

## **POSITIONING FOR CRICKET UMPIRES**

### **Training Objective** (What we want to achieve)

1. To assess and improve the umpire's positioning skills at both the bowler's end and square leg dealing with both theory and practical issues involved. To improve speed getting into position and correct any technique faults that may cause umpires not to see all aspects in a run out decision.

### **Training Tools / Time Required** (What we need)

- One centre pitch with all markings at both ends
- Two assistants (participants can help here)
- 4 Batsmen (participants can assist here)
- 4 cricket bats
- 12 cricket balls
- Participant umpires to wear long trousers and umpiring shoes and their umpiring hats
- Video recording equipment for later review – operator to work device.

### **Introduction**

#### **Why is positioning important?**

Positioning is important for a number of reasons:-

1. To be in the best possible position to make a decision
2. To avoid being in the way of the fielding side (line of sight and not obstruct the path of the ball)
3. To see all that you need to see – best position
4. To give the perception and confidence to the players that the decision made is the correct one. It is an indicator of alertness, concentration, ability to read the game, fitness and stamina.

### **Summary of Activities**

1. Positioning / Stance at the bowler's end
2. Getting into side on position at the bowler's end (normal)
3. Getting into side on position at the bowler's end ("V")
4. Positioning / stance at square leg
5. Positioning at square leg with injured striker (4 examples)

## 1. Bowlers' end umpire positioning technique

**Activity – demonstrate (show) the participants where they should be standing behind the stumps at the bowler's end. Demonstrate giving guard from over the top of the stumps and moving back into position. Also cover the positioning of the feet (slightly apart and well balanced), not to have all your weight on your heels and hands either behind your side or out in front – hands behind your back should be discouraged as this will take the umpire longer to move initially to get into position. (4-6 minutes)**

- Stand in line with middle stump so that you have a clear view of the popping crease. After the first over from the other end, you may be able to use the middle stump mark made by the batsmen to line up your position behind the stumps – line up the mark with the middle stump every time you get back behind the stumps at the bowler's end. Work with the bowler on where to stand if he requests further back or closer than you normally feel comfortable. When standing back, if you have to look through the stumps at the crease, adjust your position slightly so that you see the bowler's front foot heel between the stumps.
- If you are not familiar with the bowler's delivery action, it may be best to stand a little further back to ensure there is no infringement with the back foot. Once you are comfortable that this is not an issue for consideration, it may be more comfortable to move a pace closer to the stumps.
- Watch the bowler return to his mark and as he turns (after an over or so, it may not be necessary to do this), face the striker and switch on to full concentration. Take up your preferred position and do not leave it until the ball has been delivered and played into the field. Stress to the participants that they should not move away from that position behind the stumps when answering an appeal – give the decision first and then move.
- Positioning depth may be different for fast and slow bowlers. It is becoming more common for fast bowlers to tell you exactly where they want you to stand – accommodate these requests where possible, but don't stand too far back if it makes you feel uncomfortable. Standing too far back has its disadvantages with judgement of the front foot and the extra time it takes to get to the popping crease. For slower bowlers, it helps to stand closer (1 metre) to assist with decision making. Stand where you feel most comfortable – to be able to make better judgements and get into position in time – if you are out of these comfort zones then you need to develop strategies to compensate.
- Be ready and willing to work with the bowler if he wishes to know where his front foot is landing. Establish a consistent approach to advising bowlers in this way. Be proactive if he is gradually creeping on the line. Rapport with the bowlers is a vital ingredient in an umpire's ability to effectively handle a match.
- Give guard from over the top of the stumps at the bowler's end with further checks being done from where you would normally stand for a delivery. Know the terminology, one leg (leg stump), two legs (middle and leg - halfway between middle and leg). If the batsman shows you the full face of the bat and asks for "two please" he wants "two legs" and the bat should cover both the middle and leg stump. Always repeat to the batsman what he said to you – i.e. If he asked for middle stump then in reply say "That's middle stump there".

**Activity – demonstrate the various positions for slow and fast bowlers. Identify the challenges with viewing front foot placement when standing way back or a slow bowler making you stand right up. (3 minutes)**

- Differentiate the difference between where you may stand for a fast bowler compared with a slow bowler. The key remains to keep your head still and move the eyes only – speed and practice is important in training focus.

**Activity – Ask each of the participants to take up their preferred position behind the stumps and check their methodology – 1minute per person.**

**Correct and reinstruct any participants who may not have developed the whole skill – this may take around 1 minute for each participant as some will challenge what they are being shown compared to their current habit.**

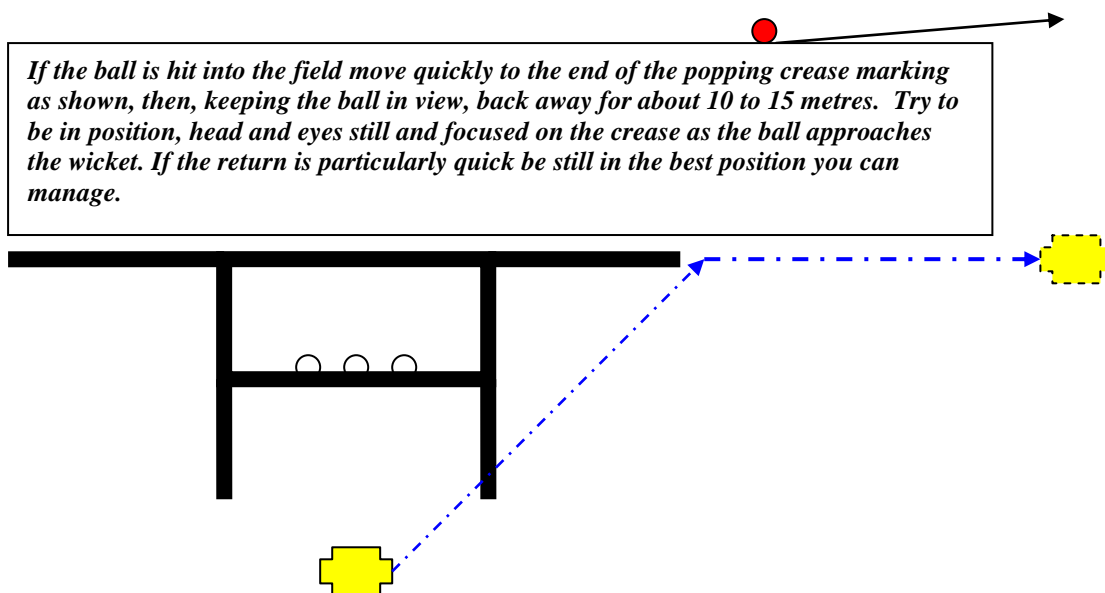
**2. Activity – Demonstrate getting into side on position at the bowler’s end (normal) after the ball is struck.**

**To do this more realistically, set up two sets of stumps and have a person stand at the striker’s end and roll balls into the field. Have two assistants – one at cover and one at mid wicket collect the ball and throw at the bowler’s end stumps.**

Demonstrate and then practise movement / getting into position with the ball going to mid wicket or cover. The objective is to get the participant to move quickly, to get in line with the popping crease and then move backwards – stopping and having the head still to make the judgement. (See diagram). Reinforce that it does not matter which side you go to – comfort is the key but outline the advantages and disadvantages of same side versus opposite side (the instructed preferred side is the same side as the ball when it goes square of the wicket). If the umpire cannot make it into position in time, then the best alternative is to stop, be still, have eyes level and make the judgement from a stationary position, rather than be on the move.

**3. Demonstrate / practise an alternative situation where the ball goes into the “V” – to mid on or mid off.**

Here the participant must go to the opposite side to the ball. The objective is to get the participant to move quickly, comfortably and get in line with the popping crease asap and then move backwards – to stop and have head still when making the judgement. (See diagram). Must go opposite side in this case – pay particular attention to speed, running backwards (not turning back on ball) and getting into line. If the umpire cannot make it into position in time, then the best alternative is to stop, be still, have their eyes level and make the judgement from a stationary incorrect position, rather than be on the move in an incorrect position.



- After the ball is struck into the field, it is current practice for most umpires to move to the same side as the ball. A clear view of the stumps being broken is the major factor here. This technique is a personal thing and you should **always feel comfortable** where you place yourself. Always be aware however of the fielders in “the arc” between extra cover and mid wicket. If you place yourself between the ball and the stumps, you may obstruct or impede a fielder in his attempt to field the ball or have a clear throw at the wicket. On these occasions, **when the ball is hit into the “V” you must move to the opposite side** to that which the ball is hit. Anticipation is the key as is the constant noting of where the fielders in the arc are placing themselves. Should there be a problem seeing if the wicket was fairly broken you can and should consult with your colleague in the normal way.

#### 4. Activity – Positioning / Stance for the umpire at striker’s end

- Stand no more than 20 metres deep (the length of a pitch), a couple of paces closer for a slow bowler or when no fielders are located near you if you feel comfortable. Move further back if asked by a fielder but try never to be more than 25 to 30 metres away. Stand in line with the popping crease splitting your stance.
  - When the keeper is standing back, watch the bowler run in and deliver the ball. Always watch for hit wicket before following the ball into the outfield. Keep your head still.
  - When the keeper is standing up at the stumps, do not watch the bowler deliver the ball, keep your head still and watch the batsman’s back foot in relation to the popping crease – listen for the breaking of the stumps on a stumping appeal.
- Once the ball is hit - watch for catches carrying and batsmen crossing. Signal to partner if required.
- Cross to off side if the sun or glare, or fielders in your line make the seeing conditions unsatisfactory. When crossing for left/right handed batsmen, anticipate the need to

change and begin walking in while the ball is still in play. This will allow you to be in position without having to run by the time the bowler begins his run up.

- Be watchful of fieldsmen behind you and always check for possible behind square leg infringements – especially important in limited overs matches with left and right hand batsmen fields. If there is a deep field very square behind you, move over to point.
- Stand side on to the stumps to watch both the ball and the running batsmen making their ground. Only turn back to face the wicket when the ball has been returned past you. This will eradicate any chance of being hit by the ball when it is being thrown towards the wickets.