Building on Werner and Almond’s (1990) conceptualization of fielding and run-scoring games, Hopper & Bell (2002) indicate that two primary rules, (a) striking an object and running between safe areas to score and (b) restricting scoring/getting batters out, warrant a need for tactical principles that structure play in this category of games. Batting (offensive) principles of play include scoring runs, avoiding getting out (staying in), and hitting to an open space in order to achieve both of these concepts. Fielding (defensive) principles include restricting run scoring, getting batters out, and preventing hitting to open spaces in order to achieve both of these concepts. While the overall batting and fielding principles delineate the game focus, Hopper and Bell also suggest application of five specific Tactical Awareness Components To Increase Cognition (TACTIC) to assist students in becoming successful games players. These components are (a) SPACE: the location an object should be placed in the playing area and a player’s reaction/movement in that area; (b) TIME: precisely when in a game to execute a skill; (c) FORCE: the location and magnitude of force applied to an object for height, direction, and distance; (d) SELF: what a player should do to gain a tactical advantage over his/her opponent(s) based on his/her use of the 3 initial components; and (e) OTHER: what a player should do to gain a tactical advantage over his/her opponent(s) based on what the other player(s) is/are doing with those components. The five tactical awareness components can be used by teachers to focus students’ experiences during modified striking/fielding games in order to improve their understanding of batting and fielding principles of play.

**Modified Cricket Games**

Several modified cricket games (Know the Game, 1989), described below, can be used to develop both tactical awareness and game skills, such as batting, bowling (delivery of the ball with a straight arm), and fielding, that permit achievement of offensive and defensive principles of play. The first game is called Tip and Run. It is a useful game for cricket beginners and requires 6-8 players per game.

**Tip and Run.** Each game requires two sets of wickets (or four cones), one plastic cricket bat (softball flat-bat), and one Nerf/wiffle or tennis ball. Pitching in this game, referred to as bowling, can be underhand tossing for beginners or overarm for more advanced students. (The bowling arm is kept straight in the overarm version.) The batter must be able to reach the ball with the bat from a regular batting stance in order for the bowled ball to be considered legal.

In the adult game of cricket, the bowler delivers the ball with a straight arm to the batter. The action of both arms in the delivery is analogous to a “windmill,” so the bowling arm is kept straight as it swings high overhead prior to release. Throwing the ball is illegal (called a no-ball), resulting in the batter receiving an extra delivery from the bowler, and one extra run is added to the batting team’s total. All other defensive players are allowed to throw the ball when fielding.

In cricket there are no “balls” as in baseball/softball. If the ball is delivered so wide the batter has no chance of hitting it (called a wide), the batter receives an extra delivery from the bowler, and one extra run is added to the batting team’s total.

A single batter runs, carrying the bat, from the batting crease (similar to a batter’s box in baseball/softball) to the bowling crease (similar to the pitcher’s mound in baseball/softball) each time he/she hits the ball (see Figure 1). The ball can be hit anywhere. There is no foul territory. A run is scored when the batter touches the bat over the bowling crease. The batter walks back to the batting crease as the bowler and fielders prepare for the next at bat.
Batters can only be run out at the end to which they are running. A run out occurs when the ball is thrown to the bowler, who then hits the nearby wicket with the ball before the batter gets past the bowling crease. A direct hit by a fielder throwing at the bowler’s wicket also runs out the batter. Additionally, the batter can be out by being bowled (the bowler’s pitch hits the batter’s wicket) or if a fly ball is caught by a fielder after a hit by the batter.

Each batter faces a maximum of 4-6 deliveries or, depending on time, bats until there is an out. A rule may also be added that the batter automatically scores 4 runs, without actually having to run, whenever the ball is hit outside the perimeter of the playing area. Each time a batter is out (or the 4-6 ball inning has been completed) a different bowler takes a turn bowling at the new batter. When all players have batted, the player with the most runs wins.

**Defensive Tactics and Concepts**

A good deal of teaching material stems from this modified game. Teachers could focus their attention on the defensive principles of play (restricting run scoring, getting batters out) and the associated TACTIC’s. Table 1 provides a summary of defensive tactics based on Hopper and Bell’s (2000) framework that could provide a focus for this modified game.

Once students appreciate the importance of the defensive principles of play, they begin to understand why particular skills, such as accurate bowling, are important. A game-related practice, like Hit the Gap with small groups of students can be set up to develop specific skills and strategy.

**Hit the Gap.** In this practice game, the batter is invited to hit the ball between two target cones in order to score. The distance from the batter and between the cones can be varied based on the age and ability of the students. The goal of the bowler is to pitch the ball into an area where the batter will have difficulty hitting the ball between the target cones, either missing the ball altogether or hitting a pop-up to a fielder.

**Figure 1—Tip and Run**

![Figure 1—Tip and Run](image)

**Figure 2—Hit the Gap**

![Figure 2—Hit the Gap](image)

The batter receives six pitches and scores one run each time the ball beats the fielder and passes between the cones. If the batter is bowled out, the ball is caught by a fielder, or it fails to go between the cones, no run is scored.

**Bowling Tactics.** A bowler quickly learns that a tennis ball bouncing in either zones 3 or 4 (see Figure 3) goes through to a right-handed batter at a comfortable height where the batter can pull the ball with a softball style swing (horizontal bat) to the area between the cones fairly consistently. A ball bowled on the fly (without a bounce) arriving at a similar height can also be pulled to the same area. However, a ball that bounces in zone 1 is very difficult to hit between the cones. It lands closer to the batter (within 1-2 yards) and comes through at a low height, making it very difficult to pull the ball. It is also on the off-side (see Figure 3, area left of an imaginary line dividing the cricket field in half).

**Table 1—Defensive Principles of Play**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tactic</th>
<th>Restricting Run Scoring</th>
<th>Getting Batter Out</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Space</td>
<td>Fielders assigned responsibility for specific areas (e.g., to cover a bunt or the area behind a batter’s wicket).</td>
<td>Bowler makes the ball land in an area where the batter has difficulty hitting the ball into space (vary location of pitch).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Fielders move in as the bowler prepares to deliver the ball.</td>
<td>Fielders return the ball quickly to run out the batter (fast pick-up, decision, and throw).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force</td>
<td>Fielder throws the ball in with appropriate force to the wicket.</td>
<td>Vary the speed of the ball bowled to the batter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
<td>The fielder anticipates the ball being hit toward him/her and needs to be in a ready position for defense.</td>
<td>The bowler imparts spin on the ball causing the ball to balloon into the air off the bat in order to get a batter out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Cover space behind a teammate in case the first fielder misses the ball.</td>
<td>The bowler positions fielders in areas where the batter tends to mis-hit (edge) the ball.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In cricket, the ball does not have to bounce before it reaches the batter, but most bowlers make the ball bounce once before the batter has a chance to hit the ball. There is more variation in height and direction once the ball has hit the ground, making it harder for the batter to hit the ball effectively. The adult-size cricket bat is 4.25 inches wide. To make the batter miss, the bowler needs to make the ball deviate further than in baseball or softball. If the batter misses the ball altogether and it hits the wicket, the batter is out (bowled).

In contrast, delivering the ball so it lands in zones 2 or 4 assists the batter to hit to the leg-side, the side where the batter's legs are (or, right side of the field when viewed from the bowler's position). That is the batter's goal in this game, and the tendency for most beginning batters. So, the bowler learns to pitch the ball into zone 1 (in line with or outside the bowler's stump, or wicket). Note: In cricket three stumps constitute a wicket: off, middle, and leg. For a left-handed batter, all the concepts and terms are reversed.

**Bowling Practice.** This is a practice task for bowling to get the batter out. Arrange students into pairs about ten yards apart from each other. Each bowler uses an underhand toss, attempting to make the ball bounce about two paces in front of the partner. The partner gathers the ball and then bowls it back. In a progression of tasks, a set of wickets or a cone can be used to focus the bowler's aim. A batter can also be added to bunt the ball only. The batter helps simulate a game context. Ground targets (plastic strip markers or hoops) can also be placed in front of the batter's wicket to represent the target (i.e., zone 1) for the bowler. For students who are ready, overarm bowling (remember, arm is kept straight) can be introduced. Students might then return to Tip and Run with bowlers now focusing on the length (position of bounce) and direction (accuracy) of their delivery.

**Stoolball.** In order to restrict run scoring and get batters out, the bowler needs the support of the defense (fielders).

A slight change in Tip and Run creates a new modified game called Stoolball (Know the Game, 1989). The rules and organization are the same as they were for Tip and Run, but now there are two batters, a striker and a non-striker. The non-striker is located near the bowler’s wicket (as in Figure 4). After hitting the ball, one run is scored when both the batters cross and make their ground behind the wickets (creases) at the opposite ends. In other words, they switch places. The ways a batter can be out remain the same, but now a run out can occur at either end. Only one batter can be out at a time, and that would be the one closest to the wicket hit by the fielding team. Each batting pair faces 12 pitches (6 pitches each). After every six pitches (one over), a new bowler bowls from the wicket at the other end. The batting pair with the most runs wins the game. Again, Table 1 provides examples of defensive tactics on which fielders could focus in this game. Game-related practice tasks with small groups of students can be set up to develop specific tactics (e.g., fielding decisions in run out situations) and skills (e.g., quick pick-up and throw).

**Fielding Tactics.** In Run Out Cricket (Know the Game, 1989; Figure 4), there are always two batters (a striker and a non-striker) at the respective wickets. The batters do not hit the ball, but their aim is to avoid being run out. The wicket keeper (catcher) rolls the ball into the field and calls the name of one of the fielders in that half of the field. Once the ball is released, both batters begin to run. The fielder (e.g., F2 in Figure 4) attempts a quick pick-up and throws to either the wicket keeper or the bowler in an attempt to run out one of the batters. The other fielder (F1) covers the teammate in case of a mis-field. Each pair of batters begins with 6 runs and receives 6 rolls. If one of the batters is run out, they lose one run from the total. If they both make their ground, they score one run. The pair with the most runs wins the game. As a variation, a batter could hit the ball from a tee and call a fielder's name, rather than the wicket keeper rolling the ball.

**Fielding Practice.** This is a practice task for fielding ground balls in run out situations. In pairs, two fielders are positioned 10-15 yards apart. Place the ball on the ground next to the feet of fielder A. On fielder B's command, fielder A picks up the ball and, with one step forward, attempts a fast, hard
throw. As the practice task is repeated, emphasize that fielder A should move toward the stationary ball with a sideways shuffle, pick up the ball in throwing position, and throw in one action from the ground to fielder B. Subsequently, fielder B feeds a rolling ball to fielder A, who advances and attempts to return the ball in one action. Variations can take place with overarm and underarm throws from different distances and two-handed and one-handed pick-ups. A third fielder can also be positioned as a wicket keeper, causing the ball to be fielded from one direction and thrown in a different direction at a wicket/cone, resembling a run out situation. Students can then return to Stoolball to practice these defensive tactics and skills.

The wicket keeper in cricket is synonymous with the catcher in baseball/softball. The wicket keeper is the only defensive player permitted to wear protective gloves. There is no foul territory in cricket, so the wicket keeper often catches a ball that is deflected off the edge of the bat before it touches the ground. This is a very common way of getting a cricket batter out.

Pairs Cricket. A further change enables this new game to resemble the adult game of cricket. The batters no longer have to run every time the ball is hit. The batters decide whether or not to run based on the chance of being run out. In Pairs Cricket (Know the Game, 1989), each batting pair faces 12 pitches (two overs) in total. When a batter is out (caught, bowled, or run out), three runs are deducted from the batting pair’s total score. Every time there is an out, the batters change ends. At the end of the two overs, each pair rotates to their next activity. With four pairs of players, one pair bats, a second pair fields on the leg-side, a third pair fields on the off-side, and the fourth pair serve as bowler and wicket keeper (the bowler and wicket keeper change roles after each over). Each batting pair calculates the number of runs scored in their two overs, for example, 10 runs scored, 2 outs (-6) = 4 runs total. The pair with the most runs is the winner.

Offensive Tactics and Concepts

The focus in Pairs Cricket can be placed on offensive tactics and associated skills (see Table 2) based on Hopper and Bell’s (2000) framework. In the previous games, it’s likely the bowlers have been encouraged to bowl the ball straight, pitching close to the batter in zone 1. If bowlers are able to do this, the batter must use different tactics and batting strokes to score runs.

### Table 2—Offensive Principles of Play

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tactic</th>
<th>Scoring Runs</th>
<th>Avoiding Getting Out</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Space</td>
<td>Hit the ball into spaces.</td>
<td>Hit the ball along the ground (in space).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Run each run fast to reach safety before the throw.</td>
<td>Refuse a run if the fielder can execute a run out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force</td>
<td>Trade accuracy for hitting power (e.g., use of defensive push) or vice versa.</td>
<td>For a fast bowler use a low batting back-lift to hit the ball. For a slow bowler, use a high batting back-lift to hit the ball.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
<td>The wider the ball is pitched the wider it is hit. A straight ball should be hit straight.</td>
<td>Defend the wicket with the bat to prevent a well-bowled ball from hitting the wicket.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Communicate with batting partner (&quot;yes,&quot; &quot;no&quot; or &quot;wait&quot;) for each run.</td>
<td>Decide whether a shot is risky based on where the fielders are positioned.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Drive Cricket. This is a game-related practice task that helps batters deal with a good length ball pitched in zone 1. In this game the bowler tosses the ball to the batter so that it bounce in zone 1. The ball could also be hit off a low tee placed in that zone if the batter has difficulty with a tossed ball.

The batter attempts to drive the ball between the cones where the fielders are positioned (see Figure 5). One run is scored if the ball goes past the cones. The batter can double the score on the hit by running to the bowler’s end, touching the bat over the bowling crease (at the bowler’s wicket), then returning to the batter’s wicket (which also simulates two runs in a real game). In this case, the fielders attempt to run out the batter by throwing the ball to the wicket keeper before the batter has returned. The batter decides whether to risk the run and loses all runs on the hit if an out is made. Each batter receives six deliveries and attempts to score as many runs as possible. If a fielder catches a fly ball from the batter, no runs are scored on that shot.

In adult cricket, a batter has the option of deciding whether or not to run after hitting the ball. In theory, a batter can receive six deliveries from a bowler in an over and elect not to run on any hit to the field.
**Batting Tactics and Practice.** In Drive Cricket, batters should learn to watch the ball, step with the front foot toward where the ball bounces, use a straight back swing, keep the bat straight (vertical) when driving the ball, and follow through in the direction of the hit rather than swinging across the body.

The batter has a choice of cricket shots just as in baseball/softball. In some circumstances, a batter may want to hit the ball over the fielders in order to run more than once, or hit a *home run* type of shot across the perimeter of the playing area without bouncing to score *six runs*. Another choice would be trying to hit a *line drive* past them, bouncing at least once prior to crossing the perimeter to score *four runs*. However, the batter must assess the risk of such shots, being reminded that in the real game of cricket, once a batter is out, he/she does not bat again during that team’s innings (usually the remainder of the day).

Students might return to Pairs Cricket and focus on other offensive *TACTICS* indicated in Table 2. Sometimes, batters are unable to aggressively hit balls that bounce somewhere between zones 1 and 3 (see Figure 3). They may be concerned about missing the ball altogether (and being *bowled*), hitting an *edge* (equivalent to ticking or fouling) that could be caught by the wicket keeper, or hitting a *pop-up*.

Batters should be reminded that avoiding *getting out* is always a tactical objective, so defending a *good* ball (a ball likely to strike the wicket) is also sensible. They can learn to block the ball by playing the drive shot with no follow-through. This is similar to a bunt in baseball and is sometimes effective for scoring runs if the fielders are positioned deep in the field or react slowly.

While attempting to score runs, the cricket batter must also protect the wicket from a straight delivery. For this reason, the batter uses a straight *back-lift*, pointing the toe of the bat just to the outside of the *wicket keeper* (catcher) at the top of the back-lift. This position allows the bat to be brought down vertically to protect the wicket from a ball that is delivered straight at the wicket. Or, if the ball bounces high and wide of the wicket after it hits the ground, the batter can maneuver the bat around to use more of a horizontal stroke as in baseball/softball.

**Pedagogical Principles for Cricket**

An attempt has been made above to focus on offensive and defensive striking/fielding tactical principles and skills that can be developed in modified cricket games and practices but which also apply to other games in this category. Specific pedagogical principles are also embedded in these games and practices in order to provide maximal learning opportunities for the participants.

Students should practice offensive (batting) and defensive (bowling and fielding) concepts in small groups and modified contexts that replicate real game situations. They should experience equal amounts of practice in each striking/fielding role. Cricket is a team game, yet an instructional approach emphasizing solo (or pairs) activities allows students to rotate through batting, bowling, and fielding roles more regularly. Therefore, batters of various abilities receive an equitable number of deliveries in both games and practices. A batter who is *out* may lose runs but continues to bat for the allotted number of deliveries. In most of the games above, only 6-8 players are involved, usually competing individually or as a pair. That means the teacher needs to set up 3-4 simultaneous games so that a class of 24-32 students can all be active at the same time. At no time in any of these activities does a player sit out.

Some practice tasks use even smaller numbers of participants. Bowling uses pairs and threes while Hit the Gap involves groups of four. Specific practices like Drive Cricket allow offensive tactics and skills to be developed in conditions similar to those experienced in the real game. While the focus in Drive Cricket is offensive (batting shot played to a specific ball), most of the game contexts described above are reciprocal in nature, so defensive skills and tactics (catching, pick-up and throw, covering a teammate) are also practiced. Using small numbers and providing students with multiple opportunities to make improvements instills players with motivation and confidence as they experience success in scaled-down situations that represent pressures similar to those in a real game of 11-a-side cricket.

**Space and Equipment Modifications.** Modified cricket games are extremely popular with students and teachers in many countries around the world. The games can be adapted to suit specific environments (indoors or outside). The dimensions of the playing area can also be varied to suit individual teaching contexts and specific students needs. Inexpensive, lightweight, and safe equipment such as tennis, Nerf, and wiffle balls can be used in these games to slow the speed of the ball. Large cones, or even trashcans, can be used to simulate the wickets. Softball trainer bats (flat bats) are ideal for elementary children to use as modified cricket bats. Bat shapes can also be made from wood (ideally willow), although these tend to be rather heavy for younger children. Three cut-off broom handles glued to a piece of wood can be used as a makeshift wicket (28 inches high and 9 inches across). Plastic cricket equipment (wickets and bats) called Kwik Cricket is available from several major sports retailers who provide equipment for physical education in the United States. The only additional requirement is a comparatively flat surface, indoors or outside, and space to hit a relatively soft ball.

**Summary**

The ideas presented here are intended to provide physical education practitioners with the basic tools to teach cricket. Many of the modified games and practices used to develop tactics and skills clearly have application to other striking/fielding games like baseball, rounders, and softball. The suggested activities can stand alone as a cricket unit or be used as part of a compilation unit on striking/fielding games concepts. The latter focus is well suited to many elementary school physical education curricula. School students appear very responsive to learning game concepts in cricket. They come to understand their responsibilities in offensive and defensive situations and specific environments (indoors or outside). The dimensions of the playing area can also be varied to suit individual teaching contexts and specific students needs. Inexpensive, lightweight, and safe equipment such as tennis, Nerf, and wiffle balls can be used in these games to slow the speed of the ball. Large cones, or even trashcans, can be used to simulate the wickets. Softball trainer bats (flat bats) are ideal for elementary children to use as modified cricket bats. Bat shapes can also be made from wood (ideally willow), although these tend to be rather heavy for younger children. Three cut-off broom handles glued to a piece of wood can be used as a makeshift wicket (28 inches high and 9 inches across). Plastic cricket equipment (wickets and bats) called Kwik Cricket is available from several major sports retailers who provide equipment for physical education in the United States. The only additional requirement is a comparatively flat surface, indoors or outside, and space to hit a relatively soft ball.

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