

Question Time – Bowls ‘Parliament’

For the past few months I drafted a column which intends to cover the lessons to be learnt from the world’s best bowlers. Once again I delay that column topic because of the spate of questions arising from the two posed last month as well as those resulting from my presentations over the past month here in Victoria. The questions seemed more pressing than my topic. I think we can all explore the answers though I simply give my opinion in response to the person asking the question. Here goes.

Question time, Mr Speaker, starts now as questions without notice from bowlers, coaches, club officials:

Q. Why do the same few clubs succeed in winning the premier league championship?

These top clubs constantly turnover their best crop of players, recruiting to force pressure on current team members. I feel they ‘suffocate’ good players who coast thus ensuring these good players fall off the pace, replaced by the next batch of motivated talented bowlers wanting to succeed.

Q. I want to be a better lead in a 4s team...becoming the best lead bowler in Australia, what do I need to know?

The prescribed role and measure for a lead for me would be your MEASURED role

- The jack delivery must be within a metre of requested min/ max length every end
- 60% acceptable ML deliveries (state level)
- ML contributions 18/25 ends
- lead and the second are a front end ‘team’ and that ‘team’ goal is to have 2/4 bowls in the head 18/25 ends (where head = mat length from the location of the jack)

your ATTITUDE role

- **lead** to record these above on a card for each end for review at team segment meeting)
- support – once third finishes join her and go **together as a team** to the head
- team meetings- listen, learn, focus on your next segment (e.g. 5 end) goal,
- accountability: with the jack you deliver 33% of the bowls contribution, take responsibility for that role
- support: verbal encouragement for your half of the front end team every end

this dark (blue) shaded area allows the reader to compare the acknowledged performance percentages expected for the positions of lead / second / third/ skip at the four described levels of competition at Division One, group, state and finally national.

	LEAD	2nd	third	skip
ML Std accepted % Div.1.club level	40	35	30	25
ML Std accepted % group level	49	44	40	35
ML Std accepted % State level	60	55	49	44
ML Std accepted % National level	75	70	65	60

Lachlan Tighe.....Talking tactically, websites
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Q. I want to achieve my bowls goals that I am sharing with you for reaction?

Success comes about through having a goal, desperate motivation, talent, and doing the hard work required to succeed at the level. Now I think you need to know

Your present skill level

The present skill levels of the best players in that competition level

Your competition performances for the year

The current performance results of those best players

How do I get there (that higher level).

Not everyone has the skill and talent to be the best in your level of competition. But you should know what the best level is and compare yourself to it. It would be great if that best performance level is you.

However you can gauge what is the next level of skill (performance) above your own and set out to progress to that next (higher) level. Once there, review and reset the standard for the next level. Like climbing a ladder, one rung at a time. This applies both individually and for a team (of bowlers).

Q. What sets the elite bowlers apart from us other bowlers, that is what I want to know?

The best bowlers are all highly motivated, all talented, most have a coach, all submit training programs, use sports science even if only limited, and have instinctive sports competitiveness

Q. I want to improve my performance, however once I enter into competition...my mind and body freeze up, what can I do?

Read my above responses above as a start. Now I suggest maybe such approaches as keep the game in perspective as it is only a game; confidence is accepting who and what you are, some of us are just not at elite level or as good as the other bloke / lady; however go out with a coach (do you not do that now, well start) and do an audit of your delivery skills and maybe there is the first answer; and in coach driven training you can also work on mental skills; also ask yourself what is concerning you, is it a bit of an ego thing, is it annoying the hell out of you that other people (who you might not regard too highly) are too good for you, well learn to accept that; look around you we are all types not one type, part of the fun of being human; and maybe look at how and what you are doing to be better and in my mind playing a lot is useless, compare that to training often with a view to applying the skill in serious events; kids play games (and enjoy it too) but you train to be better; finally you are allowed to be anxious/ nervous but keep it contained as much as possible

Q. Which Psychology books should I read?

I reckon you cannot beat being coached to improve your mental skill in training. However go to any library and look up section 796.0 series of the shelves and see what they have; no doubt these authors are bods I read in the past in no order of surname- Gummerson, Morris, Syer, Hodges, Loehr, Rushall, Summers, Butt, Orlick, Warren, Pyke and Connolly as a start. Any others would be helpful too.

*Lachlan Tighe.....Talking tactically, websites
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Q. What bowl size and brand should I use?

The question most asked, annoyingly; it is not the bowl it is the person shoving it down the other end that matters. No disrespect to the bowls manufacturers. Bowlers have to learn to know their body, know what they do to their bowl.

Q. We have upwards of 50 new bowlers coming to our club....what sort of training should we provide?

Use all your coaches to plan and conduct even one weekly session for the season as a club group with the following as a sort of time breakdown

**you have the competitive edge in bowls
knowing...**

**how you applied skills and time
to train & prepare for this game.**

Warm up	20 minutes
Skill rating /Technical delivery	30 minutes
Tactical skill training	30 minutes
Mental skill training	30 minutes
Games and modified formats	60 minutes
Fun to finish	10 minutes

...do what you always do (plan)

...get what you always get (success)

Q. I have been approached by a club to be the non playing coach and I seek some advice on plans, preparations and team goals?

I have already spoken to this contact person who asked the question. Briefly what I shared with him was the need to set mutual goals with the team, instill game plans, have a calendar of training preparation for the season, require a commitment from selectors to reinforce your approach, a training session similar in theme to that above, select the best players every time, and, I share a statement of a team values approach, minus the detail, that I am using this coming week, as follows

...

The Squad should set their guide to goals and values. Later the Team should refine these to suit the final team composition. And, next year the boys that enter the squad have a guide to commence their goal pursuit and to decide what it is their squad intake has as team goals/ values. The following content (not included in this article) intends to give example statements for you to consider, not accept, or have imposed. Beside each statement (total of 40) there is a box in which you place either a letter

Y= yes I feel OK about that for me, or

N= no, definitely don't like or agree to that, or even don't understand it, or

M= maybe, but not committed to it.

*Attitude: all about practising habits
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That represents your current view on the statement.

There is no obligation to any or all of the statements. It is what would drive me as a player striving to be better.

What I ask is for each squad member invited to read and if interested to place a letter (Y, N or M) in that box alongside and return to me today preferably as an indication to us all as to what you ultimately want as Team goals and values with other blokes alongside you in the 'heat of battle'.

Please, if you don't believe in any of this stuff, feel OK, but allow others to also have their own sense of belief.

Q. Where can we get your bowls book mentioned on Pat McErlane's radio program recently?

You misheard my comment on Pat's radio show. I indicated that the book draft is with a major Australian publisher, fingers crossed, and I await their confirmation of publication. But I am confident the approval will come shortly and when it does this is what the seven chapters will cover

- Chapter One **Warm up training routines**A series of programs to get you to focus as soon as you walk onto the green
- Chapter Two **Measuring and rating technical skill (the science)**...do you know your 'pb' when it comes to draw bowls; well if you were Ian Thorpe or Tiger Woods they can tell you as any swimmer or golfer can; so why not us bowlers- here are some guidelines
- Chapter Three **Fundamental deliveries and drills**...different training routines to add to those already out there in other bowls books and manual
- Chapter Four **Tactical skills and drills**...where oh where is all this information to be learnt in bowls; nowhere to be seen except now here in this Chapter with accompanying training diagram routines
- Chapter Five **Mental skills applied in training and practice**...research shows that you are only delivering a bowl 9% of the time you are on the green; we all need to learn more about that 91% factor and the skills that go with it
- Chapter Six **Games sense and game simulations (for game preparation)**...training for the reality of the game, called Games Sense is widely applied in all profile sports, we can do it for bowls too, read on and...do you really know what role you have in a bowls team; here is a wider interpretation and some training sessions to assist you too
- Chapter Seven **Coaching sessions, templates**...finally for you coaches who would love to get a few ideas on how and what to include in modern and successful training sessions

I had not realized when I said last month to feel free to email me with your suggestions as we all learn the more we share and exchange. Boy that response has knocked the socks off me. I may need to hide to hibernate, but thanks for the interest. Cheers.