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FORMER ENGLAND TEST PLAYER BARRY KNIGHT, WHO WAS IN THE CITY TO TRAIN SOME OF THE TOP STATE JUNIOR CRICKETERS, HAS LEFT THE YOUNGSTERS IN AWE



Mayank Agarwal and Karun Nair, both India Under-19 cricketers, share a light moment with Barry Knight, former England Test player turned coach, during a training session

Learning the art of cricket the Knight way

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On first thoughts, one can't help but wonder how good a coach Barry Knight can be at the age of 72. When most veterans his age would prefer staying home and laze on a couch all day long, the English man loves to sweat it out on a cricket field along with boys who are barely 1/4th his age. And mind you, his on field activeness would put any 17-year-old to shame.

"At first when I was told about Barry Knight, I was a bit apprehensive because at 72 I wasn't sure how much time he could spend on the field with the boys. But he surprised me," says Shankar UV, sports director of SBM Jain University who hosted a five-day

cricket clinic backed by the Power Education, Australia.

Knight's knowledge of the game and his ability to spot even the minute technical errors committed by a bowler or a batsman is impeccable. From mentoring the mighty Aussie captain—Allan Border during his rookie days to coaching the Lee brothers, Adam Gilchrist, John Dyson and Cricket Australia chief Andrew Hilditch, Knight has spent over 42 years analysing and adapting to the changing aspects of the gentleman's game. "It's pure passion for the game that keeps me going," says Knight who has played 29 Test matches for England.

"I think when you have produced players who have gone on to become the best in the

He does not make too many changes to your style. Within three balls, he knew the exact way I got out. He told me not to open my right shoulder while batting and that seems to have helped quite a bit

Mayank Agarwal India U-19 cricketer

world, it sort of becomes like a drug and you don't want to give it up," admits the coach, referring to the list of players who have emerged from his academy. Knight migrated to Australia at the end of his Test career and was one of the first English coaches to have started a successful indoor academy. He was the first to use video technology to assess batting and has asserted that he would send his analysis of the

clipping taken during the clinic in Bangalore.

At the camp in JIRS, more than 120 boys, some of whom have played for the state and India colts, were monitored by Knight along with Simon Rice, strength and conditioning coach from Cricket Australia and Nick Berman, an assistant coach and former Sydney Cricket Club player. "When I arrived here, I was not sure of the talent and quality of play-

ers I was going to coach but these young boys were impressive. They are supremely good compared to some of the younger players we have in Australia, no wonder then that there is so much competition to make it to the national squad in India," says the Sydney-based coach.

Knight, an all-rounder during his crickering days, admits that teaching techniques to young cricketers who are in awe of Twenty20 form of cricket is a challenge. "When I asked the boys here as to what they aimed to play, whether Test or T20, most of them picked Test cricket. But when you actually watch them play, they seem like they want to imitate a Dilshan (Tillakaratne) shot," he points out.