



VALLEY DISTRICT CRICKET CLUB INC.

KEEPING YOUTH BUSY IN SPORT

ESTABLISHED 1897 - OVER 100 YEARS SERVING THE COMMUNITY

AFFILIATED WITH THE QUEENSLAND CRICKET ASSOCIATION

PO BOX 240 ASHGROVE QLD 4060 ABN 35550296330

EMAIL: jmc@valleycricket.org.au WEB: www.valleycricket.org.au

The Psychology of Batting

Cricket is a fantastic game and can be a way of life for some. As in life, you make mistakes that can prove to be your undoing, you get chances at redemption, and until the stumps are drawn, you have the opportunity to fight back. As long as you have discipline, you can succeed in life and in cricket, without discipline, cricket will find you out very quickly.

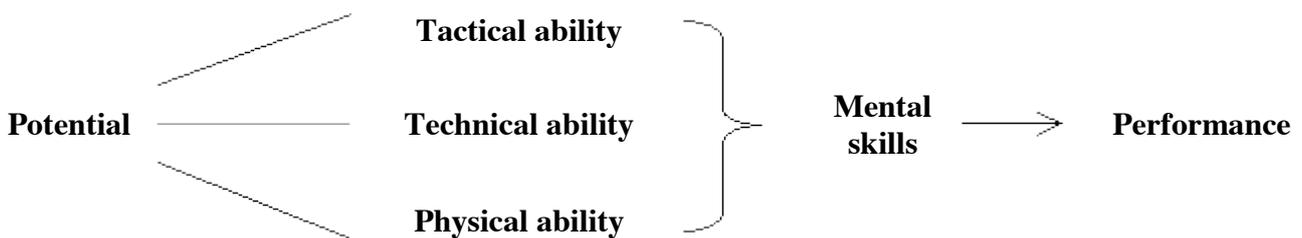
Batting discipline is difficult to teach to players of all ages. One reason is we want players to be aggressive; from a young age. Most coaches and parents are telling young cricketers to swing the bat. We are teaching them from a young age to score runs when we should be looking to occupy the crease, "Bat time and the runs will come". This approach is difficult in the early years due to the format of junior cricket where players are prescribed a maximum amount of balls to face so know they can't afford to bat time. The issue is this encourages players to compromise technique for power which needs to be remedied as they enter the junior pathway system at VDCC.

As a player gets older and bowlers gain better control, this aggressiveness will be used against him as most bowlers will target a line outside off stump (4th or 5th stump) and a test of patience between the batter and the bowler ensues. Any aspiring batsman must be prepared to endure a good line and length and have the technique to take advantage when a bowler errs in line or length.

A crucial component in the art of batting is to make the bowling come to you. Bat to your strengths! A player with good batting discipline will leave balls outside off stump unless they are in his zones i.e. short enough to cut or pitched on the half volley or fuller. Wide balls on a good length are a recipe for failure if you chase them.

Batting discipline and having a planned approach at the crease is a critical component for any aspiring batsman and is essential for a developing batsman. This document provides coaches and players with some insight into how to be ready for a big innings.

Developing your mental skills so that you can make the most of your technical and tactical ability.



Concentration

Focus on what is relevant – i.e. the ball. How do we do this? – look at seam position, triggers, “zooming in box”

“All great players have concentration. And imagination”

Eric Cantona



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Motivation

The drive to achieve something: we must know what we want to achieve and how we are going to achieve it.

"I've always made a total effort, even when the odds seemed entirely against me. I never quit trying: I never felt that I didn't have a chance"

Arnold Palmer

Coping with Pressure / Nerves

Pressure and nerves make us do strange things = physically and mentally. This is natural – we can't avoid it, but we must cope with it. The ability to cope and maintain technique and mental strength under pressure is what separates good players from excellent players. How often do you practice under pressure? What is your strategy when you are playing under pressure – do you change the way you think? The situation often makes us think differently, when what we really should do is keep doing the same things.

Confidence

Confidence underlies performance – without belief we won't achieve.

"If I didn't believe it, I wouldn't have achieved it"

Colin Montgomerie (after winning the European PGA title 6 times in a row)

"You have to expect things of yourself before you can do them"

Michael Jordan

"its lack of faith that makes people afraid of meeting challenges, and I believe in myself"

Muhammed Ali

How do we improve confidence?

Imagery, though diaries, videos, pre match preparation

"My thoughts before a big race are usually pretty simple. I tell myself " Get out of the blocks, run your race, stay relaxed. If you run your race, you'll win.... Channel your energy. Focus"

Carl Lewis

How Can Training Improve Our Mental Skills?

Mental skills play a very important part of your performance on the field.

How often do you spend trying to improve these skills?

How often do you spend trying to improve technical skills?



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Very few players take as much time trying to improve mental skills as technical skills, yet often make mistakes because they weren't concentrating, weren't confident, felt under pressure....

Often players don't work on their mental skills simply because they do not know how to. Outlined below are some ideas of how you can create an environment that will allow you to improve your mental skills in training.

Concentration

Concentration is about focusing on what is relevant rather than the distractions of the opposition, the pitch, the match situation, the weather etc. However, when you practice, do you concentrate? Are there distractions?

In order to get used to concentrating as you would like to in a match, try to create some distractions whilst you are batting (e.g. people shouting / moving) and then try to concentrate on batting as well as you can. If the conditions when you train are not the same conditions as when you play, you are practising a slightly different skill.

Confidence

Confidence plays a huge role in determining your performance. But how do we become more confident? The first stage is to know what your strengths are (specific strength, e.g. the line you bowl with a new ball, driving on the leg side etc.). If you do not know these, it is easy to lose confidence if you are not playing well. However, knowing these strengths can help you gain confidence when you aren't playing well.

Associated with the strengths are your weaknesses. Everyone has them, but what marks a good player out is that they know their weaknesses, form a plan around them and don't dwell on them. For example, Steve Waugh knew his best shots and only played to those strengths. This helped him to stay confident because he knew if a ball was in a certain area, he could attack it with his strengths, but in other areas he could be more defensive.

However, you must also have a plan of how to build on your strengths **and** weaknesses – don't just expect to always drive well on the leg side – you must continue to practice it! And don't ignore your weaknesses – try to improve them in practice.

Also try to remember your best performances before you play, or get someone to talk to you about when you performed well, or watch yourself perform well on video! If you are playing on a particular type of pitch / situation, watching someone else doing well in that situation can also help you feel more confident.

Playing Under Pressure

Playing under pressure is extremely important as it is often these situations which determine whether we win or lose. However, how often do you practice under pressure? Real pressure can only be created when there is a reward if you succeed and a punishment if you fail. Therefore when you are practising, if someone sets you a target for the last 6 balls, without a reward / punishment it is not real pressure. Try to incorporate real pressure in your practice sessions (not just for the last 6 balls) and you will find you perform better under pressure in matches (e.g. physical punishment, financial reward!).

Another form of pressure is created when you are physically tired. In a match situation you often have to bat, bowl or field well when you are tired. How often do you practice when you are tired? Try to incorporate some physical activity in your training sessions to make it more realistic.



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Motivation

Are you as motivated to train as you are to play? Most people aren't and this is obviously very natural as we train in order to play well! However, motivation in training is very important. Training for the sake of it isn't beneficial. A short, focused and intense session is much more beneficial. So how do you get yourself motivated to train?

Try to set yourself a specific and achievable goal for that session e.g. not get out once in 10 minutes of batting, hit a boundary every over, bowl 5 balls out of 6 pitched up.... This should fit into your goals for the whole season and how you are playing at that time. For example, if you bowled to full in your previous game, your goal could be not to get driven more than once an over for the training session.