

# Patenting Bowling Machines – We are not talking about Anil Kumble or McGrath

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We are midway through the fascinating Cricket World Cup 2011 now. So far, we witnessed domination of test teams over rookies (Ireland Vs England match was an exception for this). Competition will get tougher as the tournament proceeds. As expected, spinners are dominating batsmen but top class pacers from Australia and South Africa too proved worthy. The factors which will help players keep going is nothing but hard work and practice. The hard core practice sessions in the nets will definitely help improving player's performances. During practice, players help each other to improve techniques. Bowling can be practiced by an individual player independently if he has a ball and stumps. But how about practicing batting alone!!! Almost impossible. Some one must be there to bowl or else some kind of mechanism should be there so that a batsman can practice batting techniques. This thought might be the reason which ultimately resulted in the invention of bowling machines. The bowling machines allow a batsman to practice alone in an efficient way. Batsman while practicing with the aid of a bowler may not be efficient, as the bowler may not be able to repeat the same ball consistently. But a bowling machine provides this advantage, as it allows repetition of ball being bowled in a certain line, length and speed. This will help a batsman to practice shots against a particular kind of delivery and thereby improve efficiency.

The main parts of a bowling machine are two heavy wheels between 30 and 50 cm in diameter which are driven by its own motor. These are mounted in such a way that the wheels are in

the same plane and a ball joint is provided which allows maximum range of movement of the machine. The whole assembly is mounted on a tripod. The motors are battery powered and they turn in opposite directions. A controller is provided so as to control the speed of the motor into desired rate. By varying the speed of the motors and changing alignment of motor plane, various attributes of bowling such as fast, spin, seam, bouncers and swing can be achieved. Below mentioned is a patent related to a Bowling Machine.

On 10th march 1976, K. W Kirk & Sons filed a patent application (GB 1529396), which was later granted, titled "A Bowling Machine". The system comprises a rotatable throwing arm, a part circular guide centred on a horizontal axis, a force reservoir provided so as to rotate the throwing arm about the axis and a trigger mechanism which maintain the throwing arm in a cocked position against the action of force reservoir. The trigger mechanism is released when the throwing arm is in cocked position. The throwing arm gets rotated by the force reservoir and acts on the ball which will release the ball in an accurate path as defined by the guide since the ball is discharged from the machine at the end of guide. The force reservoir includes atleast one spring connected between the throwing arm and a pivotable cocking lever. The position of cocking lever at the time of cocking the throwing arm is adjusted so as to vary the force exerted on the spring and thereby controlling the speed at which the ball is discharged.

So, with this invention in picture, you really dont need bowlers. There may be a day when matches are played with bowling machines instead of bowlers. That would be fun. No one has yet invented a batting and a fielding machine though. Once that is done, matches can be played by machines.

Authored by Mr. Naveen.

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