

NZC **TRANSITION** **TO HARDBALL** **COACHING**

INTRODUCTION

Cricket is New Zealand's premier summer sport, enjoyed by thousands across the country. It's a game that uniquely blends individual skill with team spirit, offering opportunities for players of all ages, genders, cultures, and abilities to participate at both social and competitive levels.

As players transition into hard ball cricket, coaches play a vital role in shaping their experience. This phase introduces new challenges and opportunities for growth – technically, tactically, and personally. Coaches are not only responsible for teaching the skills and strategies of the game, but also for nurturing the physical, emotional, social, and cognitive development of young players.

The International Council for Coaching Excellence highlights the evolving role of coaches: “They are not only expected to coach the sport technically and tactically but to coach and develop the person physically, emotionally, socially and cognitively.”

In many ways, coaches are the sport. They are the mentors' young players look up to, learn from, and remember. A great coach can inspire a lifelong love of cricket, instilling values such as teamwork, respect, resilience, and sportsmanship.

The Transition to Hard Ball Coaching E-Manual has been developed to support coaches working with young players who are beginning their journey in hard ball cricket. It provides practical tools, ideas, and insights to help coaches create safe, inclusive, and enjoyable environments that promote learning and development.

New Zealand Cricket acknowledges the critical role coaches play in player enjoyment, retention, and growth. Your contribution makes a real difference – not just in developing cricketers, but in shaping confident, capable young people.

“They are not only expected to coach the sport technically and tactically but to coach and develop the person physically, emotionally, socially and cognitively.”



CONTENTS

Section 1.0 - COACHING

COACHING STRATEGY	05
SMASH PLAY TAMARIKI PHILOSOPHY	06
QUALITY COACHING FRAMEWORK	07
ADVANCED FOUNDATION COACHING COURSES	08
COACHES CODE OF ETHICS	09
GROWTH AND MATURATION	10
MIDDLE CHILDHOOD COMMUNITY	11
LATE CHILDHOOD COMMUNITY	12
TIPS FOR BUILDING CONFIDENCE	13
MAKING LEARNING STICKY	14

Section 2.0 - BATTING

INTRODUCTION TO BATTING	17
LAYING A STRONG FOUNDATION	17
8 – 10 YEAR OLDS	18
GAMES, ACTIVITIES AND ‘QUICK FIXES’	19

Section 3.0 - PACE BOWLING

INTRODUCTION TO PACE BOWLING	21
PACE BOWLING TO AND THROUGH	21
GAMES, ACTIVITIES AND ‘QUICK FIXES’	22
WORKLOAD GUIDELINES	23
SAFE BOWLING ACTIONS	24
MEASURING A BOWLER’S RUN UP	25
SWINGING THE BALL	26
FIELD PLACEMENTS FOR PACE BOWLING	27

Section 4.0 - SPIN BOWLING

SPIN BOWLING INTRODUCTION	29
8 - 10 YEAR OLDS	29
GENERAL FIELDS FOR PACE BOWLERS	30
FIELD PLACEMENTS FOR PACE BOWLING	30
GAMES, ACTIVITIES AND ‘QUICK FIXES’	31

Section 5.0 - FIELDING

INTRODUCTION TO FIELDING	33
GAMES, ACTIVITIES AND ‘QUICK FIXES’	34

Section 6.0 - WICKETKEEPING

INTRODUCTION TO WICKETKEEPING	36
GAMES, ACTIVITIES AND ‘QUICK FIXES’	37

Appendix - ADDITIONAL INFORMATION & GAME IDEAS

SPIRIT OF CRICKET	39
ZONE RANGER GAME	40
THE PERFECT CRICKET GAME	41



Section 1.0

COACHING

COACHING STRATEGY	05
SMASH PLAY TAMARIKI PHILOSOPHY	06
QUALITY COACHING FRAMEWORK	07
ADVANCED FOUNDATION COACHING COURSES	08
COACHES CODE OF ETHICS	09
GROWTH AND MATURATION	10
MIDDLE CHILDHOOD COMMUNITY	11
LATE CHILDHOOD COMMUNITY	12
TIPS FOR BUILDING CONFIDENCE	13
MAKING LEARNING STICKY	14

COACHING STRATEGY

Our purpose is to enhance the cricketing experience through appropriate and accessible coaching.

CORE PRINCIPLES

- Coaches exist for the players
- Player enjoyment
- Coaches are leaders
- Continuous learning
- Culture of improvement
- Collaboration amongst coaches
- Coaching capability and delivery is appropriate to the players level
- Coaching the New Zealand way

ALIGNMENT

COMMUNITY COACHING PLAN

Purpose:

To establish a coaching framework that consistently meets the needs of all participants. Offers personal development and further opportunities, and ultimately drives retention within the sport.

Key objectives:

- Ensuring nationally there are suitably trained and supported coaches available to meet the needs of all players
- To increase player and coach retention
- To increase player and coach diversity
- Create and implement an aligned national coaching approach

HIGH PERFORMANCE COACHING PLAN

Purpose:

To grow New Zealand High Performance coaching capability to enable players to perform and win.

Key objectives:

- Grow the leadership and people management capability of HP coaches
- Enhance coaches' planning processes
- HP coaches understanding 'coaching - learning' and how to enhance learning and performance
- An aligned HP coach identification and development process for succession
- Ensure ongoing best practice in the technical and tactical elements of cricket

Why? To align Community and High-Performance coaching systems, ensuring a robust talent identification and development process so high-potential coaches can progress from Community to High-Performance. This process is enabled by collaboration between NZC (HP and Community), MA's (HP and Community), SNZ and HPSNZ.

SMASH PLAY TAMARIKI PHILOSOPHY

Moving from soft ball to hard ball cricket can be exciting but also a bit scary for young players. The ball feels harder, the game seems faster, and there’s a bigger chance of getting hurt. This can make some kids nervous or hold back.

As a coach, you can make a big difference. Your job is not just to teach skills, but also to help players feel safe, confident, and ready to give it a go. If players feel supported and enjoy themselves, they’re more likely to keep playing and improving.

The six pillars of Smash Play is a framework that can support you as a coach – they are the heartbeat of effective coaching.

When you weave these pillars into your coaching, you create an environment where players feel supported, challenged, and inspired. By living these values as a coach, you give your players the confidence and resilience to navigate this tricky phase of their cricket journey with energy and belief. Embracing the Smash Play pillars means you’re not just coaching the game – you’re empowering your players to thrive.



COACHING STRATEGY

COURSES & MODULES

Welcome to NZC's modular coaching system. Modules across multiple courses can be experienced in any order, based on course requirements, personal interest and learning.

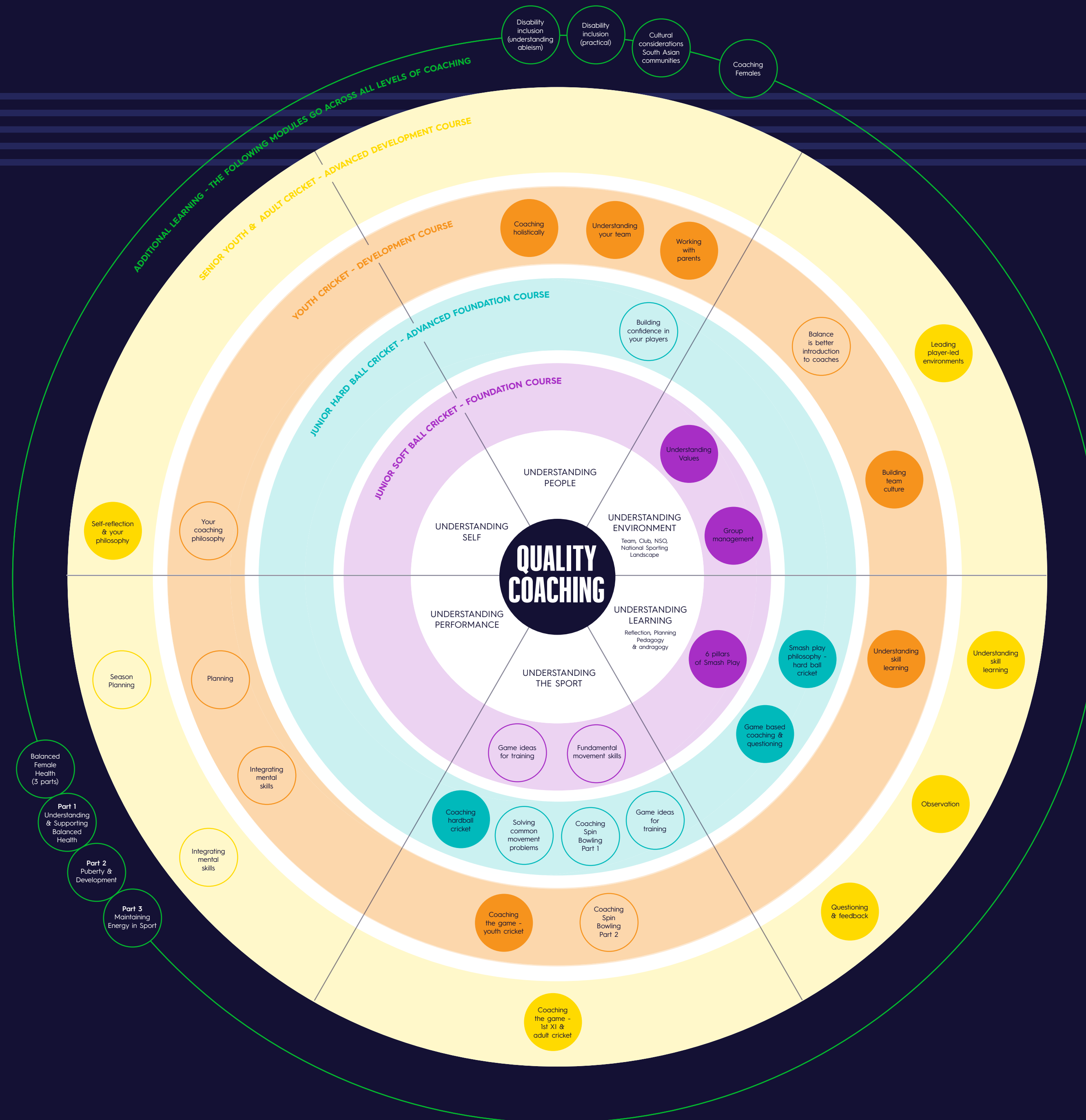
At the center of the system are NZC's 6 domains of quality coaching. All the modules throughout the various courses link back to one of those 6 domains.

Courses vary in the way they are delivered. Some are Face-to-face, online or virtual (via zoom/teams). For more information please see the course overview documents.

The junior hard ball - advanced foundation course is the stage of cricket that you are coaching at. It is recommended you engage with the learning modules within this coaching level.

COURSE KEY

- Core Module
- Extension Module






COACHING FRAMEWORK

This course will give you the knowledge to understand the key differences between coaching softball cricket and coaching hardball cricket, and with that knowledge, how you can create fun, engaging cricket environments for your team.

As you'll see below, there are a three 'core modules' as part of this course. These are the modules that we believe are critical for coaches to learn, and to help you be a great coach for your team. If you want to receive an 'advanced foundation course' certificate, you need to complete these core modules. There are also extension modules available to extend and build on your knowledge.

We will add extension modules periodically to this course as a way to keep our coaching content relevant, so keep an eye on the NZC coaching website.

COURSE KEY

-  Face-to-face
-  Online
-  Webinars (Zoom/Teams)

JUNIOR HARD BALL CRICKET ADVANCED FOUNDATION COACHING COURSE

CORE MODULES	EXTENSION MODULES <small>OPTIONAL LEARNING</small>	ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS
Coaching hardball cricket >	Game ideas for training >	All coaches must be police vetted
Games based coaching & questioning (x2 modules) ○	Solving common movement problems >	Welfare of Children & Vulnerable Adults (x3 modules) >
Smashplay philosophy for Hardball cricket >	Building confidence in your players >	
	Coaching spin bowling Part 1 >	

COACHES CODE OF ETHICS

01

Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every individual player as a human being

Treat everyone equally regardless of gender, disability, ethnic origin or religion.

Respect the player, development stage and goals of each athlete in order to reach their full potential.

02

Maintain high standards of integrity

Operate within the laws of cricket and in the spirit of cricket, while encouraging your players to do the same.

Advocate a sporting environment free of drugs and other performance-enhancing substances within the guidelines of the New Zealand Sports Drug Agency and the World Anti-Doping Code.

Do not disclose any confidential information relating to players without their written prior consent.

03

Be a positive role model for Cricket and players and act in a way that projects a positive image of coaching

All players are deserving of equal attention and opportunities.

Ensure the player's time spent with you is a positive experience.

Be fair, considerate and honest with players.

Encourage and promote a healthy lifestyle – refrain from smoking and drinking alcohol around players.

04

Professional responsibilities

Display high standards in your language, manner, punctuality, preparation and presentation.

Display control, courtesy, respect, honesty, dignity and professionalism to all involved with the game. This includes opponents, coaches, officials, administrators, the media, parents and spectators.

Encourage your players to demonstrate the same qualities.

Be professional and accept responsibility for your actions.

You should not only refrain from initiating a sexual relationship with a player, but should also

discourage any attempt by a player to initiate a sexual relationship with you, explaining the ethical basis of your refusal.

Accurately represent personal coaching qualifications, experience, competence and affiliations.

Refrain from criticism of other coaches and players.

05

Make a commitment to providing a quality service to your players

Seek continual improvement through ongoing coach education, and other personal and professional development opportunities.

Provide players with planned and structured training programmes appropriate to their needs and goals.

Understand that the development of players at any level is a long term process and this should not be sacrificed for short term gains.

Seek advice and assistance from professionals when additional expertise is required.

Maintain appropriate records.

GROWTH AND MATURATION

People grow and develop through different stages in their lifetime. The physical and emotional changes that occur as people mature, affect all aspects of life, including sport.

It is important for coaches to understand the different phases of development and how they can affect sports performance - particularly coaches of young athletes. Coaches need to consider not only the athletes' physical needs but also their social, emotional and cognitive needs.

By adapting plans and activities to suit the needs of athletes in terms of growth and development, the coach can help the athletes to progress through sport in the way that best suits them.

Understand and identify the various stages of growth and maturation

We can identify the following phases and approximate ages of physical, psychosocial and cognitive development. It must be emphasised that there are few people who go through these phases exactly as suggested; as individuals we all grow and develop at our own rate.

A young person's developmental/ biological age can differ by as much as two years from their chronological age. For example, an athlete who is 12 years old could be anywhere from 10 to 14 in developmental/biological age.



In terms of sport, there are different communities that a young person fits into. They are:

Early Childhood
(0 to 5 years old)

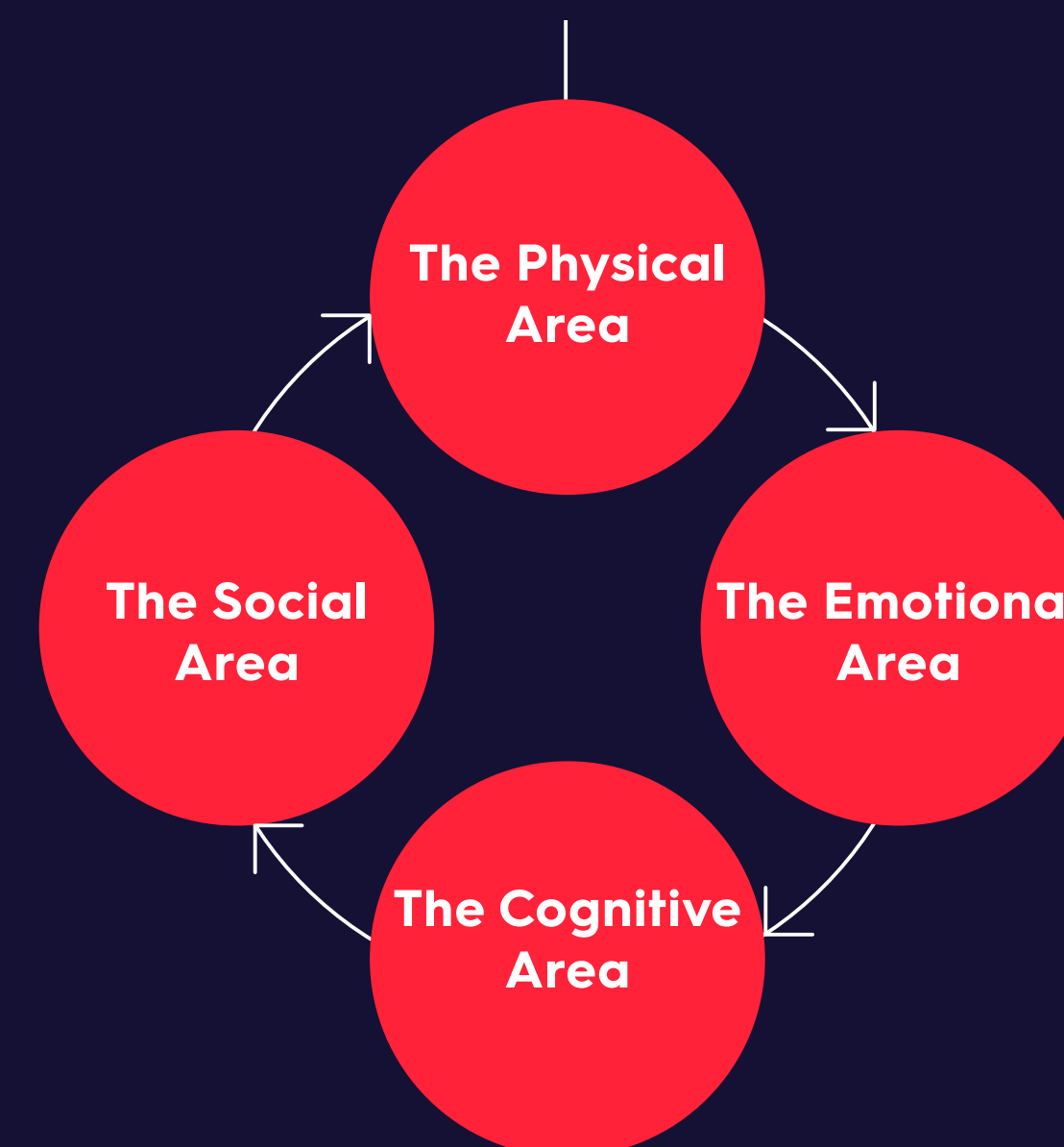
Middle Childhood
(6 to 8 years old)

Late Childhood
(9 to 12 years old)

Early Teenage
(13 to 16 years old)

Late Teenage
(17 to 19 years old)

Within each of these communities there are four areas to consider:



GROWTH AND MATURATION

- For 6–8 year olds, cricket should be:
- Play-based and exploratory, not performance-driven.
 - Focused on developing fundamental movement and social skills.
 - Delivered in short, engaging sessions with lots of variety.
 - Supportive of emotional development through praise and encouragement.
 - Cognitively appropriate—simple, fun, and imaginative.

This age group thrives in environments that are safe, inclusive, and fun, where they can move, play, and learn without pressure. Coaches play a key role in shaping positive early experiences that build a lifelong love for cricket.

MIDDLE CHILDHOOD COMMUNITY (6 TO 8 YEAR OLDS)

ATHLETIC CHARACTERISTICS

Physical

- Steady but slow physical growth.
- High energy levels and need for movement.
- Developing gross motor skills (running, jumping, throwing).
- Fine motor skills (grip, control) are emerging but still immature.
- Coordination is improving but can still be inconsistent.
- Hand-eye coordination is developing but not yet refined.
- Fatigue can occur quickly due to immature cardiovascular systems.

Social

- Strong attachment to family and familiar adults.
- Beginning to form friendships, often based on shared play.
- Enjoy group activities but may struggle with cooperation or sharing.
- Learning social rules and norms (e.g., turn-taking, fairness).
- Prefer small group interactions over large teams.
- Still developing empathy and understanding of others’ perspectives.

Emotion

- Seek approval from adults and are sensitive to criticism.
- Developing self-awareness and confidence through success and praise.
- Can be easily discouraged by failure or comparison.
- Emotions can be intense but short-lived.
- Need reassurance and encouragement to try new things.
- Begin to understand and express a wider range of emotions.

Cognitive (thought processes)

- Thinking is concrete and based on direct experiences.
- Learning through play, imitation, and repetition.
- Short attention spans—need frequent changes in activity.
- Curious and eager to learn but easily distracted.
- Begin to understand rules and cause-effect relationships.
- Prefer simple instructions and immediate feedback.

ATHLETIC NEEDS

Physical

- Steady but slow physical growth.
- High energy levels and need for movement.
- Developing gross motor skills (running, jumping, throwing).
- Fine motor skills (grip, control) are emerging but still immature.
- Coordination is improving but can still be inconsistent.
- Hand-eye coordination is developing but not yet refined.
- Fatigue can occur quickly due to immature cardiovascular systems.

Social

- Create a safe, inclusive, and friendly team environment.
- Use small-sided games to encourage interaction and teamwork.
- Reinforce positive social behaviours (sharing, encouragement, respect).
- Provide clear rules and expectations with consistent reinforcement.
- Encourage peer support and buddy systems.
- Celebrate team identity (e.g., team names, uniforms) to foster belonging.

Emotional

- Focus on positive reinforcement and encouragement.
- Avoid public criticism or comparison between players.
- Celebrate effort and participation, not just outcomes.
- Provide safe spaces to express feelings and build confidence.
- Use fun challenges that promote success and resilience.
- Be patient and empathetic—mistakes are part of learning.

Cognitive

- Use simple, clear instructions with visual demonstrations.
- Keep activities short and varied to maintain attention.
- Encourage learning through play and exploration.
- Use storytelling, themes, and imagination to engage thinking.
- Reinforce learning with immediate, specific feedback.
- Introduce basic game concepts (e.g., scoring, roles) in playful ways.

GROWTH AND MATURATION

Examine the Skills, Strategies, Tactics and Games Appropriate for an Athlete’s Stage of Growth and Maturation from late childhood through to late teenage communities

By understanding and recognising the different stages of growth and maturation, the coach can adapt activities to suit the needs and abilities of the individual athlete. Failure to adapt plans and activities contributes to the drop-out rate in sport, while good planning adds to the athletes’ enjoyment and may keep them involved in the sport longer.

The following tables describe the characteristics from late childhood to the late teenage communities.

This information is intended to be used as a reference to assist you in planning your coaching programme.



“Failure to adapt plans and activities contributes to the drop-out rate in sport.”

LATE CHILDHOOD COMMUNITY (9 TO 12 YEAR OLDS)		
ATHLETIC CHARACTERISTICS		ATHLETIC NEEDS
<p>Physical</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Growth is slow until puberty• Many females and some males reach puberty and experience growth spurts.• In puberty, skeletal system grows faster than muscular system, thus increasing injury risk.• Lack coordination whilst going through puberty.• Have steady increases in motor skills, strength, balance and coordination - fine motor skills are developing• Hand-eye coordination is relatively mature.• Are maturing at differing rates (individual, gender and ethnicity) <p>Social</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are becoming more independent.• Begin to identify with peers, although they still need and want guidance and support from parents and coaches.• Like an environment with consistent standards and fair consequences.• Enjoy organised group activities.• Enjoys a sense of belonging within a group, team, or club and thrives in cooperative activitie• Begin to sense differences.• Start to identify/prefer being with same sex groups.• Enjoy taking responsibility and assuming simple leadership roles.• Girls are more socially mature than boys. <p>Emotion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accept parent/family beliefs but are beginning to question parental authority.• Admire and imitate older people (role models) - look for the similarities between self and friends.• Success should be emphasised and failures minimised• Like challenge, but dislike public failure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Find comparisons with the success of others difficult and this erodes self-confidence.• Need to feel accepted and worthwhile (self-worth).• Are easily motivated to be involved and prepared to take risks.• With puberty, changes in hormones and thinking patterns contribute to mood swings.• Early maturing can be stressful - rapid physical change can be embarrassing. <p>Cognitive (thought processes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are capable of developing leadership skills• Vary greatly in academic abilities, interests and reasoning skills .• Begin to think logically and symbolically; new ideas are best understood when related to previous experiences.• Have increased attention span, but have many interests which change rapidly.• Are learning to absorb new ideas, but tend to judge in terms of right/wrong or black/white.• Often reject solutions offered by adults in favour of finding their own solutions.• Like to share thoughts and reactions.• Are developing individual identity - intrinsic motivation is important (doing it for yourself).• Understand multiple levels of meaning and have a rapidly increasing vocabulary.• Use reasoning skills to solve problems, negotiate and compromise with peers.• Can differentiate between ability and effort (If I work hard, I will improve).• Have clearer understanding of the concept of competition (social comparison).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Variety of sports, events and positions.• Skill development that becomes more sport specific.• A continued degree of modified sports, but gradual introduction of adult structured games/ events.• A high level of activity, lots of time on task) with rotations of roles and equal involvement.• Consistent, organised sessions - transition from deliberate play to increasingly deliberate practice.• Decision making.• Implicit and constraints-led learning will provide increased motivation, skill adaptability and decision making.• Teaching Games for Understanding (TGfU).• Introduction to the notion of competition, with emphasis on improvement to win.• Provision of a safe emotional, physical, cultural and social environment.• Proactive promotion of fair play and moral decision making.• Use of role models as a teaching tool.• Lots of positive reinforcement, variety, enjoyment.• Learning through mistakes and creation of challenges.• Encouragement to take risks in games.• Positive input from parents• Cooperative activities that reinforce the enjoyment of playing with friends.• An empathetic environment (understand and listen to individual athletes’ needs).• Leadership and responsibility opportunities (independence).• Identification with current childhood trends.• Understanding of hormonal mood swings (e.g. do not embarrass).

TIPS FOR BUILDING CONFIDENCE

MAKE IT A SAFE PLACE

Let players know it's normal to be nervous. Listen to their concerns and show them that their safety matters most.

Example: Start each session with a quick check-in where players can share how they're feeling.

KEEP IT FUN

Fun takes the pressure off and builds confidence naturally.

Example: Play "hit the target" bowling games or "fielding relay races" where the focus is on enjoyment.

SET SMALL, ACHIEVABLE GOALS

Short-term goals help players feel progress.

Example: "Today we're aiming to hit 5 solid defensive shots in a row" rather than "be good against hardball."

REFLECT TOGETHER

After a session, ask reflective questions: What went well? What could I try differently?

Example: "What's one thing you're proud of from today, and one thing you'd like to work on next time?"

START EASY, BUILD UP

Don't jump straight to the hardest drills. Start with softer balls or tape a tennis ball before moving to the hardball.

Example: Have a "soft ball warm-up" before using hardballs so players can ease in.

CELEBRATE EFFORT, NOT JUST RESULTS

Notice and praise the little wins—like trying a new shot or stopping a ball they would have avoided before.

Example: Give out a "courage clap" for players who try something new, even if it doesn't work perfectly.

TALK ABOUT NERVES

Let players know everyone gets nervous—even pros.

Example: Share a story of when you or a famous player felt nervous and how you dealt with it.

USE PROTECTIVE GEAR FOR CONFIDENCE

Make sure pads, gloves, helmets, and boxes fit properly. When players feel safe, they'll play with more freedom.

Example: Have a "gear check" at the start of training so everyone is set up right.

STAY CALM AND POSITIVE

Players copy your energy. Keep your tone and body language relaxed, even when they make mistakes.

Example: When a player gets hit or misses the ball, smile, encourage them, and remind them it's all part of learning.

BUILD A SUPPORTIVE TEAM

Players feel more brave when their teammates cheer them on.

Example: Have a rule that everyone claps when a teammate does something well in training.

MAKING LEARNING STICKY

Ian Renshaw is an Australian researcher well-known for his work in skill acquisition and coaching design, particularly around **representative learning design**. His session design principles are built on the idea that training sessions should reflect the demands of the game as closely as possible.

As a coach it would be worthwhile considering some of his ideas when planning and designing practice sessions for your team of cricketers. You may not use all these ideas at once, but even focusing on just a few will make a big difference to the training environment you create.

01

Keep it Game-Like

Design practices that look and feel like the real game.

Make sure players are seeing, deciding, and acting in the ways they would in competition.

02

Link Perception and Action

Avoid isolated drills where players just “go through the motions” like hitting off stationary tee’s

Build activities where players must read the play and respond in real time.

03

Offer Choices, Not Just Instructions

Create environments where players explore different solutions.

Encourage creativity and adaptability, not just repetition of one “correct” way.

04

Adjust the Constraints

Shape learning by changing the space, time, rules, or equipment.

Use constraints to guide behaviour without over-coaching.

05

Expect Ups and Downs

Understand that progress is not always linear.

Be patient — plateaus and setbacks are part of learning.

06

Hit the Right Challenge Point

Keep practices challenging but achievable.

Make activities varied and uncertain so players learn to adapt under pressure.



Section 2.0

BATTING

INTRODUCTION TO BATTING	17
LAYING A STRONG FOUNDATION	17
8 – 10 YEAR OLDS	18
GAMES, ACTIVITIES AND ‘QUICK FIXES’	19

BATTING

The main aim of every batter at this level should be to develop confidence facing the hard ball. Familiarity with protective equipment and the use of protective equipment is non-negotiable. Once players are familiar and confident batting against a hard ball, they can commence developing a sound, reliable technique, to score runs and develop the discipline to watch the ball.

The coach has a very important role to play in developing batters and making sure they are equipped mentally, physically, and tactically to enable them to be successful. At this level the real art of the coach lies in his or her ability to create a safe, fun, engaging environment and to assist the player to develop confidence, resilience and to also expand the fundamental skills of batting.

There is no one way to bat. Some batters have relatively unorthodox techniques that are highly effective. In the end, it comes down to a player's attitude and their desire to succeed combined with a coach's ability to guide that player.

LAYING A STRONG FOUNDATION

Ensure the player is padded up correctly wearing the appropriate protective equipment.

THE SET UP

COMFORTABLE

BALANCED

READY TO MOVE FORWARDS & BACKWARDS

WATCH THE BALL & REACT

STRIKE WITH THE FULL FACE

Note to Coaches:

Players at this level should be playing as many fun and engaging games as possible at practice. Coaches should not be too concerned with technique but should ensure they coach players the fundamentals outlined above and below.

BATTING



8-10 YEAR OLDS

Grip

- The grip should be comfortable for the player
- For right handers, the left hand is typically placed at the top of the handle with the right hand just below it. This is a common starting point for developing the grip
- For left handers the right hand is placed at the top and the left hand is just below it.
- Both hands should be as close together on the handle as is comfortable for the individual.
- The grip should allow the player to hit the ball to both sides of the wicket

Stance

- Generally, shoulder width apart. Head position still with eyes level
- Nose level, pointing towards the bowler
- Aim for balance and stability

Backswing

- Focus on getting the hands back and up
- Bend the arms and point the wrists up
- Swing path should be natural
- Watch the ball
- Reaction – make a decision based on the line and the length
- Emphasis on watching the ball from the bowler's hand

Front Foot drive –

- Push off the back foot
- Lead into the ball with the head and front shoulder
- Bent front knee and straight back leg
- Stable base
- Hit under the eyes
- Strike with the full face in the intended direction of the shot

Pull shot

- As the ball bounces react by getting into a good position on the front OR backfoot
- The head remains still to watch the ball closely
- At impact the arms snap to full extension in front of the body

Cut shot

- As the ball bounces react by getting into a good position
- Push off the front foot to move back
- Hands high to enable powerful horizontal bat swing
- Rotate the shoulders followed by the hands to create a snap with full extension into the shot
- Weight moves in the direction of the shot

Front Foot defense

- Defend deliveries that you feel threaten your stumps
- Present the full face of the bat

Running Between the wickets

- Expect to run every ball – Backing up is essential
- 3 calls – Yes, No and Wait
- Call loudly and clearly after every ball
- Run hard and straight down your lane slightly off the pitch
- Adopt a low athletic turning position with full extension of the arm and the bat

Transferable Skills

- A batter who consistently plays shots with the full face of the bat
- A player who demonstrates the ability to drive the ball and is capable of playing the cut and pull shot
- A batter who can rotate the strike through sound calling and backing up

BATTING

GAMES, ACTIVITIES AND 'QUICK FIXES'



FIGURE IT OUT GAME

This game challenges players to score runs through a particular zone of the field. The fielding team must figure out which zone the batters can or can't score within and adjust their plans accordingly. Game video [HERE](#)

BATTLE RING - HUI TE MARAMA

Teams compete against each other to score as many runs as possible. Focusing on finding gaps, Battle Ring builds awareness and strategy. Game video [HERE](#)

PLAY 360 - TAKARO HIRIHURI

Playing in at least two teams – batting and fielding – Batters hit balls 360 degrees around the arena. They run around cones to score while the fielding team collects the balls. The team with the most runs wins. Lots of quick changes, lots of action. Game video [HERE](#)

SMASH OFF – HAUKURU TAUMAHEKEHEKE

Using a wall or net, players work in pairs – one feeding the ball, and one batting. The batter hits the ball into the wall or net scoring points as they do. Smash Off can be extended in a range of ways to increase the challenge! Game video [HERE](#)

COACHING QUICK FIX: ACCESSING THE OFFSIDE

In this Coaching Quick Fix video, learn how to help a batter access the offside. Game video [HERE](#)

COACHING QUICK FIX: USING THE CREASE – BATTING

In this Coaching Quick Fix video, learn how to help batters explore different ways to manipulate their location on the crease to enable more scoring options. Game video [HERE](#)

COACHING QUICK FIX: HITTING THE BALL ON THE GROUND

In this Coaching Quick Fix video, learn how to help a batter keep the ball on the ground. Game video [HERE](#)



Section 3.0

PACE BOWLING

INTRODUCTION TO PACE BOWLING	21
PACE BOWLING TO AND THROUGH	21
GAMES, ACTIVITIES AND ‘QUICK FIXES’	22
WORKLOAD GUIDELINES	23
THE IMPORTANCE OF SAFE BOWLING ACTIONS	24
MEASURING A BOWLER’S RUN UP	25
SWINGING THE BALL	26
FIELD PLACEMENTS FOR PACE BOWLING	27

PACE BOWLING

Pace bowling is about bowling as fast as you physically can with a safe, consistent action. The action of bowling fast places several stresses on the body, and young bodies are particularly susceptible to injury. However, with the right programs and monitoring, the pace bowler can become effective in a team.

The main objective of every pace bowler is to become a regular and effective wicket taker for their team. They can achieve this by developing the ability to swing and seam the ball and mastering the ability to bowl different lines, lengths, and variations.

As a coach it is essential that you assist your pace bowlers by providing them opportunities to bowl and recognizing when they need to rest and recover.

8 - 10 YEAR OLDS

To generate momentum by building rhythm through a natural balanced stride pattern in the run up

1. Encourage a forward lean with the arms not crossing over the body
2. Look at the target, visualise the straight lines and execute the run up and delivery down those straight lines
3. Run up towards the target

Grip

- Index and second finger slightly apart on the seam
- Thumb under the ball
- Experiment with the width of fingers and thumb position on the seam
- Players to explore what works for them

Run Up

- Accelerate gradually with forward lean to target
- Keep the arms close to the body and all body movements towards the target
- Head steady and forward
- Eyes on the target
- The run up should allow the bowler to reach the crease with the correct timing and rhythm for their delivery stride

The Delivery

1. Jump towards the target
2. Keep the ball close to the body in the gather
3. Ensure hips and shoulders are in line with the target.
4. Follow through towards the target

The Release

- The ball should be released with the palm facing the target.
- All body movements including the jump are directed at the target
- Prior to the leap keep the hands arms and ball below shoulder level
- Keep the arms moving continuously forwards towards the target

Seam Presentation

- Present an upright seam at the point of delivery
- Wrist behind the ball and palm to the target. Direction of the palm will determine the 'shape' of the delivery
- Use of a 'long' bowling arm towards the target upon release of the delivery
- Encourage experimentation with seam position

Follow through

- Finish the action in the direction of the target

Ball Maintenance

- Keep the ball dry
- Keep the ball polished
- Keep the seam clean
- Decide which side of the ball the team is going to keep shiny

Transferable skills

- The players should be able to swing the new ball
- The bowler should be able to hit the pitch hard and generate bounce

PACE BOWLING

GAMES, ACTIVITIES AND 'QUICK FIXES'



HOOP SMASH | HAUKURUTIA TE POROHITA

Playing in pairs, players bowl the ball into a hoop, bouncing it as high as they can challenging their partner to catch it. Game video [HERE](#)

COACHING QUICK FIX: BOWLING ACCURATELY

In this Coaching Quick Fix video, learn how to help bowlers create more alignment and momentum towards the target. Game video [HERE](#)

COACHING QUICK FIX: BOWLING WITH A BENT ARM

In this Coaching Quick Fix video, learn how to help bowlers overcome bowling with a bent arm, thus enabling legal bowling actions. Game video [HERE](#)

COACHING QUICK FIX: DOUBLE HOP BOWLING:

In this Coaching Quick Fix, we explain how to help a player overcome a double-hop in their bowling action, which may cause; inaccuracy and loss of momentum in the bowling action. Game video [HERE](#)

WORKLOAD

The following outlines the alignment with bowling workloads and player safety but it is also important to identify another key reason for the pace bowling guidelines.

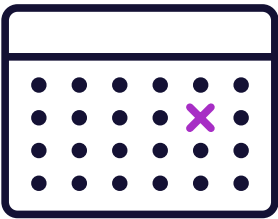
With these guidelines in place it will help to align tournaments being played with one of Age & Stage’s key principles – maximum involvement. The maximum overs allowed to be bowled per non-spin bowler during a tournament of 3 days or longer in length will result in a wider spread of players within a team needing to bowl throughout the week.

Reliance on two or three key bowlers to bowl the majority of overs during the tournament can no longer be carried out. This will help to improve the overall experience of all players within the team during the tournaments and provide more players than before with the opportunity to learn and perform during a representative tournament.

- 9-12 years of age**
- Restrictions are in place for player development. All players to bowl in every match unless injured or at risk of injury
 - Maximum 8 balls in any one over, including wides and no balls

- 13-18 years of age**
- Restrictions in place predominantly for safety but also for development purposes
 - Maximum overs in a day includes all overs on that day, including a second innings

For definition purposes:
A pace bowler should be regarded as any bowler who is not a genuine spin bowler and therefore includes medium pace and slow medium bowlers and where the wicket keeper would normally stand back. Coaches are asked to apply the rule strictly and not try to avoid it by bringing up the wicket keeper artificially.



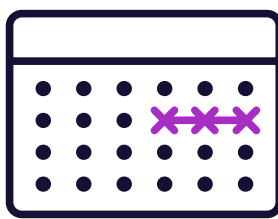
Once per week games (e.g. Saturday Cricket)

AGE	BOWLING RESTRICTION
Primary: Year 5-6 9-11 years old	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3 overs per day• 2 overs per spell
Intermediate: Year 7-8 11-13 years old	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5 overs per day• 4 overs per spell
Secondary (junior): Year 9-10 13-15 years old	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 12 overs per day• 5 overs per spell
Secondary (senior): Year 11-13 15-18 years old	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 20 overs per day• 8 overs per spell



The guidelines below are based on junior and youth cricket practice sessions

AGE	BOWLING RESTRICTION
Primary: Year 5-6 9-11 years old	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 session per week• 4 overs per session
Intermediate: Year 7-8 11-13 years old	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1/2 sessions per week• 5 overs per session
Secondary (junior): Year 9-10 13-15 years old	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 sessions per week• 5 overs per session
Secondary (senior): Year 11-13 15-18 years old	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 sessions per week• 6 overs per session



The table below is based on cricketers playing in tournaments that are played for 3 or more days

AGE	BOWLING RESTRICTION
Primary: Year 5-6 9-11 years old	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 4 overs per day• 2 overs per spell,• 20 overs max - for tournaments 3 days or longer (tournament guidelines higher than once per week guidelines due to multiple games played in one day – reserve players will need to be brought to tournaments due to bowling guidelines)
Intermediate: Year 7-8 11-13 years old	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 8 overs per day• 4 overs per spell• 30 overs max - for tournaments 3 days or longer (tournament guidelines higher than once per week guidelines due to multiple games played in one day)
Secondary (junior): Year 9-10 13-15 years old	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 10 overs per day• 5 overs per spell• 38 overs max (for tournaments 3 days or longer)
Secondary (senior): Year 11-13 15-18 years old	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 10 overs per day• 6 overs per spell• 42 overs max (for tournaments 3 days or longer)

NZC would like to stress the importance that the above guidelines need to be progressively introduced to a bowler’s workload and not included rapidly prior to a tournament. Coaches should introduce progressive bowling schedules that will allow players to increase their workloads in a controlled manner leading into a tournament.

SAFE BOWLING ACTIONS/ PLAYER SAFETY

Pace bowlers going through their peak height velocity (growth spurt) should be monitored carefully with the view to reducing their workload in training and games by up to 50%.

They are prone to developing injuries such as Sever's disease, Osgood Schlatters and stress fractures at this stage of their growth, so they need to be treated carefully. This is what player-centred coaching is all about. Doing what is best for the player.

"Keep the hips and shoulders in line and you'll be fine, Twist the back, and it will crack."

BOWLING ACTIONS:

There are two main types of bowling action

'SIDE-ON' and 'FRONT-ON'

Some young cricketers may have a **'SIDE-ON'** action. This means that the bowler in his/her run-up jumps or leaps into a Side-On position to deliver the ball so that his/her:

- Back foot lands parallel to the crease.
- Front foot, shoulders and hips point down the wicket towards the batsman.
- Head looks over or through a raised front arm.

Some young cricketers may have a **'FRONT-ON'** action and should not be discouraged. This means that the bowler in his/her run-up stays in a front-on position to deliver the ball so that his/her:

- Back foot on landing and front foot both point down the wicket towards the batsman.
- Shoulders and hips are parallel to the crease.
- Head looks inside a raised front arm.

Both actions are equally acceptable as long as they are 'SAFE' and therefore not 'MIXED'.



SIDE-ON



FRONT-ON

AS A NOTE FOR COACHES:

As a coach you are well advised to check the bowling actions of your young bowlers to ensure they are safe. Actions are considered to be 'safe' when the back foot, hips and shoulders are in alignment when the ball is released. That is, the back foot, hips and shoulders are either all side-on or all front-on. Injuries occur, especially to backs, when bowlers have MIXED bowling actions. That is their actions combine aspects of both the side-on and front-on actions.

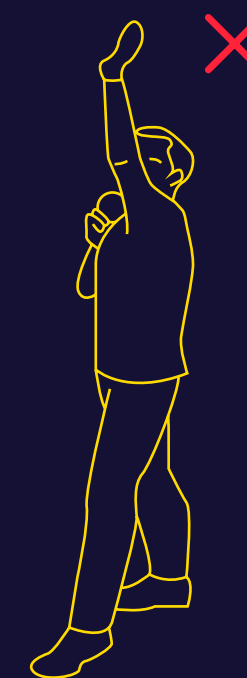
As a coach check the action of each of your bowlers by observing the position of:

- The back foot on landing
- The hips
- The shoulders and front arm

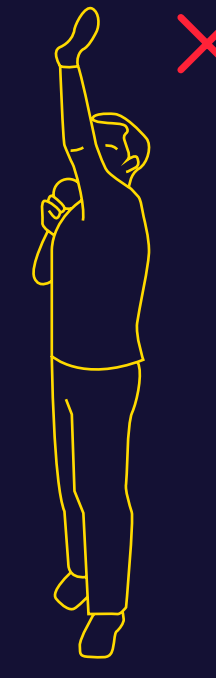
They all should be in alignment for the action to be safe.

As a rule of thumb the position of the bowler's back foot will determine where the hips and shoulders should be. Take care in trying to correct a mixed bowling action. If you are unsure seek the advice, guidance and assistance of an experienced coach.

MIXED ACTIONS:



**HIPS PAST FRONT-ON
SHOULDERS SIDE-ON**



**HIPS PAST SIDE ON
SHOULDERS SIDE ON**



**HIPS PAST SIDE-ON
SHOULDERS OPEN**

MEASURING A BOWLER'S RUN UP

As cricketers develop physically, so will their run up and stride patterns. Consequently, it is important for coaches to assist their players in ensuring their run up evolves in line with their physical development.

01

Start from a fixed mark and run away from this, gradually building momentum until it feels 'right' to jump and bowl.

02

Mark where the front foot lands in the delivery stride.

03

Repeat this several times until a consistent mark is found.

04

Pace out the distance between the two marks, counting the number of regular walking steps. This is the length of the run up.

SWINGING THE BALL

Pace bowling is about taking wickets through the control of pace, line and length and swing and/or seam. Most teams have several fast and/or medium pace bowlers. It is usual for the team's fast bowlers to open the bowling and spearhead the bowling attack.

Pace bowlers who learn to swing the ball in the air into or away from batsmen add to their ability to deceive and dismiss batsmen. To swing the ball bowlers need to shine one side of it and to grip and release it correctly. Generally the ball will swing, provided the seam remains upright, in the direction the seam is angled, with the shiny side of the ball on the outside of the intended curve. To achieve maximum swing bowlers must keep the ball pitched up to the batsman and direct their attack on the offstump or just outside.

OUTSWING BOWLING

Right arm outswing bowlers swing the ball **AWAY** from right hand batsmen towards the slips the intention is to bowl or dismiss them with catches behind the wicket.

OUTSWING GRIP



- Seam vertical but angled towards first slip.
- Shiny side of the ball faces the leg side.
- First two fingers close together on the seam.
- Side of the thumb underneath the ball on the seam.

OUTSWING DELIVERY



- Bowled from close to the stumps.
- Ball released with the bowling arm high, the hand and fingers behind the ball.
- Head still, eyes level and focused on the target.
- Follow through strongly with the bowling arm across the body.

OUTSWING MOVEMENT



INSWING BOWLING

Right arm inswing bowlers swing the ball **INTO** right hand batsmen from the offside in an attempt to dismiss them bowled or LBW.

INSWING GRIP



- Seam vertical but angled towards leg slip.
- Shiny side of the ball faces the off side.
- First two fingers close together on the seam.
- Flat of the thumb underneath the ball on the seam.

INSWING DELIVERY



- Bowled from slightly wider on the crease.
- Ball released with the bowling arm very high, the hand and fingers behind the ball.
- Head still, eyes level and focused on the target.
- Follow through with the bowling arm down the same side of the body.

INSWING MOVEMENT



FIELD PLACEMENTS FOR PACE BOWLING

The following field placements are general starting points for outswing and/or inswing bowlers based on 9-side cricket.

NOTE FOR COACHES ON FIELD PLACEMENTS

Field settings for pace bowlers should reflect the bowler's style, pitch conditions, and the batter's strengths and weaknesses. While traditional attacking fields may include two slips and a gully, at many levels of cricket, a more pragmatic approach is often required.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Pitch Conditions:

On a green seaming pitch, attacking fields with slips and a short leg may be more effective. On flatter pitches, bowlers may need more protection square of the wicket.

Bowling Length:

For short-pitched bowling, set a square field with deep square leg, deep point, and possibly a third man to manage edges.

For fuller length bowling, set a straighter field with mid-off, mid-on, and straight boundaries to catch drives.

Swing Type:

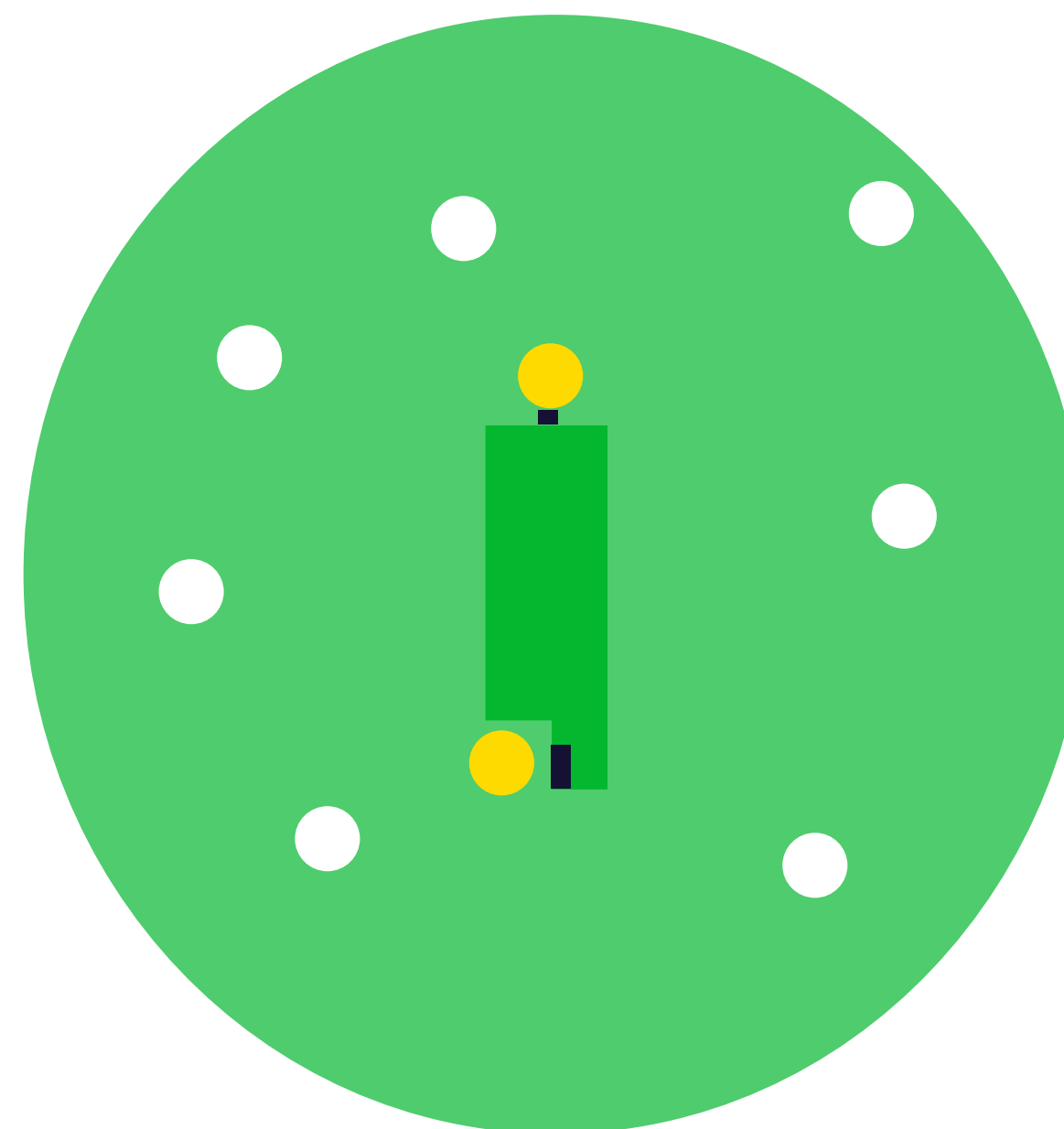
For outswing, one slip and a gully can be more effective than two slips, especially if the ball is moving late.

For inswing, consider a leg slip or short mid-wicket for catches off the pads.

Coach's Role:

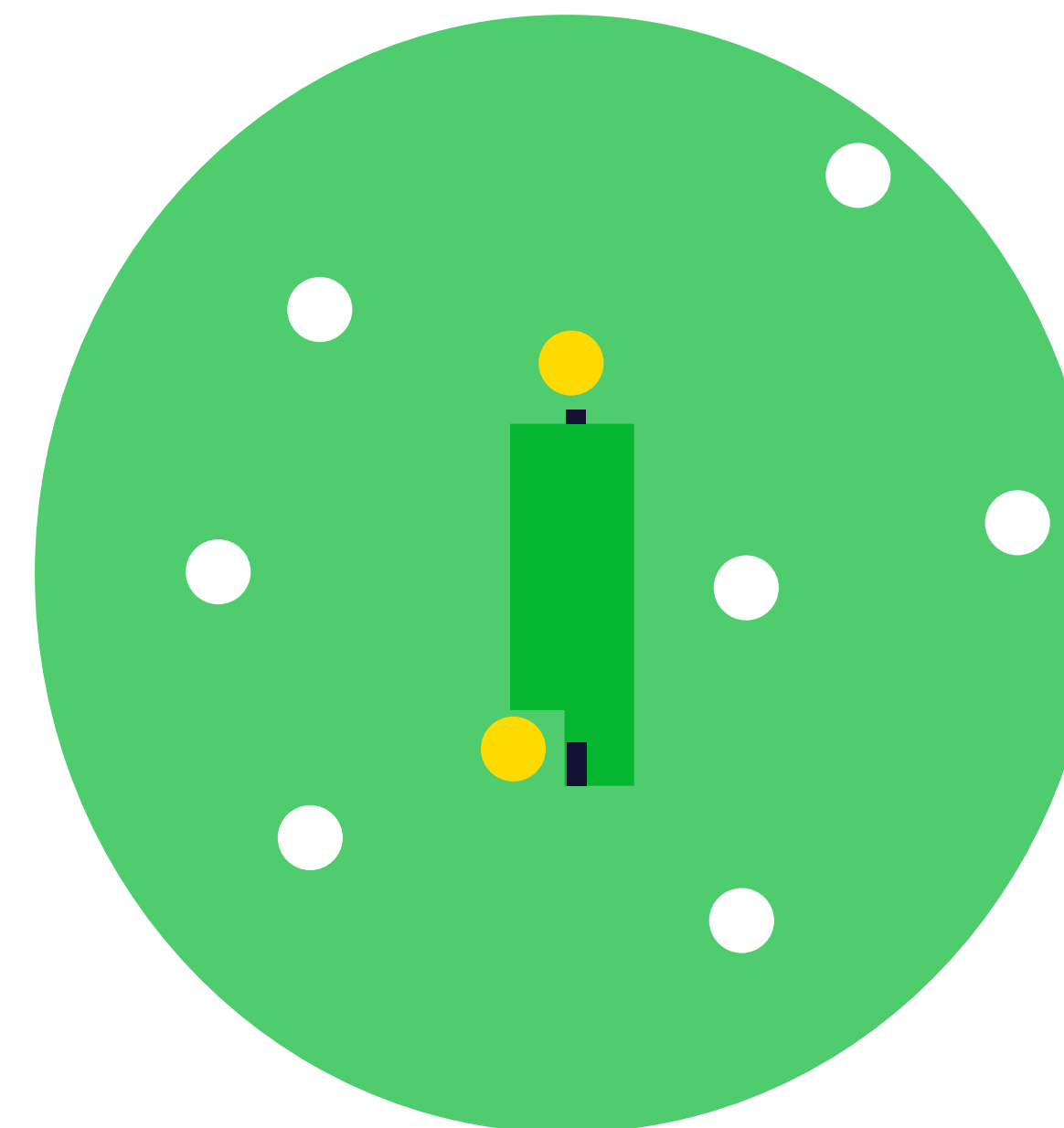
Encourage bowlers to experiment with fields that suit their strengths. Use fielders proactively to build pressure and create wicket-taking opportunities.

OUT SWING BOWLER



Bowlers end

IN SWING BOWLER



Bowlers end



Section 4.0

SPIN BOWLING

SPIN BOWLING INTRODUCTION	29
8 - 10 YEAR OLDS	29
GENERAL FIELDS FOR SPIN BOWLERS	30
FIELD PLACEMENTS FOR SPIN BOWLING	30
GAMES, ACTIVITIES AND 'QUICK FIXES'	31

SPIN BOWLING

Coaches need to look for players who are willing to experiment with trying to spin the ball. This will allow for something exciting to work with and nurture. Coaches need to embrace uniqueness; many spinners have their own unique action and style. With this uniqueness comes something a little different, and a unique style can often produce its own results in how the ball behaves in the air and off the pitch.

The coach needs to remember that when players are experimenting with bowling spin that the action should be left alone to develop naturally.

SPIN BOWLING

Stock delivery

- 1. Spin bowlers must be able to deliver their stock delivery consistently
- 2. Spin bowlers must be able to spin the ball for their stock delivery
- 3. Variations should be developed once they are able to bowl their stock delivery consistently

Dip, drift and turn

- 1. Players need to learn and understand how to spin the ball

Run up

- Accelerate gradually to the crease
- Keep arms close to the body
- Generate momentum by moving body parts in the direction of the target
- Head steady
- Look at the target

Stock ball

- Off spin and Leg spin
- Spin the ball hard

Field setting

- The coach should help the player understand and learn about basic field setting for their bowling

Transferable skills

- The bowler should be able to show ability to turn the ball

FINGER SPINNERS

Finger spin bowlers are also known as 'orthodox' spinners because they use the first or index finger to spin the ball. Right arm finger spin bowlers are called 'off spinners' and left arm finger spin bowlers are called 'left-arm orthodox spinners'.

WRIST SPINNERS

Wrist spin bowlers use the wrist more than the fingers to spin the ball. Right arm wrist spin bowlers are called 'leg spinners' and left arm wrist spinners are referred to as 'chinaman bowlers'.

EXAMPLE: OFF SPIN BOWLING

Right arm off spinners use the first or index finger to impart spin on the ball so that it turns after it bounces from off to leg against right hand batsmen. They pitch the ball up just outside the off stump to try and bowl batsmen, or to cause them to misjudge the ball so they either hit it in the air and are caught, or leave their crease and be stumped.

EXAMPLE: LEG SPIN BOWLING

Right arm leg spinners use the wrist more than the fingers to impart spin on the ball so that it turns after it bounces from leg to off against right hand batsmen. They pitch the ball up on the line of the stumps to try and bowl batsmen, or cause them to edge a catch to the wicketkeeper or slips, or to leave their crease and be stumped.

OFF SPIN GRIP



- Seam horizontal.
- Grip the ball firmly with the first two fingers spread as widely as possible across the seam.
- Rest the ball lightly on the thumb and third finger.

LEG SPIN GRIP



- Seam horizontal.
- Grip the ball firmly in the first two fingers spread widely across the seam and the third finger which is bent and along the seam.
- Rest the ball lightly on the thumb.

OFF SPIN DELIVERY



- Short, slightly angled delivery stride. Brace front leg. Pivot on the ball of the front foot.
- Bowling arm high with the wrist cocked inwards.
- Drive through with the back leg to rotate the body.
- Release the ball by turning the wrist vigorously clockwise [left to right] and ripping the first finger down the seam to impart spin. Finish with the back of the hand facing the leg side.
- Follow through strongly with the bowling arm across the body.

LEG SPIN DELIVERY



- Medium, slightly angled delivery stride. Brace front leg. Pivot on the ball of the front foot.
- Bowling arm high with the wrist cocked outwards.
- Drive through with the back leg to rotate the body.
- Release the ball by turning the wrist vigorously anticlockwise [right to left] and flicking the third finger hard over the seam to impart spin. Finish with the back of the hand facing the offside.
- Follow through strongly with the bowling arm across the body.

OFF SPIN MOVEMENT



LEG SPIN MOVEMENT



FIELD PLACEMENTS FOR SPIN BOWLING

Spin bowling requires thoughtful field placement to balance attack and protection. The goal is to build pressure through dot balls and force mistakes.

Type of Spin:

Off spin typically turns into a right-hander. Consider a short mid-wicket, slip, and deep square leg.

Leg spin turns away from a right-hander. Slip, protection at point, and deep cover are useful.

Pitch Conditions:

On a dry, turning pitch, attacking fields with close catchers are effective.

On a flat pitch, defensive fields with boundary riders help prevent release shots.

Match Situation:

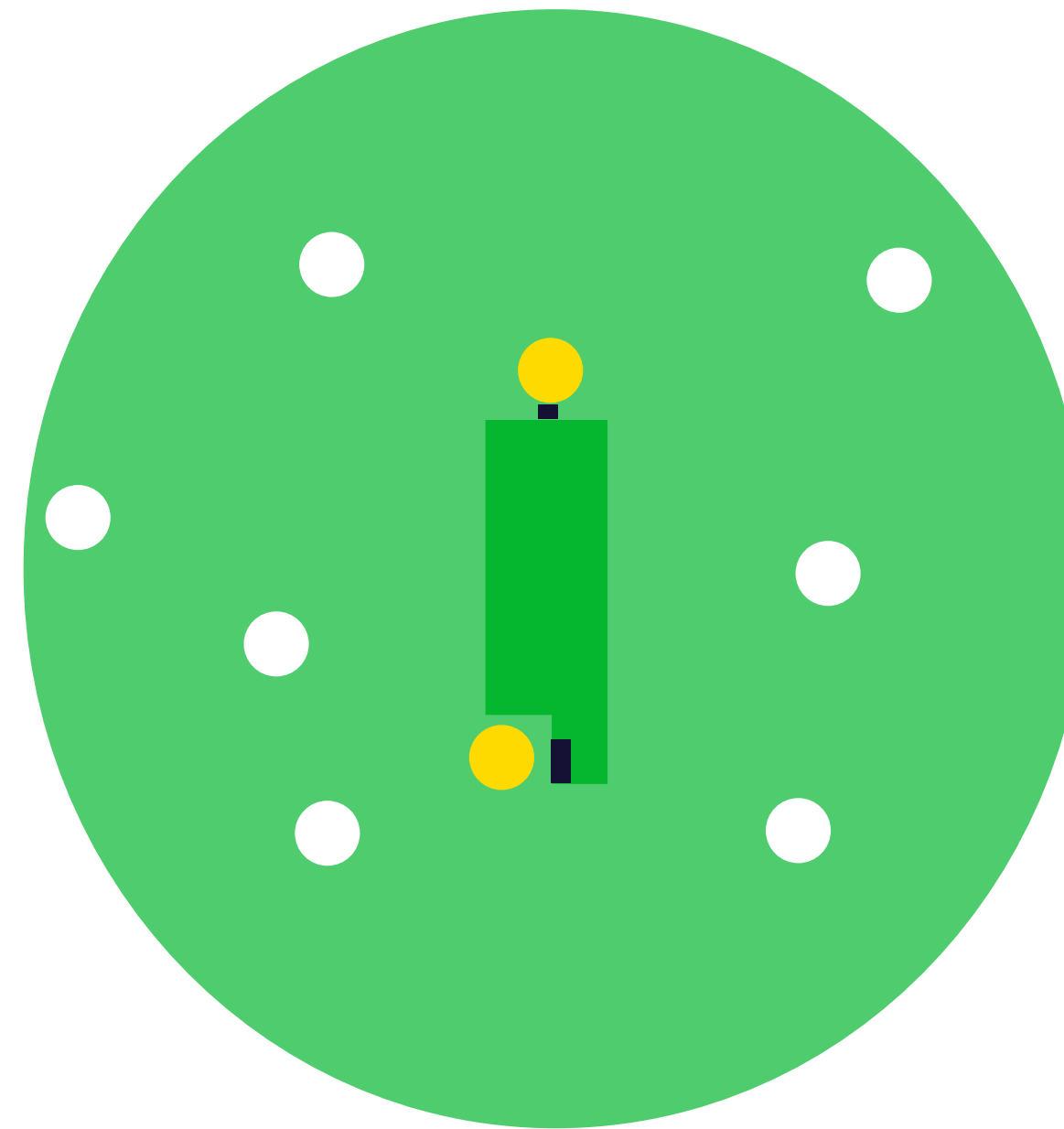
When defending a total, boundary protection is key. Use deep mid-wicket, long-on, and long-off.

When searching for wickets, bring fielders closer to the batter.

Coach's Role:

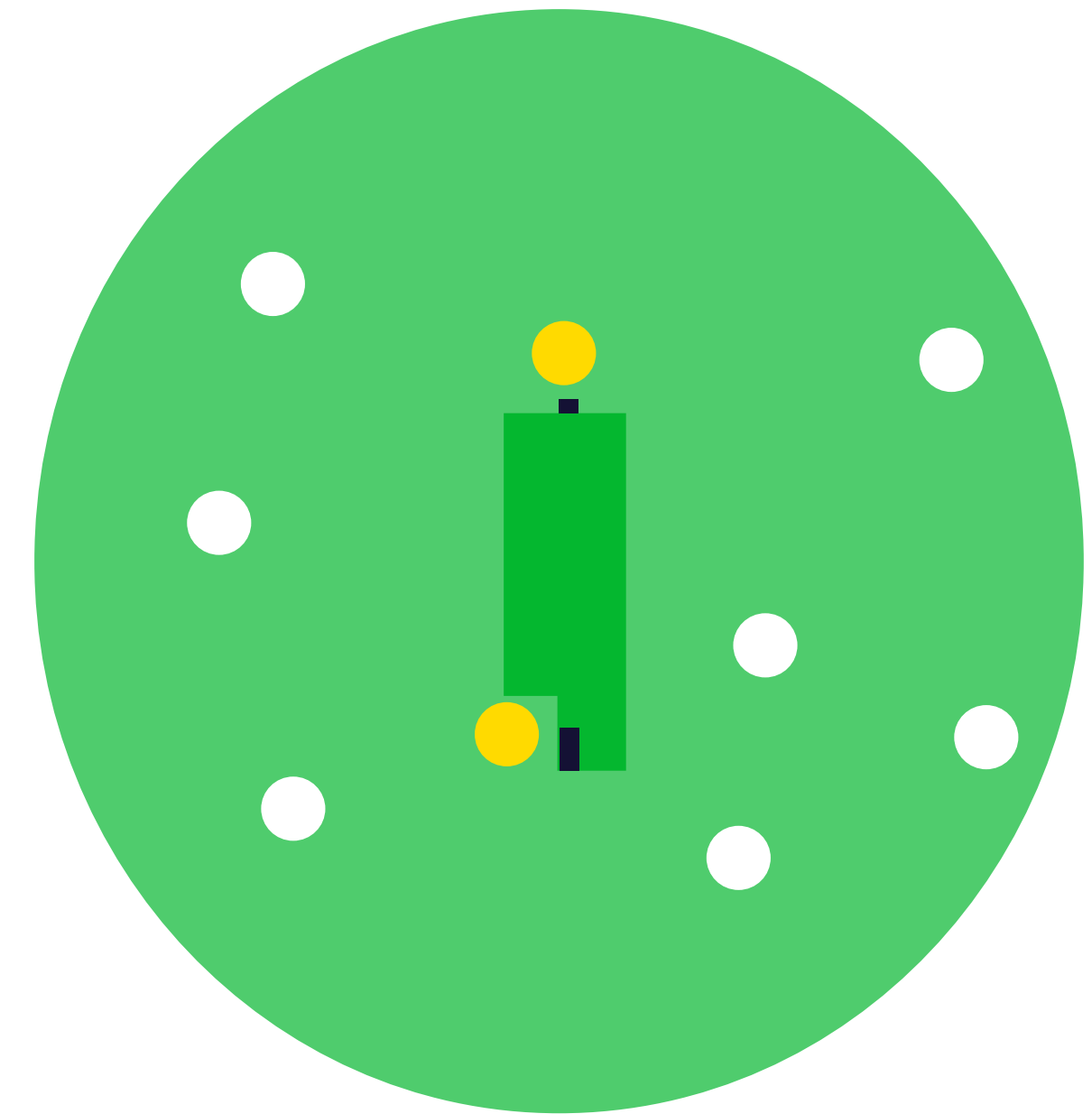
Help spinners understand how fielders can support their plans. Encourage them to use boundary riders strategically to build pressure and force errors.

LEG SPIN FIELD



Bowlers end

OFF SPIN FIELD



Bowlers end

SPIN BOWLING

GAMES, ACTIVITIES AND 'QUICK FIXES'



KEEPER BOWLER BINGO

In this game the spin bowler must adjust their line each ball to hit 'BINGO'
Game video [HERE](#)

EPANA NUI -SUPER BOWL

Playing in pairs or small teams players bowl towards a series of target cones set up in front of wickets. Once a cone is hit with a Super Bowl, it gets put on the wickets. Play for time or a self-challenge to collect the most cones. Game video [HERE](#)

FURTHER LEARNING ABOUT COACHING SPIN BOWLING

If you are keen to learn more about spin bowling, there is an online learning module focusing on spin bowling in the NZC Advanced Foundation coaching course. [Link to course HERE](#)



Section 5.0

FIELDING

INTRODUCTION TO FIELDING

33

GAMES, ACTIVITIES AND 'QUICK FIXES'

34

FIELDING

The move from soft ball to hard ball fielding is a key stage in a young player’s journey—and one where confidence can easily be shaken. At this level, it’s vital that coaches stay alert to the challenges this phase brings and show genuine empathy and understanding. Some players will adapt quickly, while others may need more time and reassurance.

Allowing a player to return to a soft ball while developing a skill can be an effective way to reduce pressure and build confidence. Coaches should also ensure all games and activities are closely monitored, that protective gear is always worn, and that the level of challenge is appropriate—never pushing players into situations they’re not ready for.

Success on the field can look different for every team, but one thing is certain — fielding plays a vital role. With teams spending at least half the game in the field, it makes sense to value this part of cricket and help players enjoy it. Every player has the chance to grow their fielding skills, and some may even choose to specialise and make a position their own.

As a coach, you can decide what success looks like for your team, knowing that strong, confident fielding will always make a difference.

FIELDING

Quick movement

Make sure that you get to the ball as fast as possible

Throwing technique

- The ball should be held across the seam
- The power in a throw comes from the legs, so it is important to establish a strong base to throw effectively.
- The ball should be drawn back with the ball pointing away from the target
- Ideally the ball should be released at about 12 o’clock with the elbow at shoulder height or above. This is the strongest, safest throwing position
- Ensure there is a good follow through
- Build strength in the throwing arm by using throwing activities at every practice

Catching technique

- Consistent positioning of the hands
- Soft elbows
- Endeavour to catch the ball above your eyes
- Watch the ball into the hands

High Catching technique

- Consistent positioning of the hands
- Soft elbows
- Catch the ball out in front of your eyes
- Watch the ball into the hands

Defensive ground fielding

- Move quickly to line of the ball and get down to the ball early.
- Right arm throwers go down on the left knee and left arm throwers go down on the right knee
- Create a “long barrier” with the foot and the horizontal

shin of the opposite leg

- Aim to take the ball under your eyes
- Elbows out in front of the knees

It is important to note that this technique will change according to the quality of the surface being played on and the speed with which the ball is struck.

Diving

- Stay low
- Push off the ‘outside ‘leg to dive laterally
- Watch the ball right into the hand

Hint: Try not to land on the elbow which may jolt the ball out of the hand

Attitude

Use a mix of ball types to build confidence – start with softer balls (like tennis balls or Incrediballs) so players feel safe and can focus on good technique. Gradually introduce harder balls as their skills and confidence grow.

Help players want the ball – by creating success with the easier balls first, players learn to trust themselves, which makes them more eager to attack the ball and get involved as the sessions progress.

Under arm flick

- Attack the ball at pace
- Get low when you close on the ball
- Place the right foot (for a right-hand thrower) on the inside of the ball pointing towards the target
- Pick up the ball with the palm facing the target
- Step through and flick ball forwards (momentum is generated in the throwing arm by the step through leg)
- Maintain a low head position throughout
- Experiment with back flicks and flicks with opposite arm

Throwing with the opposite arm

- Fun to practice and a good laugh
- Develops strength on the other side of the body
- Introduce at an early age

Transferable skills

- The player should be able to catch the ball consistently below the knees, from the knees to the chest and above the head
- Consistently catch and field balls moving to the left and to the right
- The player should be able to demonstrate a safe, consistent throwing technique
- The player should be able to execute the under-arm flick with the left and right hand

FIELDING

GAMES, ACTIVITIES AND 'QUICK FIXES'



BATTLE GRID | TAKITŪ

Similar to noughts and crosses, teams compete against each other to 'claim' squares and win the game. Focused on fielding, this game keeps everyone moving and thinking quickly. [Game video HERE](#)

RECTANGLE MASTER

A focus for fielders on being alert when fielding in the ring to enable run-out opportunities. A focus on batters for hitting the ball into gaps. [Game video HERE](#)

BATTLE BALL | POI PAKANGA

A competitive fielding game. Players work in teams of three, utilising a range of skills to race against other teams. Quick movement, attacking fielding. [Game video HERE](#)

TIC-TAC-TOE CHALLENGE | KOREWHITI

Playing in pairs or small teams, players move, throw and catch across a tic tac toe grid to get three squares in a line. You've got to think and move quickly! [Game video HERE](#)

TAPU AE

Two teams play against each other to try and knock the opposing team's balls off their cones. With scoring zones, a kaitiaki and a lot of movement, Tapu ae gets everyone involved. [Game video HERE](#)



Section 6.0

WICKETKEEPING

INTRODUCTION TO WICKETKEEPING	36
GAMES, ACTIVITIES AND 'QUICK FIXES'	37

WICKETKEEPING

Every team can benefit from having confident and capable wicket keepers, and what that looks like may vary for each coach and group of players.

Keepers often influence the game not only through their skills behind the stumps, but also through their energy, communication, and support for teammates. At this age and stage, coaches are encouraged to develop more than one wicket keeper for their teams, as it is often a late-specialisation role in the sport.

By investing time in keeping skills at training, you not only strengthen your team in many areas, but also give players the chance to explore and shape what success in the role could mean for them.

WICKETKEEPING

Fielding Leadership

Wear the appropriate protective gear whenever they are keeping

- The keeper sets the standard in the field, they should be encouraged to lead and set a positive tone for the fielding unit
- Understand the importance of positive body language
- Assist the captain and bowlers
- Be proactive at training and take a leadership role
- Aim for a tidy, consistent performance over the course of an innings

Glove Work

- Create a large catching target with the fingers pointing away from the ball and the gloves together
- Catch the ball out in front of the body and let the pace of the ball dictates the natural length of catch with soft hands
- Head in line with the ball

Standing Up

- The keeper must be capable of returning the ball to the stumps through good footwork and positioning (especially blind leg side takes)
- Develop good hand speed through short efficient movement
- Expect every ball to come to you
- Rise with the bounce of the ball

Watch the ball

- Always take the ball in line with your head where possible
- Encourage watching the ball all the way into the gloves
- Ensure clear view of the ball (practice to left handers and bowlers bowling both side of the wicket)

Hint: Use distractions in training (shadow batter) to help focus on the ball only

Positioning

- Full crouch
- Semi crouch

Hint: Wicket keepers need to be in a powerful position to enable dynamic movement laterally (side to side)

Transferable skills

- Demonstrates the correct footwork consistently standing back from the stumps
- Demonstrate the correct catching technique when standing back
- Demonstrate good technique when taking returns from the field
- Watch the ball, head in line and present large target with the gloves
- Demonstrate good high catching technique

WICKETKEEPING

GAMES, ACTIVITIES AND 'QUICK FIXES'



KEEPER BOWLER BINGO GAME


A game that helps Wicket Keepers get into quality positions to catch the ball.
Game video [HERE](#)

COACHING QUICK FIX: WICKETKEEPING

In this Coaching Quick Fix video, learn how to help wicketkeepers improve their glovework and footwork. Game video [HERE](#)

KEEPER CHALLENGE | TURUKI TURUKI

Bring wicketkeeping into play. Focus on soft and quick hands to create stumping chances. Bowling, batting, wicketkeeping, a game to challenge them all. Game video [HERE](#)



Section 3.0

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND GAME IDEAS

SPIRIT OF CRICKET	39
ZONE RANGER GAME	40
THE PERFECT CRICKET GAME	41

SPIRIT OF CRICKET

Cricket is a game that owes much of its unique appeal to the fact that it should be played not only within its Laws, but also within the Spirit of the Game. Any action, which is seen to abuse this spirit, causes injury to the game itself.

The major responsibility for ensuring the spirit of fair play rests with the captains. There are two Laws, which place the responsibility for the team’s conduct firmly on the captain.



“The major responsibility for ensuring the spirit of fair play rests with the captains. ”

The responsibility of captain

- The captains are responsible at all times for ensuring that play is conducted within the Spirit of the Game as well as within the Laws

Players’ conduct

- In the event of any player failing to comply with the instructions of an umpire, criticising his decisions by word or action, showing dissent, or generally behaving in a manner which might bring the game into disrepute, the umpire concerned shall in the first place report the matter to the other umpire and to the player’s captain, requesting the latter to take action

Fair and unfair play

- According to the Laws the umpires are the sole judges of Fair and Unfair play
- The umpires may intervene at any time, and it is the responsibility of the captain to take action where required

The responsibility of captain

- Time wasting
- Damaging the pitch
- Intimidatory bowling
- Tampering with the ball
- Any other action that they consider to be unfair

The Spirit of the Game involves RESPECT for:

- Your opponent
- Your own captain and team
- The role of the umpires
- The game’s traditional values

It is against the Spirit of the Game:

- To dispute an umpires decision by word, action or gesture
- To direct abusive language towards an opponent or umpire
- Indulge in cheating or sharp practise, for instance:
- Appeal knowing that the batter is not out
- Advance towards the umpire in an aggressive manner when appealing
- Seek to distract an opponent either verbally or by harassment with persistent clapping or unnecessary noise under the guise of enthusiasm and motivation of one’s own side

Violence

- There is no place for any act of violence on the field of play

Players

- Captains and umpires together set the tone for the conduct of a cricket match. Every player is expected to make an important contribution to this.

ZONE RANGER GAME



The aim of this game is to encourage batters to utilize a full bat swing and/ or appropriate bat swing and vertical bat shot to hit the ball down the ground into a variety of zones dictated by the roll of their dice.

Introduction - key principles underpinning the learning design

- Representative Training – Focus on perception-action coupling, such as batting against spin bowling.
- Repetition Without Repetition – Repeat the same shot while allowing self-organization to execute the skill.
- Decision Making – Utilize judgment and perception-action coupling skills.
- Constrain to Afford – Manipulate the environment to encourage accurate skill execution.

Organisation

- The game can be played in 6 vs 6, 4 vs 4, or 2 vs 2 formats.
- Best played on an AstroTurf wicket or grass wicket.
- Two games can run simultaneously if a net is erected through the middle of the pitch.
- On grass, use a used pitch for this game.

Bowling setup

- Ideally, use two spin bowlers (or an easy-paced medium bowler).
- Bowlers should aim for full deliveries to facilitate the exercise.

Bowlers can win by

- Preventing the batting team from reaching their target.
- Taking wickets or executing a run-out at the bowler’s end.
- Creating catching opportunities in the outfield zones.

Game Rules

- The game lasts 4 overs.
- Each batting pair aims to score 16–24 runs.
- No boundaries are allowed.

Dice-based shot selection

- One player rolls the dice to start.
- Both players attempt the shot shown on the dice 3 times in 6 balls.
- Shots not matching the dice roll score no runs.
- Roll the dice again for the next 6 balls, continuing until 4 overs are completed.
- Must rotate strike using a vertical bat shot based on dice roll and judgment.
- Clear calling is essential.
- Lose 2 runs if dismissed (run out, caught, or bowled)

GAME 1

- Utilising a full backswing and vertical bat shot –
- Hit the ball to mid on
- Hit the ball to mid off
- Hit the ball to long on
- Hit the ball to long off
- Hit the ball hard into the zone between long off and long on
- Hit the ball softly into the zone between long off and long on

GAME 2

- Utilising a full backswing and vertical bat shot –
- Hit the ball over mid off
- Hit the ball to mid off
- Hit the ball over mid on
- Hit the ball to mid on
- Hit the ball wide of mid on
- Hit the ball wide of mid off

GAME 3 – ADVANCED CHALLENGE LEVEL

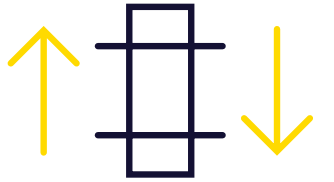
- Utilising an appropriate backswing and vertical bat shot –
- Chip the ball between mid-on and long on
- Chip the ball between mid-off and long off
- Chip the ball over the bowler’s head
- Chip the ball into a zone wide of mid-off and long off
- Chip the ball into a zone wide of mid-on and long on

REFLECTION - For each Game:

- What did your team do well?
- What were the conversations you had between games like?
- Did the conversations make a difference to your team’s performance?
- How did the constraint changes impact the way your team played?
- What were the THREE key things you learned as a teacher in this task?

THE PERFECT CRICKET GAME

RUNNING BETWEEN THE WICKET



Have a brief discussion with players around the concepts of running between the wickets to get their knowledge and some non-negotiables e.g. calling, backing up, turning facing the ball.

- The game organisation
- Split the group into pairs
- Play a normal game of pairs cricket, 2 batters, bowler and fielders
- Play with plastic bat / ball so there is no time wasted with putting on protective gear
- The coach could bowl/throw if easier but if players can do the bowling then let them go
- Pair 1 bats until they make ANY mistake. When they do, the coach gives them out and then moves on to Pair 2.
- You can add in 'lives' for less experienced groups e.g. 3 lives, 3 mistakes and you're out
- Start with or add in 3 dot balls in a row rule and you're OUT to stop the smart kids blocking it and shouting NO

PROGRESSING...

Once all pairs have batted, review missed opportunities in detail.

Even better: draw these insights out of the players by asking open-ended questions and encouraging self-reflection.

Play Round 2, where players will hopefully last longer. The goal is for the session to feel chaotic and deliberately harsh, with players swapping out after 2-3 balls for simple mistakes until they start to figure it out.

Create a list of potential focus areas. Pick and choose the ones most valuable for your group and feel free to add your own.

BASIC

Backing up - have some level of leaving the crease with the bowler at the non-striker's end.

Slide your bat into the crease.

Turn facing the ball when running a 2nd or 3rd run.

Calling. Agree your calls as a team. e.g. YES, NO, Wait or potentially some variation of those. The striker calls in front of them. The non striker calls behind.

ADVANCED

Run the first run hard.

Agree which side you run on and do not run down the middle of the wicket.

Be aware and always communicate, watching for overthrows.

The person who can see the ball best calls when running a 2nd or 3rd run.

Trust your partners call, no ball watching.