# Jail-break cricket – another simple game-variant for CGBL

Here is a game variant that can be used to encourage players to apply a specified batting technique in a practice session.

We call it "jail-break cricket" – players are challenged to hit a ball to a specified target area to release team mates who have been "sent to jail".

Playing jail-break cricket

Play a game of "relay cricket" - batters each have one hit, or three misses, then rotate to the end of the batting line-up to be replaced by the next batsman in line), but introduce a designated scoring zone (SZ) and a smaller target area - the "jail break" zone (JBZ).
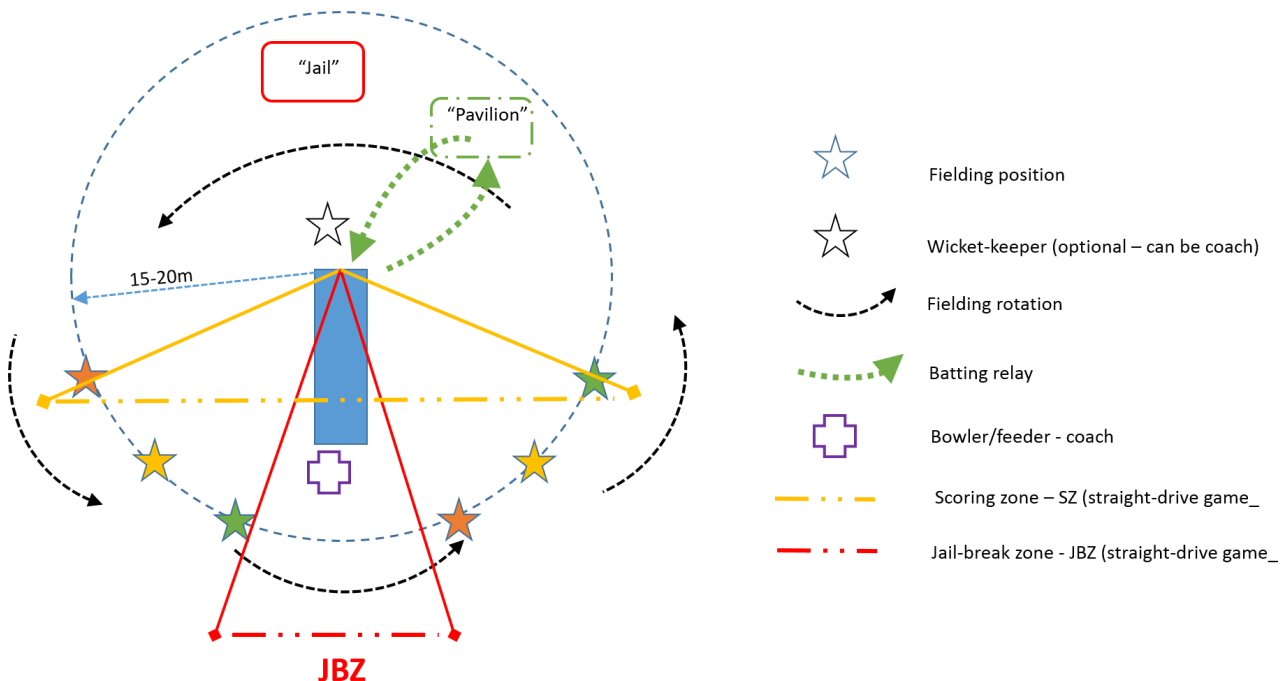
The JBZ should not be obstructed by the fielding team. They can field *behind* the JBZ, but not prevent a ball from going through it - their role is to save runs, not prevent jail breaks.

Batters score runs only if they hit the ball into the SZ (generally in the same direction as the JBZ, but 2-3x wider).

Fielders attempt to catch the batter, or run him out - essentially, the "Lord's Game". Choose any appropriate stroke, and set up the SZ, JBZ and fielding teams as needed.

In jail-break cricket, if the batsman is dismissed, she goes to the "jail" (a coned-off area behind the batter's stumps) and remains in jail until released by a colleague.

To release a jailed team mate, the batter at the crease has to hit the ball into the JBZ; all jailed players are released with one stroke played into the JBZ.

If the entire team goes to jail (all dismissed before a ball is struck into the JBZ), then their innings is over; otherwise, bat for a fixed time or number of rotations, before swapping over batters and fielders.

Too many players?

If you have a lot of players, restrict the teams to 5-6 players (so no-one has to wait for more than five team mates to bat before getting another turn at the crease, and the fielding team(s) have a realistic chance of sending a full team to jail), but have the batting side play against *all* of the fielding teams.

Set-up inner and outer rings for the fielders; fielders rotate around their own fielding ring, then move to bat (if already on inner ring) or to inner ring (if in outer ring); batting team go to outer fielding ring on completion of their innings.

Working with more advanced players

We have used this game format successfully with younger players, normally with the coach feeding deliveries appropriate to the batting skill being tested.

But I could also see this format being applied with more advanced players, by making the jail-break challenges more demanding and/or having the fielding team take on responsibility for delivering the ball.

For example - set up as before, but with the scoring and jail-break zones in completely different areas. Challenge the batting team to either score runs by hitting in one direction, or reinstate their team mates by hitting in a completely different direction - perhaps a sweep, or even a reverse or ramp.

Challenge the bowlers to bowl a line and length appropriate to the batting targets, and penalise off-line bowling heavily e.g. by releasing players from jail for a wide.

I could see scope for tactical innovation.

If the batters need to hit straight to score, but backwards of square on the legside to hit the JBZ, for example, they will have to judge line quickly and/or innovate successfully.

Bowlers need to deny batters scoring opportunities without presenting a free "get out of jail" hit.

A little contrived, perhaps, but so is any "scenario-based" session.

Conclusions

I have probably used this game format a dozen times, now. It takes a little while for the players to understand the full ramifications of the JBZ and "if you are out, you're out" first time, but once they get it they seem to really enjoy jail-break cricket.

The game rewards the batter for playing a particular stroke, so could work well as the final, modified game in a whole-part-whole session.

It also teaches team spirit (it is amazing how quickly the "jailed" players come to actively encourage their batting team mates) and introduces the concepts of responsibility and consequence - if you are the last "free" batter, you really do need to try to hit the target to free your team mates; if you are dismissed, you go to jail, and if the last batter does not release his team mates the innings closes.