

Positioning: Introduction

Why is positioning important?

Positioning is important for several reasons: -

1. To be in the best possible position to make a decision.
2. To avoid being in the way of the fielding side (line of sight and not obstruct the path of the ball)
3. To see all that you need to see – best position.
4. To give the perception and confidence to the players that the decision made is the correct one.
5. It is an indicator of alertness, concentration, ability to read the game, fitness, and stamina.

Positioning Techniques as Bowlers End Umpire.

- **Position behind the wickets:**

- As a bowler's end umpire stand at a distance you are most comfortable behind the wickets in a position to see both the bowler back foot and front foot in the delivery stride. This distance from the wickets may be different for fast and slow bowlers, for taller and shorter umpires, Men-Women-Junior matches. The emphasis should be optimum visibility of the bowlers landing.
- Stand in line with middle stump so that you have a clear view of the popping crease. After the first over from the other end, you may be able to use the middle stump mark made by the batsmen to line up your position behind the stumps – line up the mark with the middle stump every time you get back behind the stumps at the bowler's end.
- You may request the ground authority to mark your positioning at varied distances behind the wickets in line of both the middle stumps.

- **Working with the Bowler:**

- Work with the bowler on where to stand if he requests further back or closer than you normally feel comfortable. It is becoming more common for fast bowlers to tell you exactly where they want you to stand – **accommodate these requests where possible**, but don't stand too far back or too close to the stumps if it makes you feel uncomfortable.

- Be ready and willing to work with the bowler if he wishes to know where his front foot is landing. Establish a consistent approach to advising bowlers in this way. Be proactive if he is gradually creeping on the line. Rapport with the bowlers is a vital ingredient in an umpire's ability to effectively handle a match.
- Wherever practicable this positioning adjustment can be worked out with a particular bowler during pre-match net practice. (Slow bowlers running between the umpire and wickets in run up.)
- **Adjusting to bowlers with unusual actions:**
 - If you are not familiar with the bowler's delivery action, it may be best to stand a little further back to ensure there is no infringement with the back foot. Once you are comfortable that this is not an issue for consideration, it may be more comfortable to move a pace closer to the stumps.
 - Watch the bowler return to his mark and as he turns (after an over or so, it may not be necessary to do this), face the striker and switch on to full concentration. Take up your preferred position and do not leave it until the ball has been delivered and played into the field. Do not move away from that position behind the stumps when answering an appeal – give the decision first and then move.
- **Giving guard to the striker:**
 - Give guard from over the top of the stumps at the bowler's end with further checks being done from where you would normally stand for a delivery. Know the terminology, one leg (leg stump), two legs (middle and leg - halfway between middle and leg). If the batsman shows you the full face of the bat and asks for "Two please" he wants "two legs" and the bat should cover both the middle and leg stump. Always repeat to the batsman what he said to you – i.e. If he asked for middle stump then in reply say "That's middle stump there".
 - Walking few paces up to the wickets while giving guard exhibits/suggests greater involvement/diligence in performing basic duties and thus, helps in creating a rapport with the batter.
- **During the over:**
 - Whenever the wickets are disturbed at the striker's end, assist your partner in re-arranging the wickets in proper alignment.

- If the bowler's end wicket is re-made during the over, the umpire can wait after the end of the over and check the alignment with the partner before leaving to his position as the Striker end umpire.
- When the batters are running, stand in a side on position to glance quickly back and forth to see for short run or boundary. Never turn your back on the play when moving into positions.
- After the ball is struck into the field, it is current practice for most umpires to move to the same side as the ball. A clear view of the stumps being broken is the major factor here. This technique is a personal thing, and you should **always feel comfortable** where you place yourself. But try not to place yourself between the fielder and the stumps between extra covers and mid-wicket. If you place yourself between the ball and the stumps, you may obstruct or impede a fielder in his attempt to field the ball or have a clear throw at the wicket. On these occasions, try moving to the **opposite side** to that which the ball is hit. Anticipation is the key as is the constant noting of where the fielders in the arc are placing themselves. Should there be a problem seeing if the wicket was fairly broken you can and should consult with your colleague in the normal way.
- In matches where the front foot No balls are being checked by the third umpire, It would be good practice for the BEU to wait for the confirmation of the fair delivery on the last ball before leaving his position.
- **Safety and Injury prevention:**
 - Individual safety of an umpire is paramount.
 - Anticipation and alert mind are as much important as physical agility in avoiding getting hit by the ball. An umpire who can anticipate when batsmen are trying to score quick runs or which batsmen are likely to strike the ball hard down the wicket etc. are better at avoiding path of the ball.
 - Keen and consistent observation of matches, including on the television assists in understanding the latest trends and pace of the game and build the anticipation skills.
- **Hand Over**
 - After the call of over it is advisable to wait near the pitch for your partner to reach or be close enough to the pitch before you move to take your position as a striker end umpire. This practice generally called 'Pitch Hand Over' goes a long way in establishing and

demonstrating teamwork between the umpires.

- The hand-over also signifies the cricketing philosophy of umpires being seen as protectors/caretakers of the holy 22 yards which ought not to be left unattended at any time.

Positioning for the umpire at striker's end

- Stand no more than 20 metres deep (the length of a pitch), a couple of paces closer for a slow bowler or when no fielders are located near you if you feel comfortable. Move further back if asked by a fielder but try never to be more than 25 to 30 metres away. Stand in line with the popping crease splitting your stance.
- When the keeper is standing back, watch the bowler run in and deliver the ball. Always watch for hit wicket before following the ball into the outfield. Keep your head still.
- When the keeper is standing up at the stumps, do not watch the bowler deliver the ball, keep your head still and watch the batsman's back foot in relation to the popping crease – listen for the breaking of the stumps on a stumping appeal.
- Once the ball is hit - watch for catches carrying and batsmen crossing. Signal to partner if required.
- Cross to the off-side if the sun or glare, or fielders in your line make the seeing conditions unsatisfactory. When crossing for left/right-handed batsmen, anticipate the need to change and begin walking in while the ball is still in play. This will allow you to be in position without having to run by the time the bowler begins his run up.
- Be watchful of fieldsmen behind you and always check for possible behind square leg infringements – especially important in limited overs matches with left and right hand batter fields. If there is a deep field very square behind you, move over to point.
- Stand side on to the stumps to watch both the ball and the running batsmen making their ground. Only turn back to face the wicket when the ball has been returned past you. This will eradicate any chance of being hit by the ball when it is being thrown towards the wickets.

Positioning for adjudging Runout /Stumping:

Watch the crease, not the bat or stump in case of close run-outs or stumpings. You would be able to view the breaking of wickets with your peripheral vision.