



## TEACHING GAMES FOR UNDERSTANDING (TGfU)



## Introduction – What is TGfU?

The best cricketers are those that have a great understanding of the game. They are more than just the most technically proficient and many would describe them as having a 'cricket brain.' How does a player develop a 'cricket brain'? The answer probably lies in their childhood experiences with informal play. Backyard cricket provides the learning environment for quality cricketers – many a test player has attested to this. The backyard game offers players the opportunity to innovate, experiment, strategise and dream. It throws up the do-or-die situation of Brett Lee, running in with a taped-up tennis ball to fire an out-swinger down to Brendon McCullum with the BLACKCAPS requiring four off the last ball to win. Hitting the garden fence on the leg-side is an automatic out and the tool shed protects the third man fence. As a bowler, where should I bowl this? As a batsman, what is my best option to score a boundary?

Teaching Games for Understanding (TGfU) is an approach to coaching that aims to recreate the fun of the backyard and deepen the tactical understanding of players. It recognises a sportsperson's innate desire to play games and structures the games in such a way that they pose tactical problems for the players to solve. The coach acts as a facilitator, setting up the game and where appropriate asking open-ended questions of the players to encourage them to consider and evaluate their tactical decisions.

TGfU does not neglect good technique as an important aspect of skilled performance. In fact it enhances it. Players are challenged to perform the techniques within a competitive game and so are practising the techniques as they would expect to implement them in a match. Further, if the techniques break down under pressure this provides the motivation for players to work harder on their skill development.

Most importantly, TGfU is fun and highly motivating. Coaches within all athlete communities can use this approach to enhance their players' enjoyment of the game and deepen their understanding of the strategies and tactics that make it so interesting and challenging to play.

## How to use TGfU in Cricket

*What are the fundamental aims of the game?*

<b>BATTING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ To score runs</li> <li>◆ To avoid getting out</li> </ul>
<b>BOWLING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ To get the batsman out</li> <li>◆ To prevent the batsman from scoring runs</li> </ul>
<b>FIELDING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ To dismiss the batsman by effecting a dismissal through caught, run-out or stumped</li> <li>◆ To prevent the batsman from scoring runs</li> </ul>

From these fundamental aims, players then employ strategies or tactics to achieve them. Below are just some of the basic strategies/tactics that could be used. These could guide coach questioning to promote greater tactical awareness and decision-making among the players and are also a good starting point for creating your own modified training games. The questioning approach is central to TGfU – by coaches asking open-ended questions of the players they are encouraging them to think for themselves and come up with their own solutions to the tactical problems posed.

SKILL	TACTIC	QUESTIONS
<b>BATTING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ <i>How to score runs:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hitting the ball into areas where fielders aren't such as, through gaps, over the top of fielders (calculated risk), in front of fielders for quick singles.</li> <li>• Recognising which balls are easier to hit powerfully (decision making)</li> <li>• Good judgement of when to run and good communication with batting partner to call runs</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ <i>How to avoid getting out:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognising which balls are harder to score off and should therefore be left or defended (decision making)</li> <li>• Hitting the ball along the ground rather than in the air</li> <li>• Communicating well with batting partner to call runs</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Where can you hit the ball to score the most runs?</li> <li>◆ What is your team's batting plan?</li> <li>◆ What is your role within the team's batting plan?</li> <li>◆ How would your opponent's score impact upon your team's batting plan?</li> <li>◆ At what stage in the game do you feel it is appropriate to take more risks?</li> <li>◆ What things should you take into consideration when judging how many runs you can go for from a shot?</li> <li>◆ What types of shots will allow you to score more runs?</li> <li>◆ How would a certain match situation (e.g. Loss of early wickets, change of bowler) change your approach?</li> <li>◆ What area of the field is less protected by the fielders?</li> <li>◆ How can you make sure you have strong communication with your batting partner?</li> </ul>
<b>BOWLING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ <i>How to get the batsman out:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bowling good line and length which makes it difficult for batsman to score off.</li> <li>• Having a plan to get the batsman out based on a perceived weakness</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Where can you bowl the ball to prevent the batsman from scoring the most runs?</li> <li>◆ What is the team's bowling plan?</li> <li>◆ What is my role within the</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using variations, such as slower balls, to deceive the batsman</li> </ul> <p>◆ <i>How to prevent the batsman from scoring runs:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Position fielders to protect areas where the batsman is strong</li> <li>Bowl a good line and length, which forces the batsman to defend rather than attack</li> </ul>	<p>team's bowling plan?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ What is your stock ball?</li> <li>◆ When do you use variations?</li> <li>◆ What do you look for when analysing a batsman's strengths / weaknesses?</li> <li>◆ How do you deceive the batsman?</li> <li>◆ How would a certain match situation (e.g. Aggressive batsman at crease) change your approach?</li> <li>◆ What factors do you take into account when setting your field?</li> </ul>
<b>FIELDING</b>	<p>◆ <i>How to get the batsman out:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good skill execution (low and high catching; accurate throwing)</li> </ul> <p>◆ <i>How to prevent the batsman from scoring runs:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fielders positioned in areas which restrict scoring options for batsman</li> <li>Anticipation of where the ball is going to be hit (reading the batsman)</li> <li>Backing up in the field</li> <li>Use of relay throws to get the ball in quicker</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ What is your team strategy – how do you use your fielders to defend the area?</li> <li>◆ Do you change your field for different batsman? Why?</li> <li>◆ What can you look for to help you anticipate where the batsman will hit the ball?</li> <li>◆ How can you work together to best cover the space available to the batsman?</li> <li>◆ How would your opponent's score impact on the way you set the field?</li> </ul>

## Tips for Questioning

- Ask open-ended questions which prompts a conversation between coach and players, rather than yes/no answers.
- As a coach, ask questions in a positive, enquiring tone. You want your players to feel comfortable providing you with their thoughts, not scared or hesitant about having an incorrect answer. All answers provide something for the coach to work with so be encouraging and open-minded.
- Be patient when asking questions – allow the players the chance to process the question and formulate an answer. Periods of silence do not necessarily indicate to the coach that they must jump in and answer their own question.

**Also POINTS OF NOTE:**

- Use small-sided teams when playing games. This allows for more action and involvement for each player which contributes to greater enjoyment and skill development.
- Ensure games are challenging but where necessary lower the skill level required so that players can still complete them successfully and engage with the tactical problems that the game poses (eg. If players are struggling to hit the ball, give them a tennis racket which has a greater surface area to hit the ball. Alternatively, allow the players to throw the ball rather than hit it).  
*The games focus on tactical aspects of cricket as well as technical elements in realistic cricket situations.*

## TGfU Games

The following section contains practical examples of TGfU games that coaches can set up for their training sessions. They are divided into two sections – ZONE PLAY and OPEN PLAY.

ZONE PLAY refers to games that are limited or isolated to a certain *zone* of the playing field.

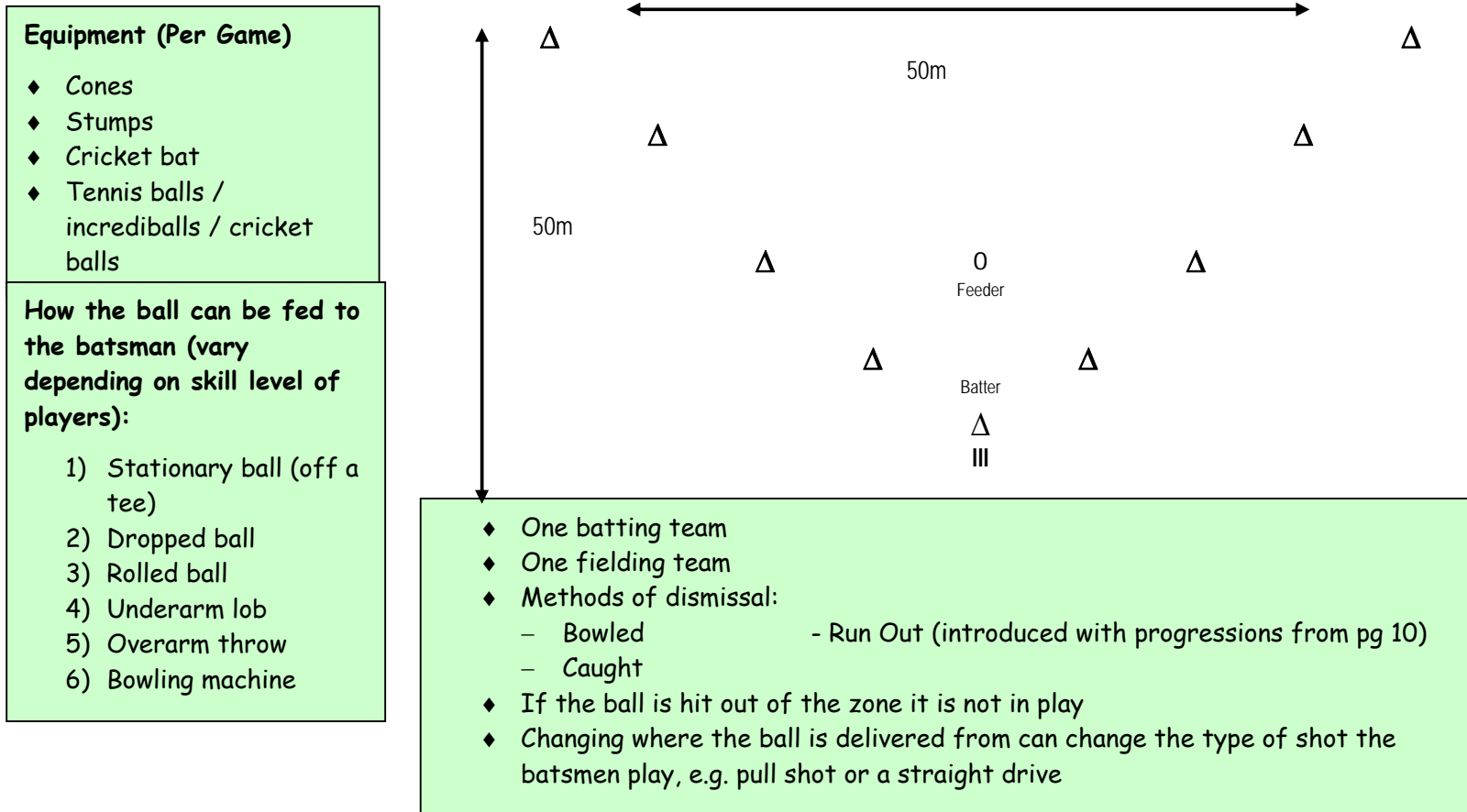
OPEN PLAY refers to games that are played on a full or *open* playing field.

In each section the front page outlines the basic field set-up, necessary equipment and baseline rules. Following that are a host of modifications / additions that can be made to introduce different tactical problems to the players. The modifications are only a starting point – coaches are encouraged to build on this and develop their own modifications that suit the needs of their particular team.

In all the games coaches should aim to create a competitive environment with as close to match-like conditions as possible. Keep score; ensure there are consequences for batting dismissals. The rider to this is that games must be set at the ability level of the players so as to challenge them but not be so difficult that they become disillusioned.

## SECTION 1 – “ZONE PLAY”

The following games and variations are isolated within particular areas or *zones* of the field and are designed to present the players with batting and fielding “problems” that they must solve by playing the game. Below is a diagram of the field layout and the basic rules of the game.

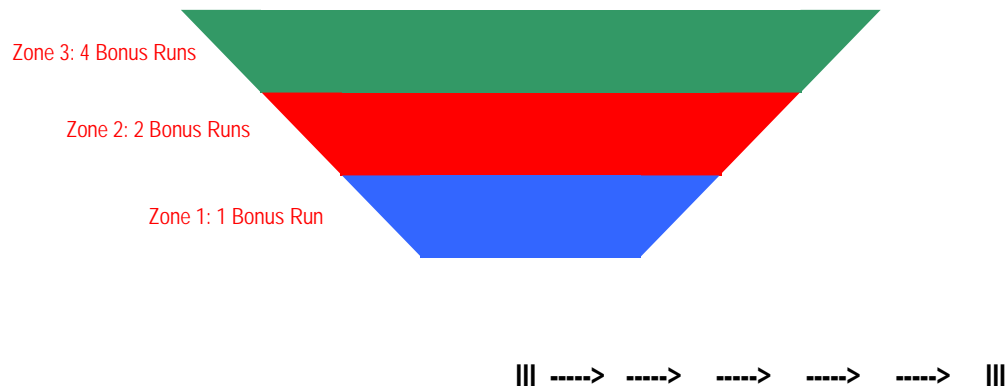
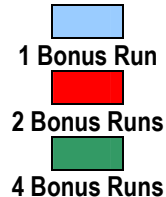


## ZONE PLAY – HORIZONTAL ZONES

### Purpose:

- ◆ Batting - to think about where to hit the ball to increase scoring opportunities given that bonus runs can be scored by hitting the ball(s) into different horizontal zones
- ◆ Fielding – to work as a team to cover playing space to keep the batsmen's score to a minimum Zone 3: 4 bonus runs Zone 2: 2 Bonus Runs Zone 1: 1 Bonus Run

- ◆ One batter comes up at a time and gets one turn at bat to hit the delivered ball. You can introduce multiple balls to be hit in each player's turn at bat to provide for more action and involvement from the fielding team. If any ball is caught, or the batsman is bowled by a delivery, they are out and score no runs.
- ◆ The fielding team must start 15-20m back from the stumps to prevent crowding the batsman.
- ◆ To score runs the batsman runs to and from the opposite set of stumps as many times as they can before the fielding team can 'stop' play.
- ◆ The fielding team 'stops' play by returning the ball(s) to the wicketkeeper (or placing them back on tees if they were hit as stationary balls)
- ◆ Batsman are awarded bonus runs if they place the ball into certain zones of the field



### VARIATIONS:

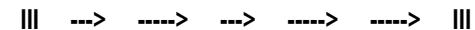
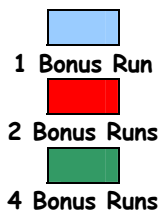
- ◆ Change the zones, eg. 1 Bonus Run 4 Bonus Runs 2 Bonus Runs
- ◆ Introduce a hoola-hoop to 'stop' the play. Place the hoola-hoop anywhere on the field. To stop the play the ball(s) have to be placed in the hoop by the fielding team rather than by returning them to the wicketkeeper. Where the coach places the hoola-hoop will encourage the batsman to consider where they hit the ball(s).

## ZONE PLAY – VERTICAL ZONES

### Purpose:

- ◆ Batting - to think about where to hit the ball to increase scoring opportunities given that bonus runs can be scored by hitting the ball(s) into different vertical zones
- ◆ Fielding – to work as a team to cover playing space to keep the batsmen's score to a minimum

- ◆ One batter comes up at a time and gets one turn at bat to hit the delivered ball. You can introduce multiple balls to be hit in each player's turn at bat to provide for more action and involvement from the fielding team. If any ball is caught, or the batsman is bowled by a delivery, they are out and score no runs.
- ◆ The fielding team must start 15-20m back from the stumps to prevent crowding the batsman.
- ◆ To score runs the batsman runs to and from the opposite set of stumps as many times as they can before the fielding team can 'stop' play.
- ◆ The fielding team 'stops' play by returning the ball(s) to the wicketkeeper (or placing them back on tees if they were hit as stationary balls)
- ◆ Batsman are awarded bonus runs if they place the ball into certain zones of the field



### VARIATIONS:

- ◆ Change the zones eg. If you are playing the pull shot you may want to encourage players to hit in front of square so the zones may be

3 Bonus Runs    2 Bonus Runs    1 Bonus Run

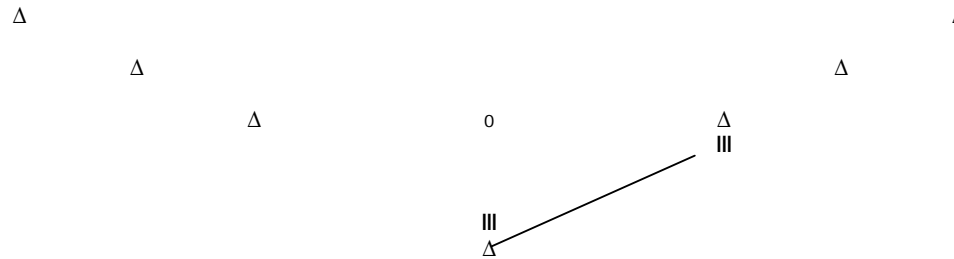
## ZONE PLAY – RUNNING BETWEEN WICKETS

The following are progressions or options to be incorporated within the Horizontal and Vertical Zone Play games. They are designed to make players think about decision making when it comes to running between wickets – judging a run, taking risks and communicating with their partner.

### Progression 1 – Introducing the Run-Out & Communication between Batsmen

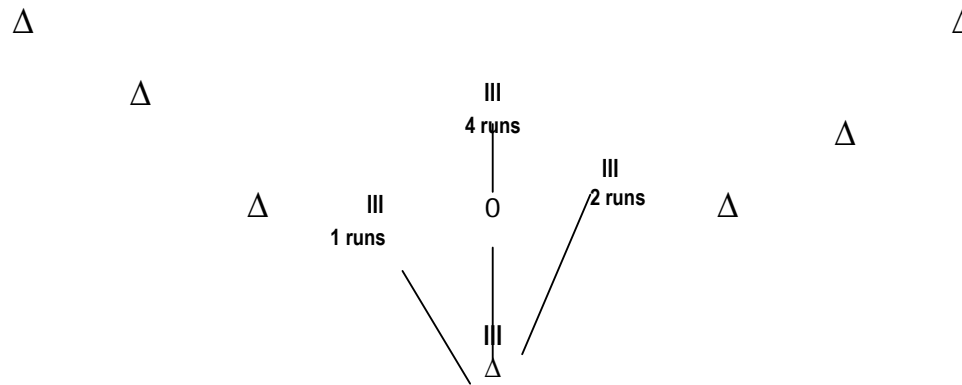
In the previous zone play games, the batsman had to run to and from the stumps as many times as they could before the fielding team 'stopped' play. In this progression:

- A) The batsman runs to and from the stumps as many times as they can but if they are mid-pitch when the fielding team 'stops' the play they are run-out and score no runs. They can be safe at either end; OR,
- B) The next batsman in the team to have their turn stands at the non-strikers end and acts as the batting partner. Once the ball(s) is/are hit they both runs as per conventional cricket. If either batsman is short of their ground when the fielding team 'stops' the play they are run out and score no runs. Penalty runs can also be deducted from the batting team if batsmen use incorrect calls when communicating with each other. Correct calls are loud, clear calls of 'YES', 'NO' or 'WAIT' made by the correct batsman; OR,
- C) The same as the above progression except the fielding team 'stops' the play by running the batsmen out at either end as per conventional cricket rules.



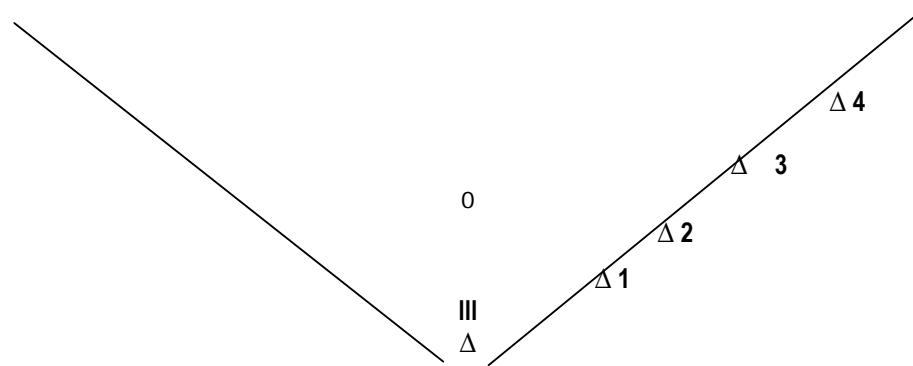
## Progression 2 – Judging a Run

- ◆ The objective of this progression is for batsmen to learn to judge a run
- ◆ Once they hit the ball, the batsman can choose which of the three options they would like to take to score runs
- ◆ The batsman must complete a full run to and from the chosen set of stumps before the fielding team 'stops' the play to successfully score the runs
- ◆ As with the previous progression the batsmen can be run-out mid-pitch and score no runs



### Progression 3 – Taking Risks

- ◆ This progression is similar to the one above, however the batsman is only allowed to run once after hitting the ball(s) so must make a decision on how many runs they believe they can risk going for. To score the runs the batsman must make it to their chosen cone and back before the fielding team 'stops' the play.



## SECTION 2 – “OPEN PLAY”

The following games and variations are played on an *open* field and are designed to present the players with batting, bowling and fielding “problems” that they must solve by playing the game. Below is a diagram of the field layout and the basic rules of the game.



### **Equipment**

- ◆ Pitch and open field
- ◆ Stumps
- ◆ Cricket gear
  - Protective equipment
  - Cricket bats
  - Cricket balls
  - Boundary markers
  - Netting (optional)

### **How the ball can be fed to the batsman (vary depending on skill level of players):**

- 1) Stationary ball (off a tee)
- 2) Dropped ball
- 3) Rolled ball
- 4) Underarm lob
- 5) Ball bowled to the batsman (necessary if wanting to develop bowlers' strategies)
- 6) Bowling machine

### **Rules**

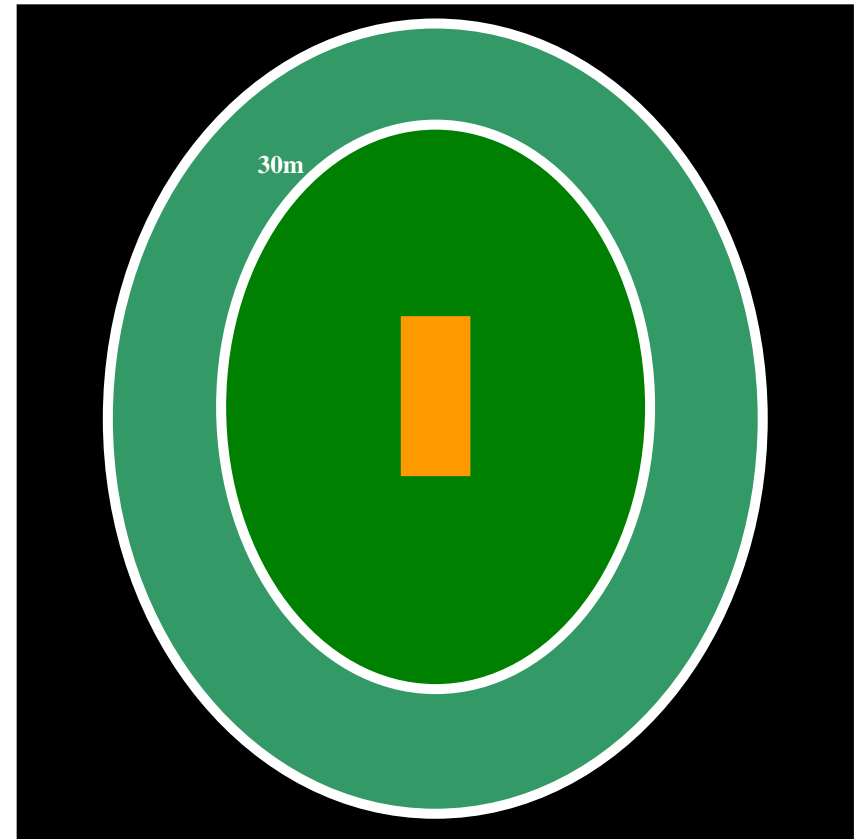
- ◆ Batsmen bat in pairs for set number of overs
- ◆ Rest of team fielding / bowling (can have two bowlers operating at same time, rotating after each ball)
- ◆ Conventional cricket rules except for rule modifications of each particular game

## OPEN PLAY – FINDING THE GAP

### Purpose:

- ◆ Batting – to think about where to place the ball within the inner circle to take quick singles
- ◆ Bowling – to think about where to bowl the ball to prevent the batsmen from scoring
- ◆ Fielding – to work as a team to cover playing space to keep the batsmen's score to a minimum

- ◆ Each pair bats for 4 overs
- ◆ The batsmen can only score runs from shots that remain within the 30m 'inner' circle. If the ball only slightly rolls beyond the 'inner' circle the runs should still count. It is only if the ball is hit powerfully through the field that it would count as no score to the batting pair
- ◆ All fielders must be within the 30 metre circle
- ◆ The bowlers or captain have the responsibility of setting the field
- ◆ The coach counts the runs of each batting pair over the four overs. Five runs are deducted from the score every time a batsman is dismissed
- ◆ A competitive environment can be set up to find the batting pair that scores the most runs in their allotment of overs

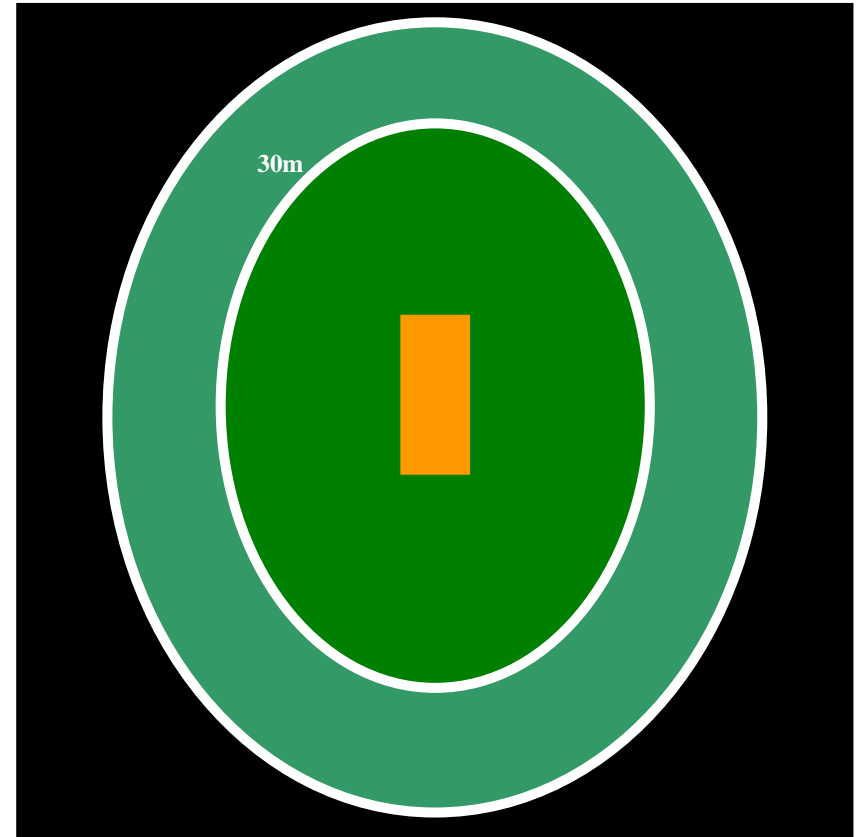


## OPEN PLAY – TAKING ON THE BOUNDARY FIELDER

### Purpose:

- ◆ Batting – to think about where to place the ball to take quick singles and take on boundary fielders for second / third runs
- ◆ Bowling – to think about where to bowl the ball to prevent the batsmen from scoring
- ◆ Fielding – to work as a team to cover playing space to keep the batsmen's score to a minimum

- ◆ Each pair bats for 4 overs
- ◆ The batsmen can score runs from shots anywhere in the field.
- ◆ Only 2 fielders (except the wicket keeper) can field within the 'inner' circle. All other fielders must field on the boundary (suggest it is no more than 50 m from the wicket for junior players)
- ◆ The bowlers or captain have the responsibility of setting the field
- ◆ The coach counts the runs of each batting pair over the four overs. Five runs are deducted from the score every time a batsman is dismissed
- ◆ A competitive environment can be set up to find the batting pair that scores the most runs in their allotment of overs

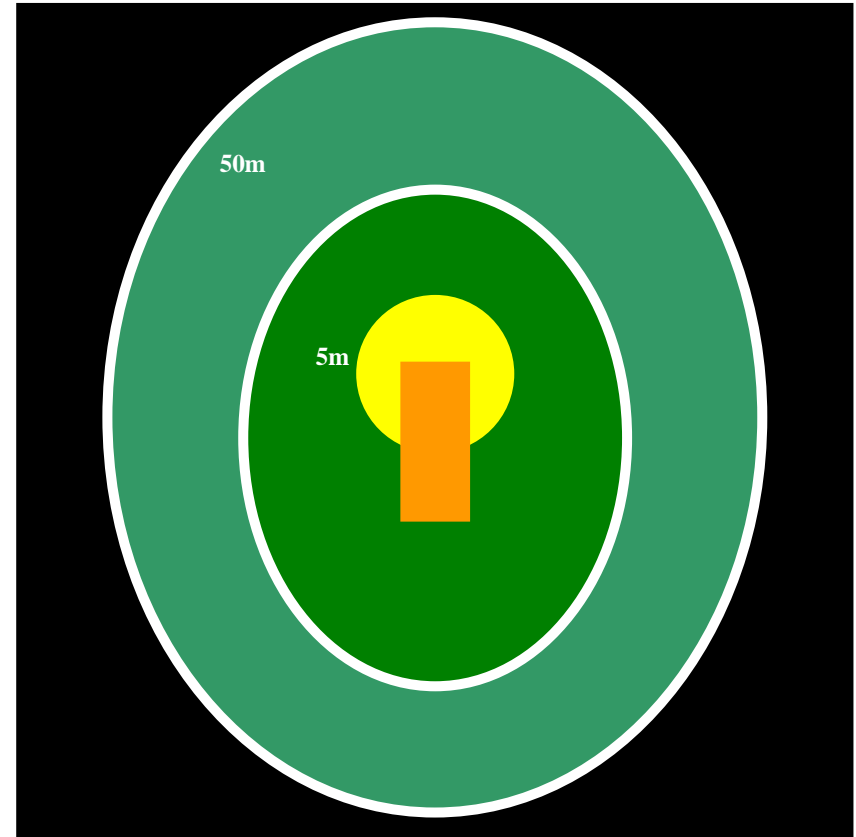


## OPEN PLAY – QUICK SINGLES

### Purpose:

- ◆ Batting – to think about where to place the ball to take quick singles
- ◆ Bowling – to think about where to bowl the ball to prevent the batsmen from scoring
- ◆ Fielding – to work as a team to cover playing space to keep the batsmen's score to a minimum

- ◆ Each pair bats for 4 overs
- ◆ The batsmen can score runs from shots anywhere in the field. However batsmen are awarded two bonus runs for placing the ball within a 5m radius of the striker's wickets and taking a quick single
- ◆ Fielders can be anywhere on the field, however 4 players plus the keeper and bowler must be inside the 'inner' circle. Aside from the wicketkeeper and any slips, fielders may not start within the 5 m circle
- ◆ The bowlers or captain have the responsibility of setting the field
- ◆ The coach counts the runs of each batting pair over the four overs. Five runs are deducted from the score every time a batsman is dismissed
- ◆ A competitive environment can be set up to find the batting pair that scores the most runs in their allotment of overs



## OPEN PLAY – DART BOARD

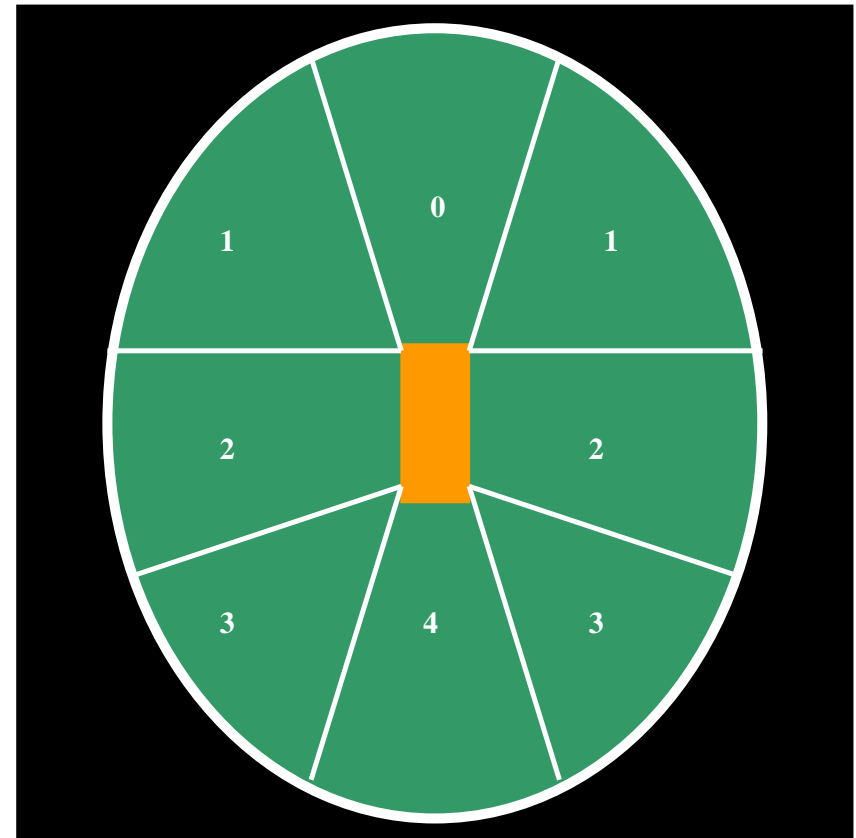
### Purpose:

- ◆ Batting – to think about where to place the ball to maximise scoring opportunities
- ◆ Bowling – to think about where to bowl the ball to prevent the batsmen from scoring
- ◆ Fielding – to work as a team to cover playing space to keep the batsmen's score to a minimum

- ◆ Each pair bats for 4 overs
- ◆ The batsmen can score runs from shots anywhere in the field. However batsmen are awarded bonus runs depending on which zone they place the ball into.
- ◆ Use marker cones to divide the field up into segments.
- ◆ The bowlers or captain have the responsibility of setting the field
- ◆ The coach counts the runs of each batting pair over the four overs. Five runs are deducted from the score every time a batsman is dismissed
- ◆ A competitive environment can be set up to find the batting pair that scores the most runs in their allotment of overs

### EXTENSION

- ◆ Bowlers may bowl negatively in order to reduce the number of bonus runs ie. bowl wide and down the leg side. Therefore change where the bonus runs are so that bowler's are still bowling good lines.

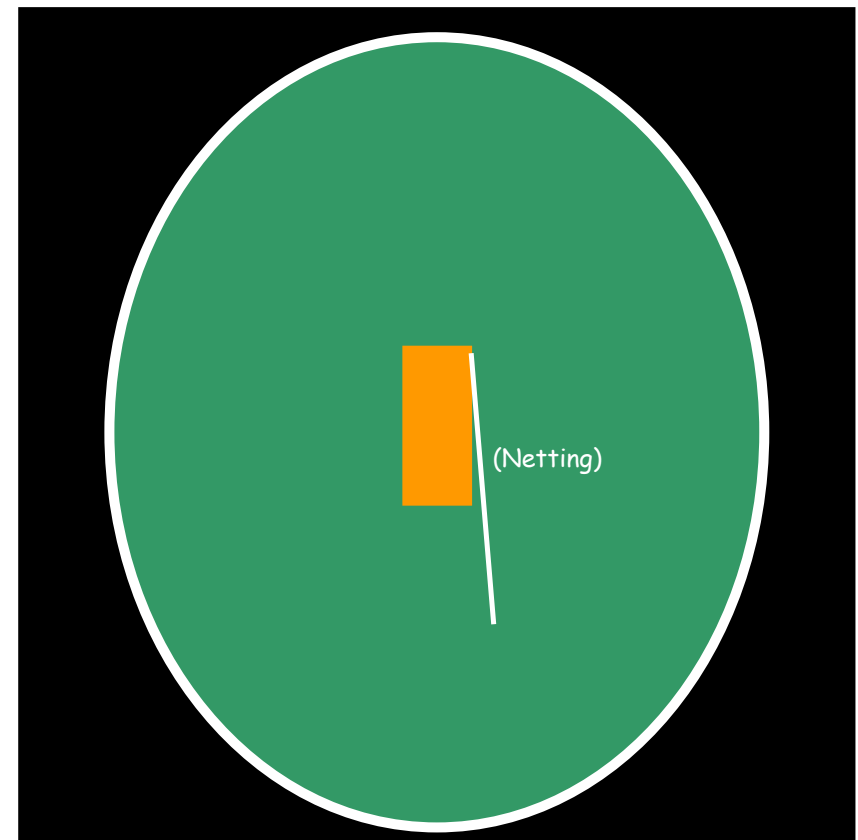


## OPEN PLAY – OFF SIDE PLAY

### Purpose:

- ◆ This modification is useful when working with smaller groups as you are limiting the space that a fielding team with less players will have to cover
- ◆ Batting – to think about where to place the ball on the off-side to maximise scoring opportunities
- ◆ Bowling – to think about where to bowl the ball in the off-side channel to prevent the batsmen from scoring
- ◆ Fielding – to work as a team to cover the off-side playing space to keep the batsmen's score to a minimum

- ◆ Place a side netting on the leg side of the cricket pitch
- ◆ Each pair bats for 4 overs
- ◆ The batsmen can score runs from shots anywhere on the off-side of the field. Batsmen score no runs for hitting the ball into the leg-side netting
- ◆ Fielders can be anywhere on the off-side of the field
- ◆ The bowlers or captain have the responsibility of setting the field
- ◆ The coach counts the runs of each batting pair over the four overs. Five runs are deducted from the score every time a batsman is dismissed
- ◆ A competitive environment can be set up to find the batting pair that scores the most runs in their allotment of overs

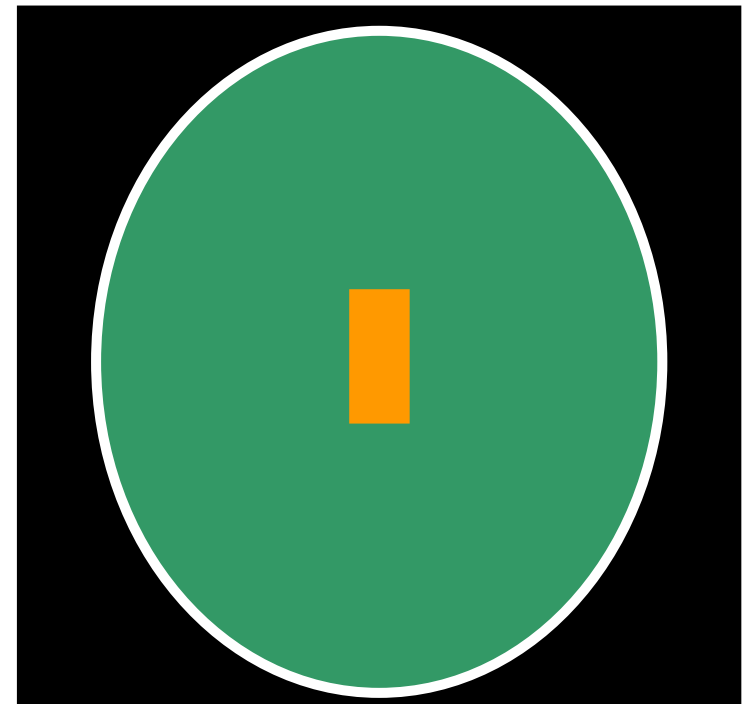


## OPEN PLAY – MATCH SCENARIOS

### Purpose:

- ◆ Match Scenario games are designed to be full-blown mini games of cricket, limited to a certain aspect or *scenario* of a match
- ◆ Batting – set goals and plans for the scenario and look to implement those plans to achieve the goals
- ◆ Bowling – set goals and plans for the scenario and look to implement those plans to achieve the goals
- ◆ Fielding – to work as a team to cover playing space to keep the batsmen's score to a minimum
- ◆ Fielding – to execute fielding skills effectively to assist the team create chances and effect dismissals
- ◆ NB. As a coach you may want to allow 5 minutes before starting the match scenario for the batting pair and bowling / fielding team to discuss their goals and plans and possibly document them on a piece of paper to assist the reflection process at the completion of the match scenario

- ◆ Each pair bat for the length of the scenario
- ◆ Captain (in discussion with coach at a junior level) sets the bowling order
- ◆ Consequences for batting dismissals are dependent on each different scenario
- ◆ Examples of different match scenarios are listed on the next few pages



## Match Scenarios

### MATCH SCENARIO 1

- ◆ 2 day game
- ◆ Day 1, Session 1
- ◆ Opening 10 overs of the game

#### **BATSMEN - Questions:**

- ◆ What are your goals as a partnership – what position do you want to be in after 10 overs?
- ◆ How will you approach this 10 over period?

#### **FIELDING TEAM – Questions:**

- ◆ What are your goals as a fielding team – what position do you want to be in after 10 overs?
- ◆ How will you approach this 10 over period?

*NB. Rather than deducting five runs per wicket lost for the batting pair, simply record the number of wickets lost. This will have a major impact on their ability to achieve the goals they have set.*

### **MATCH SCENARIO 2**

- ◆ One-day game
- ◆ Batting second, chasing 225 from 50 overs
  - ◆ Currently 60/1 off 15 overs
  - ◆ 10-over period through to 25<sup>th</sup> over
- ◆ If you lose more than 1 wicket, then each wicket lost after that is minus 5 runs

#### **BATSMAN – Questions:**

- ◆ What are your goals as a partnership – what position do you want to be in the 25<sup>th</sup> over?
- ◆ How will you approach this 10 over period?

#### **FIELDING TEAM – Questions:**

- ◆ What are your goals as a fielding team – what position do you want to be in the 25<sup>th</sup> over?
- ◆ How will you approach this 10 over period?

### MATCH SCENARIO 3

- ◆ 2 day game
- ◆ Day 2, Second innings
- ◆ Currently 60/4, still trailing by 60 runs on the second innings
- ◆ 8 over period

#### **BATSMAN – Questions:**

- ◆ What are your goals as a partnership – what position do you want to be in after this 8 over period?
- ◆ How will you approach this 8 over period?

#### **FIELDING TEAM – Questions:**

- ◆ What are your goals as a fielding team – what position do you want to be in after this 8 over period?
- ◆ How will you approach this 8 over period?

*NB. Rather than deducting five runs per wicket lost for the batting pair, simply record the number of wickets lost. This will have a major impact on their ability to achieve the goals they have set.*

#### **MATCH SCENARIO 4**

- ◆ One day game
- ◆ Batting first
- ◆ Currently 180/6 after 32 overs
  - ◆ 8 over period
- ◆ If you lose more than 1 wicket, then each wicket lost after that is minus 5 runs

#### **BATSMAN – Questions:**

- ◆ What are your goals as a partnership – what position do you want to be in the 40<sup>th</sup> over?
- ◆ How will you approach this 8 over period?

#### **FIELDING TEAM – Questions:**

- ◆ What are your goals as a fielding team – what position do you want to be in the 40<sup>th</sup> over?
- ◆ How will you approach this 8 over period?

#### **MATCH SCENARIO 5**

- ◆ 2 day game
- ◆ Day 2, final session
- ◆ Need 250 to win, currently 200/8
- ◆ Final 8 overs of the match

#### **BATSMAN – Questions:**

- ◆ What are your goals as a partnership in this 8 over period?
- ◆ What is your approach – try to win or defend for a draw?

#### **FIELDING TEAM – Questions:**

- ◆ What are your goals as a fielding team in this 8 over period?
- ◆ What is your approach?

*NB. Rather than deducting five runs per wicket lost for the batting pair, simply record the number of wickets lost. This will have a major impact on their ability to achieve the goals they have set.*

### **MATCH SCENARIO 6**

- ◆ One day game
- ◆ Batting second, chasing 200 off 50 overs
  - ◆ Currently 90/3 after 22 overs
  - ◆ 8 over period through to 30<sup>th</sup> over
- ◆ If you lose more than one wicket, then each wicket lost after that is minus 5 runs

#### **BATSMAN – Questions:**

- ◆ What are your goals as a partnership – what position do you want to be in the 30<sup>th</sup> over?
- ◆ How will you approach this 8 over period?

#### **FIELDING TEAM – Questions:**

- ◆ What are your goals as a fielding team – what position do you want to be in the 30<sup>th</sup> over?
- ◆ How will you approach this 8 over period?

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