



ECB
Developing
cricket from
playground
to Test arena

Hitting the Seam



The Official Newsletter of the ECB Coach Education Department

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in partnership with the ECB Coaches Association

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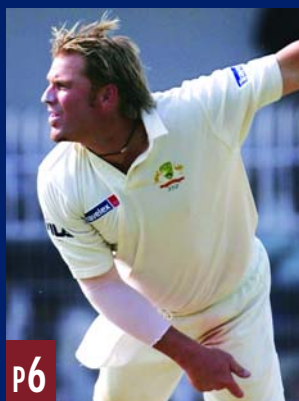
Inside

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Winter 2004

Issue Number 14



BALANCING THE WHAT AND HOW

Increasing our understanding of the principles of "Applied Biomechanics" based on John Harmer's outstanding work with ECB which began with Cricket Live '99 and Dr Istvan Bayli's work on the principles of Long Term Athlete Development, the implementation of which is being led by Keith Tomlins (ECB Performance Manager) have formed focal points for coach development in recent years.

A major focus of the emerging UK Coaching Certificate (UKCC) is the importance of balancing the "technical aspects" (What to Coach)

with the way in which we as coaches are able to deliver that message (How to Coach) with the ultimate aim of ensuring that the players with whom we work learn. Expanding our repertoire of How to Coach and What to Coach is therefore pivotal to our continued development as coaches.

As Cricket moves towards its launch of the UKCC the ECB Coach Education trainer team under the expert guidance of Penny Crisfield have worked with over 170 Staff Coaches (Tutors) on developing an approach which will allow coaches to integrate the How to Coach and the What to Coach into their coaching sessions and programmes to maximise learning.

In parallel with the accredited "levels" of the UKCC will be a range of Coach Development Workshops which will provide opportunities for existing coaches at all levels to continually update and develop their skill base. Details of this workshop programme will be posted on www.ecb.co.uk and www.ecbca.co.uk as they become available.

Philip Relf and reviews the "How to Coach" at Staff Coach training 2004.

ONE LAST HIT

Just a reminder for all. The *Hitting the Seam* newsletter will join all other ECB newsletter publications, by being available online from April 2005.

It is proposed that ECB CA members will receive the benefit of 2 'Technical Bulletins' posted twice a year in addition to its current benefits.

With membership benefits on the increase, this couldn't be a better time to join the ECB Coaches Association.

Style or Substance?

By Michael Fordham

Michael is a Senior Fellow in Management Development at the University of Bradford Management Centre. He is a Cambridge Graduate and has a masters degree from Loughborough University. He has worked closely with the ECB on the development and delivery of the Level IV programme.



The Athens Olympics and the recent changes of Managers in Premiership Football Clubs has led to much comment on coaching methods and coaching styles.

Bill Sweetenham (Swimming, *above left*) and Charles van Commence (Athletics, *above right*) may not deserve their label as "coaches from hell" (Observer 15 August) but both appear to work on the basis of "strict discipline, stinging criticism and training (methods) until you throw up" to make "Britain's sportsmen and women serious Olympic contenders." The claim is that they are a new breed, different from old style coaches by being expert "in psychology, management, technology and coaxing athletes to give the performances of their lives". Coaxing or coercing?

On the surface these descriptions remind me of the Guards Sergeant Major many years ago who turned me and 30 or so other conscript soldiers - in 10 weeks - into a squad that could be mistaken for Guardsmen drilling. Our performance was raised beyond recognition in short time, spiced by a "love hate relationship" born out of a recognition of our demanding instructor's "uncompromising search for success". Instructor or coach?

It is often the case that those who appoint and fire coaches appear to accept any style, provided it produces winners or a winning team. Bill Sweetenham and Sven Goran Eriksson - whose styles are poles apart - are now under some pressure and scrutiny for not producing success. In each case their style and methods, once lauded, are now questioned.



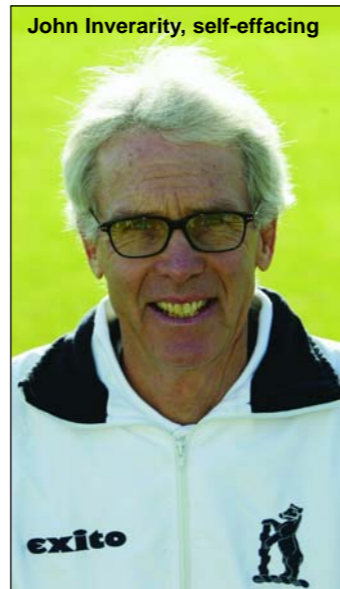
Rafael Benitez (*below*), the Spanish Coach whose taken over Liverpool Football Club, where expectations of success are pressing, has naturally been quizzed on his methods. He was asked whether he would orchestrate the changes he intends to make from the dugout or get the team to think things out for themselves. "I am a physical education teacher" he said, "I have worked in schools. You soon learn that if you tell people to do a thing they will do it once. Whereas, if you teach them how to do something they will do it all the time". Liverpool players are not schoolboys - but they seem to be relishing this approach.



Rafael Benitez, a class act



Warwickshire have just won the Championship under the captaincy of Nick Knight, praised for his motivational skills, organisation and leading from the front style. John Inverarity (*right*), his apparently more self-effacing coach, has clearly been the other significant partner in this winning team. Vic Marks talks of how an "inspired Inverarity" has made most of Warwickshire's batting talents - "...as ever slow to intervene...he gains a broad perspective of a player before diving in with panaceas." Dougie Brown, a current player who was also in the 1994 winning side, confirms the coach's style and impact - "...even though John's quiet he's an Aussie and you feel his spirit and desire pushing through. He's made us remember the basics." Complementary styles of coach and captain can sometimes pay off. Do they also allow some helpful separation between management and coaching roles?



John Inverarity, self-effacing

Over the last year or so we have been asking coaches and players to describe the "best coach" they have ever played under or worked with. This population of respondents includes about fifty coaches for all over the cricketing world at the last Cricket Live Conference and two recent groups of participants on Level III Courses. Former International and first-class cricketers were also in these groups. The Cricket Live group picked out 'encouraging', 'attentive' and 'sensitive' behaviours in their best coaches. The other groups saw the strengths as lying in 'communication', 'technical strength', 'calmness' and being 'available and accessible'. So despite the obvious pressure in sport for individual success and team victories, these groups endorse - through their experience - consensual coaching styles.

These views support the contention that coaches can only make the best use of their expertise and experience if they work from the players' needs - i.e. the player's frame of reference. The sheer variability of players' needs and motivations, calls on the coach to be able to tune-in rather than "dive in with panaceas". This holds for the coach of the under 11's as it does for County Coach.

Style, of course, may cloak but in the end not conceal inadequate technical knowledge, poor diagnostic skills or the ability to spot and then help the development of good players. Bill Sweetenham again. He declares that his sport needs career coaches whose jobs are "results dependent". He suggests the criteria for selection:

"You have to understand that the experience of the coach needs to be greater than the talent of the athlete to get people to rise to the highest level."



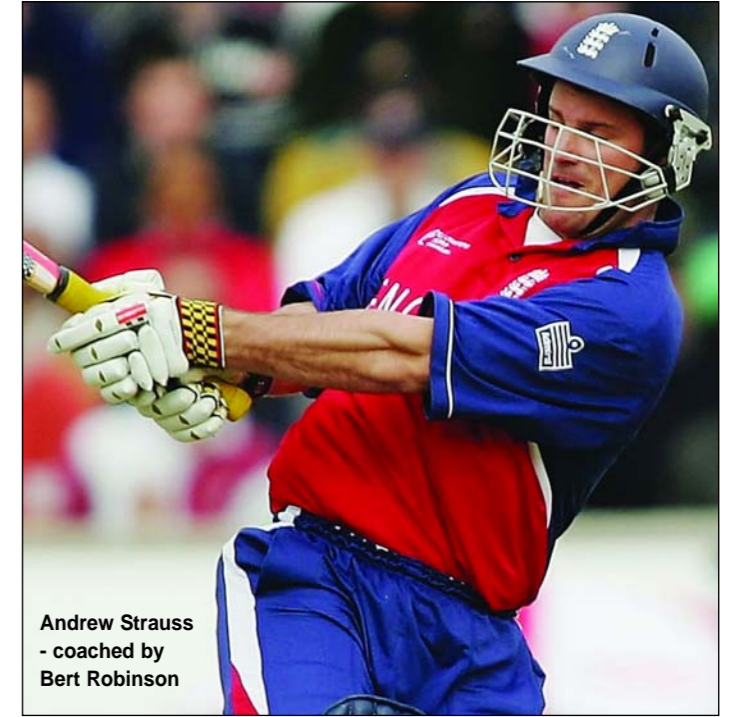
Bernhard Langer, "micro management"

Might this explain the success of Bernhard Langer with his Ryder Cup team? Top European Golfers, drawn together by his team building skills, also accepted his "micro management" during play, over their club selection and shot placement. A deft "sergeant major"?

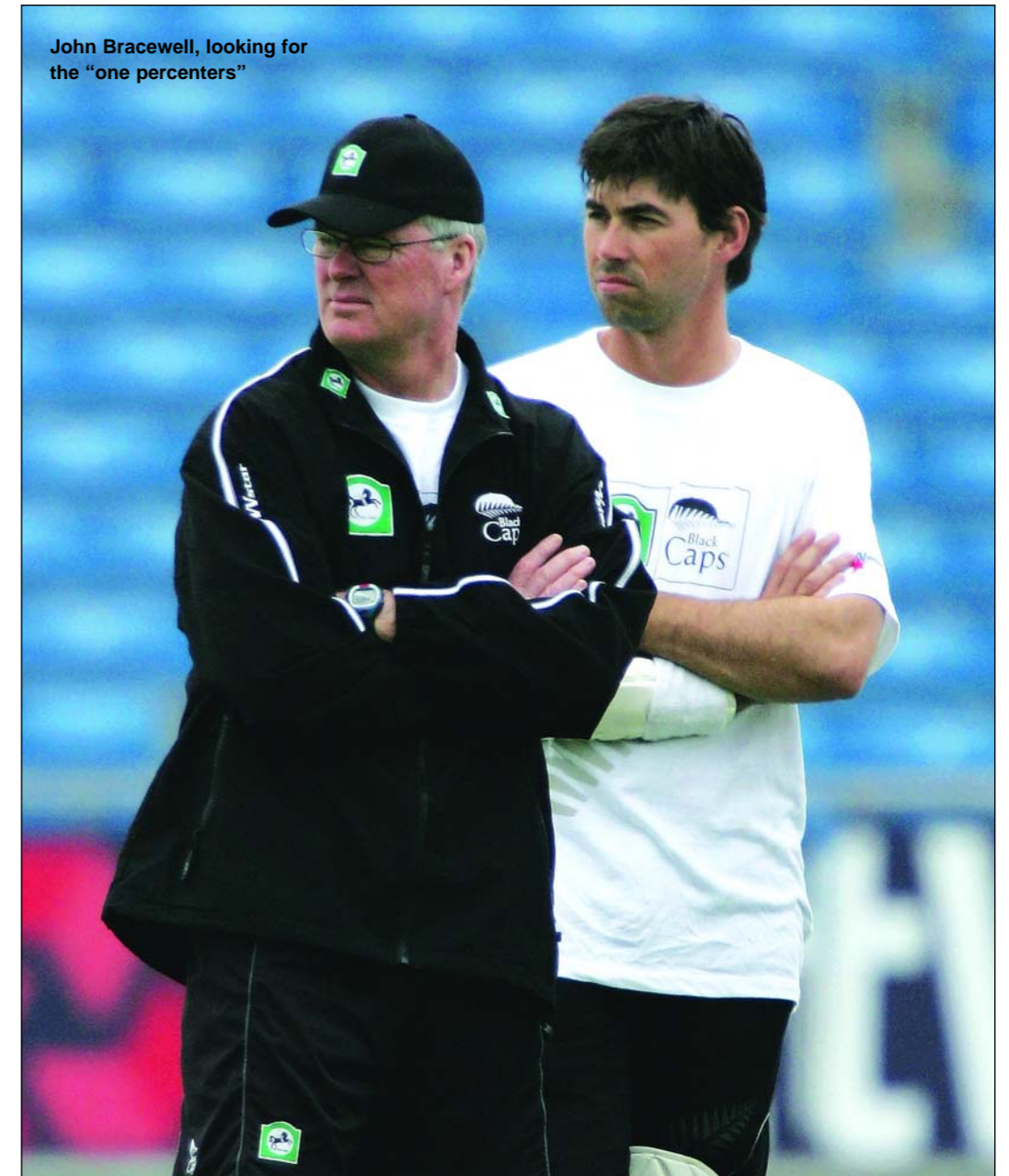
How about Bert Robinson - would he pass the Sweetenham test too? Now 87 he has coached at Radley School for fifty five years. He bowled at a brisk pace for Northamptonshire either side of the Second World War. Over the years, since 1949, in what he admits is a "wonderful place to learn cricket", he has coached many players. They include Ted Dexter, and more recently Andrew Strauss and Jamie Dalrymple. Bert is still working and according to him there are more to come.

There is more science now than there used to be in coaching and this provides the "substance" to blow away myths and fanciful theories. But current best practice should always be evolving and never codified into "one best way". John Bracewell talks about the need to identify the "one percenters" - the small things that together can make the difference between success and failure in cricket. The individualists in coaching often challenge us - and sometimes they also remind us of things we have forgotten.

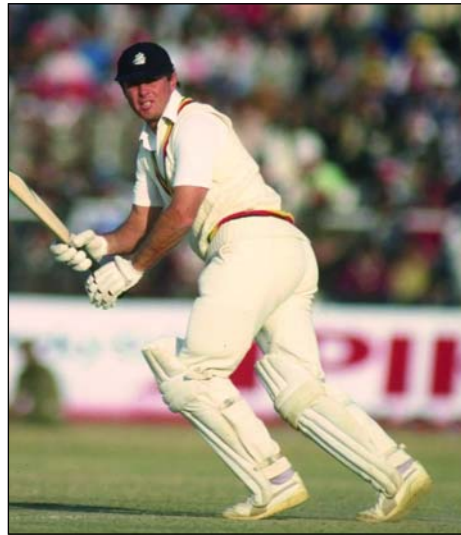
Michael Fordham
September 2004



Andrew Strauss - coached by Bert Robinson



John Bracewell, looking for the "one percenters"



TECHNIQUE VERSUS FLAIR

BY BOB WOOLMER



Some critics of coaching often site over coaching as a reason for a player not going all the way and that coaching stifles natural flair, the West Indies way or the MCC coaching book? While it is not for me to give you a definitive answer, my current experience coaching in Pakistan has given me new insights into the question.

For flair, read natural talent, this equals great shot making and adequate (only) defence. On good pitches watch out! On bowler friendly (seam and swing) equals potential collapse.

For text book cricketers read over coached, equals good defense but limited attacking abilities, play every ball on its merits.

As coaches we have to find a way first to judge what type of player we are dealing with and how best he can make the most of his talent, and secondly how do we coach him. Intriguingly, the same two players will display entirely different mental approaches to the game.

An example of a coached player playing to the text book would be Geoffrey Boycott and an example of a flair player would be Ian Botham. There are of course many more examples of this.

If we accept that no two players are the same then we have to accept that we must coach different players differently. However as importantly are the basic structures of the game itself, watching the ball, judging length, correct feet movement forward and back and then shot making itself. The fine line is where do we intrude and where do we let go?

There are few text books on how to deal with the different types, but there are many examples of how the two types have merged as great players. Many players have said that they never received coaching, however on television a most powerful medium, in fact all players would have picked the game up from someone, my first experience came from my father, but the most illuminating experience I had was watching the England Australian Ashes series, Cowdrey, Barrington, Dexter, and Graveney to name a few.



Colin Cowdrey, a hit on the box



Inzamam Ul Haq, no formal coaching

Talking to the Pakistan players they said that they learnt their cricket by watching others and television, perhaps the greatest example of this is Inzamam Ul Haq, who has never been formally coached but learnt by watching copying and developing his own style. He is amazing in that he has scored so many runs and has terrific game plans to all types of bowling.

I suppose it begs the question what would have happened had he attended formal coaching clinics. I certainly don't know the answer to this question but it would depend on how he was coached I guess. It was accepted that Bradman was unorthodox but when I see him bat on the video clips, I do not see unorthodoxy I see results. His judgment of length and his ability to play shots was second to none, if we think of Botham bullying the ball out of the park we as coaches should wonder how he had the confidence to play this way. Technically too he played pretty straight and I bet Don Wilson (Yorkshire & England) whoever would have had

him while he was the coach of the MCC young pros would have given him tips as to how to defend. It is blatantly obvious though that Botham enjoyed hitting the ball.

In the final analysis, any batsman needs to know how to play forward how to hold the bat how best to swing the bat and where is the best place to hit the ball. He should have an understanding of how his body works when driving or defending and when he does he should go out and play. The most reasonable solution to this coaching dilemma I believe is to take the skills and talent of the player and enhance them; the most formative ages are between 6 and 16 after that it will become harder to make change.

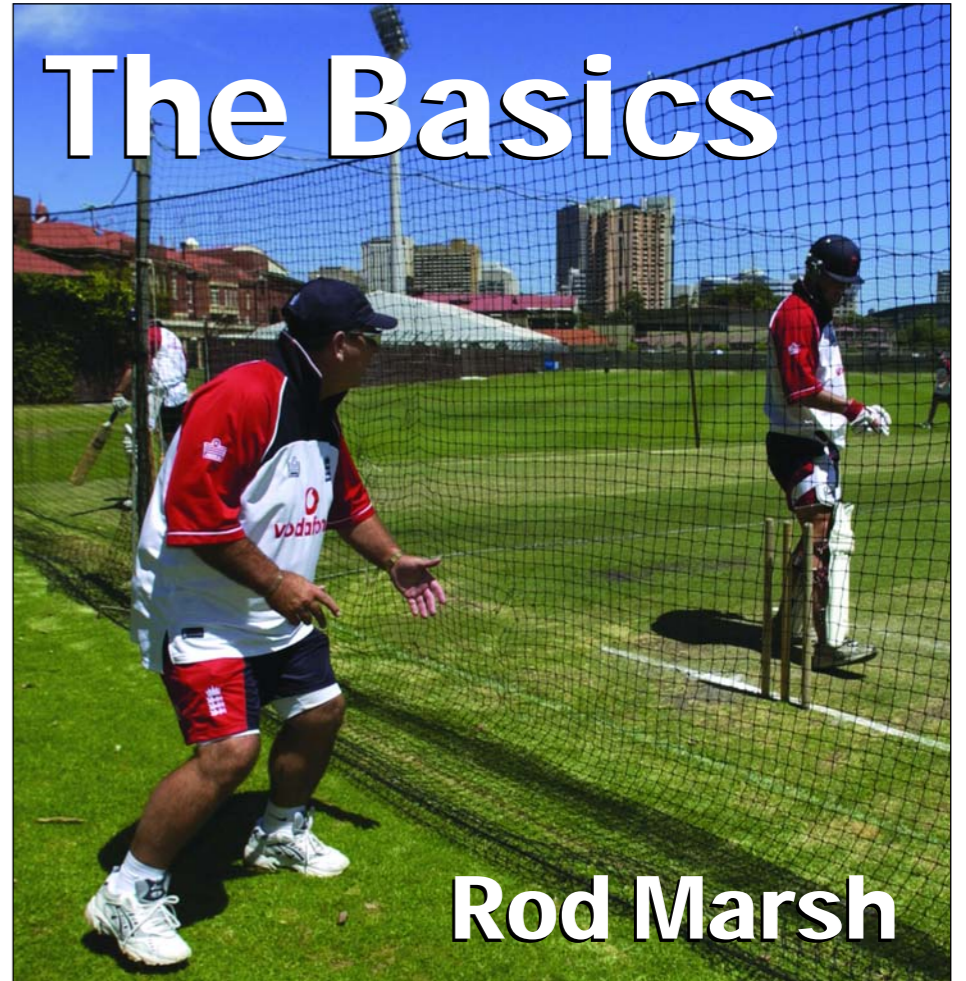
By the time they are 26, changes are possible as long as that players feels it necessary and the coach feels it is possible. Then you will need many correct repetitions (1000 plus) before it can go into the sub conscious. Under pressure the individual will revert to how he played when a youngster.

Technique is important when playing on different surfaces and conditions as you will need to know how to deal with a specific type of bowler, or how to bowl on these different surfaces. Technique is important when playing at the highest levels as the bowlers will find out poor technique and expose it. The second year syndrome is the easiest form of proof for this statement. A new player on the block has an outstanding start and then struggles the following year. The bowlers will have looked at the player and would have found a way to nullify his strengths, pinpoint a potential flaw and then expose it. The most recent example that immediately springs to mind is Ian Bell of Warwickshire. Always a good player but exposed at the higher level for a season before he could bounce back and show what skills he really had. This takes a special temperament a number of batsmen have fallen by the way side during this period never to recover.



In coming to a conclusion it is reasonable to assume that Technique can be exposed so it is important to have a good one, Flair cannot be taught you either have it or not it should be encouraged, sometimes tempered but always encouraged. As Coaches we have a job to recognize the levels that we have and that we need. We must not stifle talent but ensure that it grows. Let the player discover for himself what he can achieve, coaching is about helping that player discover!

Bob Woolmer, Lahore 14th October 2004



Rod Marsh

I often wonder if cricket coaches had complete security and didn't feel as though they had to justify their positions would they coach any differently?

Sadly, I think the answer is yes. Cricket coaches throughout the world want to show everyone just how smart they are, just how innovative they are and think up new drills and fill player's heads with many theories on why they are not making runs or taking wickets. The re is a preoccupation with catch phrases such as 'bowling back of a length'. What is wrong with bowling a good line and length I ask? Furthermore, what is wrong with asking the bowlers and even teaching them to bowl a good line and length?

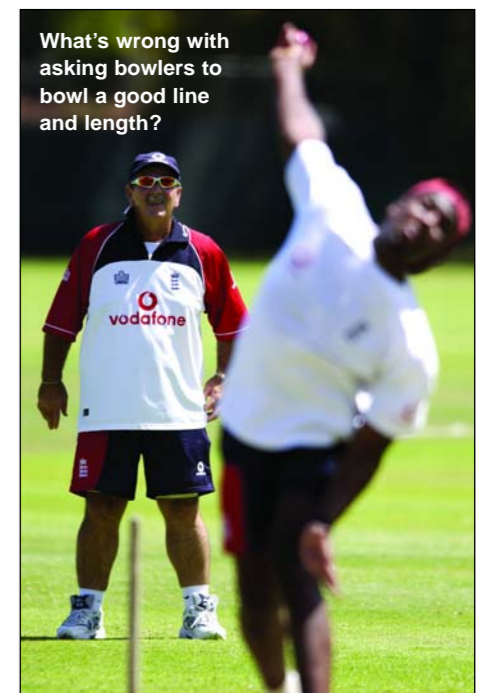
Unfortunately the answer is far too simple. What sort of a cricket coach would teach line and length bowling? You have to teach the lads how to bowl a heavy ball and get the odd one stuck in the pitch. I have yet to see one get stuck in the pitch and to my knowledge cricket balls are still no heavier than five and a half ounces!

You can't be heard asking the batsman if he is actually watching the ball. You must spend lots of time checking and rechecking trigger movements and that he is not hitting outside to in or inside to out and then of course making sure he has at least 3 hours on the bowling machine under your watchful eye making sure he drills any bad habits he may have until they become permanent. After all, you can't expect a qualified coach to ask such a simple question, at least not in front of anyone who may be responsible for his employment.

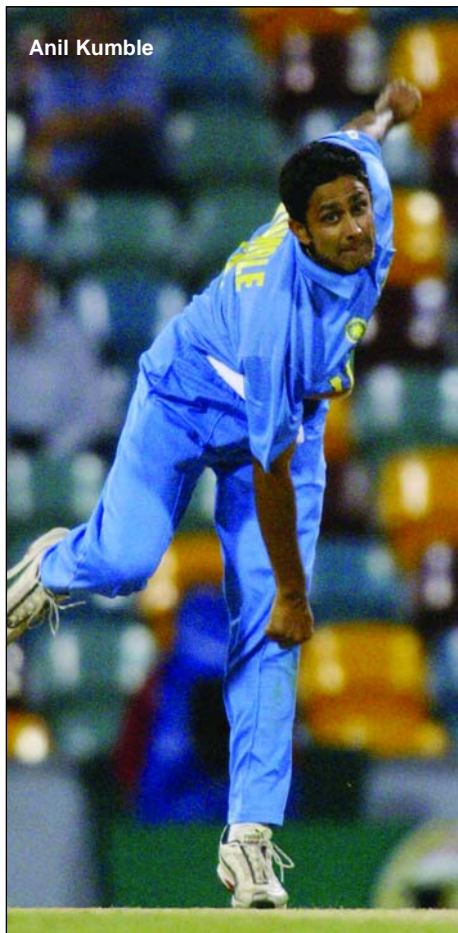
I say let's teach the basics first and then rein force the basics as our first line of attack. Get the players to understand the basics and tell them the

answers to their problems will always be found in the basics. Let them solve their own problems if they can and if they can't, guide them through the basics until they actually see the light. Once they do, they will have a better understanding of their game and as a consequence become better cricketers.

What's wrong with asking bowlers to bowl a good line and length?



If as coaches we have a team of good cricketers then all we have to do is get them to play as a team and away we go on the road to success. Now, this is proper justification of our positions!



Anil Kumble

WRIST ACTION

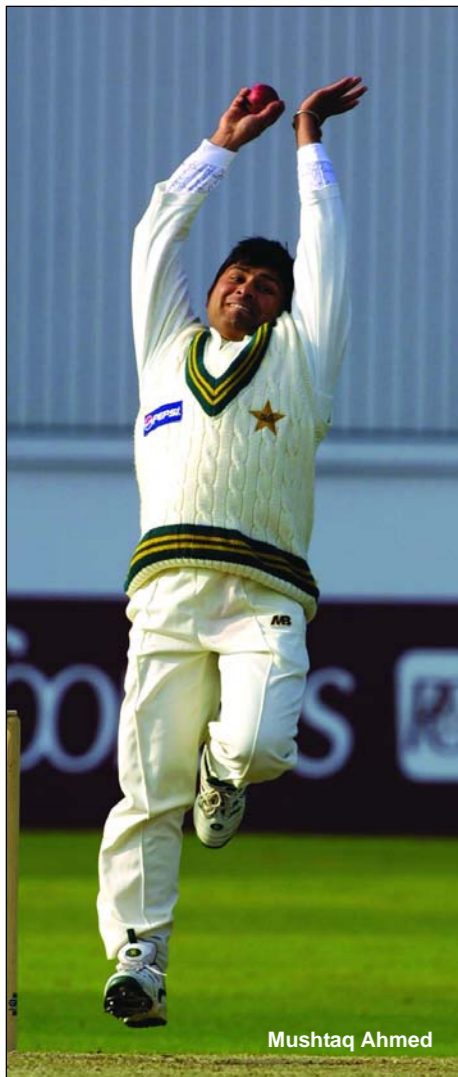
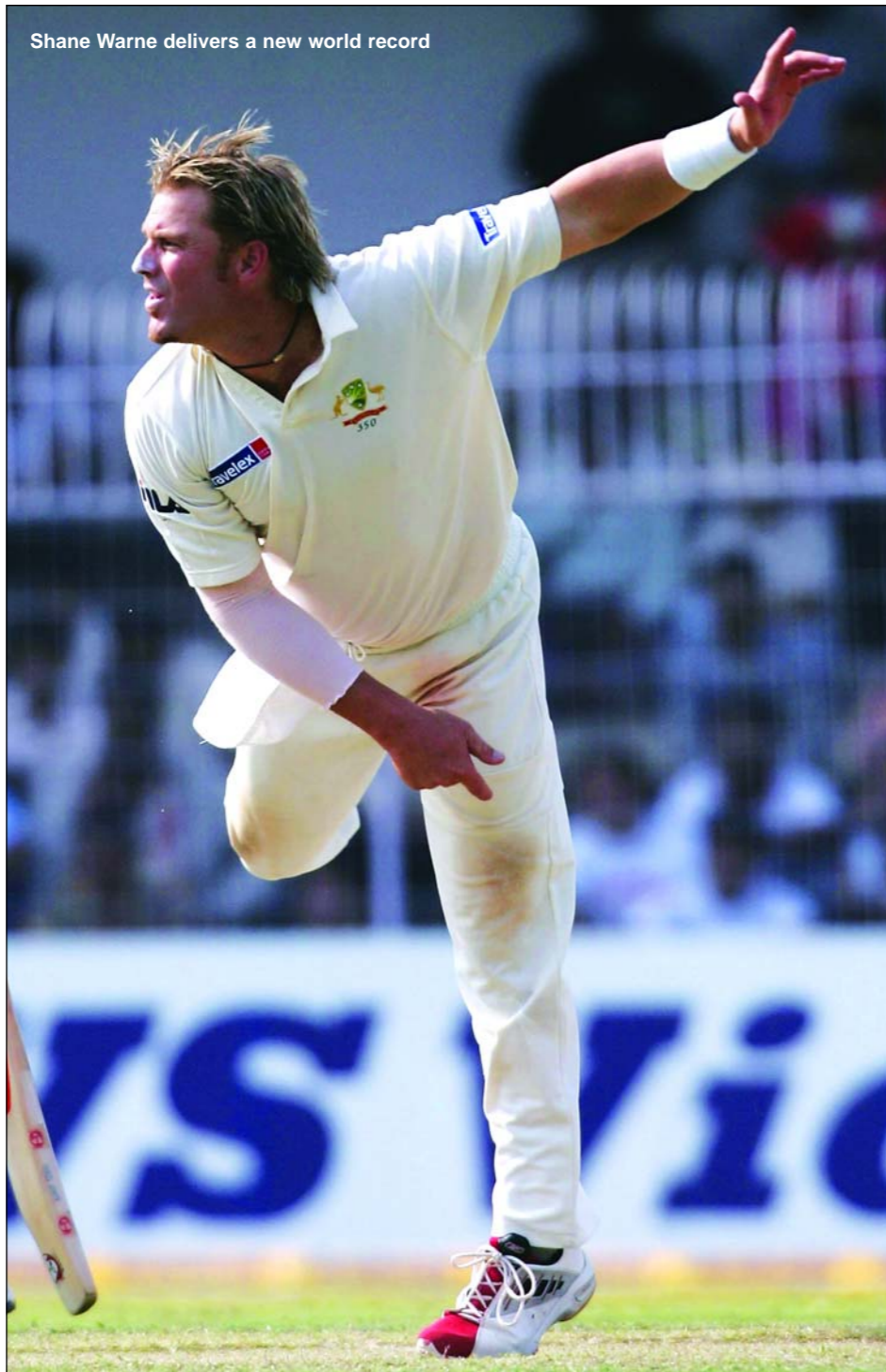
In the Spring of 1999 the ECB set out a number of performance targets to be achieved by 2007. The headline targets were to become the number one ranked Test nation in world cricket and to win the World Cup in the same year - ambitious targets indeed, but this summer's on-field successes have begun to make the doubters sit up and take notice.

Behind the major headline targets were a number of less publicised but nevertheless important targets which were designed to help towards the overall goal of being number one in the world. One of these was to produce a Wrist Spin bowler to play for England by 2007. At the time, many of the top nations had quality Wrist Spin bowlers - Shane Warne, Anil Kumble, Mushtaq Ahmed, Paul Adams, Stuart Magill - whilst others had less than orthodox 'finger spinners' capable of producing what Nasser Hussain called the 'magic

ball' that would dismiss Test match batsman on less than helpful pitches - Murali, Saqlain Mushtaq, Harbhajan Singh. Whilst traditionally England has some record of producing orthodox finger spinners, in the modern era Ian Salisbury in 15 matches and Chris Schofield in 2 have had limited success as 'leggies' in the Test arena. With the 'Wrist Spin' cupboard also empty in the County game, this was a very ambitious target.

Hugh Morris, the ECB Performance Director, set about engaging the services of Terry Jenner, best known as Shane Warne's personal coach and mentor. Terry, who himself played for Australia in the 1970's, is a passionate coach who has a genuine desire to help players to make progress. He describes himself as a 'hands-on' coach who uses, in particular, chaining and reverse chaining methods to promote the learning of technique. Much of Terry's coaching is done with the bowler bowling from delivery stride in order to groove a sound basic action

Shane Warne delivers a new world record



Mushtaq Ahmed

through repetition. He is a firm believer that a repeatable and effective bowling action can be developed through the promotion of a set of basic principles - in particular, he promotes a strong grip, a rhythmic approach, weight forward, a healthy, aligned delivery stride, a spinning action up and over the ball, the rotation of the hips and shoulders and a full completion in the follow through.

Terry visited the country to carry out coaching clinics around England & Wales and to try to identify talented young leggies who may have a bright future. However, not only was it shown that there was a paucity of Wrist Spin bowlers at the top of the game, but beneath the surface the picture was hardly more rosey - Shane Warne had inspired many to take up this most difficult of crafts, but success was rare and, perhaps most importantly, there was an even greater paucity of coaches with the knowledge, confidence and skills to be able to coach and guide these young bowlers during their most important developmental years.

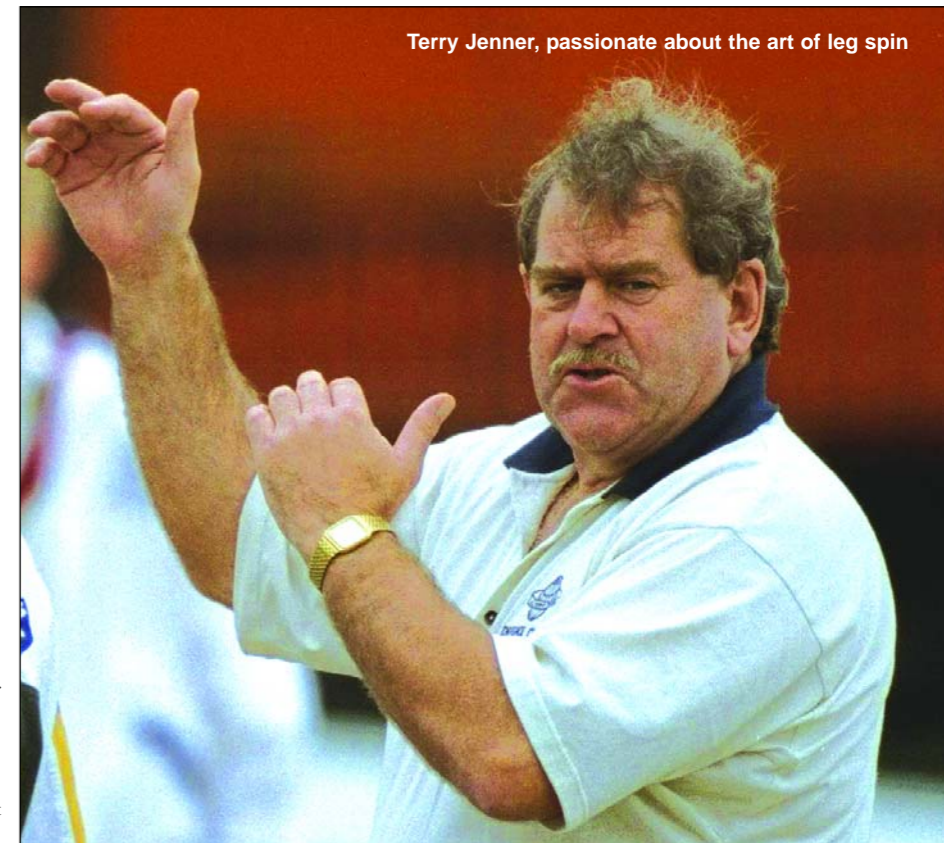
Development for a young Wrist Spinner can be turbulent & coaches have a hugely important role to play. Over the next 4 years, the ECB and Terry Jenner set out to meet three specific goals - (i) To educate and develop coaches in the art of coaching Wrist Spin bowling, (2) To introduce Wrist Spin bowling to as many young bowlers around the country as possible and (3) To offer coaching and support to the most talented of young leggies. Terry came over to the UK 3 times a year to work alongside coaches and players and in October each year, 2 to 3 young bowlers went to Adelaide, South Australia to spend 2 weeks with Terry, eating, breathing and sleeping Wrist Spin bowling.

ECB are fortunate to have established an agreement with the Brian Johnston Memorial Trust to fund the programme. The amount of funding from the Trust has grown year on year and without it the programme would be significantly curtailed.

In September 2003 ECB carried out a full and thorough review of the programme and it was found that progress had begun to be made - the profile of Wrist Spin bowling had been raised and there had been a consequential rise in the number of young bowlers trying to bowl leg breaks, coaches were becoming more confident and, for many, Wrist Spin bowling had been de-mystified. Overall the standard of Wrist Spin bowling at a junior level had begun to improve. However there was still a feeling amongst many that the programme needed a 'breakthrough' at the top end if its success was to be acknowledged. It is all very well for the roots to be developing beneath the surface, but it's not until the first green shoots appear above the ground that we truly believe Spring has arrived.

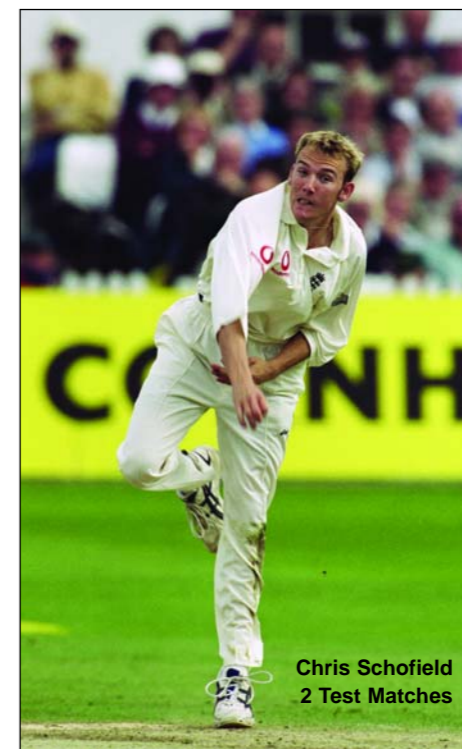


Ian Salisbury
15 Test Matches



Terry Jenner, passionate about the art of leg spin

And so, in 2004 the programme was adjusted to place a greater emphasis on the development of the more talented players. Terry continues to visit in January and February, when he spends a week in each of the 6 Regions initially working with coaches and 'all-comer' leggies but also identifying those more talented bowlers for enhanced support. Terry returns in May to offer further support for the top 40 or so young bowlers around the country. This number is reduced to 20 for a week of Wrist Spin bowling at Taunton in August and from there the best 2 young bowlers are selected to go out to Adelaide in October. Theo Brooks from Northamptonshire and Patrick Turk from Surrey are due to fly out to Adelaide for the last 2 weeks of October this year. At each visit to this country Terry offers additional support to an identified group of 5/6 'advanced' bowlers.



Chris Schofield
2 Test Matches

So are the 'green shoots' beginning to appear? Those that keep a keen eye on the County game may have noticed in July a young bowler by the name of Mark Lawson making his County Championship debut for Yorkshire. Mark is 18 years old and has been 'beneath the surface' for a while - he played for England Under 15, 17 and 19's in recent years and has been part of the Wrist Spin programme since its inception, including benefiting from 2 of the two week Adelaide visits in 2001 and 2003. Right now he is back in Adelaide - ECB, supported again by the Brian Johnston Memorial Trust, has teamed up with Yorkshire CCC to send Mark out to spend 3 months under Terry's watchful eye and to play at Adelaide Cricket Club until Christmas, when he returns to tour India with the England Under 19 squad. Just beneath the surface Michael Munday has played for England Under 19, Somerset 2nd XI and Oxford UCCE this summer and Adil Rashid, also from Yorkshire, played for England Under 16 and 17 this year.

There is still much more work to be done. We are not after 'the one' - what is needed is a continual supply of high quality, talented young wrist spin bowlers at all levels of the game. Wouldn't it be great if every County had a wrist spin bowler playing a key role in its 1st XI? That target too is some way off - but it can be achieved with high quality guidance, coaching and opportunities at a junior level. There are challenges for the ECB and for us all as coaches - we have to look closely at how we 'look after' our young leggies for they are a precious resource which can so easily be lost if mis-handled and we have to continue to support, develop and increase the team of coaches around the country that can offer specialist help to leg spinners.

But the successes of this summer and the green shoots which are beginning to appear give us cause for optimism - with some careful nurturing and a little more sunshine, we may one day see a leg spinner blossoming on the Test match stage for England.

Article by David Parsons
ECB National Coach

The 2005 ECB Wrist Spin Development Programme recommences in January. Details will be posted on the ECB and ECB CA websites. To register to attend a Coach Development Workshop with Terry Jenner or to nominate a young leg spin bowler to attend, please send relevant details to julie.page@ecb.co.uk



THE LORD'S TAVERNERS

Registered Charity No. 306054

THE LORD'S TAVERNERS' broad mission is to give young people, particularly those with special needs a sporting chance. We achieve this by providing opportunities for young people, able bodied or with disabilities, to participate in sport and recreation. Over the last fifty years we have given away £30 million to schools, sports clubs and special needs organisations. Our annual disbursement of grant aid is divided between the grassroots development of youth cricket in communities across the UK and providing specially adapted minibuses and equipment to enable young people of all abilities and backgrounds to enjoy the benefits of participating in sport and recreational activities.

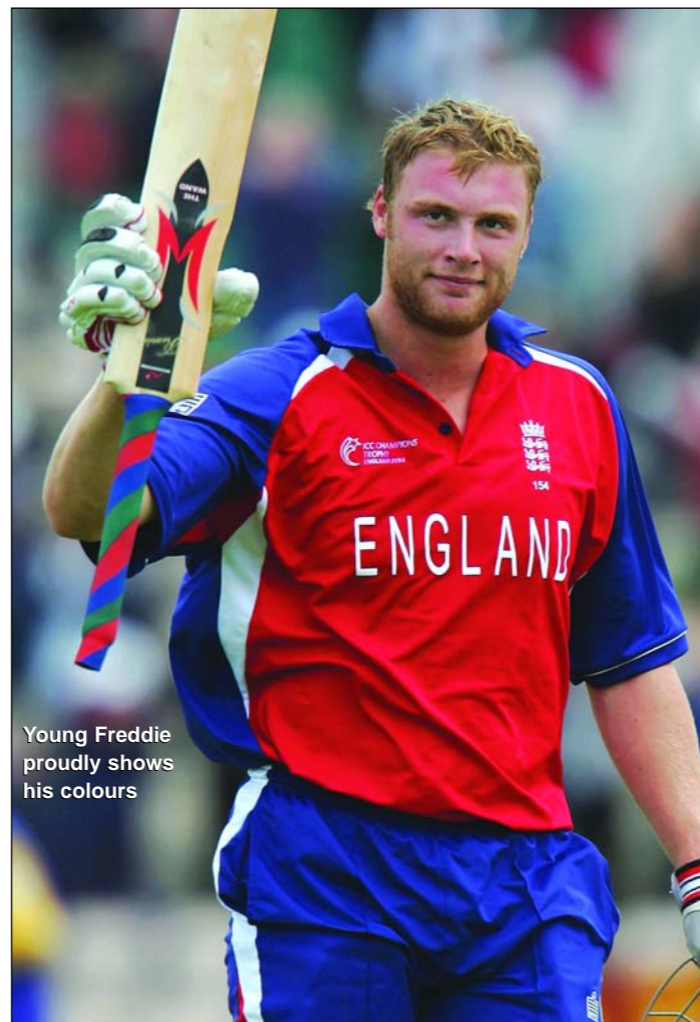
Since 1998, The Lord's Taverners has supported over 1,000 projects which include the funding of sports wheelchairs, pool hoists, multi-sensory equipment and play ground equipment.

Our annual disbursement of grant aid is broken down in the following way:

- 50% Youth Cricket
- 35% Specially Adapted Minibuses
- 15% Sport & Recreation for young people with Special Need.

The Lord's Taverners started life as a club founded in 1950 by a group of actors who enjoyed watching cricket from the Old Tavern pub in Lord's Cricket Ground. Since then, the organisation has evolved into both a Club and a registered Charity with over 4,000 members, which include The Lady Taverners (founded 1987) and The Young Lord's Taverners (founded 1988), both fundraising arms of the charity. Since 1975, twenty-five regional volunteer groups have established themselves across the UK and Northern Ireland and join up to make a formidable fundraising force.

The current president of The Lord's Taverners is Mike Gatting, president of The Lady Taverners is Rachel Heyhoe Flint and president of The Young Lord's Taverners is Andrew Flintoff.



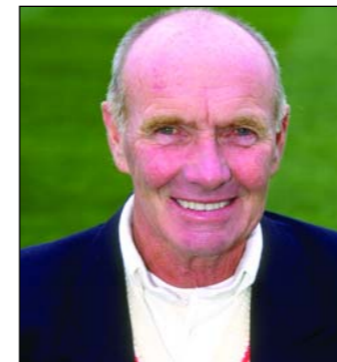
Young Freddie proudly shows his colours



LORD'S TAVERNERS 50th Anniversary Coaching Scheme

Jack Birkenshaw

Jack Birkenshaw has been involved in professional cricket for over forty years covering most aspects of the game.



He began his career for Yorkshire in 1958, before moving to Leicestershire where he enjoyed a long and successful twenty years. Altogether he scored twelve thousand runs and took a thousand wickets before retiring to be a first class umpire. Whilst at Leicestershire he represented England on 5 occasions, touring India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and the West Indies.

After umpiring for seven years and standing in two test matches he joined Somerset as their Manager-Coach.

Coaching has been his real love, and he returned to his adopted Leicestershire to coach and manage them to two Championship Titles.

Jack also managed the Orange Free State in South Africa and coached in the West Indies and Australia on many occasions.

His enthusiasm for the game remains and he envisages many more years of nurturing young players towards the county game.

Jane Powell

Jane Powell has represented England both as a player and coach at Hockey and Cricket over a 30 year period. A qualified Physical Education teacher, she has worked in schools in both Sheffield and Malvern as Head of PE.

Jane is about to complete her Level IV Cricket Coach Award and also has already achieved Level 4 Hockey coaching. She has worked with various England women's Cricket squads between 1998-2003. Vastly experienced as a coach in overseas environments she has recently returned from a coaching camp in Pune with the Maharashtra State women's teams, during which time she also worked as a Coach Educator with local coaches.

Jane holds a degree in Exercise Physiology, has a Diploma in Sports Psychology and is an accredited SAQ trainer.



Following on from the highly successful coaching scholarships to Australia and New Zealand in 2002/03 we are delighted to announce that five further scholarships have been awarded as part of the Lords Taverners 50th Anniversary Coaching Scheme.

These scholarships, which will take place in the early part of 2005, will be hosted by Sri Lanka and India and as in 2002/03, the scholars will be involved in a range of coaching activity as well as conducting research and evaluation of player development, coach development and administrative structures.

Chris Brown



Chris is an ECB Level III coach currently working in Norfolk. He is involved with the implementation of the Norfolk Cricket Development Plan, which includes both club and school coaching, as well as regional age group work.

Chris played professional cricket for Lancashire between 1994-1997 and Glamorgan from 1998-1999. Chris has had experience coaching and playing overseas after fulfilling six short-term contracts in South Africa.

John Brierley

John is an ECB Level III coach and a key member of the ECB Coach Education team based in Lancashire.

As a coach and a tutor he draws on his professional expertise as a Management Trainer as well as his extensive experience as a player and coach in top League Cricket.

There will be, in both of these centres a particular emphasis on establishing a greater understanding of the ways in which the cricketers of these countries develop as spin bowlers and as expert players of spin bowling and the ways which are coaches can develop these skills in our players.

The lessons from India and Sri Lanka will be integrated as appropriate into the ECB's Coach Education and Development Programmes in our continuing journey towards delivering the most successful and respected Cricket Coach Education Programme in the world.

The 2005 Scholars are listed below:

Michael Griggs

Michael Griggs is a ECB Level III coach and Coach Educator. He has been Head of Cricket at a Preparatory School in Hertfordshire since 1999. He is involved in the MCC Spirit of Cricket "grassroots" programme during the summer and for the past year has been Chairman of Selectors for England Women.

Over the past two years he has coached in secondary schools in Sri Lanka.

MOORE DONATIONS

JOHN MOORE, the Author of 'Coaching Top Club Cricket', has kindly donated all proceeds from the sale of his book to The Lord's Taverners. Donations of over £10.00 are requested. To obtain your copy please contact Sports Dynamics, 9 Skillicorne Mews, Queens Road, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL50 2NJ. Fax 01242 522638. Email: orders@sportsdynamics.co.uk.



Teaching Games for Understanding / Games Sense

ROD THORPE recently retired from Loughborough University where he taught for 35 years. Always interested in how best to provide people with an enjoyable and effective sport experience Rod has contributed to the development of Leadership, Teaching and Coaching innovations throughout the UK and indeed internationally. Rod always stresses that many of his thoughts come from the leaders, teachers and coaches he and his colleagues work with.

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

INTRODUCTION

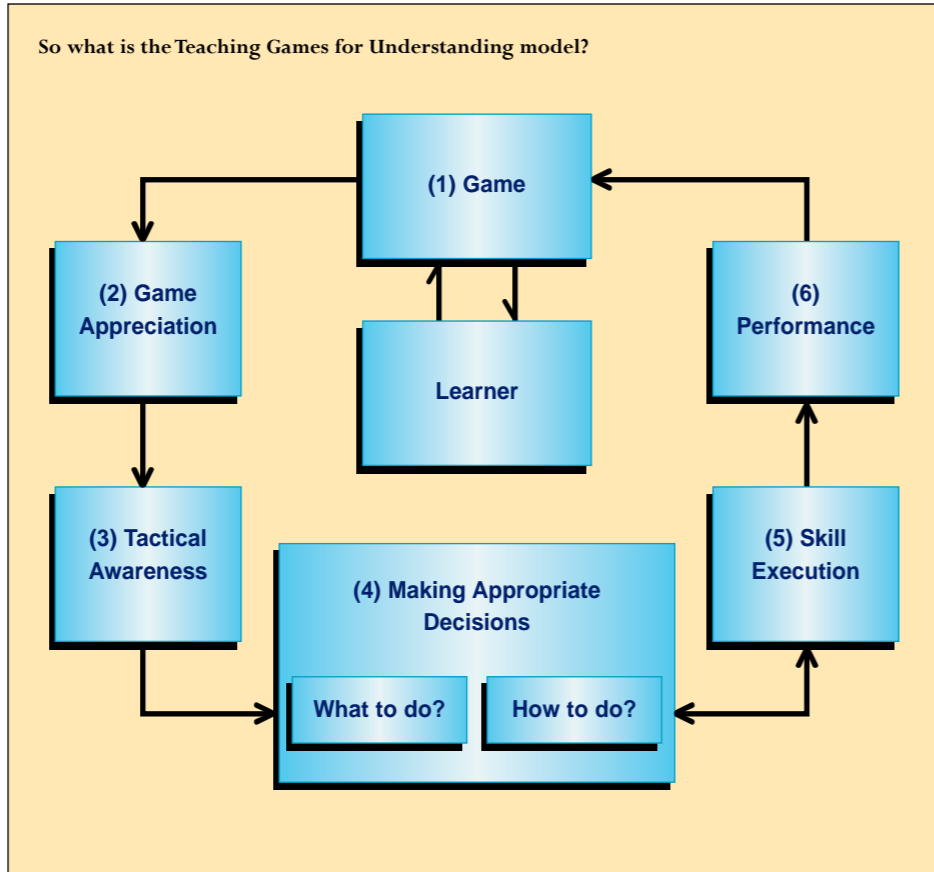
Physical education teachers in a wide range of countries may have come across the phrase 'Teaching Games for Understanding'. A coach from Australia and New Zealand might be more familiar with the phrase 'Games Sense'. Are they the same? Not quite. A brief outline of the development of the approaches might help clarify the terms used.

In the mid 1960s, as a Physical Education teacher, I moved away from the traditional 'Warm Up, Skill, Game' lesson structure with its emphasis on the 'skill' part and a game to follow (sometimes, if time allowed). I was very influenced by a movement called 'Educational Gymnastics'. Ed Gym recognised that not all children could do complex 'sport' gymnastics movements, so posed challenges that allowed children to provide an answer commensurate with their abilities. Hence in the same class a child could be doing a handstand, whilst another might be challenged by a balance on one foot and a hand. Both are doing a two point balance. A problem arose, however, because some teachers found it difficult to set challenges that excited or interested children.

This is interesting when one considers that every time we play a 'game' we are faced with challenges and problems to solve - where shall I hit the ball? how shall I get past that defender? who shall I pass to? (the term games here is used to indicate those activities like foot ball, cricket, tennis, badminton, not athletics, swimming, gymnastics, etc. although the underlying principles apply to these activities as well).

I have no doubt I was greatly influenced by my lecturers at Loughborough in the early '60s' because whilst the 'warm up, skill, games' lesson structure was encouraged, so also was modifying games, not least to small sided and simplified games.

Returning to Loughborough as a lecturer in the late 60s and throughout the 70s, a large number of people influenced my thoughts, not least the many lecturers, advisors, teachers and students who contributed to the development of the approach. Together with fellow lecturer, David Bunker, I presented a 'model' that we felt summarised this work. When we presented it to teachers, initial responses to the approach varied from - 'Thanks for that, I have been doing something similar, but always felt a bit guilty at not using the Warm Up, Skill, Game model' to 'Interesting, but you cannot teach cricket until you have mastered certain cricket techniques'. This last comment is not only interesting, but pivotal - if we expect children to master specific techniques before a realistic game is possible, some children will never play the game. It is my opinion that if the 'bowler' becomes a feeder on the side of the batter for a considerable time, far more of cricket, e.g. fielding, field placement, well placed shots, etc. come into play.



Lessons may differ but we always start with the game. Depending on the skills of the players, we may spend the whole lesson on Game Appreciation, Tactical Awareness and What to do (with no mention of skills). Three lessons later we may be passing through these phases quickly and the coach/teacher may be able to spend more time developing skill execution with some of the group, whilst others continue to work in the game. At the top end, a previously well coached child may have already grasped the technique and now needs more practice within the game. A key point here is that a less experienced teacher may not be able to help skill development in the talented player, but that youngster can still be challenged productively in the context of the game. At the opposite end of the continuum a barely adequate skill still allows the game to be played, perhaps as mentioned earlier if the bowler becomes a feeder. Maximising the fact that this less able player can play is also key and can make valued decisions. Confidence is an essential issue.

Simply, we feel that all children could play games successfully if we find the right game and develop at the pace of the individual. Modifications to meet quite serious disabilities illustrate the point.

Teaching Games for Understanding is essentially a practical approach and best understood by a 'practical' demonstration. In the absence of such I will indicate some of the major rationale for taking this approach.

- Children like playing games (until the point at which they realise they are no good - sometimes as a result of misguided coaching).
- To become skilful requires considerable practice - we have to maximise a player's intrinsic motivation, because much practice will occur away from the teacher or coach. We firmly believe if people understand the reason for something it will be motivating.
- We can structure games so that we convince all people that they can play, rather than cannot play - the tee in cricket & the modified tennis racket are good examples of equipment designed to enable people to play.
- Often we have small teams who work things out together, so we also maximise the 'affiliation' factors and enjoyment of interacting with others.
- By placing tactical awareness and decision making as key outcomes of any lesson, it became possible for youngsters with different 'physical abilities' to succeed - additionally we hoped to produce thinking spectators, officials and administrators.
- We realise that it takes many years to develop the skills of a top class performer, it is our contention that if we wish to develop good decision makers, capable of 'reading the game' & making a decision commensurate with their skill, we must start early. The game at top levels is too fast for all but fairly 'reactive' actions.

Let us return to feeling competent - the beauty of games is that they are relative. Two equally matched squash players with poor techniques can imagine themselves playing for the 'world championship', they hurtle about, get excited on match point, feel shattered after the match. They have 'awful' techniques BUT they can play the game! Some coach has not had a chance to show them they cannot play the game by telling them the shots they use are poor. Does it matter they have poor techniques?

Maybe not - if they are happy and unwilling to give any time to practice - this is a fun outlet.

Maybe - if they realise the need to improve and are motivated to get better then they should be helped.

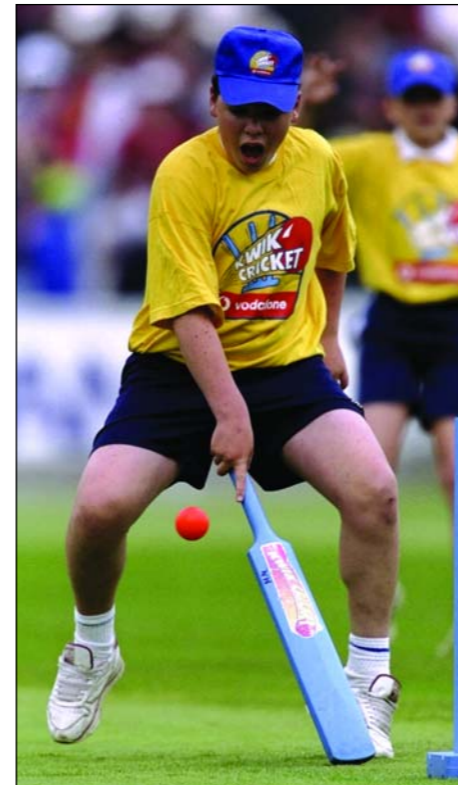
A key issue, always, for the teacher/ coach is to decide if they have the time and the players have the desire to make lasting changes.

The move towards player learning and away from coach 'instruction' is also intentional to avoid teacher/coach dependence.

The thoughts at the early stages of Tgfu development are perhaps best summarised and illustrated by practical examples in the Bulletin of Physical Education - Games Teaching Revisited, Spring 1983, Vol 19 No1. which includes a cricket example.

PLAYSPORT AND THE 'TOPS' PROGRAMMES

One criticism of our approach was that the teacher/coach needed to understand the principles underlying tactics (space, time; depth/width; penetration; etc). Whilst I would not disagree, I think skill teaching requires a far greater understanding than previously assumed. Merely asking teachers/coaches to demonstrate a technique isolated from the game and ask the players to copy is not efficient skill teaching, particular when the skill has to be employed in a games context. The real issue is probably that teacher/coaches feel somewhat insecure in setting players challenges in which some freedom to try different ideas and uncertainty in the likely response will occur. Telling, showing and asking all to do the same thing seems far more controlled, it even looks efficient.



With this criticism in mind, I started working on a programme in the early 90s called 'Playsport' with a research assistant, Ben Tan. This programme attempted to provide the inexperienced teacher/coach/parent/leader with a series of progressive games, presented on colourful cards, with simple safety points and guidance as to how to make the games easier or harder, etc. This was based on the firmly held belief that children (and adults) can learn a considerable amount through 'appropriate' play. A mid-point (not a starting point) might be 'Kwik Cricket'. These cards were subsequently developed by the Youth Sports Trust as 'TOP Play' and 'TOP Sport' and formed the start of a support programme for primary teachers.

GAMES SENSE

At the time of developing these cards (1992), I was fortunate to receive a Churchill Travelling Scholarship to study Young People's sport in Australia (Aussie Sport) and New Zealand (Kiwi Sport). I reported much of what I saw was great BUT observing inexperienced teachers and coaches attempting to teach prescribed techniques children of widely different abilities confirmed my opinion that a one fit Warm Up, Skill, Game approach was not appropriate. The modified Aussie and Kiwi Sports did not go far enough in providing progressive activities, that both led up to the modified game and ensured 'understanding'. The Australian Sports Commission and Australian Coaching Council noted this observation and invited me to present the case to their Annual Coaching Conference in 1994 - a daunting proposition for a 'pom'.

A number of people were working on TGFU in Australian Universities and coaches like Rick

Charlesworth (national hockey coach), were presenting activities that challenged decision making in game-like situations, so development of an approach to coaching games like ours was timely. Add to this the realisation that decision making had been neglected at all levels of coaching and it is perhaps no surprise that, at both national and state level, there was a desire to examine the model. Over time the term 'Games Sense' became popular and I see this as embracing the two concepts developed first in the UK.

1. It makes sense to play games - the TOP Play TOP Sport concept.

2. Making sense of games - Teaching Games for Understanding.

By combining the two approaches one can see a coherent programme that embraces teachers and coaches of different abilities and experience and can operate from the very young beginner to the international player.

Interestingly, whilst Physical Education has picked up the approach internationally and there are pockets of use in coaching in Northern Europe and indeed by some International Bodies (the International Tennis Federation), there has been an increased interest in the approach in the UK coaching since the Antipodean developments.

I do not 'know' the right way to coach and I am not an advocate of slavishly following a particular approach, but for me the Tgfu/Games Sense seems to fit more of the requirements of Games Teaching and Coaching than more traditional approaches. Some coaches use the approach in entirety, other coaches include elements with a more extensive programme. The choice is theirs.

The ECB Coaches Association performs a key role in supporting the ECB's Coach Education and Development programmes and its member coaches through the provision of an enhanced two way communication system, a range of high quality membership services and an infrastructure of local County Board (Coaches Association) which take responsibility for, on behalf of ECB, the organisation, delivery and assessment of key elements of ECB's Coach Education and Development programmes.

Have YOU joined yet?

THE BENEFITS FOR 2004 INCLUDE:

- Coach's Performance Handbook
- Legal and Tax advice helpline card
- Yearbook 2004
- "Wings to Fly" video
- Membership Card
- Licensed Clothing & Equipment Catalogue
- Resources Catalogue
- Subsidised access to County, Regional and National events
- Website

HOW DO I JOIN ?

To qualify for membership you will need to be a qualified coach. Application forms together with a Direct Debit mandate are available from the ECB CA Support Centre on: email: coaches.association@ecb.co.uk , Tel: 0121 440 4332 Fax: 0121 440 7605 or on the ECB CA website – www.ecbca.co.uk

A Direct Debit system for collection of annual subscriptions has been established and undoubtedly represents the most efficient and cost effective means of collecting and administering your membership fees. Whilst payment will be accepted by cheque we would urge you to complete and return the Direct Debit Mandate, allowing us to allocate maximum resources to the primary functions of ECB CA towards educating, informing, supporting and motivating coaches at all levels.

STRUCTURE

The effectiveness of the ECB CA relies upon the co-operation of County Boards and their respective Coaches Associations. Each County Board Coaches Association has a representative of their Board at the ECB CA Regional Forum. The Forums are based on the National Coach's regions. In addition the Cricket Board of Wales and the ICC/ECC have their own Forums. A representative of each Regional Forum sits on the ECB CA National Forum, who's Chairman represents the ECB CA on the Performance Steering Group of the ECB.

ECB Hitting the Seam

Address correspondence to:
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Photos: Getty Images or ECB unless stated

ECB Coaches Association



INSURANCE

As part of the membership you will be covered for Public Liability up to £5,000,000, Employers' Liability up to £10,000,000, and modest cover for Personal Accident. Our Insurers are able to offer additional cover for Personal Accident in bespoke packages at your request, and also travel insurance. Members of the Association will also benefit from two 24-hour legal help lines provided by market leaders DAS Assistance Ltd.

Any member can also purchase separately as an extra; legal expenses insurance under the headings of bodily injury, legal defence and tax protection for a premium of £36 and this would be a good back up to the advice lines being provided as part of the membership. It should be made clear that the legal expenses insurance has to be purchased separately as it cannot be included for the membership automatically.

Full details of the insurance and further benefits can be obtained from Bryan Banbury @ Russell Scanlan, on 0115 9470032 or under the heading cricket coaches on the Russell Scanlan website address: www.rsib.co.uk

It should be noted that members who are aged Under 18 are insured, but must be directly supervised by a qualified coach, who should also be an ECB CA member.

MEMBER'S PACK

In March all members were sent a new Member's Pack, containing a Coach's Performance Handbook and inserts for existing members, 'Wings to Fly' video and a 2004 Yearbook. An additional benefit for 2004 included a membership card.



MEMBERS'TIE



Two ties and a Ladies Scarf are available to Members only, priced £10 each (including post, packing & vat).

The two tie designs are labelled 'Millennium' and 'Traditional'. Details and an order form are enclosed in the Members' Pack.

WEBSITE

The website is in operation and continues to be developed. The aim of the site is to help keep members informed of current and future coaching activities around the Country. It has a National Planner of events, archives of previous publications and newsletters, details of the whole National Coaching Scheme, and holds details of all courses in county all over the Country. If you have any helpful ideas, please write to the ECB CA Support Centre at Edgbaston.

CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT RESOURCE CATALOGUE

The Clothing and Equipment Catalogue continues to provide members of the ECB CA access to a wide range of high quality support service resources. The product range has been enhanced, and we look forward to your feedback.



NB. Only Members of ECB CA are entitled to purchase and wear the licensed clothing range.

FROM OCTOBER 1ST 2004 MEMBERSHIP TO THE ECB CA REQUIRES A FULL CLEAR ENHANCED CRB CHECK TO HAVE BEEN COMPLETED AND REGISTERED WITH THE ECB.

FOR CURRENT MEMBERS, YOUR CLEAR ENHANCED CRB CHECK NEEDS TO BE REGISTERED WITH THE ECB NO LATER THAN 1st APRIL 2005.

Further ECB CA information from **David Gallagher** ECB CA Membership Officer, Email: coaches.association@ecb.co.uk