

# MASTERCLASS

FOR ANY  
YOUNG LADS  
OUT THERE...



## THE BATTING DOCTOR

WITH GARY PALMER



### SECRETS OF BATTING – PART 1

OVER THE YEARS, I HAVE WATCHED and worked with many world class batters – when I first played at Somerset, I was in the same team as Viv Richards, possibly the greatest player of all time – and there are some common traits with all of them that I feel are non negotiable. Over the next two issues, I will be sharing what I consider the secrets of batting technique – and pointing out some common errors that both professional and amateur players make, as they strive to achieve these techniques.



PICTURES: PA PHOTOS



### in practice

Playing off the front foot in the V both drives and defence.

**1 STANCE** should include a slightly open front shoulder so that the eyes are level with the head in line with the stumps at the bowlers end, with head slightly forward of the body.

**Common fault** Players become too side-on because front shoulder is too closed. This causes players to tip to the off-side and play around the front pad to straight balls, making them vulnerable to being LBW or bowled. This also means it's difficult to play in the V.

**BACK SWING** should go back over off stump with elbow of bottom hand pointing towards the stumps. Aligning the elbow in this way 1) prevents the potential of the bottom hand towards being too dominant and 2) aligns the forearms towards the ball so that the bat swings in a straight line for the maximum amount of time.

**Common fault** Picking the bat up over middle stump, which again means you will have a tendency to play around the front pad with the risk over being LBW or bowled and – again – will find it difficult to play shots in the V.

Avoid having the elbow of the bottom hand tucked in to your side: this is another way in which the bottom hand can become too dominant, restricting the swing of the bat in a straight line through the line of the ball towards the target area. It also causes you to pick the bat up over leg stump like a golfer making it difficult to swing the bat in a straight line towards the ball.

**2 YOUR HEAD** should always be forward of the front foot when driving or defending the ball along the ground in the V.  
**Common fault** Head behind front foot making it difficult to drive the ball along the ground, thus minimizing your ability to play front foot drives. This also encourages you to lean back in your drives.



**3 MAKE CONTACT** with the ball slightly forward of the front foot but under your eyes to encourage leaning in to the shot. This will allow you to let the ball come to you, giving you more time a wider variety of options of where you can hit the ball. Letting the ball come to you will give you more control over your technique and ultimately the technique of the shot.

**Common Fault** Hitting the ball under the eyes level with the front foot. This makes you rush the shot with the feeling of being yorked and makes it difficult to strike the ball cleanly down the ground in the V. It also encourages you to lean back slightly in the shot coupled thus limiting your scoring options. Trying to hit the ball into the ground is a technique that is sometimes

taught BUT this encourages the above fault and I would strongly advise against it.

**WHEN DEFENDING OR DRIVING** in the V off the front foot, always try to keep the heel of the back foot raised so that you can lean into the shot. The heel being raised ensures that you have got your head forward of the body and in a great position to play the drives and forward defence.

**Common fault** You hear the term 'Firm base'. Too many coaches and players do not understand that the heel should be raised. 'Firm base' doesn't mean keep your heel stuck to the floor so that your reach is restricted and you can't lean in to the shot. Being stuck to the ground will again minimise your scoring options in the V.

**4 LEAN TOWARDS THE BALL** predominately with the head not the shoulder so that you are well balanced and aligned to play any straight batted shot in the V.  
**Common fault** Players turn the shoulder directly towards the ball and the head is pushed towards the off side. This causes poor balance and alignment: players will tip to the off side for all drives and defensive shots and when the ball is straight they will play around their front pad. This minimizes the chances of playing drives in the V and makes them vulnerable to being bowled or LBW.

Info on courses and one-to-one coaching with Gary: [www.ccmacademy.co.uk](http://www.ccmacademy.co.uk)

