



Game Sense Training Plan

Many players today do not approach the game with much intellectual vigour. This is not a criticism, but an observation that could be directed towards many club cricketers in Australia. Over the course of a season a player's enthusiasm can wane and matches can easily become "another weekend."

The aim as a coach is to make them more 'aware' of what is happening in matches so they are able to react positively and strategically and gain some momentum on their opponents during the game. For this to happen there must be a focus on their mental practice during the week as much as technical work.

This means practising more of the whole game.

It is impossible to always 'TELL' players what they should be thinking or doing. They would never learn anything and it would be impossible for them to play 'naturally'. In fact they would make more mistakes and perform poorly which would frustrate them and dilute their confidence in the coach's and their own methods.

In the first instance of centre wicket training we should simply as the players to:

'PLAY NATURALLY'

Initial session

- Batting in pairs, facing 5 overs in match conditions
- A dismissal ends the partnership
- No other information or instructions apart from 'play naturally' will be given.

The coaches will evaluate the batters in the following areas (template on WACA website):

- Balls faced
- Balls asking the question
- Leaves
- Singles
- Boundaries
- Confidence, calling running between wickets
- Total score

At the end of 4 or 5 rotations (20 or 25 overs) coaches will debrief batters re the scenario template , encouraging honest interaction with each pair.

It will be obvious from the statistics they will have wasted opportunities by:



- Being too cautious
- Being too aggressive and overconfident
- Not weighing up bowlers strengths/weaknesses or fielders
- Not understanding the plans of the bowling team –field placing
- Not taking advantage (technically) of poor bowling
- Not batting in a partnership

Whilst these are very simple cricket skills, it is obvious the batters at club level are often not utilising them efficiently, so becoming 'AWARE' of the little things that can shift momentum should help them when they bat.

Whilst this session may seem simple, it is where we should start to form the foundation of the Game Sense approach and build from there.

Effective coaching of players and teams is like building a successful enterprise. Without a strong fundamental base they will eventually collapse and all of the technology and language and clichéd advice is wasted on the recipients who don't have the resources or wherewithal to take it on board.

As coaches we MUST teach players how to play the game!

What would be an immediate positive result in the next session would be to repeat these game sense scenarios again as soon as possible and measure the improvement.

In following sessions batting in pairs for 5 overs where 'boundaries don't count' making players call and run every run would further increase the learning experience. (ie: Battle zone concept)

Similarly the coach can assess team performance, identify areas for improvement and design short game scenarios to address the problem through targeted training that is competitive.

Some examples include:

- Batting against spin
- Batting against the new ball
- Batting up to and after a break
- Zero bowling extra's
- Direct hit run out game (Fielders throw until stumps are hit, batters can keep running)

A player development plan that has a mix of technical & volume building net training, and Game Sense practice will develop smarter players who understand the situation of the game and execute their skill according to the team plan.

Further tips:

- Utilise hard wickets or even the outfield if turf wickets aren't available
- Create tasks for the fielders to keep them engaged in the scenarios
- Ask the players what scenarios they would like to practice