

LEVEL-0 CERTIFICATE COURSE IN CRICKET COACHING

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Lecture 64: Tactics in Cricket

Hello everyone. Today, let's explore the tactics in cricket. This lecture has been structured to cover the key aspects of tactics from the perspectives of both bowlers and batters. We will begin by discussing bowling tactics, starting with seam bowlers.

Seam bowlers are advised to bowl at the stumps or just outside the off-stump, particularly when attempting to swing the ball. The goal is to pitch the ball full, encouraging the batter to commit to front-foot strokes. Whether you're bowling an outswinger or an inswinger, a full length increases the chances of inducing an edge to the wicketkeeper or slips. This length tempts the batter into playing expansive drives, making them vulnerable to being dismissed. Varying the length occasionally is a strategic move that keeps the batter uncertain about whether to play on the front foot or the back foot. Mixing up deliveries with occasional bouncers adds another layer of unpredictability.

A further tactical consideration is to manipulate field placements in such a way that batters are tempted to play dangerous strokes. Leave gaps in the field where it is difficult to score, and bowl deliveries aimed at preventing the batter from exploiting their favourite areas. For example, if a batter is strong on the front foot, try pushing them onto the back foot by bowling a shorter length. Likewise, avoid overusing variations such as inswingers, outswingers, off-cutters, and leg-cutters. While variation is a key weapon, excessive use can complicate field placements and reduce the bowler's effectiveness. Varying your position on the crease can also provide subtle advantages in angle and bounce.

If a particular batter appears vulnerable, target them consistently. One approach is to allow the batter to score singles early in the over by setting a deeper field, but then tightening the field toward the end of the over to ensure the weaker batter is left to face the next over. This kind of control can shift the momentum of an innings.

Spin bowlers follow similar tactical principles, with a few modifications. They should aim to bowl a good, often full-length and always try to impart spin on the ball, even when the pitch does not offer much assistance. Use variations such as floaters or the arm ball sparingly for maximum effect. Additionally, control the trajectory by releasing the ball

earlier to give it more loop or later for a flatter delivery. These subtle differences can deceive even set batters.

Moving on to the batters, tactics in batting require not just technical skill but also sound judgment and decision-making ability. A batter must react to the tactics employed by the opposition, and this often involves predicting what the bowler will do based on experience, match situation, and field settings. At higher levels, the speed and accuracy of the delivery often exceed the human eye's tracking ability, so anticipation becomes essential. At the school level, bowlers may not be as fast, but the challenge lies in the batter's relative lack of experience in reading and responding to tactics.

Early in the innings, it is advisable to play straight balls pitched up with a straight bat, targeting the region between mid-on and mid-off. Batters should approach swinging or spinning deliveries with caution, avoiding overly aggressive strokes. When faced with a pitch that offers variable bounce, it is wise to avoid risky shots such as the hook. One must also watch for low deliveries or "shooters," especially from faster bowlers, and be ready to bring the bat down quickly. Defensive strokes should be reserved for balls that would hit the stumps or the body.

After a strike is called, the batter must quickly assess whether a run is possible. This requires constant awareness of the field placements. Gaps in the field, or fielders placed too deep, present opportunities to rotate the strike. Observing which fielders are slower or have a weaker throwing arm can help batters decide when to attempt quick singles. It's important for the non-striker to back up and for both players to run hard. When playing defensive strokes, soft hands are crucial to keep the ball close, making it harder for fielders to cut off singles. If a fielder is brought in close, a firm push might be enough to beat them.

When faced with a well-set field, the batter should not attempt to hit over the top unless it is a clear scoring opportunity. Instead, aim for the gaps created by that field or look to score in other areas. Against specific bowlers, especially spinners, it is often effective to use your feet to get to the pitch of the ball. This reduces the chances of being deceived by spin. Patience is critical—bad balls will eventually come, and those are the scoring opportunities to wait for.

The tactics of both batters and bowlers are closely linked to field settings. Field placements are not random; they are chosen based on whether the fielding team wants to take a wicket or restrict runs. Fielding positions fall into three broad categories: close catchers (such as slips, gully, and short leg), fielders saving one run (like mid-on and square leg), and

boundary riders (such as deep third man and deep mid-wicket). Sometimes, fielders are placed halfway to the boundary to cover long boundaries where the ball may not travel all the way. In such cases, hitting aerial shots into those zones may not be the best option.

In conclusion, the tactics of cricket—from bowling to batting to field placement—are all interconnected. Success in the game depends not only on skill but also on how intelligently those skills are applied in real-time scenarios. The more players understand these tactics, the more effectively they can adapt to the dynamics of the game. Enjoy your coaching and keep learning.