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## Rise of the ProBatter machine

Robert Craddock From: Herald Sun November 17, 2010 10:11PM

### **AUSTRALIA is playing catch-up with a new space-age coaching device that has taken cricket to the cinema.**

Australia's Centre of Excellence unveiled the ProBatter coaching machine where real life videos of bowlers are played in a net and a ball shoots out from a hole where the bowler's hand comes down at the point of delivery.

Behind the hole is a sophisticated bowling machine that can be programmed to replicate the styles of the man delivering the ball on the screen.

England had the technology first and has already watched footage of Australian bowlers such as Mitchell Johnson on the ProBatter.

Australia's Test squad will trial the ProBatter when it trains at the Allan Border Field on Monday, even though the machine does not yet have footage of the English bowlers they will face in the Ashes.

The ProBatter, which costs about \$55,000, was invented in America as a baseball coaching tool a decade ago.

Australian fielding coach Mike Young saw it advertised in a magazine sent by his father and passed it on to Cricket Australia's respected sports scientist Marc Portus, who visited America to help the company refine their product for cricket.

"It has been a long time coming but it is great to finally have it here after three years," Portus said yesterday.

"With the Englishmen in the country, this is the perfect opportunity to gain some footage of them. We will get footage of them, build it in to the machine as we go and the Aussies can come in and face it.

"The machine can replicate trajectories and outswingers and inswingers, yorkers and bouncers and good length.

"The elite guys get so much information from players before a ball is released. A standard ball machine just does not give you that information.

"You can replicate some of the great spells in history or just some of the spells that were bowled last week.

"England has said their machine has given them a great advantage in the Ashes series so we have neutralised that advantage."

Yesterday footage of Shane Warne's perfectly pitched leg-spinners was played on the machine at the Centre of Excellence at Brisbane's Allan Border Field.

The machine is set to repopularise the use of bowling machines, which have drawn mixed reviews from modern players.