QUEENSLAND CRICKET

EFFECTIVE TRAINING SESSIONS

- ❑ Session structure

- ❑ Net session options

- ❑ Modified games

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.

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

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.	1.	CONDITIONING - cricket specific
(sample 1)	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

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 he 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

     Result :   Team 1 = 9 x 62 = 558
                   Team 2 = 8 x 70 = 560

8. It a team fails to lose a wicket both teams add 1 (one) to their wicket totals.

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

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.

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

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

MODIFIED GAMES

TEE LINE

Major Game
TEE LINE CRICKET

Coaching

POINTS

Skill emphasis
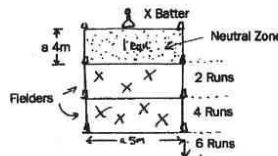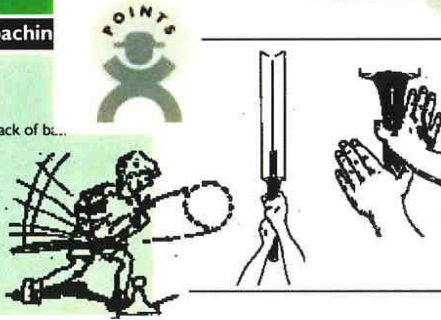**– Grip, stance & front foot hitting**

- **Batting Grip**
  - V's formed by thumb & forefinger aligned down back of bat.
  - Hands together in middle of handle.
- **Batting Stance**
  - Side On.
  - Feet shoulder width apart.
  - Head upright, eyes level.
- **Batting**
  - Pick up the bat by first cocking at the wrists.
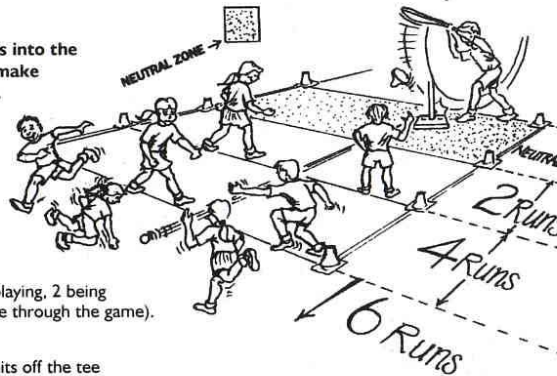
8 PER GROUP 1 1 1 1 8

AIM In 6 successful hits into the scoring zones to make the highest score.

To start: Place a stump in the ground. Place a tee on the stump and a ball on the tee.

- Batter 1 ready at the tee – others fielding.
- Maximum 8 per group (6 playing, 2 being coached to the side - rotate through the game).

Game

- Each batter has 6 scoring hits off the tee (mis-hits or hits that do not go beyond the neutral zone do not count).
- Fielders cannot enter the neutral zone.
- The fielder who stops the ball returns it by ROLLING it to the batter.
- Highest score wins.

Assess

- Are the batters stepping next to the tee to hit?
- Is the batter's front knee bent, head over the ball?
- Is the ball being hit in the desired direction?
- Are the fielders confident enough to stop the ball?
- Are the fielders positioned appropriately?

Modify

- **Game:** Increase/decrease the neutral zone appropriate to the batters skill level. Widen the playing area to create more gaps between fielders.
- **Skills:** It is encouraged to have the next batters practicing hitting off tees with a helper coach prior to them batting in the game.

Encourage

- Promote fun and enjoyment.

COACHING HINT

Learn the names of players to improve communication

Smile, praise and encourage – if you're not having fun the children won't either.

MODIFIED GAMES

TEE PAIRS

Major Game
TEE PAIRS CRICKET

Coaching

Skill emphasis
Catching and Throwing

■ **Throwing**
- Body side on to target.
- Step toward target.
- Throwing hand to move back & up with fingers on top of the ball while.
- Non throwing hand points toward the target.
- Throw the ball keeping the elbow high.

- Throwing arm follows through across the body.

■ **Catching**
- Move into position as quickly as possible (high catches).
- Keep head still, eyes on ball.
- Fingers point down, up or to side
- Catch with soft hands, giving with the ball.

POINTS

10 PER GROUP | **2** | **3** | **2** | **2**

AIM Batters in pairs to hit a ball off a tee to score as many runs as possible.

To start: Set up stumps 13 – 16m apart.

■ Place 2 batting tees with a ball on each either side of pitch just forward of batter.
■ Organise players into pairs & number each pair.
■ Maximum 10 per group (8 playing the game, 2 being coached to the side – rotate through the game).
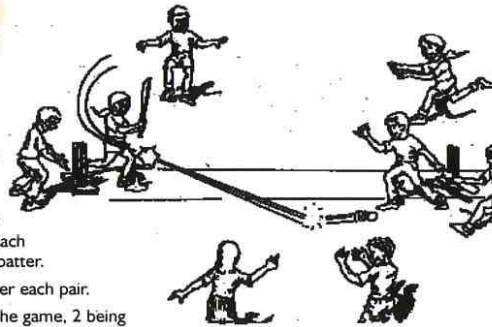
Game

■ Each pair bats in turn for 12 balls (ie. 6 balls in a row with partner as runner).
■ Those not batting are fielding. Players should be positioned as wicketkeeper & bowler to assist with run outs.
■ Batters can be 'out' Caught or Run Out only.
■ IF BATTERS GO OUT THEY DO NOT SCORE FROM THAT ATTEMPT HOWEVER THEY CONTINUE TO BAT.
■ When each pair has batted a 2nd innings can begin.
■ Highest scoring pair wins.

Assess

■ Can fielders watch the ball from the tee to fielders hands?
■ Are fielders able to catch the ball / throw accurately?

Modify

■ **Game:** Use a tee placed on a stump to create more catches.
■ **Skills:** It is encouraged to have 2 players in turn practising catching and overarm throwing with the helper coach and then rotated through the game.

Encourage

■ Highlight those players catching with the correct technique.
■ Encourage overarm throwing at the stumps or back to the wicketkeeper or bowler.

COACHING HINT
Add variety to sessions by allowing teams to choose their own team name.

MODIFIED GAMES

DIAMOND CRICKET

Major Game
DIAMOND CRICKET

Coachin...
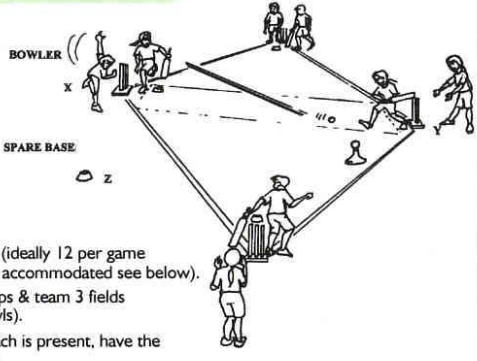
POINTS

Skill emphasis
Bowling with run up

- To teach bowling with a run-up only progress to next point when previous is mastered:
  - Revise : Basic Bowling Action (arm action, including release of the ball).
  - LIFT front knee and at the same time, perform the initial stretching movement of the arms. STAMP on front foot in a straight line toward the target and BOWL.
  - STEP THROUGH with back foot toward the target by taking it across the front foot. LIFT front foot, STAMP and BOWL.
  - Then, build run-up one step at a time. That is, one STEP, back foot STEP THROUGH across front foot , LIFT front foot, STAMP and BOWL.

Jump

8-12 AGE GROUP

4 4 2 5

BOWLER
X
SPARE BASE
Z

AIM To score runs as a team (24 balls per team).

To start: Select players into 3 teams of 4 (ideally 12 per game however fewer / greater numbers can be accommodated see below).

- Team 1 bats, team 2 bowls / wicketkeeps & team 3 fields (if only 2 teams one bats the other bowls).
- Where numbers allow and a helper coach is present, have the next 4 to bowl as follows: 2 in the field, 2 practicing bowling to the side (rotate after 12 balls).
- Use a marker as an additional base if teams have more than 4 players.
- Place 2 tees either side of the pitch and just forward of the batter.

Game
- The bowling team bowls from X to the stumps at Y at all times.
- Each bowler bowls 6 balls and then the bowling team rotate to bring a new bowler to the crease.
- If 'bowled' ball is missed (& doesn't hit the stumps) or can't be reached, batter hits ball from a tee.
- Only the hit ball is in play.
- Batters can be 'out' Bowled at Y, Caught or Run Out at any set of stumps.
- Batters rotate to next base if out, no runs are scored on a delivery if a run out occurs.
- When the batter hits the ball, all 4 batters must run in an anticlockwise direction to the next base.
- Batters may run more than one base at a time.
- One run is scored for each successful run to the next base by all 4 batters.
- After all bowling team members have bowled 6 balls each team changes roles.
- The game continues until each team has batted & bowled. Highest score wins.

Assess
- Are bowlers co-ordinating a run up in their bowling action?
- Are bowlers bowling more or less accurately with a run up?

Modify
- **Skills:** It is encouraged to have 2 players in turn practicing bowling with a run up with the helper coach and then rotated through the game.

Encourage
- Encourage team work from the fielders.

COACHING HINT

Build skills one component at a time. If players becoming frustrated move onto other activities and re-address later.

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 one's 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 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 to early (this will slow the batter down) and not to 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.

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