

Kent CCC used Thomas assessments to improve individual player performance.



Sport



Objectives

- Help Sam Billings to improve and play to his ability
- Use assessments to identify temperament and ambition in academy players
- Identify how to improve and develop players



Results

- ★ Created a 30-day personal game plan for struggling players
- ★ Sam Billings, a new player, was awarded player of the year
- ★ Assessments have helped players see opportunities beyond the sport for when they retire

THE CHALLENGE: Pressures for new player

Wicket-keeper batsman Sam Billings was 22 and in his first full season at first team level at Kent replacing long serving and successful player, former England wicket-keeper batsman Geraint Jones.

“He had taken over from someone who had been in his position at the club for 15 years who was a high performer and who had played for England at the highest level,” explains Willis.

“He was coming in with high standards to follow and there were various pressures he was struggling to cope with that had an impact on his performance.”

Billings turned to Willis for help: “I wasn’t getting the scores that I knew I could get.”

Willis, who was no stranger to psychometric assessments, decided that Billings, as well as other professional players could benefit from this type of assessment.

Willis says: “I’d gone through quite a few myself over the years as part of my coach education. Also I was looking for a couple of tools to utilise with young players in the Academy, with a point of view of trying to identify things like temperament and ambition.”

Willis first profiled a few senior managers at the club to get an appetite for it, including head coach Jimmy Adams. The response was so positive that the club signed up to use Thomas tools just in time for the start of the season.

A small group of players including Billings were then given Thomas’s PPA, an eight minute questionnaire which shows how a person interacts with those around them. Willis plans to roll this out gradually to other players and later, also use the TEIQue, an Emotional Intelligence assessment.



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THE SOLUTION: Introduce assessments

Off the back of Billings' assessment, Willis, who has been trained by Thomas to give feedback, helped the young player with a personal 30-day game plan. "I did the assessments," recalls Billings, "it told me I was someone who performs well under structure, so we agreed that I was going to go through a meticulous routine with my batting, keeping warm up and pretty much everything to achieve the target we set that was to get a championship hundred."

"The routine worked and straight away turned my form around. The next game was Surrey and I managed to get an 82 not out and 60 not out in both innings. Straight away it made an impact."

Billings has since been selected for the England Performance Programme, awarded Player of the Year at the Spitfire Kent Cricket Awards and became joint winner of the Walter Lawrence Trophy awarded for the fastest hundred of the season in county cricket, all just five months on from his Thomas assessment. A year on, Billings received his first call up for England.

"The assessment had shown me that when structure is put in place I thrive upon it, I needed consistency and as soon as I got it everything started to click into place."



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**THE RESULT: National squad membership**

"Any tool which allows a sports person to realise their potential and their possible failings, will ultimately enable them to tackle any issues head on and it's something more clubs should do" Will says. "I would say that you've got to be very open-minded nowadays as a coach. Our game is moving forwards very quickly so you need to know how to get the best out of your individuals."

But the tools don't just help a player realise their potential, it also allows them to see opportunities beyond sport for the time when they retire. "I think the more we can emphasise their strengths and identify the kind of careers that may be open to them, they have a better chance of making that transition rather than coming to the end of their career and hoping someone will just give them a job, which might not be the right fit."

"Working with Thomas has been an absolute pleasure. They're one of the most professional organisations I've worked with either in sport or outside. They're a very welcoming organisation that wants the best for people involved and I look forward to hopefully working with them for a long time."



Tools used



For more information about how we can help deliver confidence for your organisation, get in touch



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