

LEVEL-O CERTIFICATE COURSE IN CRICKET COACHING

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Lecture 43: Long Barrier and Retrib

In cricket fielding, two important techniques are the **two-hand interception** and the **long barrier**. Two-handed interception, often used in attacking fielding, involves the fielder stopping the ball securely with two hands and immediately preparing to throw it, often aiming to run the batsman out. This skill is used when a batsman takes a run and the fielder needs to act quickly to either prevent the run or cause a run-out.

The **long barrier** technique, however, is a **defensive fielding skill**. It is particularly important on rough or uneven ground, where the ball may bounce unpredictably. In these conditions, fielders use the long barrier technique to safely stop the ball and prevent extra runs. It also helps in situations where the ball is moving fast and there is a risk of it slipping past the fielder. The long barrier creates a second line of defence with the fielder's body, ensuring that even if the ball bounces awkwardly, it cannot get through.

To perform the long barrier, the fielder must first move into the line of the ball. If the fielder throws with the right hand, the right leg should step in line with the ball. The body should lower into a kneeling position, forming a solid base. The back knee should be grounded while the front leg should stay firm, slightly bent at the knee to maintain balance. It is crucial to ensure there is no gap between the body and the ground where the ball can pass through, although a slight gap between the heels and knees is allowed to maintain stability. After fielding the ball, the player quickly moves into the throwing position.

Practising the long barrier starts with a stationary ball. The player stands a step behind the ball, positions the feet in line with the ball, and practices kneeling into the correct position. Progressively, the player can move to walking and then jogging drills, each time getting into the long barrier position accurately. The coach must ensure corrections are made immediately, such as checking the gap between the legs and the body balance after fielding the ball. Later, the drill advances to rolling balls towards the fielder, allowing them to

practice stopping moving balls under game-like conditions. This gradual build-up from stationary to moving balls helps the player develop the correct technique and body control.

Another important defensive fielding technique is the **retrieve**. The retrieve is mainly used when the ball is hit toward the boundary, and the fielder must chase it down. In this skill, the fielder runs quickly towards the ball, gets behind it, picks it up while running, and immediately throws it back toward the wicketkeeper or stumps. The retrieve prevents boundaries and saves crucial runs.

When performing the retrieve, the fielder must sprint behind the ball at full speed. As the fielder approaches the ball, the steps should become shorter—this is called "choppy steps"—which helps to control the speed and prepare for fielding. The picking hand (throwing hand) should approach the ball with fingers pointing downwards and palm facing the ground, ensuring the ball is collected cleanly. The back of the hand should be facing the boundary. After picking up the ball, the fielder quickly moves into a strong throwing position without losing balance.

Practising the retrieve begins with stationary ball drills. The player stands a few steps behind the ball, walks towards it with small steps, picks it up properly, and immediately gets into the throwing stance. The key corrections involve ensuring the knees are slightly bent, the body weight is controlled, and the throwing arm is properly positioned. After mastering walking drills, players move to running drills, where they run at full speed to a stationary ball, pick it up, and throw accurately. Finally, the practice includes retrieving rolling balls, simulating a real match situation where the ball is moving toward the boundary. During the moving ball drill, players need to maintain body balance even at high speed and control the pick-up and throw smoothly.

Both the long barrier and the retrieve are essential techniques for fielders to master in cricket. These skills not only save runs but also create opportunities to dismiss batsmen. Proper coaching, step-by-step practice, and immediate correction of mistakes are crucial to help players perform these techniques effectively during matches.