

ADRENALINE RUSH!

The New Bowling Machine by Mark Edmonds

Barkisland Cricket Club have recently enlisted the help of possibly the world's greatest bowler as the club prepares for the 2008 season.

Although not the talkative type, the bowler can reach speeds of up to 100 miles per hour, while being able to swing the ball both ways with unerring accuracy. If that wasn't enough, the seven-and-a-half footer is also as adept a spinner as you could ever wish to see, with the ability to bowl both off-spin and leg-spin. Unfortunately, this bowler cannot bat or field, nor are they eligible to represent the side on matchdays.



The BOLA cricket bowling machine

The BOLA cricket bowling machine is housed at Huddersfield New College but could prove crucial in the club's pre-season preparations. With bowlers unable to reach full speed due to the shortened indoor run-up, batsmen are not able to hone their timing of the fastest balls. The BOLA machine is the best available training resource for cricketers, with every county side in possession of at least one of them.



Tinashe Panyangora facing a BOLA delivery

Players typically use the machine in pairs for a period of 15 minutes. This involves a batsman at each end with the on-strike batsman facing an over from the machine. After the sixth ball, the two players run three, leaving the previously off-strike player on-strike. This process then continues for the full session, irrespective of being dismissed.

“What this does is increase the heart-rate of the players and gives them a rush of adrenaline,” says the college’s cricket coach Dave Weston. “Running three makes them both physically and mentally tired, meaning that they’re not at 100 per cent when they face a delivery.” The reasoning behind this, Dave concludes, is that “the running between the wickets helps to create a more match-like situation rather than standing in the nets and being totally focused.”



Running three!

Young players between the ages of 16 and 18 are also coming from Leeds and Bradford to the college to use this equipment as part of four sessions that they undertake each week. “It’s only going to improve the youngsters,” Dave enthuses. “They’re going to be able to face quality bowling throughout the year, instead of just during the summer months. Who knows, some of them might even end up at Barkisland!”



74 Mph in the “Corridor of Uncertainty” – good luck!

“It’s great for everyone that faces it,” says club chairman Steve Casaru, feeding the balls into the machine. “It gives us the chance to really work on a player’s technique by being able to put the ball right where we want it, every time we want it to.”

Another ball thuds in at Tinashe Panyangora’s front pad. “He’s got to learn to get that leg out the way!”