

# EFFECTIVE TRAINING SESSIONS

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## INTRODUCTION

- Today's cricketers, both young and old, without doubt have *totally different expectations from their sport than they did as recent as ten years ago*.
- There are many *exciting options available nowadays* to share the seemingly ever-decreasing leisure time available. Some of these are computer/video games, water sports, the perceived high action sports, eg. basketball, football, baseball, etc...
- So competition is at a premium and that is why we must look at providing more enjoyable sporting environments, both on and off the field.
- One important factor, which attracts us to playing sport, is the satisfaction of success and improvement. Obtaining small goals and achieving progressively provides great enjoyment and reward. Because of this our training programs should be directly geared toward constant progression in areas such as skills, physical conditioning and match skills, tactic, etc.
- Your biggest challenge as a coach is providing an atmosphere, which continually contains a very positive work rate and is enjoyable.
- It is imperative that we do not lose focus of our training objectives. Cricket training is about preparing your team to give it the best possible opportunity of performing at its optimum level for each contest. Anything you expect them to do in a game you must try and implement at your trainings.

## PREPARATION

*FAILING TO PREPARE IS PREPARING TO FAIL!*

Spend some time pre-season mapping out a season planner and then breaking down the plan and mapping out guidelines for each session is an invaluable exercise. Of course, many variables may affect the end result of the session, but to have something to work from is the key.

The key is to *avoid the monotonous boredom* that traditional cricket training in the nets is renowned for. *Too often net training flows the same path*; where the batters pad up for a ten minute hit and everybody else bowls and then training continues until everybody has batted. The major problem due to excessive training duration and boredom a major deterioration of intensity and quality results.

In an attempt to overcome the monotony of net practice, included in this handout is a list of various suggestions to assist maximising the benefits of net practice and also some training alternatives.

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## VARIETY AND INNOVATION

We all enjoy a change and it is imperative that we can provide some variety whether on a small or large scale. Innovation is important, whether provided by you the coach, or along with collective input from your players and/or coaching resources.

One thing is using our imagination in creating new activities but most importantly let's have a go at implementing new ideas and drills. You really do have nothing to lose. If it doesn't work well, at least you have learnt something and this can often generate evaluation of further application possibilities.

*IMAGINATION IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN KNOWLEDGE*  
'ALBERT EINSTEIN'

## SIMPLE SESSION STRUCTURE

- WARM UP
  - allow body to warm up (dynamic/static)
  - gains attention/motivates
  - MUST BE EASILY ORGANISED
- SKILL DEVELOPMENT
  - combine individual/partners/team
  - ample opportunities for FOCUS/SKILLS to be achieved
- WARM DOWN
  - refine the new skill
  - reinforce and old skill
  - allow body to warm down

## TRAINING FORMAT OPTIONS

### FIELDING PATTERNS

Fielding patterns are an excellent way for developing the fundamental fielding skills under controlled and safe conditions. One of the major advantages of the following drills is that they allow a large number of players to be under the guidance of one coach.

- LINES/GRIDS/SQUARES
- CHANNELS
- CIRCLUES/SHAPES

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## FIELDING GAMES

Competitive sessions can be used to simulate match pressure situations, motivate fielders at training and accelerate skill development. The focus for the competition may be:

1. TIME TAKEN to complete a set number of rows
2. NUMBER of moves completed in SET TIME
3. TEAM against TEAM

The following activities may be used either as SKILL DEVELOPMENT routines without pressure or competitively between teams:

- Pick and place; 3/2/1 throws; knock em down
- Run a two; run outs; leader ball
- Fielding rounders; fielding possession soccer

## TABLOID

Commencing each time players arrive. Groups will rotate through six stations (variable). For a 90 minute session, groups will spend 15 minutes at each station (nets count as two stations ie. 30 minutes).

ACTIVITY NO. (sample 1)	1.	CONDITIONING - cricket specific
	2.	CATCHING - long/mid/short
	3.	NETS - bowling in pairs with clear objectives
	4.	NETS - batting in pairs with clear objectives
	5.	FIELDING - ground and throwing
	6.	FLEXIBILITY - (PNF, major muscle groups)

The six activity stations could be made up of many activities such as throwing at stumps, cradle catching, tennis ball/racquet catching, mini soccer, bat drills, batting off tees, target bowling, running between wickets, agility tests, etc.

## ACTIVITY LIST FORMAT

As a change to regular sessions, organise a list of activities similar to the above tabloid method, which need to be completed for the session. The activities may have a specific focus depending on what stage your training program is at. The use of a whiteboard or a pre-drawn list of activities.

Equipment will have to be set up for all of the stations and an activity checklist produced and copied for all players. (Players would be encouraged to work in pairs or perhaps threes, depending on the activities).

## CENTRE WICKET PRACTICE

- Use as regularly as your curator allows
- Simulate game situation as much as possible
- Refer scenarios attached

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## **RUN OUT/FIELDING UNDER PRESSURE GAME**

Simulating match conditions as much as possible, (including attire) a game in which players experience and learn first hand when running a single is possible and when it is not. All rules are match simulated other than the exception of compulsory run. If contact is made by bat to ball then running is compulsory. The only exception to the compulsory run rule is if the ball is hit directly back to the bowler.

The fielding captain is encouraged to maintain regular fields so as to achieve a good level of match simulation. The benefit of this game activity as a skill development drill for the fielding team is the enhanced level of pressure situations that are regularly presented.

A game de-briefing at the conclusion of the game should confirm a greater awareness of:

1. When a run is possible
2. Fielding under pressure.

## **DUAL PITCH CRICKET**

- Pairs Dual Pitch cricket is designed to keep all players actively involved in the game of all times. The game is conducted on 2 pitches adjacent to each other.
- 1. There are 10, 12 or 14 players on each team. In a team of 12 - 10 players on field, 2 players bat
- 2. Team 1 fields on Pitch A and bats on Pitch B. At the same time Team fields on Pitch B and bats on Pitch A.
- 3. Each team is divided into pairs and each pair bats for 2 overs irrespective of wickets lost.
- 4. At his end of their 2 overs the batting pair swaps with 2 of their teammates fielding on the opposite pitch.
- 5. The batters change ends at the fall of a wicket or after 3 consecutive non-scoring deliveries. Batters may be dismissed by all the usual means except LBW.
- 6. During the game each player will bowl one over.
- 7. The score is calculated on the product of wickets taken and runs scored.  
Eg. Team 1 captured 9 wickets and made 62 runs  
Team 2 captured 8 wickets and made 70 runs  
$$\text{Result: Team 1} = 9 \times 62 = 558$$
$$\text{Team 2} = 8 \times 70 = 560$$
- 8. If a team fails to lose a wicket both teams add 1 (one) to their wicket totals.

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## **CENTRE WICKET - NET SESSION**

In the format of dual pitch cricket, one team fielding whilst the batting team will be working purposefully in the nets until their turn to visit the centre wicket.

## **NET SESSIONS**

Any Traditional net practice lacks purpose and tends to be mundane and monotonous.

Whatever your net practice, set goals so that players are practising with a specific purpose. This will provide them with immediate feedback of their performance in relation to the demands of the task.

Net practice can provide a perfect opportunity to attend to some specific coaching demands if everyone is active.

## **NET SESSION ENHANCEMENTS**

Any number of the ideas below can be integrated into net practice to increase the value and training benefits of the session.

It is important to try to simulate match conditions best we can in most cases.

### *Hints and Tips for Net Sessions:*

- ◆ Batters bat in pairs
- ◆ Calls must be clear
- ◆ All running between wickets to be completed at 100%
- ◆ Fiddlers may be marked with fabric/markers around net
- ◆ If dismissed, your time is up
- ◆ Batters pad up well before their turn and shadow bat
- ◆ New ball may be used for opening batters
- ◆ Batters coach other batters when they're not busy
- ◆ Have an umpire adjudicating in each net
- ◆ Batters rotate through pace and spin and bowling machine
- ◆ Bowlers bowl in pairs, 6-8 balls each, resting bowler stretching major muscle groups
- ◆ Spinners net with wicketkeeper
- ◆ Remove all side nets or back net only for keepers
- ◆ New ball for opening bowlers
- ◆ Bowlers to bowl close to the stumps (inside markers/channels)
- ◆ Bowlers must follow through past a marker
- ◆ Routine: running between wickets and bat swing exercises after net hit
- ◆ Compulsory run for any contact either bat or body
- ◆ Extra stumps for feedback in leaving the ball
- ◆ Hard verse soft

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## SPOT CALLS

Coach may call any one of the following for a selected period (ie. 6 balls, 5 minutes):

- ◆ Batters must run singles every ball
- ◆ Batters must hit through the ball along the ground
- ◆ Set a run target ie. 10 runs, 6 balls
- ◆ Balls must be left if possible
- ◆ Bowlers to bowl a maiden over
- ◆ Bowlers to bowl off-stump/leg stump, etc.
- ◆ Bowlers must bowl slower balls only
- ◆ Bowlers must bowl outswingers/inswingers, etc.
- ◆ Lofted strokes only
- ◆ Back foot strokes only
- ◆ Off-side strokes only
- ◆ Charge the bowler
- ◆ Footwork to spinners
- ◆ Bowl around the wicket

Bowlers and Batters may be set conflicting tasks as a tool to explore various situations and outcomes. For example, bowlers being instructed to bowl leg stump and batters instructed to hit through the off-side field. Encourage discussion and evaluation during and after.

## NET SESSION EXAMPLES

### 1. GAME SCENARIOS - using a match net

4 bowlers (pair the bowlers in similar types)  
2 batters

Give a game scenario eg. 5 wickets down, 3 runs and over for the next thirty overs.

Bowlers and batters develop a strategy and share this with you.

**Bowlers** set field, encourage them to try, on occasions, to rush the batsmen. Spinners may bowl their deliveries consecutively. One over on, one teachers them getting onto length straightaway.

**Batters** emphasis on singles and use of a routine to help them to be optimally ready for each delivery. Allow them to call for runs thereby changing the strike.

### 2. LETTING THE BALL GO

2 batters  
3 bowlers  
1 umpire

The aim of the task is for bowlers to deliver as many balls as possible without the batsmen being able to let the ball go. If a batsman is dismissed then a new batsman enters the net. Rotate batters if no dismissal - possibly right and left handed to teach bowlers to cope with changing line.

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### 3. STARTING AN INNINGS

Batsmen are at their most vulnerable early in their innings; however, this is an aspect, which is all but ignored at cricket practice. The following drill seeks to replicate some aspects of commencing an innings, thereby giving players extra practice at developing strategies for this situation.

4 batters - 2 in net at one time

4 bowlers - bowl in pairs, 1 over each then rotate

Batsmen aim to get off strike, if dismissed they are rotated. Rotate batters at any time if not dismissed after having faced more than an over and up to three overs.

Continue until all players have had the chance to begin their innings.

Also highlights to bowlers the importance of bowling well to new batsmen.

### 4. BATTERS VERSUS BOWLERS

Competitiveness often brings the best out of us via increasing anxiety and arousal levels, which in turn provide a pressure atmosphere and often a greater intensity to training.

## SKILL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

### BATTING (IN PAIRS)

- Footwork and Balance Drills
- Front/Backfoot Drives and Defence
- Length Batting
- Pad Drill (front foot only)
- One Handed Grip
- Decision/Perception Game
- Bouncer Practice
- Bowling Machine Practice
  - For shot pitched balls (with tennis balls)
  - Spinners (one wheel very slow)
  - Swingers (increased difference between wheel speeds)
  - Variety (mix in various ball types, ie. tennis, hard)
- Shoulder Positioning Drill
- Footwork to Spin
- Leaving the Ball

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## **BOWLING**

- Rating Drills (in pairs)
- Target Bowling - Length
- Target Bowling Line
- Target Bowling Test
  - Progress to a marked area on the pitch. A points system can be incorporated using this target method
- Run-Up Drill
- Channel Bowling
- Follow Through
- Release Drills
  - Progression* - 1. Impart as much backspin as possible
  - 2. Vary seam and wrist position for outswing and inswing release
  - 3. Bowl to each other attempting to keep seam straight.
- Coloured Balls/Taped Seams

## **RUNNING BETWEEN WICKETS**

Running between wickets is a crucial part of the game and poor running can be the difference of winning and losing a game. Players must always run the first one hard and push ones into two's and two into threes.

There are 4 main key points listed below:

### 1. Calling

- Three calls are: Yes, No & Wait. Must be LOUD.
- Striker to call on most occasions
- Non striker calls when striker unsighted

Batters need to make a judgement call and make a decision every single ball they face deciding on whether to run or not. Communication is important as there maybe more than one run to be taken. Players must have a good understanding of each other's speed.

### 2. Backing up

- Be moving forward when ball is delivered
- Short strides for balance and reaction time

Non striker needs to be ready at all times and only go far enough down to be able to get back if the batter on strike hits straight back to the bowler. The more

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ground they cover the better chance they have of gaining a run but need to be reminded they can be run out at the bowler end.

### 3. Turning Correctly

- Carry bat in correct hand for easy turning
- Low into crease
- Make sure the bat crosses over the crease
- Accelerate from crease like sprinter

When running more than a single, batters must learn to be able to carry the bat in both hands not just their dominant hand. They must turn on the side the ball is so they can have a clear view as to whether there might be another run.

### 4. Sliding the Bat

- Must slide early to put doubt in the umpires mind
- Use the thin side of the bat for speed

Sliding the bat is crucial and must be done at the appropriate time. Not too early (this will slow the batter down) and not too late (makes the decision easier for the umpire). By using the thin side of the bat this will enable the bat to have better speed and less chance of it getting caught in the ground.

## **RUNNING BETWEEN WICKETS- DRILLS**

### 1. Sliding the bat

Players run through and slide at the appropriate time.

Set up a cone 10M from a set of stumps. 2-3 sets to be set up depending on your numbers. Go through until they become successful.

### 2. Turning correctly

Players run through a series of 2's & 3's that have been hit on either side of the wicket.

Set up a cone 10M from a set of stumps. 2-3 sets to be set up depending on your numbers. Go through until they become successful.

### 3. Backing up

Set up two sets of stumps approx 15m apart. Coach sets up a normal batting stance and takes slow backswing (players commence backing up) and then the coach stimulates a batting stroke and proceeds to make a call - Yes, No or wait. Players respond to the call by running through to the other side. Can run singles, 2's or 3's.

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#### 4. Calling

Time how long it takes for a player to complete a run.

Then set up a stationary ball and fielder so they can judge their run. Then progress to a moving ball and fielder.

For a moving ball choose two teams-Batting team and a fielding team. Bowler (Coach) lobs easy ball to batter who places the shot and decides on a call. Fielders take it in turns of fielding the ball and throwing at the stumps while the batters rotate as well.

Can run quick singles or 2's and 3's for variation.

#### 5. Modified Games

Running Rounders

Run out/ Fielding game

Runs vs Catching