered analysis that surrounds top level sport these days Mark Lane and Charlotte Edwards have showed just how far trust, shared goals and unwavering standards can take a talented team.

The second day kicked-off with an interesting debate on the spirit of cricket from three men at the forefront of developing and enforcing the sporting reputation of our great game.



Paul Bedford, ECB head of non-first class cricket, test umpire and former England player **Peter Willey** and former England captain and current director of cricket partnerships **Mike Gatting** made up the panel.

A lively debate ensued with all three men offering an opinionated and passionate view on the state of the game and the way to ensure the game continues to uphold its fine traditions.

Although delivering a serious message the talk struck a fine balance of being both entertaining and poignant. This was highlighted by the disclosure of some of the games more acerbic sledges.

Coaches left reminded of the importance of our own role in making sure our players continue to respect their opponents and the game as a whole.



Paul Farbrace : The leader in the band - the wicketkeeper's role

Paul's lecture focused on the importance of character in young wicketkeepers and developing leadership and teamwork.

Tony Robson & Jon Benn : Developing leadership qualities in young people

Tony and Jon's talk explored how problem solving exercises and decision making activities can develop leadership, communication and teamwork. The workshop was aimed at coaches of all levels working with young players. For a look at some of the practical drills involved visit www.businessballs.com/teambuilding.htm or www.wilderdom.com/games/InitiativeGames.

The grand finale of the 2010 ECB CA Conference was a fascinating interview between **Dr Steve Bull** and England coach **Andy Flower**.



The exchange gave a unique insight into the inner-workings of the England team and the man in charge. The talk was for many the highlight of an action-packed two days and meant the 2010 conference finished on a memorable high.



Luke Sellers would like to thank the Devon CA and in particular Paul Farnham, Howard Rose, Pat Steward, Andy Walter, Tim Ward and David Bayliss for their superb reports on the conference.

NEWS

Within Coach Education our four Regional Training Managers work tirelessly with Counties to help support the development of coaching at a local level. This issue of 'Hitting the Seam' sees each RTM give an overview of what is going on in your region from a County Board and County Coaches Association point of view.



NORTH

■ **Cheshire** recently teamed up with neighbours Lancashire to offer its coaches three exciting workshops with former first class players Mike Watkinson (Fast Bowling), Steve Yates (Spin) and Steve Titchard (batting).

The sessions proved a big success and plans are already underway to run a similar day next year.

The county have a packed 2010/11 coach education season ahead of them with 2 coach development workshops, 6 coach awards, 3 assistant

■ **Recently having taken over from Paul Shaw, the new Regional Training Manager for the Northern Region is Tony Robson:**



Former Lancashire and England all-rounder Mike Watkinson

coach awards, 2 working in schools modules and a host of young leader and cricket for teachers courses.

And it's not just newer coaches in the county that will be supported over the next 12 months.

The board has recently joined forces with the ECB to develop its staff of 8 cricket coaches and development officers. The training will be lead by Barbara Daniels and Sarah McQuade and will include practical and theory based work.

They also plan to continue working with Lancashire CCC to set up specialist workshops and develop coaching staff and club coaches.

A number of coaches have been nominated for Sky Sports Coach Awards including Pete Hancock for long time services to Cheshire youth cricket, Heather Beattie – Young Coach Award and Gareth Moorhouse Coach of the Year Award for helping Cheshire Girl's U17's reach the national quarter final.

Invited coaches will also be rewarded for their hard work with an evening at Chester Races.



ECB CA Membership:



Cheshire will continue to offer its CA members' a range of courses to help develop its coaches. This will be aided by plans for the board to renew its website.

MIDLANDS



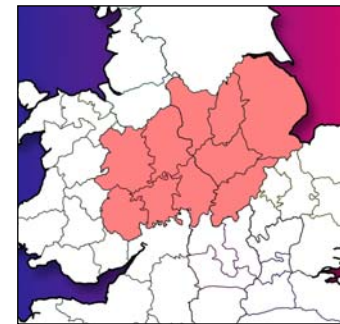
■ **Cookie Patel is the Regional Training Manager for the Midlands, here's the news from his region:**

■ Coaches in **Warwickshire** have something to look forward to this summer with a number of district, schools and community coaches set to be rewarded for their hard work with an invite to watch a Warwickshire one day match from a hospitality box with refreshments.



A number of coaches will be rewarded for their hard work with an invite to watch a Warwickshire one day match

The county has also had two coaches nominated - Malcolm Ord (Dorridge CC) and Richard Fox (Olton & West Warwickshire CC) - for Sky Sports Coach Awards.



Warwickshire have run a packed coach education programme with a coach assistant course, two coach awards and a club coach award.

Martin Hoffman (South Birmingham), Danny Longhorne (North Birmingham) and Mark Evenson (South & Central Warwickshire) have all been appointed to the CA board.

ECB CA Membership:



SOUTH WEST & WALES



■ **Gary Worgan, Regional Training Manager for the South West and Wales, here's the news from his region:**

■ **Buckinghamshire** re-launched its Coaches Association on February 17 and plans are now being made to organise another coaching event during October.

Colin Kightley - a level 2 coach - has taken on the duties of chairman of the revamped association.

At its re-launch a coaching session was held at Stoke Mandeville Sports Hall led by the new Zimbabwe and former

Surrey coach Alan Butcher (right). Alan led a session on the "Inverarity" method of front foot play with tips on back foot play. In the other half of the sports hall, local coach Steve Ayres introduced new ideas on fielding drills to the group.

The CA wishes to thank Damien Dunlop and Stuart Beck for getting the information out so quickly and to both coaches for a most enjoyable and informative couple of hours.

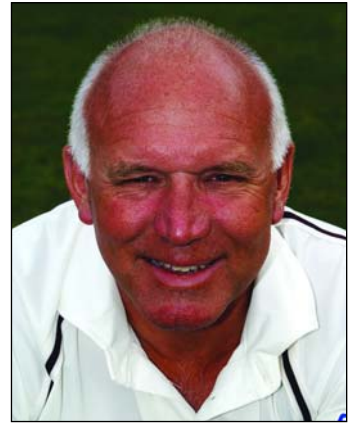
■ **Devon.** An impressive 30 coaches from Devon attended the ECB CA conference at Warwick University earlier this year. The county's district coaches were subsidised to attend by the CA. For a Devonian insight into the event visit www.devoncricket.co.uk.

The county has received a number of nominations in the Sky Sports Coach Awards including Young Coach - Ross Farrer; Outstanding Coaching Achievement - Brian Champion and Outstanding Services and Contribution to Cricket Coaching - Mark Overton, Martin Brice, Jan Witheridge and Andy Davies.

The CA have kept members up to date with quarterly newsletters, emails and via its website.

To help develop its coaches the CA is encouraging them to watch district coaching sessions and district coaches to watch county sessions to give them fresh ideas. The DCBCA will also hold an AGM/refresher day later this year.

Devon's young players continue to do their county proud. Heather Knight, 19, recently scored 49 on her



England debut against India and Lewis Gregory is currently Captain of England U18s.

Last but by no means least Perry Sprung heads up Devon's new disability coaching and team and Devon Cricket Board chairman Brian Champion has stepped down after 24 years.

■ During the past 12 months **Dorset** CA has gone from strength to strength. It boasts a vibrant management committee with specific roles and responsibilities.

The association has improved its communication systems to ensure they are in regular contact with members. This includes a biannual Coaches Association newsletter with info, updates and coach profiles. The association has also carried out a survey to establish exactly what members want.

Looking forward, to May 20 Dorset are hosting Somerset at Sherborne in a Twenty-20 match starting at 2:30pm. And on June 1 they take on Hampshire at Dean Park starting at 5pm. For tickets please contact Alan Willows.

A number of Dorset coaches have been nominated for the SW region Sky Sports Coach Awards for 2010.



Last year 12 nominated district coaches spent an enjoyable T20 afternoon watching the Hampshire Hawks.

On the coach education side the county has run coaching assistant and coach award courses, a club coach award, working in schools module and a groundsman's course. More are planned throughout 2010.

District head coaches have been appointed who can verify CRB applications and this year the association is reviewing how to support district clubs without UKCC2 coaches.

More clubs have added girls sections this year with all offering fun sessions throughout the summer.

And finally as part of a three-counties initiative to develop a hearing impaired cricket team, Paul Warren - a Dorset county player - is running a series of free coaching sessions at Sherborne from March to June on Sundays. For more info visit www.dcb.play-cricket.com.

ECB CA Membership:



Last year 12 nominated district coaches spent an enjoyable T20 afternoon watching the Hampshire Hawks

■ **Somerset.** The SCB are looking to re-establish an active Coaches Association in the county. They held an initial meeting at the centre of excellence in Taunton in February attended by SCB staff and the recently appointed focus club head coaches. The meeting covered the initial steps required to reform the SCB Coaches Association which was followed by a full AGM in March.

The board has recently carried out assessments for both its coach award and club coach courses and are encouraging all lapsed members to rejoin the ECB CA.

The SCB is hoping to kick-off its revamped CA with a conference in October.

■ **Wales** ran a grand total of 11 coaching assistant courses and five coach

award courses this winter.

This included an innovative UKCC1 course held by Monmouthshire Cricket Board at St John's-on-the-hill school near Chepstow. The candidates were made up of teachers from the school and players from Chepstow CC and the course had a huge benefit for both.

To help continue its packed coach education programme Wales has added three more tutors and two field based trainers (FBT's). They are also looking at ways of making sure every new coach to qualify in Wales joins the ECB CA.

Looking ahead Wales plans to hold its own coaches conference in conjunction with Glamorgan CCC in the autumn.

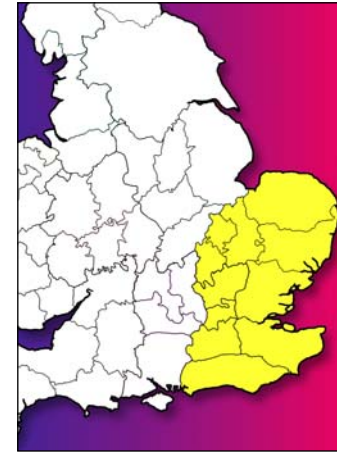
The CA will be using its £500 subsidy to send 10 lucky coaches -1 from each

region - to the upcoming one-day game between England and Australia at the Swalec Stadium in June.

LONDON & EAST



■ **Hartley Bishop** is the ECB's Regional Training Manager for London and East. Here's his news:



■ **Bedfordshire** recently held a special coach development day led by former Gloucestershire player and coach Andy Stovold. The day featured a seminar on how coaches can get utilise a bowling machine.

The county have also appointed a coach mentor in Brad Matthews who will help UKCC2 candidates through their supported practice.

Women's cricket in the county is on the rise with Bedfordshire's Women's county trials held in February with a view to forming its first county team for the coming season.

■ **Hertfordshire** are planning to run a coaching assistant course during the 2010 season delivered on weeknights to specifically encourage young coaches who have returned from university and cannot attend in the close season. They are also working on a possible coach award course during the summer for which they hope to receive significant funding.

The Herts CA has been dormant for the last few years but there are plans to bring it back this summer. Each cricket development group is to nominate a representative to act as a committee member on coach education matters and it is hoped a new chairman will

emerge from this group.

A coach education evening was held on March 31 to discuss the programme and kick-start plans. Hertfordshire has nominated two coaches for the Sky Sports Coach Awards and have plans in place to use its allowance to contribute to their own county awards.

In addition the board offer rebates to clubs and coaches on coaching courses and 175 coaches have benefitted since it started in 2008.

It has been another busy close season with coaching assistant courses delivered and one coach award course in process. This latest set of candidates makes it a grand total of nearly 150 new coaches qualified since the end of the 2009 season.

Herts recently appointed a lead coach to the county disability team and have had a number of female coaches recently complete the UKCC2 and UKCC1 courses.

■ **Huntingdonshire** ran a varied coach education programme this winter including two coach assistant courses, a coach award, cricket for teachers, working in schools and young leaders course. HCBCA also ran its first club coach assessment in late February with six coaches taking the practical and video assessments.

The association continues to support its coaches with presentations and workshops. The next one features Charlotte Edwards, the England womens captain and former Huntingdonshire youth cricketer. She will be presenting a practical session to HCBCA members on the theme of coaching girls cricket at Godmanchester Town CC.

In other coaching news disability cricket sessions

start this month and congratulations go to Chris Brown who has passed ECB Level IV.

At the November 2009 AGM, HCBCA members elected a new chairman, Mallie Bandaranaike, and a new secretary, Shaun Asplin.

■ **Suffolk CA** is now up to 166 members including its first lady member and three coaches under the age of 25. The county delivered a number of coach education courses over the winter and has a new tutor - Tom Huggins - signed off and 2 more working towards competency.

Carl Webb-Snowling attended the CA conference

as a guest having won East Region Coach award.

There are a number of summer roadshows planned where coach education will be taken to three locations around the county.

In other news Suffolk started a hearing impaired squad in summer 2009 run by three CA members. They played their first game against the Suffolk CA and won.

ECB CA Membership:



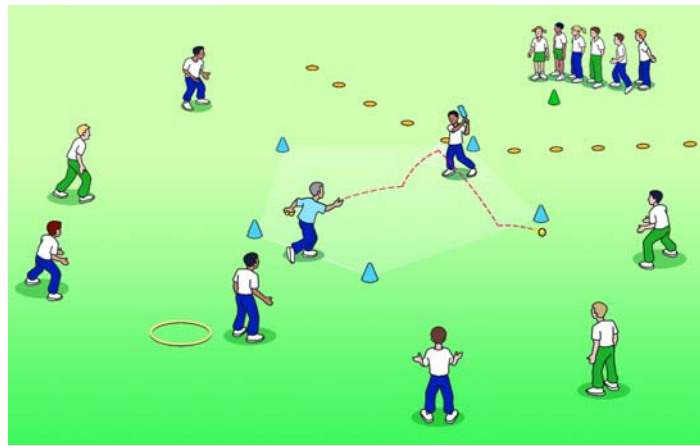
The former Huntingdonshire youth cricketer Charlotte Edwards

CRICKET GAMES AND PRACTICES

Here are the four winning entries to our inaugural ECB CA competition.

- **1st Place:** Martin Jackson from Yorkshire CA with *'Strike and Field'*. The three equal runners up are:
- **Paul Inman** from Lincolnshire CA with *'Goal Fielding'*.
- **Andrew Lutwyche** from Sussex CA with *'Quick Singles'*.
- **Ed Peters** from Bedfordshire CA with *'Building a Score'*.

Strike and Field by Martin Jackson



Aim

- To develop tactics and basic batting and fielding techniques using a fun team game.

Organisation

- Mark out the pitch as in the diagram with the batter and feeder opposite each other inside a pentagon of large cones.
- Place the waiting batters behind the pitch standing behind a cone.
- Place a line of small cones behind the batter with the fielders spread out in front of this line and a hoop behind the feeder.
- Divide the group into two equal teams (6-8 per side is ideal) and divide into a batting and fielding team.
- The feeder throws three balls to the batter in quick succession using an underarm feed, making the ball bounce once.
- The batter attempts to hit all three balls and after striking the third they run around the five large cones.
- The batter scores one run for each cone they pass.
- The fielders start collecting the balls as soon as the first is hit and place them into the hoop. When all 3 are in the hoop the batter stops running.
- If a ball is struck behind the line of smaller cones the ball is out of bounds and does not need to be fielded. If a batter misses the ball and it goes behind the smaller cones it is still counted and must be collected.
- Each batter has 3 goes each though this can be adapted.
- The team with the most runs wins.

Coaching points/Coach role

- Reinforce basic batting and fielding techniques eg basic batters set-up and over arm throw.
- Encourage players to think about hitting the ball into gaps.
- Encourage communication and teamwork between fielders.

Progression/Adaptation

- Introduce target scoring areas for batters.
- Vary the speed and length of feed.
- 5 runs taken off if the batter is caught out.

Equipment

- 1 Bat
- 3 Tennis balls
- 1 Hoop
- 10 Small cones
- 6 Large cones, 5 the same colour and 1 of a different colour.

Goal Fielding by Paul Inman

Aim

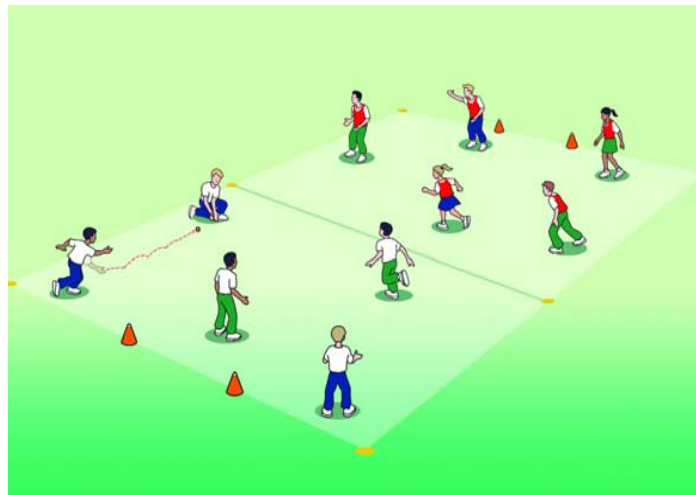
- To practice a variety of fielding skills including the long barrier, one handed intercept and two handed intercept in a fast-paced, fun team game.
- To improve teamwork, communication and agility.

Organisation

- Mark out a pitch using 6 cones and place a goal at either end using the larger cones.
- Divide the group into two equal teams (5-a-side is ideal) and nominate a goal for each team to aim for.
- Rolling the ball underarm along the ground, teams must complete three passes before 'shooting' at goal. A point is scored for each goal.
- Any rebounds go to the team whose half the ball lands in. Possession is turned over if there is a misfield.
- Players are not allowed to cross the centre line.

Coaching points/Coach role

- Reinforce the techniques for the long-barrier, one handed and two handed intercepts.
- Encourage players to maintain an athletic, balanced fielding position.
- Get players to read the angles of throws and adjust accordingly.



Progression/Adaptation

- Players can only field using a nominated hand.
- Dummy runners can be used to distract players.
- Move players after each goal to ensure maximum participation.

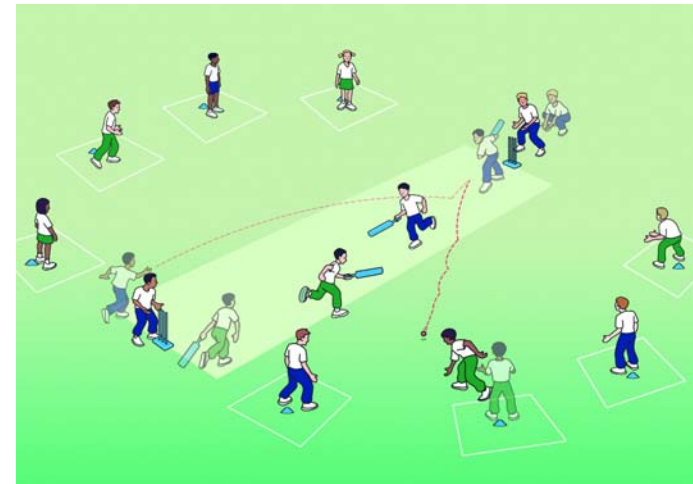
Equipment

- 1 Ball
- 6 Small cones
- 4 Larger cones.

Quick Singles by Andrew Lutwyche

Aim

- To encourage batters to hit the ball into gaps using soft hands and to run quick singles.
- Bowlers and wicketkeepers to get to the stumps as quickly as possible.



Organisation

- Place the stumps a pitch length apart and place a 1mx1m square of cones in each ring fielding position eg cover, cover-point, mid-off, mid-on, mid-wicket and square leg.
- Divide the group so there are 2 batters, a bowler, a wicketkeeper and at least 6 fielders.
- The batter must run every ball.
- Fielders must stay within their box until the batter has played a shot.
- Batters can be out in the usual ways eg bowled, caught, run-out, lbw, stumped etc.
- Each pair must be dismissed three times before they are 'out'.
- At the end of each over the bowler is replaced and the fielders rotate to ensure players experience every different fielding position.

Coaching points/Coach role

- To set out fielding positions and umpire or bowl depending on numbers and ability of players.
- Encourage batters to consider a real-life game scenario and keep the scoreboard 'ticking over' by putting fielders under pressure.
- Reinforce the importance of the fielders being on their toes and getting themselves into an athletic, balanced 'ready position' with feet around shoulders width apart, knees slightly bent.

Progression/Adaptation

- When using this drill indoors the batters score no runs for hitting behind square but still have to run.
- The batter can be caught or run-out from a rebound off the wall.
- If outdoor place a boundary 10m outside the fielders which the batter must keep the ball inside to encourage soft hands.

Equipment

- 2 Sets of stumps
- 1 Ball
- 2 Bats
- 4 Cones per fielder

Building a score by Ed Peters

Aim

- To encourage batters to build a team score by hitting the gaps, playing straight, using soft hands and communicating clearly.
- To develop the techniques and tactics for fielding in the ring eg one-handed intercept and backing up.

Organisation

- Set out a pitch surrounded by a ring of cones as in the diagram. Mark out an area away from the action for the waiting batters to stand.
- Divide group of 12 players into 4 batters (2 batting, 2 waiting), 7 fielders and a wicketkeeper.
- Each fielder must stay behind the cones until the ball is hit. Each fielder covers the area between 2 cones.
- The coach feeds the ball to the batter so it lands as a half-volley. Batters try to hit the ball in front of square using soft hands and take a quick single.
- Fielders try to collect the ball quickly and return it to the wicketkeeper or coach.
- Batters score 1 for each run completed. The pair are out if they are run out but bowled and caught are counted as dot balls.
- 'Accidental boundaries' count as a 2 and batters must run the 2 runs.
- Each pair gets 12 balls each although games can be as long as you want.

Coaching points/Coach role

- Batters to play with a straight bat, soft hands and call using 'yes', 'no' or 'waiting'.
- Encourage fielders to assume an athletic, balanced ready position to field the ball as quickly as possible.
- Fielders should attack the ball using the one and two handed intercept. Reinforce the under arm and over arm throws.
- Encourage both batters and fielders to back up.

Progression/Adaptation

- The coach can vary length and speed of feeds or players can feed.
- Encourage tactical thinking in batters eg hitting to the fielders' weaker hands.
- Provide batters with scoring targets eg 14 off 12 balls.

Equipment

- 1-2 Balls
- 4 Bats
- 2 Sets of stumps
- A number of different coloured cones



2009 Sky Sports Coach Awards Reward & Recognition Scheme



Mark Lane received the 'Outstanding Coaching Achievement' award from **Jonathan Trott**

As well as giving coaches a hatful of ideas to help them in the new season the 2010 ECB CA conference also celebrated the work of the UK's top coaches from the previous 12 months.

Three of the ECB CA's finest were honoured on the Saturday evening of the two-day event at Warwick University.

The triumphant trio were applauded on to the stage by 500 delegates as they received their awards from MC for the night Chris Cowdrey, the former England captain and current England star Jonathan Trott.



MC Chris Cowdrey quizzes **Jonathan Trott**



Lancashire's John Roberts (*above left*) was honoured for 'Outstanding Contribution and Services to Cricket Coaching', Mark Lane (*top*) from Surrey received the 'Outstanding Coaching Achievement' award while Adam Hall (*above right*) from Essex picked up the prize for 'Young Coach of the Year'.