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WICKETKEEPING



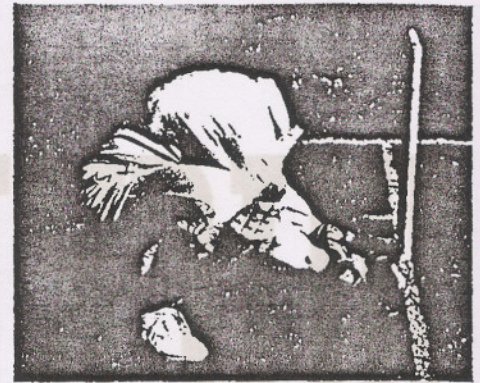
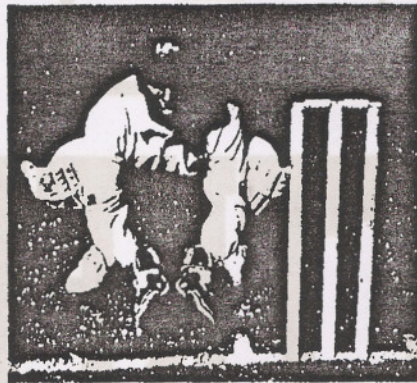
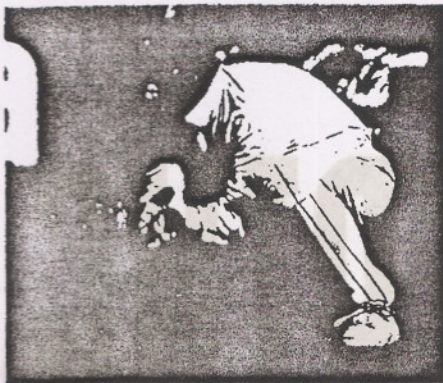
The wicketkeeper provides the focal point for the fielding team. The good wicketkeeper earns the respect of team-mates and leads the fielding team by demonstrating enthusiasm and skill, as well as visible hard work at training. Keeping wickets is a complex, subtle art but for the purposes of clear coaching key points are

established in this manual which form the basis for wicketkeepers at all levels of expertise. The crucial facets covered are Equipment, Crouch, Positioning, Glovework, Footwork, and Concentration. Drills and activities for the development of these aspects of wicketkeeping are presented as a concluding section.

KEY POINTS

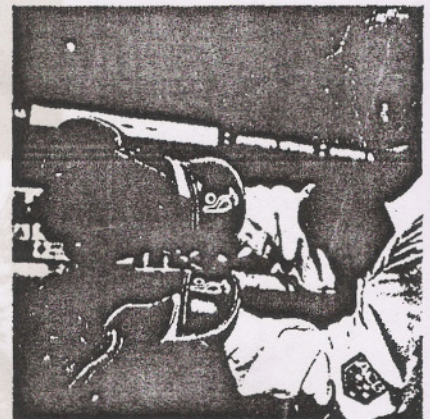
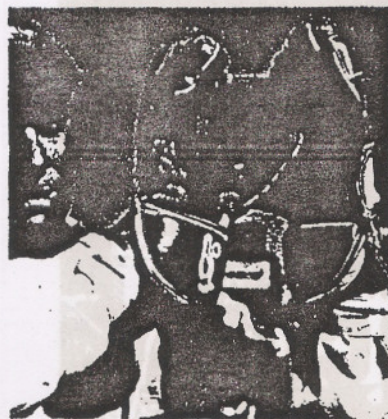
- Crouch
- Glovework
- Positioning
- Footwork
- Concentration

The Skills



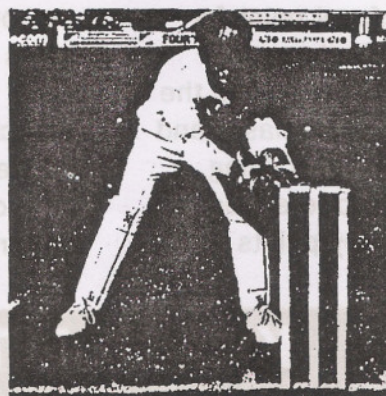
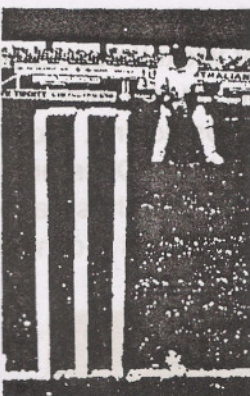
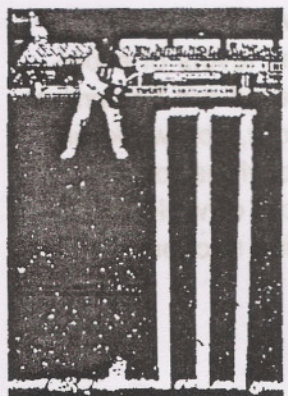
Crouch

- Feet approximately shoulder width apart
- Weight balanced on the balls of the feet



Glovework

- Cupped gloves rise with the ball
- Keep gloves slightly out in front of the eyes
- Point fingers at the ground, sky or sideways rather than straight at the ball



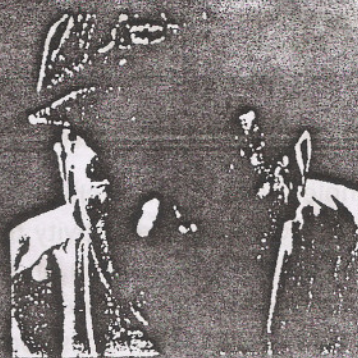
Positioning

- Ensure a clear view of the bowler in delivery
- Position to take the ball at hip height standing back
- To spinners, pivot (left) foot should be about 5cms outside off stump and two "foot lengths" back



Footwork

- When standing back, position the feet to take the ball in line with the inside hip
- Maintain bent knees through sideways movements
- Keep the head over the gloves (in line with the ball) to the spinners
- Move across the crease in a straight line



Concentration

- **Focus when the ball is "live", relax when it is "dead"**
- **Recover from error by positive thinking and involvement**
- **Lead by example in the field and at training**



EQUIPMENT

'Keeping is a highly demanding job, requiring all available energy to concentrate and focus effectively on every delivery bowled. Inadequate equipment should therefore not add to the normal stresses of a day.

Clothing should be non-restricting and as cool as possible, including hats. Footwear should be extremely comfortable, have good traction and be white at all times. Equipment must be almost a second skin to the 'keeper when wearing it. Pads should always be clean, comfortable, and light, with the gloves as useable as normal hands. 'Keepers should thus be able to throw easily with the gloves on and catch naturally with two hands as well as one hand. Ensure that the finger length of the glove is not too short, as this decreases "feel" for the ball. For a junior to maintain proper fitting gloves and pads during each year, parents may have to pay high prices, but with the range of gear on the market, a compromise can suc-

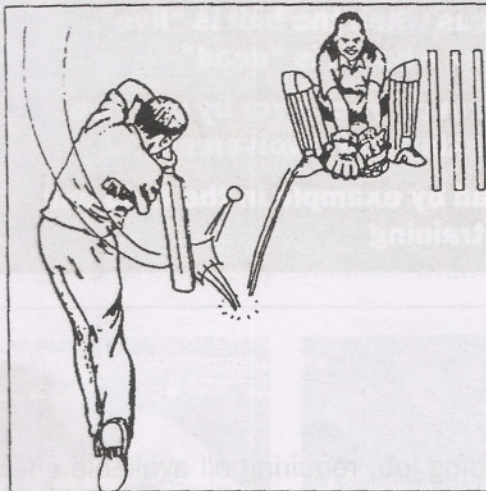
cessfully achieve several seasons use from the one purchase. 'Keepers should maintain their equipment meticulously, whether that be cleaning their shoes or pads, or refacing their gloves when the rubber is worn. "If you can't be a good cricketer, at least look like one," is an old adage, and a truism – a major step towards being a good cricketer is to look like one.

WICKET KEEPING DRILLS

Drills should simulate match conditions as closely as possible.

For example, when Wall-catching, the wicket-keeper should relate the activity to taking the ball in line with the inside hip on the offside or onside, depending on the sideways movement. The coaching points and focus for each activity should be specific to the developmental needs

of the 'keeper (e.g. obvious weaknesses) and selected from the key points of the relevant sections of this manual. In all the drills the major focus is the ball. Have your 'keeper watch it right into the gloves in all activities.



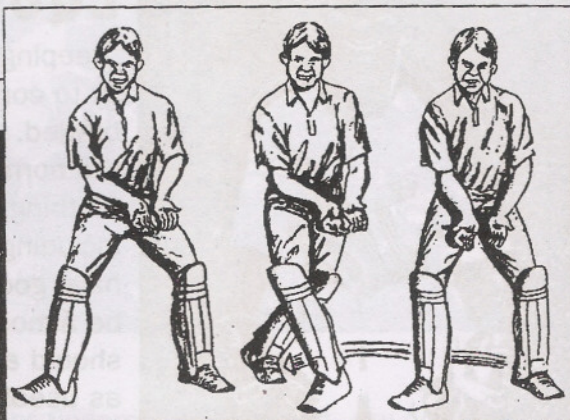
Half-volleys

This is the major drill and aims to establish effective footwork and glovework, and to establish the focus which is required in a game e.g. right-handed batter missing the ball outside off stump/leg stump.

- Wicketkeeper back in semi crouch position
- Throw to hitter on bounce, move to take catch imagining a particular type of batter

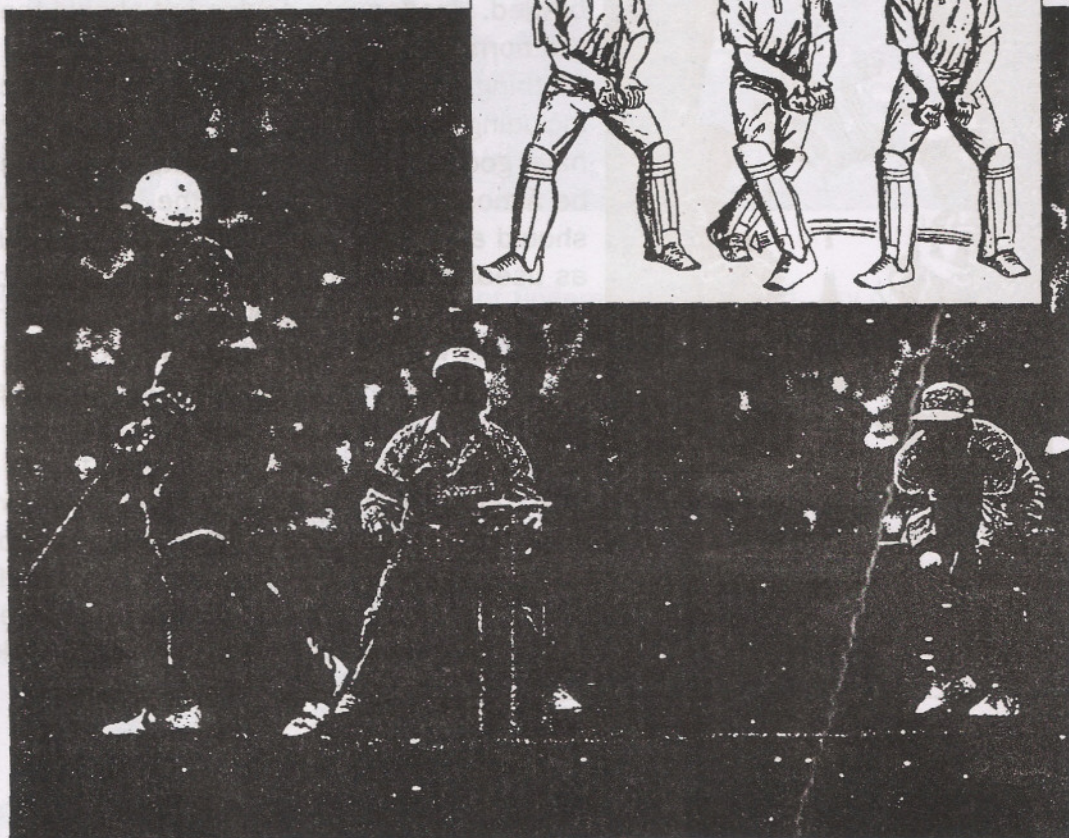
Variations

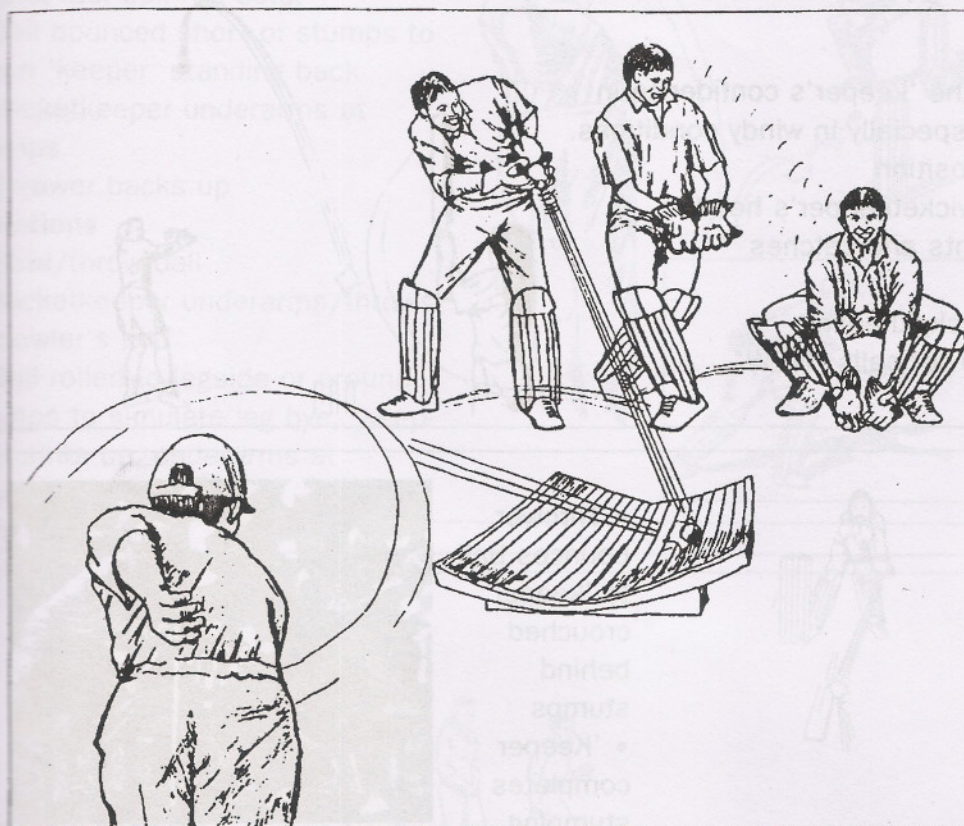
- Work legside/offside (10 each)
- Vary distance back



Fast Bowling

- Take ball in line with inside hip
- Weight on balls of feet
- Gloves low
- Movement strong and well balanced
- Cross over or side stepping





Slips Cradle

Aims to produce a general rhythm of slip work and develops slip patterns and understanding for the cordon who will be together in the match.

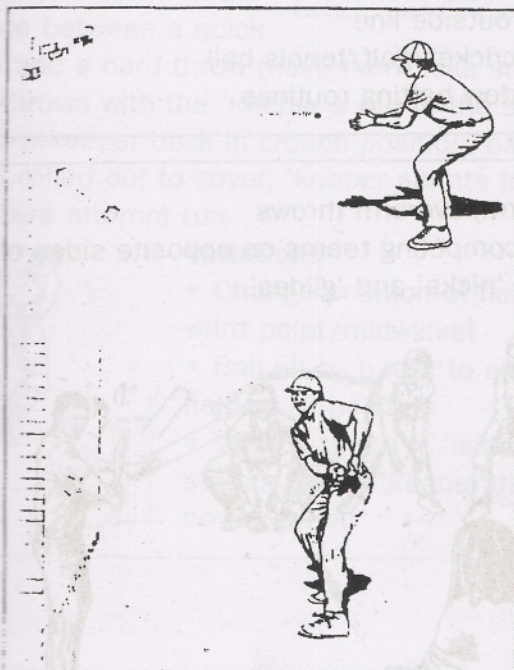
- Ball thrown into cradle
- 'Keeper moves from crouch to take catch.

Variation

- Use roller instead of cradle
- Have one slip next to 'keeper to develop understanding
- Vary pace/angle of throw

Wall-catching

Aims to develop effective sideways movement for quick and slow bowlers; to ensure the hands are cushioning the ball enough and that the ball is seen entering the hands; and to enable much "mental imagery" for the many tight situations of an upcoming match.



- 'Keeper stands square on to wall in semi-crouch position with inners on
- Throw golf ball to rebound off wall then concrete (or vice versa) before catching.

- Move sideways along wall and back.

Variations

- Change angle/height/pace of throw
- Change distance from wall to take diving/reflex catches
- Place sand, stones or stump/bat in bounce zone
- Utilise thrower from behind 'keeper
- Use tennis ball



WICKET KEEPING DRILLS

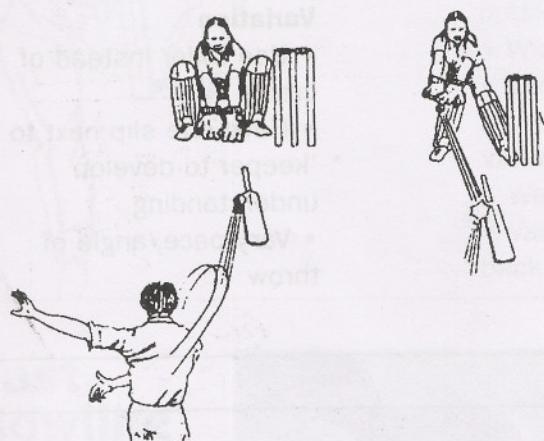
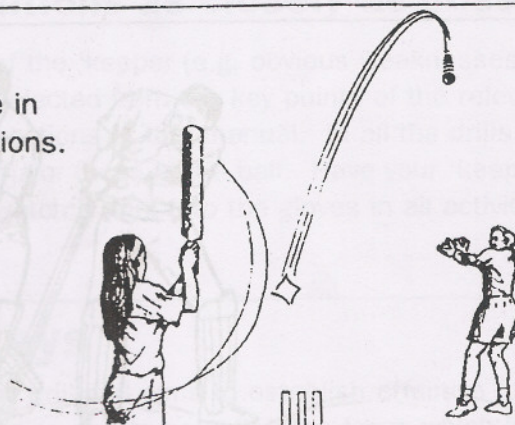
High Balls

Aims to regularly maintain the 'keeper's confidence in taking running high balls, especially in windy conditions.

- 'Keeper back in crouch position
- Ball lobbed in high over wicketkeeper's head
- 'Keeper turns, calls, sprints and catches

Variations

- 'Keeper face down/on back/kneeling
- 'Keeper closes eyes, thrower calls "NOW"
- Hit rather than throw ball



Stumping

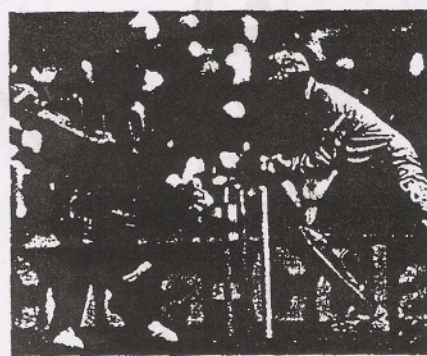
Aims to ensure the 'keeper only watches the ball and doesn't react suddenly when it hits an obstruction or just misses it.

- Place bat face down on a good length

- Thrower bounces ball to 'keeper crouched behind stumps
- 'Keeper completes stumping

Variations

- Change pace/length/spin of throw
- Place stump as obstruction at various lengths/lines
- Batter stands in position and play inside/outside line
- Use cricket/golf/tennis ball
- Shadow batting routines



Nicks

Aims to ensure that only the ball is focused on and not the swinging bat; to stay low, focus and move powerfully side-

ways; to simulate the 'nick' in the game and to practise glove work.

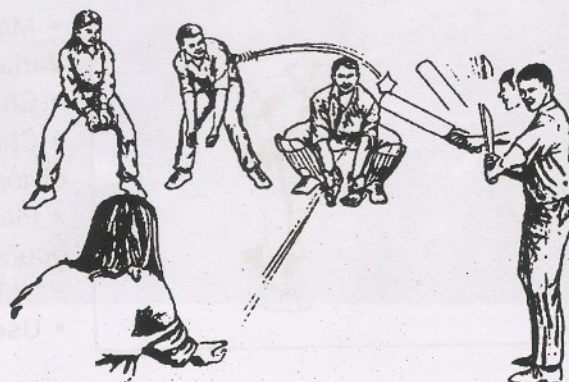
- Wicketkeeper and slip crouched in position
- Batter nicks ball from thrower, fielders catch

Variations

- Change pace of throw, depth of catches –

underarm/overarm throws

- Two competing teams on opposite sides of hitter – 'nicks' and 'glides'



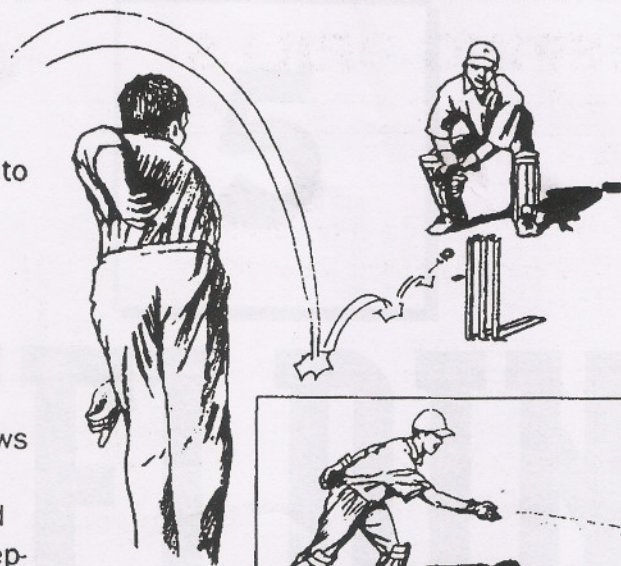
Underarms

Aims to maintain confidence for crucial last ball run outs!

- Ball bounced short of stumps to reach 'keeper standing back
- Wicketkeeper underarms at stumps
- Thrower backs up

Variations

- Bowl/throw ball
- Wicketkeeper underarms/throws to bowler's end
- Ball rolled to legside or around stumps to simulate leg bye, 'keeper sprints up, underarms at stumps



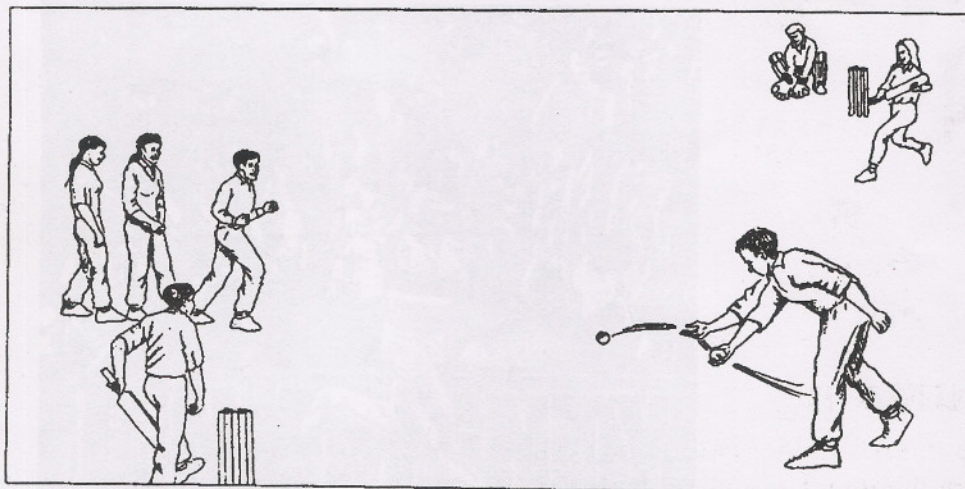
Run Outs

Aims to provide practice for 'keeper – sprint, stop, turn, catch, stump (difficult skill).

Teaches fielders the difference between a quick

throw and a hard throw (have them take some weight out of their throws); throwers learn to time their throws with the 'keeper's run to the stumps. Ball between gloves and stumps.

- Wicketkeeper back in crouch position, batters and fielders in position
- Ball rolled out to cover, 'keeper sprints to stumps to effect run out from throw
- Batters attempt run



Variations

- Change position of fielders – backward point/midwicket
- Ball hit by batter to either side, fielders in position
- Vary distance of fielders/far stumps; wicketkeeper throws to bowler's end



