

MASTERCLASS

FOR ANY
YOUNG LADS
OUT THERE...



THE BATTING DOCTOR

LEANING IN TO THE SHOT (BALANCE)

If your initial stance is correct, with your feet level, as we discussed in last month's surgery, you will be in a good position to lean towards the ball. The No 1 thing to check is the position of your head and alignment of your shoulders. The head must be slightly forward of your body and above the front foot, in line with your toes. If your head is further across than your toes, the chances are that you will tip to the off side and this will make it difficult for you to play straight.

Your eyes need to be level and your shoulders need to be in line with each other and also in line with the stumps at the other end of the pitch.

A common problem is that the leading shoulder gets too closed or too far round and therefore the batter can't help but fall to the off side. It's more important to get the head pointing up the wicket rather than the shoulders. If the head is in position and the chin is close to the inside of the leading shoulder, then you are in a

great position and well aligned, ready to lean in to the shot.

TIPPING TO THE OFF SIDE

A common fault with many batters is tipping to the off side. If you tip to the off side, you will end up looking only at the off side as your scoring area. So, when the ball is straight or on the leg stump, you will generally be hitting across the line; you will be presenting half a bat at the ball on contact and therefore have a higher risk of missing it or getting a leading edge.

Batters must open their minds to the possibility of playing straight or through mid-on to help stop them tipping over, rather than pre-judging hitting the ball towards their favourite scoring area, mid-off or extra cover.

Gary Palmer has coached a roster of county teams and international players. His Academy (www.ccmacademy.co.uk) runs a series of coaching programmes for young players throughout the year.



HAWKEYE MASTERCLASS

BROAD AND SIDEBOTTOM FINDING THE RIGHT LENGTH

The art of swing bowling has had something of a comeback of late, with Ryan Sidebottom and Jimmy Anderson showing its potency at the highest level. Batsmen can prepare for bounce, or lack of it, but swing – especially late swing – can be especially lethal when married with correct lines and lengths.

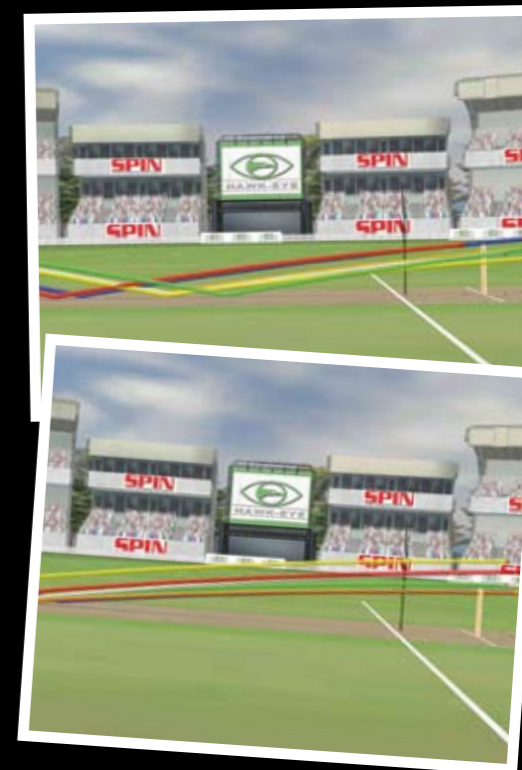
Anderson's occasional waywardness shows the downside of swing bowling – often searching for more movement than is there and getting your line wrong correspondingly – but the key to Sidebottom's success has been his consistency: pitching the ball up enough to give it the opportunity to swing, and then getting your line right so as to make the batsman play.

In Graphic 1, we see Sidebottom in action during the recent Lord's Test against New Zealand. This shows over 81 of the first innings, with Sidebottom bowling to Kyle Mills and Tim Southee and attaining considerable inswing to both batsmen. Sidebottom bowled Mills with the second (white) ball and also had three big lbw shouts with his first (red), third (yellow) and fourth (blue) balls.

Here, we're highlighting the length that he bowled, with all six deliveries pitched in the batsmen's third of the strip to allow the ball maximum time to swing.

Contrast this with a typical over from the taller Stuart Broad, a bowler who relies more on bounce – attained through his height – and movement off the pitch via the ball's seam, ie as/after it has bounced.

Graphic 2 shows the 18th over of the first innings against New Zealand in the Trent Bridge Test. Again it was a maiden, with Broad disconcerting Ross Taylor with his bounce and seam movement towards the slips. It is the length he bowls at that shows the main difference; our graphic shows how much further back he naturally pitches the ball in order to achieve his bounce. This means Broad is aiming to get the batsman caught behind rather than LBW or bowled.



PICTURES: PHOTOS: GARY PALMER