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Spin Bowling Success Tips

By Ian Canaway

The spin bowler is a key element in the bowling line up of any cricket team, the skill of Shane

Warne and Muttiah Muralitharan has highlighted the potential and the sheer power and influence a high class spin bowler can have in the game of cricket. The spin bowler can be used to slow the game, add pressure and most importantly attack batsmen. The spin bowler moves the ball off the pitch turning it sideways, as the spinning ball grips the pitch and turns and can also cause it to bounce variably.

A good spin bowler needs to be able to bowl a consistent line and length, is able to turn the ball, which requires lots of practice and dedication to succeed. If you are a spin bowler you should try and experiment with varying degrees of flight, speed, and angle of approach in order to deceive the batsmen.

There are two recognised types of spin bowlers, which are, finger spinners who are classed as the orthodox technique and use their index finger (first finger) to spin the ball and the wrist spinners who use the wrist more than fingers to spin ball.

Target areas:

Off spin: The off spinner aims to spin the ball from a right handed batsmen's off side towards the leg side. Try to bowl just outside of the off stump so that the ball turns and hits the stumps, also try to entice the batsmen forward on to the front foot by bowling a full length.

Leg spin: The leg spinner aims to bowl the ball so that it spins from a right handed batsmen's leg side to the off side. Again try to pitch the ball up to the batsman to get them coming forward. Pitch the ball inline with the wickets so that the ball turns to hit the top of the off stump.

The grip:

Leg spin: Use the first two fingers to grip the ball horizontally across the seam, your third finger should be bent and running along the seam. Your thumb should rest lightly on seam and the spin is generated primarily by the third finger.

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Off spin: Again grip the ball with your first two fingers horizontally across the seam and try to spread as wide as possible apart the joints of index and middle finger. The ball then rests lightly on third finger and thumb, the spin is produced and passed on mainly through the index finger.

The delivery:

The off spin delivery, should start with an angled and short delivery stride. You should then pivot on ball of the front foot keeping your bowling arm high. Cock your wrist inwards and drive your back leg through to help rotate the body. Release the ball by turning your wrist sharply from left to right and by pulling down on seam with the index finger to generate spin. The back of hand should face the off side or upwards at finish of the delivery, don't forget to follow through properly. Keep your head as upright as possible throughout the delivery and your eyes fixed on the target at all times.

The leg spin delivery is very similar to the off spin except with a few subtle and important variations. Your approach should be somewhat longer and have a slightly angled approach towards the target.

As you bowl you should raise your lead arm towards the target and bowl with a braced front leg (your weight should be through this leg). Pivot on the ball of the lead foot and bring your bowling arm up high with your wrist cocked outwards. Drive your back leg through and release the ball. Generate the spin by rotating your wrist from right to left and by most importantly using the third finger to impart the most spin. Finish with your palm facing leg side.

Follow through by rotating shoulders through the line of the wickets and driving your back leg through the action so that your hips rotate over your front foot. Keep your hips and shoulders inline and head as upright as possible throughout the delivery and your eyes fixed on the target at all times.

The Googly and the Doosra: Deceptive deliveries

The googly is bowled by a leg spinner and is a ball that appears to look like a leg spinner when it's bowled but then moves unexpectedly in the opposite direction after it pitches. It's bowled out of the back of the hand and requires the shoulder to be dropped a little at the point of release. A great example of a bowler who has mastered the googly is Shane Warne.

The doosra is bowled by an off spinner and is a ball that initially seems to look like an off spinner when it's bowled but then moves unexpectedly in the opposite direction after it pitches. The doosra has been pioneered by the Sri Lanka great Muttiah Muralitharan and is very difficult to bowl, Muralitharan reputedly practiced the delivery for 2–3 years in the nets and practice before using it in first class cricket...I can't bowl it so I'm not going to go into it!

The power and rotation on the ball are generated through a strong action and is enhanced by flicking the wrist and straightening the fingers at the point of release. Always try and spin the ball as much as you can, your consistency and accuracy will come with practice and hard work. Remember to bowl your spinners with oomph and purpose, don't just throw it up and hope for the best.

Tip– Examine the pitch before bowling and try to identify areas of rough, cracks and other features on

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the wicket to aim at which may cause increased spin, variable bounce or erratic ball behaviour when pitched on and aim to bowl the ball into these areas provided they don't cause you to bowl bad deliveries (e.g. short and wide).

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Bowling: Still Cool After All These Years

By Dylan Miles

Bowling is a game we associate with our childhood and teenage years. Even our parents remember bowling when they were young. Many people continue to bowl throughout their lives. Bowling is for the young and the old.

In fact, bowling has been around in one form or another for thousands of years, because it is one of the most exhilarating ways to pass an afternoon or weekend. The moment when your turn comes is exciting: you cool and dry your palms for the perfect grip; you choose your ball, not too heavy, not too light; you pause, take a deep breath, and then you take one step, then two, and then you are off, you release the ball and the momentum carries it down towards the pins, until it strikes!

Tips for improving your game

Concentration

This is the most vital aspect of a good bowling game, but also the most difficult. Bowling takes place at a bowling alley where there is always lots of activity. But you have to learn to tune out and tune into your game.

Posture

Your body position is also important to get right. Stand tall, but not stiff. Your legs should be slightly bent, your head high, but loose.

The Best Ball

It's you and your ball out there, so make sure you choose your ball well. It shouldn't be too heavy and it shouldn't be too light. It needs just the right amount of weight that you can comfortably control.

Have Fun!

The final and most important part of improving your bowling game is to have fun. A good bowler is a bowler that knows how to have fun. Taking it all too seriously will definitely spoil your game, and your ball will most certainly end up in the gutter.

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on which you will find a longer, more detailed version of this article.



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