

CLUBWATCH



First course, second course, third . . .

The range of available coaching is like a giant menu to suit all ages and pockets. TWC tells how to read it

LOOKING for a decent coaching course can be overwhelming and pinning down the most suitable one needs care and research. Matt Homes, of In-Touch Cricket, says word of mouth can be as good a guide as any.

“Does the academy or coaching course have a good reputation?” he says. “Check out testimonials and speak to people or parents who have attended.” He says a group of 15 to 20 players is a comfortable size – any more calls for a greater number of coaches – and getting the right ability level is essential.

Sam Lavery, from Pro Coach Cricket, explains: “Generally you’ll find that the beginners’ courses take place throughout the summer and holiday periods and the more technical and advanced courses take place in the winter months and the period leading up to the season.”

He adds that there should be one over-riding concern: “No matter what level, try and get the best quality of coaching you can. This doesn’t necessarily mean paying lots. You can get some cheap coaching from quality companies at different times of year.”

What price?

So what should you expect to spend? The price range is vast. You can spend thousands of pounds heading abroad for training camps. ACE Cricket, standing for Australian Cricket Experience, offers this in Perth, Western Australia, and Australian Sports Gateway has an academy in Queensland. “On these you should expect the total package, highly qualified coaches, top facilities and regular visits from first-class players,” says Sam. “A course like this can be a great experience for any young cricketer.”

While these should develop character and skills, they will not be right for every pocket or individual. Matt gives an idea of other prices: “£30 to £40 would get a one-to-one session for an hour with a good coach. A 12-week course with 90-minute sessions will cost £160 and elite courses for top players can be up to £400.”

Sam adds that for juniors it can be much more affordable, especially when it comes to summer camps and holiday courses: “You’ll find courses at £5 or £10 a day which are great for beginners. For £50 to £100 you can be involved in a two- or three-

day coaching camp and get decent, experienced coaching. Do your research as a bargain may not be that good while an expensive course does not always mean quality.”

What type?

There are a number of types of course available: holiday camps; a series of one-day-a-week sessions; courses endorsed by star names. Matt has a simple rule on courses: “Make sure it has variety: batting, bowling and fielding specific skill sets, game scenarios, nets and an element of fitness.”

Star names are a draw, of course, but may not indicate high-quality coaching. As Sam explains, they do have advantages: “They provide that X factor for young players who will listen that little bit more carefully than they do at other times. It helps if these stars are regularly involved in coaching activity so they know how to pass on useful knowledge.”

There are seals of approval and awards that coaches should have before they take sessions, so get those running the course to confirm this is in place. All coaches need to be qualified through the ECB/County/UKCC process, which

includes first aid, child protection and an enhanced CRB check.

Never too old

Any course must be at the right level for those attending. Sam says: “Always establish who the course is aimed at; children who are far too advanced or not advanced enough on a particular course will feel excluded, frustrating themselves and others. Courses can be open to a range of ages so get a feel for those already booked or try and recruit a few friends to come along as well.”

Courses get booked well in advance, so the earlier you can get your name on the list the better. Residential courses may require you to plan six months in advance.

Sam’s final word is for adults: “There are adult courses and finding a high-quality one can be invaluable for any club cricketer. Most players who don’t make it to the professional ranks stop learning and settle with the way they play; they think they’ve learnt it all and are too old for basic drills and skill development. Not true. Get in touch. You’re never too old to learn. And don’t assume coaching companies deal only with young cricketers.”



Coch and seven: Danny Buckland, of Barnes CC, shows off his favourite forward defensive to children from Victoria Park CC in east London

Coch trip by car that became a joyride

A nervous Danny Buckland made a not-so-straight drive to learn how to teach

IT WAS a gloomy Sunday for the drive round the North Circular to Middlesex Academy's indoor school at Finchley. Day one of a UKCC Level 2 coaching course and what seemed a good idea at the end of the season was suddenly a reality.

Hundreds of potential coaches will be considering or taking a course devised by the ECB to spawn a new generation of club coaches as part of the sport's £30m investment in facilities and club cricket. Each faces four demanding days lasting up to seven hours followed by at least 10 supported practice sessions as a coach before a competency assessment in the spring. It is a taxing and rewarding route as I discovered after joining 24 candidates from clubs across Middlesex.

There were fleeting first-day-at-school moments with form-filling and registration but our course leader Phil Knappett, Middlesex's coaching development manager, was swiftly into his stride with an introduction into the principles of

coaching. The emphasis is on practical demos with participation to keep everyone engaged.

The first break gave us a chance to exhale, compare packed lunches and share our motivation for sacrificing a string of Sundays – principally to put back into a much-loved sport. Few were talking about being the next Peter Moores and, to be honest, few of us had the hair.

The biggest concern was whether our humble club technique would stand up to scrutiny and provide a robust model for youngsters.

I was keen to have a go at the forward defensive section, as it is my quasi-religious go-to shot, and was dreading the straight drive, a shot whose very mention sends a chill to my cautious core.

But here is the inner beauty of coaching. You don't have to be your club's best player, the most stylish or even the most dedicated. Coaching is about getting the right information across at the right time.

The Level 2 course teaches you

just that, guiding candidates through a demonstration of each particular skill and how to communicate its component parts. It is not about a torrent of technique. It is about getting the basics correct and making them easy to understand and pick up. Crucially, too, it is about making the game fun and not pushing natural flair players down the text-book tramlines.

Trial-and-error sessions in small groups helped well-judged messages take hold as we started to shed our self-focused club player skins. "The most important element is the ability to communicate and work with young people and other players. It's no good having good technical knowledge without the skills to impart that," says Knappett.

"We are running one course that has a full England A international, a former England Under-17 player and others who have hardly played the game. But working together is good for all of



How to do it

- UKCC courses start with Level 1, coaching assistant, or Level 2, club coach.
- Applications should be made through a club affiliated to one of the 39 county boards which will give guidance on the appropriate level to choose.
- Level 2 costs £250
- Candidates must be over 18.
- Course availability can be checked at www.ecb.co.uk or via a county board.
- Candidates are supplied with information booklets and log books.
- You will need to get a CRB check, which normally costs £30, and will be required to attend First Aid (£20) and Safeguarding and Protecting Children (£25) sessions courses before the award can be made.
- The award is a nationally recognised 1st4sport qualification and will help you to be a volunteer club coach or get paid work as a coach.

JOIN THE WISDEN CRICKETER ACADEMY

The Wisden Cricketer Academy is a fantastic way to improve your game. Be coached by top players and receive a free copy of the

magazine plus TWC kit, T-shirts and accessories. Two-day courses include batting, bowling and keeping masterclasses run by England Lion Andrew Gale and other first-class cricketers. Work through the same drills used by the

pros. Caters for ages 8 to 16 and you must book well in advance. Courses run in Easter half-term in London, Kent, Birmingham and Scotland. For more details see thewisdenricketer.com/coaching or call 01133 200 444.



Directory

- ACE Cricket Coaching**
acricricketcoaching.com
00618 9445 3565
- Andrew Flintoff Academy**
andrewflintoffcricketacademy.co.uk
0800 345 7480
- Australian Sports Gateway**
australiansportsgateway.com
00617 3272 3762
- CCM Academy**
ccmacademy.co.uk 07815 081 744
- City Cricket Academy (Leicestershire)**
citycricketacademy.co.uk 0116 254 3333
- Clifton College Residential Course**
residentialsportscourses.com
0117 3157 143
- The Cornish Cricket Company**
thecornishcricketcompany.co.uk
01726 884606
- Cricket for London**
cricketforlondon.co.uk 07548 668 666
- Cricket Scotland**
cricketscotland.com/onlineshop
0131 313 7420
- Derbyshire Cricket Board**
dcbcricket.com 01332 388 111
- DFCA (Gloucestershire)**
www.dfca.co.uk 07766 801 340
- Dorset Cricket Centre**
dorsetcricketboard.co.uk 01202 470 852
- Durham**
durhamccc.co.uk 0191 387 2816
- Essex**
essexcricket.org.uk 01245 254 028
- Glamorgan**
glamorgancricket.com 02920 419 363
- Hampshire**
www.hampshireccb.com 02380 475 630
- In-Touch Cricket Academy**
intouchcricket.co.uk 08442 492 805
- Isle of Wight Cricket Academy**
iow-cricketacademy.co.uk
01983 857 763
- Kent**
kentcricketboard.co.uk 01227 473 618
- Lancashire**
lccc.co.uk/cc_index.php 0161 282 4037
- Mavericks Cricket Institute**
maverickscricket.com 01787 479 071
- MCC**
lords.org 020 7616 8612
- Michael Vaughan Cricket**
mvricket.org 0845 643 5277
- Middlesex**
middlesexccc.com 020 8346 8020
- Northamptonshire**
northantscricket.com 01604 609 258
- Nottinghamshire**
trentbridge.co.uk 0115 9823 008
- Pro Coach Cricket Academy (Yorkshire)**
procricketcoachingacademy.com
01133 200 444
- Serious Cricket**
seriouscricket.co.uk 01256 398 633
- Somerset**
steve@somersetcricketboard.org
01823 352 266
- Surrey**
britoval.com 020 7820 5684
- Sussex**
sussexcricket.co.uk 01273 827 135
- Warwickshire**
wcb.org.uk 0121 446 3615
- Worcestershire**
thewcb.org.uk 01905 337 923

Course work – a guide

By region

UK-wide coverage Pro Coach Cricket Academy Offers a huge range of courses. If you can't find a specific listing for your county, try Pro Coach Cricket Academy. For ages seven to 16 and all abilities, boys and girls. See also *The Wisden Cricketer* coaching courses that come with a TWC goodie-bag.

Cornwall The Cornish Cricket

Company Ltd Fun, challenging and professional courses for ages five to adults. Courses run on weekday evenings, weekends and in school holidays. Can also tailor programmes for clubs and schools.

Gloucestershire Clifton College

Residential Course For 10- to 16-year-olds, pre-season and summer courses. Spend an intensive week working with excellent coaches. Designed specifically for competent school and club players.

Essex MCI Academy Choice of bowling, batting and fielding academies. Weekly sessions cover video analysis, tactical and technical work. For cricketers from aged 11, suitable for county and club players, including adults.

Hampshire Isle of Wight Cricket

Academy Courses of six hours over two days each held in school holidays for boys and girls. Generally non-residential but packages can be provided to include accommodation and meals.

Cricket for London Former first-class cricketer Carl Greenidge manages Cricket for London. Winter, Easter and summer holiday camps and courses. Also offers after-school courses in north and east London for all levels.

Middlesex Serious Cricket Holiday courses: three, fun-filled days covering all skills. Specialist Workshops: video analysis batting and bowling workshops. Also elite training programme available.

Oxfordshire Cricket Coach Master Academy (CCM) For talented young players, offers preparation to help realise potential. The highest standards

of coaching with a world-class coaching programme from experienced specialist coaches.

Scotland Cricket Scotland Coaching camps for all ages from basic skills to video analysis. Courses are two-hour sessions on Sunday evenings for a five-week block at the National Cricket Academy in Edinburgh.

Surrey In Touch Cricket Academy

Runs high-performance programmes for district and county standard cricketers from 12 to 15 and development courses for club standard cricketers aged seven to 14. Based at Epsom College.

Starlit

Michael Vaughan Cricket Runs courses during the summer and October half-term holidays. For boys and girls aged five to 12 and uses games and competitions to develop skills for all abilities. Week-long camps take place during the summer holidays at venues throughout the UK.

Andrew Flintoff Cricket Academy

Nationwide day and residential cricket coaching courses for five to 16 years. Follows a coaching programme based on Flintoff's own cricketing beliefs, with coaches selected for attitude as well as qualifications. Each course features a visit from Flintoff or another international cricketer.

Overseas

Perth, Western Australia ACE Academy Offers a structured development programme. Will play Australian grade cricket to the highest possible standard. Will develop invaluable life skills. Accommodation is at the University of Western Australia. Most participants are 18 and older.

Brisbane, Queensland Australian Sports Gateway For cricketers from gap year to first-class. Accommodation is at Griffith University. Has links with all ICC countries and most of the counties. All play grade cricket in local competitions. Players both male and female aged 17 upwards but also for groups of younger players on short programmes. Cater for any standard.