

LEVEL-0 CERTIFICATE COURSE IN CRICKET COACHING

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Lecture 44: Key Points Wrist Spin, Stock and Variations

Let's talk about **leg spin** in cricket. Leg spin is also called **wrist spin** because the spin on the ball starts with the fingers and finishes with the movement of the wrist. Although it begins with the fingers, it's the wrist action at the final moment of release that gives the ball its real spin and turn. That's why the term wrist spin is often used.

When we talk about a leg spin delivery, it usually means the ball is pitched on the leg side of a right-handed batter and, after pitching, it spins and moves towards the off side. This movement makes it difficult for the batter to play correctly. Before we go deeper into the details of bowling leg spin, it's very important to understand the grip.

In leg spin, the ball should be gripped **across the seam**, not along it. You place your **index finger, middle finger, and ring finger** on the ball. The ball lies across these fingers, with the ring finger playing the most important role in spinning it. The thumb is used mainly to support the ball, providing resistance. When you spin, your ring finger flicks the ball, using the thumb's support to generate strong rotation.

When releasing the ball, the bowler should aim to release it **away from the head**, imagining the position like 11 o'clock if you think of a clock face with noon being straight above the head. This release point helps create a better angle for spin. At the moment of release, the **back of the hand** should face towards the batter's midwicket area. Also, the **seam** of the ball should be pointing towards the **gully** position while the ball travels through the air. To achieve an effective turn, the bowler's **delivery stride** should be slightly longer and across the pitch, which helps create a natural angle towards the batter, enhancing the ball's spin and drift, as recommended by expert coaches from the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB).

Now, moving on to a **variation of leg spin** known as **topspin**. In topspin, the bowler grips the ball the same way as a normal leg spin delivery. However, when bowling topspin, instead of spinning the ball sideways, the bowler imparts a forward rotation. This forward spin causes the ball to dip quicker in flight and bounce higher after pitching. When delivering a topspin ball, the bowler must release it from a **vertical position** with the **back of the hand facing towards the cover** region. The **seam** of the ball should be directed straight towards the batter during the flight. Unlike regular leg spin, the **delivery stride** for a topspin ball should be **shorter**, and the ball should be released from a position above the head to produce that sharp dip and bounce, as explained in the International Cricket Council's coaching resources.

Another very famous and tricky variation is the **googly**, also called the **wrong'un**. In a googly, the bowler runs in and bowls with an action that looks just like a normal leg spin delivery. However, the ball behaves differently after pitching. Instead of turning away from the right-handed batter like a normal leg spinner, the ball spins into the batter, behaving like an off-spinner.

The grip for a googly remains the same as for a normal leg spinner. The main difference lies in the release. Just before releasing the ball, the bowler dips the front shoulder slightly and releases the ball **slightly away from the head**. At the point of release, the **back of the hand faces towards the ground**, not towards the batter or midwicket like in a leg spin. This action tricks the batter into thinking it's a normal leg break, but the ball instead spins the other way. In a typical leg spin delivery, the seam of the ball in flight points towards the gully. But in a googly, after release, the **seam points towards the batter**.

So, when you watch a bowler carefully, you can sometimes pick up these small differences. In leg spin, the seam points towards the gully and the ball spins away from the batter. In the googly, the seam points towards the batter, and the ball spins into them.

All of these techniques — whether leg spin, topspin, or googly — require a lot of practice. Spinning the ball properly, controlling the flight, and mastering the wrist action are essential to becoming a successful wrist spinner. It's important to practice regularly, work on the grip, the wrist position, and especially the release to develop the right feel for each delivery.

Thank you, and keep spinning the ball — because, as all great spinners know, your success lies in your ability to make the ball talk!

