Bowling Basics

A resource for Newcastle Junior Cricket Coaches
KEY ELEMENTS

Bowling is quite unlike any other motor skill and for many, it can feel unnatural and even awkward in the first attempts. The key elements are outlined in the following paragraphs.

**Ball Grip (medium-pace)** - The ball is gripped with the index and middle fingers resting on top of the seam and the thumb underneath, also on the seam. The aim being to send the ball towards the target with the seam remaining in a perpendicular position allowing the ball to swing and move off the pitch.

**Run-Up** - is like a 100m race starting with small steps, body leaning forward, building momentum to a peak when reaching the bowling crease. Arms should pump forward towards the target, not across the body. Bowlers should know the number of steps in their run-up and which foot they take off. The run-up should be consistent to prevent over-stepping.

**Gather** - or ‘leap’ is used to turn the bowler from a chest-on position to the batter, to a side-on position which is performed while in the air. All body movement is directed at the target. The bowling hand, ball and arms are kept below shoulder level until airborne. The bowler looks at the target through the front-arm. For best efficiency, position the ball under the chin. Its important that arms do not cross over at this point.

**Delivery Stride** - Pull the front arm down by the hip (pulling the chain) keeping the elbow close to body. Arms and shoulders rotate as vertically as possible towards the batter. Eyes need to remain horizontal, front-foot points down the pitch to the batter.

**Release** - The bowling arm should “brush the ear” allowing for a high ball release. The wrist needs to be ‘locked’. The ball is released as the front-foot cuts the crease. The bowling arm comes across the body.

**Follow-through** - All bowlers should follow-through after delivering the ball. This involves taking a few steps towards the target before veering off the pitch.

INJURY PREVENTION

Learning good habits early will prevent injury later. Country-rotation and hyperextension should be corrected as early as possible in young bowlers. Counter-rotation means the hips and shoulders don’t point towards the target and are out of alignment. Changing the upper body is best with the bowler looking at the target through their leading arm.

Hyperextension can also lead to injury. Maintaining an upright body position at delivery and ensuring the bowling arm doesn’t go past the vertical are key.

*Coaches should work with players who already have a basic bowling action to refine it for maximum efficiency*
COACHING YOUNG BOWLERS

BOWLING FROM A STANDING START

No run-up required, bowlers stand in line with the stumps with their chest facing the target.

Jump 90 degrees to the right (for right-arm bowlers) or 90 degrees to the left (for left-arm bowlers). The bowler should now be ‘side-on’ with their shoulder pointing towards the target.

Raise arm without the ball towards the sky (11 o’clock), bowling hand remains next to hip or ‘pocket’ of shorts. Arms should be approx. 180 degrees, like aeroplane wings.

Now we need to get the bowler in a ‘rocking’ position back and forth. Raise the leg closest to the target (Kung-Fu Panda martial arts style) to create rocking motion. Stay ‘tall’ or upright during delivery.

Rotate arms wind-mill like (pull non-bowling arm to hip, rotate bowling arm and release ball at perpendicular point) and step through towards the target with the bowling arm brushing the ear during rotation. This is where young players will go from bowling into a ‘throwing’ position so remind them to keep their bowling arm relatively straight while rotating.

Practical - Hit the target - Take turns to bowl balls towards a set of stumps, place a square of markers on a ‘good length’ in front of stumps for bowlers to aim at. Why? Hitting the stumps on the full isn’t the best idea because a batsmen would be in the way during a game making the ball a full-toss. Give bowlers points for hitting stumps and landing the ball in the square.

BOWLING WITH A RUN-UP

The run-up should be smooth and free of any stuttering, shouldn’t be too long, just enough so that the ball is released at maximum speed. You should be able to draw a straight line from the top of the mark, through the crease to the batter.

Bowlers need to change from a ‘front-on’ run-up to ‘side-on’ to bowl the ball and this is best achieved while in the air. One way of getting players into the habit is to lay out some markers and a hurdle (set of Milo stumps side-on will do).

Bowlers jump ‘front-on’ off lead leg (right foot = right-arm bowlers, left foot = left-arm bowlers) over hurdle and finish in ‘side-on’ position, back-foot parallel to the crease.

Like a 100m runner, bowlers don’t immediately stop after they deliver the ball (or cross the finish line). Place a different coloured marker a few steps down and off the pitch to signify where you want your bowler to follow through to. Take into account left and right-arm bowlers. The run-up and follow-through should roughly be in a straight line through to the target.
HOW LONG SHOULD A RUN-UP BE?
Only as long as needed for the bowler to reach maximum pace before releasing the ball

HOW CAN THIS BE WORKED OUT?
Using markers and a flat area, ask the player to close their eyes and run as far as they need to then bowl the ball. Mark the start point and where the ball is released. Then get the player to do it 2-3 more times to see if it varies. When consistent, the length of run-up can be measured or stepped out for the bowler to remember.

CHANGING AN ACTION?
Generally this is done by walking through the change many times, then increasing the length of run-up and repeating the action. In this process you are re-training the player’s brain and walking through the change is easier than asking the player to do it from their usual run-up. If the action is ‘mixed’, change the upper body to align with the bowler’s feet.

ACTION-REACTION?
Newton’s Law - every action has an equal and opposite reaction. Any change in direction towards the target will require the body to make a compensating movement to bring the body into alignment. If a bowler changes the angle of their feet or arm position to one side during the delivery, the body will react with a compensating direction change on the other to align with the target.
For the game of cricket to be enjoyable the batter must have the opportunity to hit as many balls as possible and the fielders must be involved in the action as often as possible.

All games are played in accordance with the General Provisions and the Laws of Cricket, except as amended below. The aim and spirit of the NJCA Saturday 8’s Cricket is to ensure each player has the opportunity to bat, bowl and field in different positions.

a) Each match is played between two teams of 8 players. Each innings consists of 16 x 6-ball overs bowled by each side from one end of the wicket. Players shall bowl 2 non-consecutive overs of 6 balls, including no balls and/or wides.

b) Bowlers having difficulty bowling over-arm shall be permitted to bowl under-arm.

c) Each batting pair shall bat for 4 overs irrespective of the number of times dismissed. Batsmen will change ends at the fall of a wicket and at the end of each over.

d) Batsmen cannot be given out LBW.

e) (i) All runs and extras are scored according to the accepted Laws of Cricket, except any ‘wide’ or ‘no ball’ which shall not incur a run to the batting side. As per Rule ‘a’ these balls are not re-bowled.

   (ii) Any ball called wide by the umpire will be considered a dead ball. The batsmen then has a free hit (1 swing) at a ball placed on the batting tee and the game continues with the batters able to score runs and be dismissed, as the ball hit off the tee is now considered to be ‘live’. The batting tee should be placed on the batters ‘off-side’ at a suitable position on the edge of the wicket and near the popping crease. Any ball hit behind square does not count as runs. Batters should be encouraged to hit the ball through the off-side forward of square (between the bowler and the fielding position known as point).

f) When the ball is bowled and until the ball has passed the stumps, no fielder may stand closer than 10 metres from the striker’s wicket on the leg side, or in front of the wicket on the off-side. When the ball is played off the tee, fielders from the striker’s wicket on the leg-side or in front of the wicket on the off-side must be a minimum 10 metres from the batter. Fielders allow the Coach to collect the ball that is bowled. The live ball makes its way to the bowler and the no ball/wide is collected by an adult and placed on the batting tee as the other ball makes its way back to the bowler.

g) The fielding team shall position 3 players on either side of the wicket at all times, plus the wicket-keeper and the bowler.

h) Players rotate one position in a clockwise motion at the end of each over.

i) Teams may consist of 9 or 10 players. Extra players must bat or bowl and may be rotated as a fielder at the end of each over.

j) The ball used shall be the soft compound Kookaburra as specified.

K) Protective equipment - Batters will wear helmets when batting, protectors, batting gloves and leg protectors. Designated wicket-keepers will wear helmets, protectors, leg-protectors and gloves.

i) The pitch shall be 16 metre (stump to stump), synthetic, concrete or a mown outfield strip.

m) The boundary shall be 25 metres from the middle stump position in a semi-circle running from backward point behind the stumps to backward square at both ends. These semi-circles should be joined by a straight line running parallel with the wicket. Therefore the field should be ideally oval in shape.

n) There will be no official umpires. The fielding team coach shall officiate from the bowling end and the batting team coach from square leg. Advice, as required, is encouraged from both coaches during the match.

O) Match results are determined by the Average Cricket Method - total runs divided by wickets (+1) ie 0/50 does not give an average, 0 + (1)/50 does.

P) Normal scoresheets will be used and the match details entered into MyCricket results as per instructions.

Q) Matches continue until all overs are bowled.

R) Plastic Milo in2CRICKET stumps should be used if available.
NOTES:

- The batting tee should remain set up at all times so the batter is able to take a free hit immediately after a wide is called.
- For safety reasons, players should not field the wide ball until after the batter has taken their free hit.
- Batters are not permitted to take more than one swing at the batting tee.
- Batters are not permitted to hit the ball off the tee behind square. They are only permitted to hit the ball in front of square.
- A front-foot no ball does not facilitate a free hit unless it goes on to be so wide of the stumps that it would otherwise be deemed to be a wide.
- A ball bowled that is deemed to be a no ball because it has bounced more than once before it reaches the batsman does not facilitate to be a free hit unless it goes on to be so wide of the stumps that it would otherwise be deemed to be a wide.
- Use of Law of Cricket No. 43 - Common Sense!
Cricket is a statistics based game and scoring can be complex. At the introductory stage however, keeping score relates to the number of balls/overs faced by the batters, how many runs they score and how many times they get out.

Some things on the score-sheet are common to all games and need to be filled in, eg. round number, venue, date, team names, who won the toss and which team is batting first.

**SCORING**

**During Play**

There are 3 sections to a score-sheet, 1) the batting area, 2) bowler analysis and 3) progressive score. It is important to work methodically through these sections after each ball.

**Batting Area**

- Runs scored off the bat are awarded to the batsman, runs scored not using the bat (eg no balls, wides, leg-byes and byes) are recorded in Sundries or Extras.

**Bowler Analysis**

- The Runs scored off the bat plus any Wides or No Balls are added to the Bowler’s Analysis.

**Progressive Score**

- The total number of runs scored and/or Sundries are added to the Progressive Score.

So, if the batsmen hit a 4, the batsman hitting the ball gets 4 runs against their name, 4 is added to the progressive score and 4 is recorded against the bowler.

**At the end of each over**

The scorers should check team and individual totals to make sure they agree. The batsmen’s Runs scored off the bat + Sundries = Progressive Total. The bowler’s analysis + No Balls and Wides should add to the Progressive Total.

**At the end of each innings**

Individual batsmen’s innings are added together, the Sundries are totaled to achieve an innings team total.

**At the end of the match**

The team batting second has their innings recorded and the team with the most runs wins.