

LEVEL-O CERTIFICATE COURSE IN CRICKET COACHING

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Lecture 38: Out Swing

Let's dive into the world of outswing bowling. Following our discussion on inswing, we'll now explore how to deliver, develop, and understand the principles behind an outswing delivery.

So, what exactly is an outswing? For a right-handed batter, an outswing is when the ball moves in the air from the left side towards their offside. This movement away from the batter in the air is the defining characteristic of an outswing. Just like with inswing, the fundamental reason the ball swings lies in the interaction between the ball's surface and the air.

When we aim for an outswing, the positioning of the ball is key. The rough side of the ball is now on the right-handed batter's offside, while the shiny side is on their left side. The seam of the ball is typically oriented towards the first slip. The specific grip and release action that facilitates this movement will be discussed shortly. The reason the ball moves from the left to the offside is again due to the principles of air mechanics. As the ball travels, air flows around it. The rough side creates friction, leading to turbulence and a low-pressure zone on that side. Conversely, the smooth, shiny side allows for smoother airflow, resulting in a high-pressure zone. As we know, the ball will naturally move from an area of high pressure to an area of low pressure, causing it to swing away towards the offside. These are the basic aerodynamic principles at play.

Now, let's focus on how to develop and bowl an outswing delivery. The positioning of the ball in the hand is crucial. The rough side should be on the right-handed batter's offside, and the shiny side on their left. The seam position should be directed towards the first slip. The grip itself involves holding the ball primarily between the index and middle fingers, with the thumb positioned underneath the ball, resting on the seam. This is similar to the basic bowling grip, but with the seam aligned towards first slip.

The release of the ball is where we impart the outswing. We need to concentrate on the index finger during release, using it more prominently than the middle finger to generate the outward movement. The release position is generally away from the head, slightly more so than for an inswing. The follow-through should be across the body. Visualising the hand moving across the body during the follow-through can help in achieving the desired swing.

To learn the outswing, just like with inswing, we start by checking the grip and wrist position. The grip should be oriented towards the first slip, and the wrist should be held straight, perhaps slightly cocked outwards. The rough side of the ball should be facing the offside of the right-

handed batter. The release position should be away from the head, and the wrist should remain firm.

Developing the outswing delivery in bowling follows a similar progression to the inswing. We begin with one-step bowling. The player takes the correct outswing grip, steps with their left leg, lands with their back foot, comes into the bowling action, and releases the ball away from their head with a follow-through across the body. As a coach, it's vital to constantly check the grip and the release position.

Moving on, we incorporate three-step bowling, maintaining focus on the grip and the release. Positive reinforcement is key during these drills to encourage proper technique development. Once the bowler has a grasp of the action, we introduce walk-and-bowl and then run-and-bowl drills, specifically focusing on maintaining the outswing grip and release throughout the delivery stride.

A very important aspect of bowling outswing is the utilisation of the crease during the release of the ball. For maximum effectiveness with an outswing, the ball should be released close to the stumps. Why? Because we need to create an angle that allows the ball to swing from the left side of the batter towards the offside. If we release the ball too far away from the stumps, our body's momentum and angles might take the ball straight or even slightly across the batter, negating the desired outswing. By releasing closer to the stumps, we maximise the angle for the ball to swing away from the right-handed batsman.

A useful drill for developing outswing involves placing a pole, around 6 or 7 feet high, behind the wicket in line with the stumps. The bowler is then instructed to aim to deliver the ball in that line. This encourages the bowler to release the ball in a way that, when it swings, it will move away from the batter playing with either a front foot or back foot defence, increasing the chances of getting an edge, particularly when the batter plays off the back foot.

Now, let's address some common misconceptions about swing bowling, specifically regarding inswing and outswing. There's a prevailing myth that bowlers with a side-on action can only bowl outswing, and those with a front-on action are limited to inswing. This is simply not true. Swing is primarily determined by how you use your wrist, the condition of the ball (roughness and shine), and the principles of air mechanics. Regardless of whether a bowler has a side-on or front-on action, if they can correctly manipulate the grip, utilise the air mechanics, and maintain the proper wrist position at release, they can achieve either inswing or outswing. The action itself doesn't dictate the type of swing.

Similarly, the angle of your run-up doesn't inherently guarantee more swing. While an angled run-up can influence the angle at which the ball is delivered, the actual swing is still dependent on the factors mentioned earlier: ball condition, wrist position, and air mechanics.

In summary, outswing bowling involves understanding the aerodynamic principles, adopting the correct grip with the seam towards first slip, focusing on the index finger during a release away from the head with a follow-through across the body, and strategically using the crease by releasing the ball closer to the stumps. Consistent practice through drills like one-step, three-

step, walk-and-bowl, and run-and-bowl is essential for developing this crucial skill in a fast bowler's repertoire.

Now, we move on to another set of valuable variations in pace bowling: cutters. There are two main types of cutters: the off-cutter and the leg-cutter. These are like additional weapons for a fast bowler, especially useful in situations where conventional fast bowling might not be as effective. For instance, if the pitch is slow or has cracks, cutters can exploit these conditions to create variations in bounce and movement, potentially leading to wickets. Even on flatter pitches where batsmen are comfortable, a well-disguised cutter can disrupt their rhythm and induce a false shot.

Let's first discuss the off-cutter. The grip for an off-cutter involves holding the ball with the index finger just beside the seam and the middle finger on the leather, while the thumb rests under the ball on the seam. To bowl an off-cutter to a right-handed batsman, you need to turn the ball slightly in your hand so that, upon release, the wrist and fingers rotate towards the left side of the batter. The back of the palm will tend to face towards the backwards square leg. The release point is typically slightly away from the head to maximise the angle. The action will be similar to a normal delivery, but with this slight rotation imparted at the moment of release. An off-cutter, as the name suggests, is intended to move away from the off-stump towards the batsman after pitching. This can be particularly effective if there's a crack on the pitch, as the ball can hit the crack and deviate sharply. Even without a crack, the off-cutter changes the pace of the ball, which can lead to mistimed shots and potential wickets. Practice for off-cutters follows the same progression as swing bowling: one-step, three-step, walk-and-bowl, and run-and-bowl drills, all focusing on the specific grip and release. It's generally advisable to introduce cutters only after a bowler has developed a good control over their basic pace bowling.

Next, we have the leg-cutter. A leg-cutter involves cutting the ball so that it moves from the leg-stump side towards the off-stump after pitching. This can be particularly useful on cracked pitches or to introduce pace variation when batsmen are well-set. The grip for a leg-cutter involves having both the index and middle fingers on either side of the seam, with the middle finger close to the seam and the index finger on the leather. The thumb remains under the ball on the seam. To bowl a leg-cutter to a right-handed batsman, you need to turn your wrist downwards and slightly towards the leg side at the point of release. The palm will tend to face towards backward. The release position, similar to the off-cutter, is slightly away from the head for maximum advantage. The action will have this distinct wrist rotation at the time of letting go of the ball. Like the off-cutter, the leg-cutter is not an easy technique and requires significant practice. The development of the action follows the same staged approach: one-step, three-step, walk-and-bowl, and run-and-bowl. It's also important to teach the leg-cutter only after the bowler has a solid foundation in their basic bowling. Depending on a bowler's natural action and strengths, a coach might choose to teach either the off-cutter or the leg-cutter first. For example, if a bowler naturally bowls with a higher arm action, they might find it easier to learn the leg-cutter first. The introduction of these variations adds another dimension to a pace bowler's skill set, making them a more versatile and challenging opponent for batsmen. So,

these are the fundamentals of off-cutters and leg-cutters, valuable variations that complement in-swing and out-swing in the arsenal of a complete pace bowler.