

# 7

# PSYCH SKILLS



## PREPARATION AND ATTITUDE

Basic psychological principles are important in ticket coaching. A fundamental understanding helps to:

- Highlight the coach's role as a facilitator of learning
- Teach the fundamental principles of learning and reinforcement
- Establish how to create a learning environment through the effective use of organisation and communication skills
- Introduce the principles of match preparation and basic tactics

## ORGANISATION

Successful clubs and teams have plans which:

- Are appropriate to the age, skills, experience and aspirations of the players
- Encourage a sense of purpose and confidence amongst all members of the club/team
- Describe the expectations of the coach, including basic standards and results



# Goal Setting

**The process of goal setting is the first, and most important step in planning. Clear goals or objectives are essential for a coach to create a successful program. These goals will generally cover each of the following two categories:**

## **1. ACHIEVEMENT GOALS (e.g. win the premiership)**

Achievement goals provide motivation and can be either long term (e.g. "play Test cricket"), or short term (e.g. "win this game"). As a guideline, the younger the players the shorter the time frame for goals.

## **2. PERFORMANCE GOALS (e.g. bowling an effective outswinger)**

Performance goals describe the processes (actions) which lead to the result goals. Importantly, these goals are more under the player's control than result goals.

## **Principles of Effective Goal Setting**

Numerous research studies have shown that performance can be markedly improved by the effective use of goal setting. The coach can ensure that goal setting is effective by following the guidelines:

- Specific – clear, written
- Measurable – e.g. bowl 5 out of 6 deliveries in "corridor"
- Important – and agreed between player and coach
- Challenging – but not too difficult
- Flexible – able to change if circumstances change
- Multiple – use more than one goal

for areas such as dress, practice behaviour, match behaviour and off-field aspects

- Meet with players to discuss the goals and involve them in developing an agreed plan for making improvements in key areas
- Write down the team goals and standards and distribute these to all players
- Regularly meet with the players to review progress and provide feedback on performance

### **INDIVIDUAL**

- Have each player develop a personal goal plan, including their long term and short term goals. Offer advice on goals, particularly in regard to what is challenging but realistic
- Have each player develop a personal improvement plan based on your observations of areas that you want them to improve

## **Practical Goal Setting**

### **TEAM**

- Develop your goals and plan for achieving the goals, including a list of standards

## **BEWARE!**

**Many coaches fail to gain full benefits from goal setting because they don't involve the players in the process.**

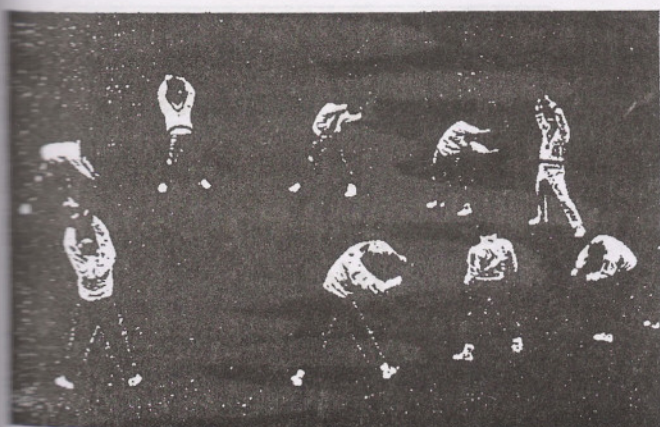
**Even with younger players it is valuable to create a feeling of ownership for the goals.**

- Review the plan regularly and ask the player for his own assessment on progress. As a guide, do this once per month and then suggest changes as required



# Preparation

**Top level cricketers have pre-game and within-game rituals which they follow. Coaches can assist players to develop effective rituals by explaining their importance and then following the guidelines outlined in the next two sections.**



## Pre-game Rituals

The effective coach creates a team system based around rituals for the following areas:

- Team meetings to discuss strategies
- Clear arrangements for arriving at the ground
- Team inspection of pitch
- Team warm-up, including stretching, catching and practice
- Final discussion before the game begins

Players will want time to do their own personal preparation, particularly if they are experienced. As a rule, allow more free time for older, more experienced players, while guiding the younger players through a preparation which helps them to be physically and mentally ready when the game begins.



## Within-game Rituals

The within-game rituals fall into two broad, overlapping categories:

### Team Rituals

- Walking out onto the field together
- Coming together after a wicket falls
- Always backing up a throw
- Batsmen walking back together at a break or end of innings
- Keeping the ball shined

They are some. Most of these rituals are minor aspects of cricket but they can set the standard for the team's total performance and as such are very important.

### Individual Rituals

- Starting an innings
- Bowler's ritual between deliveries
- Wicketkeepers ritual between deliveries

They are some. Individual rituals include all the things which the coach wants players to do consistently during a game. Coaches can help players to develop effective rituals by highlighting those behaviours which help to produce results (e.g. bowlers using time between deliveries to plan, and polish the ball)



# MOTIVATION & COMMUNICATION

## Positive

**Gaining mastery of skills**

**Personal pride**

**Meeting/mixing with people**

**Enjoying playing cricket**

**Sense of getting better**

**Scoring runs, taking wickets**

**Winning the match**

**Recognition from friends**

**Praise**

**Trophies**

## Internal

**Negative mental 'pictures'**

**Negative self talk**

**Embarrassment, worry**

**Lack of belief in**

## External

**Threats**

**Punishment e.g. running laps**

**Coach yelling at player**

**Taking away of support**

## Negative



# Developing Acceptable & Motivated Behaviour

## Coaches can discourage unacceptable behaviour by:

- Focusing criticism at the behaviour, not the person (e.g. instead of saying, "You are stupid," try saying, "You gave no thought to that.")
- Avoiding emotion when dealing with unacceptable behaviour
- Linking consequences to the behaviour (e.g. "If you do slog the ball out of the net again, then you are not batting any longer.")
- Being consistent in applying punishment (i.e. application every time the behaviour occurs)
- Dealing with the individual and not in a group situation
- Developing standards in advance for areas that are likely to be of concern (e.g. practice behaviour for when players are not batting or bowling)

## Coaches can encourage acceptable behaviour by:

- Having clear standards and team goals which are regularly communicated
- Developing individual goal plans and allocating time to discuss progress with each individual (this encourages commitment)
- Providing regular feedback which focuses more on performance instead of just the results (this helps the players to focus on ways to improve)
- Encouraging players to take responsibility for their own performance by creating the opportunity for self assessment
- Being a positive role model (in words and actions)

## How to be an Effective Communicator

Effective coaches are effective communicators. Good communication in matters of preparation and attitude is just as important as it is in technical matters. Effective coaches incorporate the guidelines below into their own personal style

- Always tell the players what you do want them to do (e.g. "follow through across your body"), rather than what you don't want them to do (e.g. "stop letting your arm slide down the right hand side of



your body")

- Make your verbal and non-verbal messages consistent by using your facial expression and gestures to reinforce what you are saying
- Use a range of communication methods, such as telling, demonstrating, story telling, white board, written, video and using a role model (e.g. senior player)
- Keep information to a minimum so that the player gets a simple, easy to understand message