

## Coaches Development Day 2010 Session Notes:

### Question and Answer session with Tony Middleton and Jimmy Adams



#### Question came from the attending coaches.

Q1. Did Playing Club Cricket help in your development at a higher level?

JA. Yes, certainly. Firstly it is great fun to play with your friends, but also it taught me to play on different pitches under differing conditions. Working in nets under controlled conditions can teach correct form but when the pitch is damp and slow or there is variable bounce then the time spent at club level is important. Sometimes we must remember that it is the “Result Produced” that is important and not necessarily the technique used.

TM. I agree, taking academy players into senior club teams can be really beneficial. Where there are “old heads” that they can learn from it helps to develop not only their physical ability but also the mental toughness that comes from experience.

Q2. Following on then, when and what is the best time to introduce kids to senior cricket?

TM. When? Well it is when they are ready, but again this needs the experienced players around them that know how to “manage” the time to bowl and time to bat. There needs to be encouragement and guidance.

JA. Identify Role models within the club that can work almost as a mentor, but don’t leave it too late to introduce them as often they are ready before we are, don’t be afraid to push them!

Q3. We hear and see examples of “team spirit” but how can we coach team spirit?

JA. Team spirit is really important; one way is to get them calling for the ball in planned drills. Get them familiar with using their voice in a guiding way, Fielder A calls to fielder B calls to fielder C.

TM. Sometimes the Body Language can be all important, they may be vocal but displaying negative body language can give the wrong impression.

Q4. How do you teach a high over rate?

There are a number of ways and it follows on from the Team Spirit, you can set challenges in the field, i.e. Last one in position, all ready before the bowler...a lot comes from the keeper as he has the best view of the game.

Q5. As a coach what was the last thing you learnt?

TM. I have just returned from India, it was really interesting how they teach Batting almost as an art form. There is strong emphasis on posture and they use Yoga to develop this. They have a simple way of thinking:

The head is for Balance, the hips for control, the hands complete the shot. So if the Head is still and the hips properly aligned the hands will be free to work.

JA. One thing for me is realising that the net is not used just for batting. When I am in the net I am thinking about my batting, but also the Bowlers are practicing just as hard. So if I miss a ball or get bowled it is down to me to improve myself. No one ever gets 100% right in the net, if they did it'd be boring, say you face 100 balls and play the same shot at all of them 40-50% go exactly where you intended, this gives you something to work on next time.

TM. Remember, what we are trying to do is improve, this will help to make it easier but it is essential to put in the practice and set the goals.

Q6. There is a worry about “Over Coaching” how much is too much?

TM. Over coaching is often a concern but we should think about what we say and do. Sometimes there is too much correction so I think along these lines, “Spend less time correcting what has happened, Spend more time leading what is going to happen” you can't change the ball that was bowled or the shot that was played only influence what happens next. So I suggest, “watch without interfering, give information and praise”.

JA. Use 1 on 1 where possible, this can often show reactions. The player may play a good shot but not feel right about it, 1 on 1 situations can allow you to see this. Also remember that even criticism can be a positive if it is delivered with the correct manner.

Q7. What do you consider has more effect, Strict coach or Friendly coach?

JA. Well for me it would have to be the friendly coach, but in an ideal world you'd want a mixture of both. A coach needs to be adaptable and flexible dependant on the students.

TM. Again it is down to "what suits this player?" sometimes controlled anger can be very effective.

Q8. What's the best way to approach correction of Technique?

TM. Develop what they have already, so long as it is safe, if they hit the ball well over mid-wicket why stop them, work on this to build consistency.

JA. Yes, underpin their ability with the fundamentals, think about "their time" in the nets, split a session between what they want to do and what you want to do, let them have a hit then teach them how to control it.

Q9. As a left handed batsman, did Jimmy find a lack of consistency of bowling during his net sessions and how would he approach this as a coach?

JA. It can be difficult, especially for younger players so work with throw downs, but remember and remind them that what they get in the net is going to be similar to the match so set up that this is a match situation, explain that they need patience. Go back to the split session, say 15 minutes with the bowlers 15 minutes with throw downs or machine.

Q10. How did Jimmy develop his "pre-delivery" movements are they important?

JA. Mine just happened, I was working on get my hands clear of my body and this is a by product of the changes we made, I would recommend not to focus on it. Try to avoid pre-delivery routines.

TM. I'd just add, don't let things get complicated, work with players to develop what feels natural to them.

Q11. What would you attribute your playing success to?

Both: You need to find a method that works for you, then have belief and stick to it, if it's a batting technique and you get a duck first up don't immediately think of change. Enjoy the challenge. Importantly you need to be comfortable in your mind.

Q12. What do you do "mentally" to get in the mood for a game?

TM. It depended on the match, for 1 day games I'd try to get the adrenalin going but for the longer form of the game I found it important to stay relaxed, this would mean slowing down, taking time and making sure I was settled.

JA. For me it's a matter of staying relaxed and settled even in the short form of the game

Q13. How do you approach coaching the play of different shots? And when would you introduce these?

TM. Times have changed, now there are new shots and new areas . Work on these in the nets setting target zones, make the technique safe.

JA. Explain the “Risk and Reward”, a lot of the new shots are focussed around manipulating the field. Take time to explain this and then work on the execution.

Q14. How important are the basics?

TM. They are critical, Drill them and Teach them over and over. At the same time though asses the needs of the individual and treat them all separately.

JA. The Basics will always be important, Balance and Control in all aspects of the game.

The Coaches Association is extremely grateful to Tony and Jimmy for their time and we are sure that the answers they gave will prove beneficial to all who attended.