



# Mind Mastery In Fast Bowling



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**We've all been there.**

**You are four balls into an over that is not exactly going to plan. The first two deliveries thunked into the fence, an overthrow then gifted them a cheap single and your last ball nicked behind but the keeper, standing up, didn't hold the chance.**

**In other words – you're having an over to forget.**

**How do you finish the over strong, keep bowling effectively and not let events get you down?**

**Well, according to Ian Pont, one of the world's leading fast bowling coaches, the key to keeping it all together is to have been there a thousand times before, in your mind and in the nets.**

**“No net session can ever replicate the pressure of a World Cup final,” Ian said. “Of course it can't, but what nets and practice sessions can do is help you work on your technique time and time again so that when you're in a critical moment in a match, or you're bowling the last over in a cup final, your technique takes over and you're still able to perform effectively.**

**“Pressure is only something you perceive to be there but once you start to feel it then it does become an issue.**

**“At times like that, it is vital that you've practised enough so that delivering the perfect yorker or a bouncer is ingrained in your DNA - it becomes a central nervous thing. You CAN perform under 'pressure' because you HAVE done so much training and technique work that it's become automatic.**

**“Mastering your skills - and knowing that you have the situation under control because of that mastery - makes all the difference.”**

**Pont, who won the County Championship with Essex as a player and who has also worked with the likes of Dale Steyn and Shoaib Akhtar, is a huge believer that bowling quick is something that can be taught but also believes the world of cricket has - incorrectly - moved away from considering skill to be the most important element of the sport.**

**“Cricket has begun to look at the athlete first and the cricketer second,” Pont said. “We should be putting cricket technique at the very top of the list of ways we teach and coach cricketers. You are not born a fast bowler in the same way you are not born an airline pilot, a doctor or a Formula One driver.**

**“It needs to be taught and while every cricketer's own personal bowling style is different, and you shouldn't try and change that style, what you can do is help hone and perfect technique.”**



**Pont, a former Bangladesh bowling coach who now hosts coaching clinics around the world, also has several tips on how to mentally improve as a bowler and for international and club cricketer alike, the key to becoming stronger is eradicating the doubts that can sledgehammer their way into your mind, particularly during tough matches.**

**“Self-talk and self criticism are so, so important,” Pont said. “The phrase 'fake it til you make it' is true. You have to work on being super confident in yourself - without shouting it from the rooftops to others - and you need to absorb positive advice from people you respect and, crucially, you have to let go of any negativity and filter out the crap you might hear.**

**“As human beings we are conditioned to seek out and hear negativity more than compliments.**

**“If somebody said 99 positive things about you and only one criticism, I bet you would remember the criticism more.**

**“What cricketers have to try and work on is ignoring that negativity around you and if you're immersed in an environment or a club that is like that then remove yourself from it.**

**“We are all products of our surroundings and environments and developing the right mindset takes a lot of effort.**

**“I worked with Darren Gough at Essex and he was always the same; he always believed he could win a match from any position or bowl six perfect yorkers. And on the days when it didn't quite go right for Darren, he was the first to shake the opposition's hand and get over it. He didn't dwell on past mistakes or failings, he accepted that not every day is going to be successful. And, don't forget, cricket is not the be-all and end-all of life, enjoy it and enjoy yourself. Cricket is supposed to be fun.”**

Find out more about Ian's fascinating career and understand more about his fast bowling coaching techniques by visiting [UPFcricket.com](http://UPFcricket.com)



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