The Performance Department of Surrey Cricket delivers all the County Age Group and District Cricket programmes as well as the elite Emerging Players Programme and the Pemberton Greenish Academy programme. Within all our representative cricket programmes we will look to make sure that players are put under pressure in their training sessions in order to allow players to practice in realistic situations, i.e. closing the gap between intensity of practice and intensity of match play.

Below are a few ideas of current practices that we implement at all steps of the Player Pathway:

**Fielding:**

Fielding practices can occasionally become repetitive and dull for players and so it is important to create a fun and intensive training environment in which players practice under pressure. Creating competition in fielding sessions is the easiest way to improve concentration and prepare players for fielding in pressure situations. There are a wide variety of ways of developing competition within fielding practices and below are just three examples:

1. **Dice Catching**

Line 6 cones up 1m apart going away from the Katchet board. Each group has 1 person catching (Y) and one person feeding (X).

Roll the dice and which ever number comes up run to that cone and take a set number of catches. Once the player has completed the set number of catches they race to the board. The winner is the first to touch the board.

This drill can be organised in many different ways, for example the die can dictate the number of catches they have to take. If you do not have a Katchet board you can do straight catches.

2. **Goal Keeping**

Set two goals up an appropriate distance apart (5m) with the coach (X) standing in the middle of the two. The coach attempts to score past the fielders (Y & Z) through their goal. Players start with 5 points and if they allow the ball to pass through the goal then the fielders lose a point. You can add some throwing at targets (possible use of fielding nets) so the fielders can also gain points. This practice can be run as a team game or as individuals.

(see below for diagram)
3. Target Throwing

Place four stationary balls 10m away from a target stump. Player (X) starts at a cone 5 m behind the balls and, individually, races to pick the ball up and throw at the stump. Player then returns to the start point and then back to the next ball. Player continues until all four balls have been thrown at the stump. Time how long the player takes to throw all the balls and return to the start point.

Seconds (e.g. 5 secs) can be taken off the final time if the players hit the target stump. Time taken off the final time is to be dependent on the level of the players.
**Batting Net Scenarios**

Net sessions are a key training environment for the development of young players; however they are often used without a specific purpose. While creating specific scenarios can take longer to organise and set up, the benefits to the individual’s learning is worth the time and effort. The scenarios you can set are wide ranging and can vary from batting in power play overs through to attempting to save the game.

**Running a Scenario Net:**

Set a specific scenario for the net session and duration (normally 5 overs). Allow the bowler’s (normally max of 3 bowlers) time to set a field, ideally making use of a whiteboard. Discuss the batsman’s plan prior to the start of the net and ask the bowlers what their plans are. Run the net with no distractions for the duration of the scenario; if needed allow the bowlers time half way through to discuss their plans and if they would like to change their field. Allow the bowlers to change their field at any stage during the scenario. If the batsman is out he is out and it can be a good opportunity to have batsmen batting as a pair.

When the scenario has finished use some time to review the session and discuss their plans and if they have executed them and if they were the most appropriate plans for the scenario.

**5 Point Net:**

This net competition can be used to encourage spin bowlers to attack as well as encouraging batsman to use their bat where possible, rather than the pad.

Batsman has total number of balls in which to ‘survive’ or score a run target from (e.g. 24 balls). Batsman has total of 5 points to play with and when 5 points are lost the session is over and next batsman comes in. Batters lose points in the following fashion:

- Lose 1 point if the ball hits the pad
- Lose 1 point if the batsman plays a shot and misses the ball
- Lose 3 points if a wicket is taken

Bowlers are to set a field and batsman to be aware of this – attacking fields to be set with close catchers used.
**Target Bowling Competition**

Bowlers rarely practice bowling at a variety of lengths and as coaches we tend to ask our young bowlers to concentrate on bowling ‘line and length’. It is felt that while having the ability to hit a consistent line and length is vital to future success, bowlers also need the ability to change their length dependent on the situation and format of the game. The kinaesthetic awareness required to be able to hit a variety of lengths may help bowlers be able to hit the ‘good’ length more often if they practice bowling at a variety of lengths.

**Target Bowling Practice:**

Set up x number of lanes of bowling targets for number of players involved.

Have 3 key bowling targets: Yorker length, good length to be adjusted to suit age and ability of the players (6-8m from stumps is for Test cricket) and final length to be a bouncer length.

Split the group into teams of 3 and they are to number themselves 1 – 3 for the bowling order.

The game has 3 rounds and points are scored as follows:

- First round hitting the target is worth 1 point
- Second round hitting the target is worth 2 points
- Third (final) round, hitting the target is worth 5 points

Each bowler will bowl one ball in each round with the target they are attempting to hit being dictated by the opposition nominating which target they have to hit. Over the three rounds, each bowler must be nominated each of the three targets (order to be decided by opposition).

This practice can be adapted in many different ways, which may include the bowlers nominating the length they are attempting to hit, reducing the number of targets used so they just focus on one specific length or by the opposition placing the target cones anywhere on an off stump line (no shorter than bouncer length).

**Conclusion:**

These practices are just a few of many different ways of creating competition during practice sessions. There are numerous benefits of placing the players in a competitive environment, such as developing the ability to perform under pressure as well as the notion of ‘critical moment control’

**Equipment used in demonstrations:**


Fielding Net / Target Stumps / Cones (various types) / Discs – [http://www.ecbcashop.co.uk/homepage.asp](http://www.ecbcashop.co.uk/homepage.asp)

Whiteboard – local stationary shops