

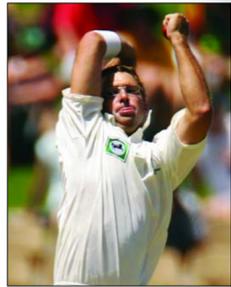
# Coaches Matter



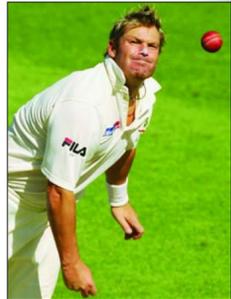
COACHES ASSOCIATION

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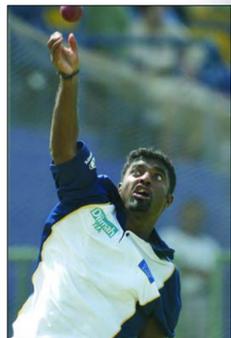
## Spin to win



Daniel Vettori, the experienced New Zealander, has been the world's leading exponent of orthodox left-arm finger spin over several years



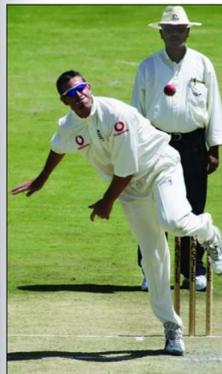
Shane Warne – the leading wicket-taker in Test Cricket – has a strong action, especially notable for his powerful shoulder rotation



Muttiah Muralitharan – who uses an unorthodox action and style to deliver his offbreaks and doosras



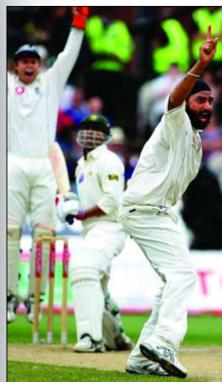
Harbhajan Singh another modern "finger" spinner who has developed a doosra and uses excessive bounce as a key weapon



Ashley Giles, England's reliable left arm spinner, notable for his restrictive, patient approach



Adil Rashid is an exciting leg spin prospect for Yorkshire



Monty Panesar, England's left-arm finger spinner, uses an orthodox method and a vigorous spinning action

## The basics of coaching Spin Bowling

By **DAVID PARSONS**  
ECB Spin Bowling Coach



**The essence of all Spin bowling is using the fingers (supported by the wrist, shoulders and hips) to impart revolutions on the ball so that in its path from the bowler's hand to the batsman, it behaves differently from a ball that does not possess such properties.**

The science of Spin tells us that a revolving ball will drop, curve, break off the pitch and bounce excessively dependent upon the axis around which the revolutions are imparted.

Armed with such weapons, together with changes of pace, trajectory and use of the crease successful Spin bowlers are able to deceive even the best batsmen by creating an illusion of length, line, angle and timing - "It's not just where the ball arrives, but how it arrives, when it arrives, where it came from and to where it is going"

Whilst the best Spin bowlers each possess their own unique style and individual characteristics, there are commonalities and basics which most share and which can help an aspiring young Spin bowler to develop an action which is simple and repeatable :

**Grip** - a comfortable grip with the index and middle fingers (finger spin) or the middle and ring fingers (leg spin) spread across a perpendicular seam, so that

top knuckle of index finger (finger spin) or the ring finger (leg spin) is gripping the seam

**Release** - a vigorous spinning action with the index or ring finger dragging over the top of the ball

**Front arm** - a strong front arm leading the action towards the target and pulling in hard to commence the shoulder rotation

**Shoulders** - rotating through 180 degrees from a position generally sideways to the target area. Rear shoulder rotates 'over the top' of front shoulder not 'around' it

**Alignment** - feet, hips and shoulders all aligned at delivery stride with the target area whether over or around the wicket

**Delivery stride** - long enough to allow a balanced position but short enough to allow for a strong drive over the front leg

**Run up / approach** - rhythmical, balanced approach of appropriate pace, angle and length to enhance not to detract from what follows

In delivering the ball, similarly, each bowler will develop their own preference but generally would focus on achieving a 'stock' delivery from which any variation arises. Variations can be achieved by small and subtle changes in any of the factors listed below:

**Amount of Spin** - looking to impart maximum revolutions on the ball

**Direction of Spin** - developing a stock ball but also seeking to develop a ball (doosra / arm ball etc) which rotates in the opposite direction from the same or a similar action

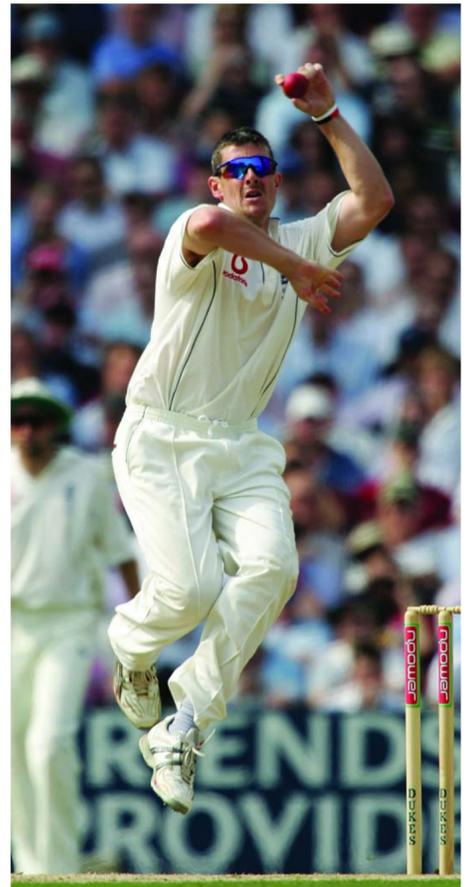
**Pace** - delivering the ball at a pace which allows for maximum spin and deception through flight

**Flight** - generally spinning up from the hand but seeking to achieve maximum vertical drop just prior to pitching

**Line** - looking to hit off stump - therefore adjusting the line of pitching according to anticipated break off the pitch whether a batsman is right or left handed

**Length** - the non-negotiable for spinners with the smallest margin for error - inviting the batsman forward to drive and hoping to deceive for length

**Angles** - generally delivering from mid-crease allowing for movement closer to or further from stumps to provide for variation of angle



Time and again spin bowlers are seen as cannon fodder for batsmen in the net environment, but if spinners are to develop effectively coaches and the bowlers themselves have to find time for quality specific practice. Spinners can work on their 'technique' or process without the necessity for a batsman. The basic spinning action can be practiced by 'hand to hand' drills or by throwing the ball to a partner, whilst the basics of the bowling action can be worked on by 'chunking' or 'chaining' - practicing bowling from a stationary delivery stride position can allow a bowler to focus on a specific technical issue, working backwards through the action adding steps until the full action is complete.

Target bowling to a cone, handkerchief, cap etc on a suitable line and length is an effective practice used by the very best, whilst bowling over a suitably placed obstacle such as a set of stumps or

string across the net can allow a spinner to develop flight and drop. 'Spin gates' or simple cones suitably placed, encouraging the bowler to pitch outside and spin inside, can be effective ways of measuring spin. These type of practices allow a young bowler to receive objective feedback on their performance without being concerned about retrieving the ball from a bush, having being unceremoniously slogged out of the net by some unsympathetic tail-enders.

If a spinner is to bowl in practice at a batsman, the coach should seek to make the practice as close to a match simulation as possible for both the batsman and the bowler. Fields should be identified, goals set, overs bowled, scores kept, coaches should umpire and rewards should be given for wicket-taking.

Coaches have an important role in the development of

spin bowlers - young spinners need nurturing as much if not more than any other player for this is the most difficult of crafts to master. And the world of the developing spinner is riddled with dilemmas - When do we intervene? If it 'ain't broke' should we fix it? When is the right time to fast-track a young spinner into the bullying world of adult cricket? How do we balance the desire to take wickets without risking being scored off? Does every spinner need a magic ball?

It is worth repeating - this is the most difficult of crafts to master. Our young spinners need advice, information and feedback but they also demand support, encouragement and understanding. The art of good coaching is recognizing and acting upon the specific requirements of the player and providing the environment and conditions in which their talents can flourish.