

# Power of Speed

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Batsmen who face the new ball in a cricket match are treated with toe crushing yorkers, nasty bouncers and swingers. But the most troublesome moment and the challenge for a batsman is when he knows that he is about to face one of the fastest bowlers in the world. Jeff Thompson is believed to have bowled the fastest ball ever (over 161 kilometers

## List of fastest deliveries

1. Brett Lee - 161.8 kph vs West Indies (2001-02)
2. Shoab Akhtar - 161.3 kph vs England (World Cup 2003)
3. Shaun Tait - 161.1 kph vs England (2010)
4. Brett Lee - 160.8 kph vs New Zealand (2005)
5. Brett Lee - 160.7 kph vs England (World cup 2003)
6. Shaun Tait - 160.7 kph vs Pakistan (2010)
7. Jeff Thompson - 160.5 kph vs West Indies (1979)
8. Jeff Thompson - 160.4 kph vs India (1978)
9. Brett Lee - 160.3 kph vs South Africa (2001-02)
10. Brett Lee - 160.1 kph vs Sri Lanka (World Cup 2003)

per hour) but during his period, the speed measuring equipments were not that efficient.

In our era, three bowlers have passed the 160kmh mark, namely Brett Lee (161.8kmh), Shoab Akhtar (161.3kmh) and Shaun Tait (161.1kmh). Inter-

estingly, the batsmen who face the Australian and Pakistani teams at the ongoing ICC Cricket World Cup will have to counter their thunderbolts.

Here, we have a look at the fastest pacemen at the 2011 edition of the cricket World Cup.



### Shaun Tait

Shaun Tait launched his fastest delivery - a sizzling 161.1kmh one against England at Lord's last year.



### Shoab Akhtar

Akhtar once occupied the top slot of the list of fastest bowlers. He recorded 161.3kmh, twice at a match against England at the 2003 World Cup in South Africa. His ability to bowl fast yorkers and quick bouncers have made him one of the best. Picture by Kavindra Perera



### Dale Steyn

Dale Steyn is probably the best lethal weapon that Proteas have in their possession. Steyn who has bowled over 155kmh in several occasions, will be one of the hardest to face.

### Lasith Malinga

Slinger Malinga is the fastest Sri Lankan in this category and his speed which comes with the unorthodox action and makes him one of the hardest pacemen to face. His toe-crushing yorkers which falls with speeds of over 150kmh, will be nightmares for the batsmen during this World Cup



### Brett Lee

Without any doubt, Brett Lee is the fastest. He holds the record for the fastest delivery in every form of cricket by bowling 161.8kmh. He achieved this feat during a match against West Indies at Brisbane on November 23, 2000.



## Interesting facts

◆ Harold Larwood was rated as possibly the fastest bowler of all time in a book "The Fast Men" by David Frith (Corgi Books, 1977, p114). It quotes a recorded speed of 98mph (154.5 kph), although it is not clear how this speed was obtained.

◆ The same book says that both Frank Tyson and Brian Statham were timed at just under 90mph (144.8kph). Tyson himself said of this: "We were measured at the NZ Aeronautical College in Wellington in 1955. A metal plate was attached to a ball, which was then bowled through a sonic beam. It produced a whistle, which was measured and then the speed was worked out according to the distance covered and the length of the whistle. I was measured at 89mph and Statham at 87mph. We bowled in two or three sweaters, and I cannot vouch for the length of our run-ups."

◆ Colin Croft states that himself and Michael Holding were both timed at 97mph (156.1kph), although no further details were provided.

◆ Lance Klusener from South Africa was timed at 154kph against India in 1993/97. At that time, early in Klusener's career, he was said to be every bit as quick as team-mate Allan Donald. The ball in question was struck for six and received a mention in a book by Mark Waugh. Klusener since adapted his style to become a medium-pace bowler, averaging around 120kph, with a faster ball around the 136kph mark.

◆ In Perth, Western Australia on February 2, 2001 Cameron Cuffy from the West Indies was timed at 150.9kph in a fast bowling competition against local bowlers. Early in his career Cuffy was considered a young tearaway pace bowler but due to injuries Cuffy had made a conscious decision to slow down and consistently bowl around the 130kph mark.

◆ According to news reports: Historical speeds for Devon Malcolm (156.1kph) and Allan Donald (155.4kph) were cited in The West Australian newspaper in May 2000, although no further information was attached. A report in The Telegraph on January 20, 2001 states Dilhara Fernando from Sri Lanka was timed at 148kph against South Africa in 2000/01.

◆ During practice: Shoab Akhtar was timed at 158.4kph in December 2000. Brett Lee was timed at 148kph at the Australian Institute of Sport, aged 19.

◆ During domestic matches: Mfuneko Ngam from Eastern Province was timed at 150kph (approximate) in 2000. Brad Williams from Western Australia was timed at 146kph against New South Wales in 1999/00. Charl Langeveldt from Boland was timed at 145kph against Eastern Province on March 29, 2001.

◆ According to unconfirmed sources Ajit Agarkar from India was timed at 147kph against Australia in 1999/00. Reon King from the West Indies was timed at 145kph against England in 2000.

◆ A delivery by Brett Lee from Australia was timed at 161.8kph against the West Indies at Brisbane on November 23, 2000. However this has been put down to an erroneous recording due to external interference of the radar's signal. Two back-up radars recorded the correct speed of 142kph for the delivery.