

## **Safety in Positioning Techniques**

The global game of cricket has evolved over the years with new and modern science making its way into the bats and equipment, strength and conditioning of players, speed, agility, and flexibility is now much more built in. Additionally, with the advent of shorter and shorter versions of matches the quest for runs is even more necessary than the longer versions.

This impacts every aspect of the field craft and technique of umpires who are in the modern-day game, safety therefore plays a critical role in the life of an umpire and it is important to be emphasised through training and development years at all levels.

The analytical skills of the umpire are brought into focus to enable him/her to have the ability to quickly determine whether there is a safety issue there or not, that is usually in a microsecond, a lapse in concentration or confidence can thus be detrimental.

### **Training**

The training must shift from same side as the ball, and directed towards 'Appropriate safety in positioning', this will assist in changing the culture and mindset of the umpire when on the field of play especially at bowler's end.

### **Bowler's end**

Key component is awareness, moving from position for decision making, knowing or anticipating or judging through knowledge and experience of where the ball and fielder would eventually end up, throwing the ball and to which end. This requires quick thinking and decisiveness, going to same side or going to opposite side, are you in doubt, then the opposite side must be the best option, this also requires the umpire to go as far out as possible to avoid collision/obstruction of the running batsman and the incoming ball.

Depth in position also requires focus with batsmen carrying modernized bats which hits the ball harder thus travel faster, standing 4, 6, 8, 10 feet from the stumps will also be a consideration especially to batsmen who rapidly advance down the pitch, closing that distance, the ball having less distance and time to arrive at the umpire's position, this also may be direct hits or deflection the limited reaction time being the same.

The blue zone below, called the 'V' describes area from covers to mid-off/on viewed from batsman:

- a. Ball hit within 'V' = umpire moves opposite side of pitch
- b. Ball hit outside 'V' = umpire moves to same side of pitch



### **Striker's end**

The striker's end while mobility and choosing side to go is not a factor, the component is awareness is necessary, where the ball is played behind or in front of, where is the fielder throwing towards, where should you be positioned, how should you be positioned. The umpire should be side on in relation to the ball, keeping eyes on the ball and fielder and switching to see grounding. While the recommended distance is one pitch length at striker's end, is it safe, are you feeling safe or are you uncomfortable, adopt the comfortable and safe position.

### **Fitness, movement, agility, flexibility**

These play an important role in safety, regularly exercising to keep these up to date will assist with getting into position and out of the way of a ball thrown and directed, accidentally, towards the umpire being able to duck, bend, move, jump, skip, and flex are necessary at times although on the safe side and out of the way.

### **Consequences**

In recent times we have seen the advent of the shorter version of the game and a greater and more urgent need to score runs fielders are more agile, alert and flexible with more powerful throws, this has brought on more safety concerns for umpires. There have been some serious injuries including fatal or requiring hospitalization, this therefore requires umpires to be more aware of their positionings.



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Bhuvneshwar Kumar's throw hit Paul Reiffel on the head.