

Coaching Manual



Preface

This Resource has been prepared by New Zealand Indoor Bowls (NZIB) for all coaches. It is a practical tool for the training of coaches detailing how, and what, to coach. It covers all aspects of indoor bowls from the beginner learning to hold a bowl to team leadership by the skip. It should not be used by players to learn the game.

Indoor bowls is 90% brain power and 10% physical power. It is a combination of chess, billiards and snooker. It can be played by anyone regardless of age, sex or physical ability. It combines the attributes of an individual game with that of team play.

Coaching in the sport of indoor bowls has the objective of enabling enjoyable participation by all persons regardless of age, sex, culture or ability, by encouraging participation and skill development, and promoting good sporting behaviour by all involved.

Further information will be added from time-to-time.

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Part 1:

Coaches and coaching

1.1 Who fills the role of coach

A coach should be a person who can clearly and pleasantly pass on instructions and information. The coach does not need to be a high achiever but must have a good knowledge of indoor bowls. S/he must be a good manager and organiser, and have enthusiasm for the job. The coach is also a trainer, a motivator, a manager and a friend.

DIRECTOR OF COACHING

- is responsible to NZIB;
- attends appropriate courses as directed by NZIB;
- co-ordinates district coaches;
- promotes the coaching programme by organising seminars and training sessions for district coaches;
- arranges for the supply of coaching material;
- updates the coaching programme as required.

DISTRICT COACHES

- liaise with the Director of Coaching
- attend seminars and training as requested by NZIB and/or Director of Coaching;
- co-ordinate coaching within their district;
- encourage clubs to participate in the coaching programme;
- keep up-to-date records of club coaches, addresses, attendance at seminars and level of attainment achieved;
- organise regular seminars and instruction sessions for club coaches;
- promote the availability of coaching material.

CLUB COACHES

- attend instruction sessions organised by the district coach;
- consider attending other coaching courses;

- Instruct players in the sport of indoor bowls;
- Coach the basics simply, correctly, courteously and continuously so that players derive pleasure from playing indoor bowls;
- Coach the individual to the level of their aspirations;
- Keep a positive attitude;
- Encourage the new player;
- Be available to assist the established competitor.

1.2 Guidelines for coaches

- Have time to be a coach; time required for preparation and actual coaching.
- Have experience of the game; but you don't need to be a top bowler.
- Know the laws of the game and promote them at all times.
- Be able to relate to players; greet players warmly by name and/or by handshake.
- Understand how to communicate; coaching is communicating. Good communication is not only what you say but how you say it. Every word and gesture tells the player about your attitude to them.
- Speak clearly using words that can be understood. Vary your voice tone to keep players interested. Vary the volume according to the situation.
- Be able to demonstrate, or have someone do it for you. Make sure you can see everyone and they can all see you.
- Watch your own body language; be enthusiastic and interested. Be alert at all times. Look players in the eye to show sincerity and confidence.
- Practice co-operation, self control and respect for others.
- Encourage proper attitudes to language and dress. Dress appropriately; have an open, positive and enthusiastic approach.
- Encourage fair play and sportsmanship.
- Aim to develop the individual to enable them to fulfil their potential. Have the time to coach one-to-one.
- Motivate; goals of players must be realistic, achievable and measurable.
- Be honest, fair, consistent and positive; be encouraging, not critical.
- Recognise and be sensitive to individual and cultural differences.

- Watch the players for clues on whether or not they understand, are uncomfortable, or need further information.
- Listen carefully to questions and comments; respect the players' views. To be a good listener you must have patience. You are there to help the players not vice versa.
- Interact with officials, parents.
- Encourage fitness for life; a coach has a big impact on use of the individual's leisure time.
- Coach to make indoor bowls challenging and fun; concentrate on the process of taking part. Fun is important, if enjoyed people will continue to participate.
- Have a constructive attitude when receiving feedback; offer sincere compliments, "what a good idea"; "that's better".
- Use people management skills. Draw on others who have experience and/or bowling ability to help put the point across.
- Encourage the player to watch the top players; relate what they have been told to what they see to give an insight into the finer points of the game.
- Always say "thank-you" for any information or assistance given no matter how small. A thank-you now may mean more help will be available later.
- Continue to learn and develop coaching; be innovative, flexible and questioning.

If you have 20 years experience use it.
Do not repeat one years experience 20 times.

You don't buy fish from a chemist, or tripe from a fancy bazaar. You do not go to a boot shop, if you want to buy a cigar.

You don't get your shades from a tailor, or go to the pub for a hat. Don't take advice from a member, a coach is appointed for that.

The Five C's

- Concentration
- Confidence
- Consistency
- Correction
- Consideration

1.3 Training club coaches

SAMPLE LETTER FROM DISTRICT COACH TO CLUB COACHES

To: Club coach details
From: District coach details
Date: dd/mm/yy
Subject: Training session

As district coach I will be conducting a training session for all club coaches on commencing and finishing by

The venue for the session is

- A brief outline of the programme is
- All club coaches will be expected to demonstrate some aspect of the game as part of the training session. (If you require club coaches to bring any material with them then state this in the letter.)
- If you are unable to attend please advise me by
- Signature

SUGGESTED TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR CLUB COACHES

This basic programme layout is approximately two and a half hours long. It is provided as a framework for the district coach to build on.

- 5 mins. Open with any introductions that may be necessary. Not all coaches will know each other.
- 15 mins. Demonstrate that preferred grip. Explain the preferred stances.
- 10 mins. Show DVD of these aspects just demonstrated.
- 20 mins. Ensure all coaches can hold a bowl the preferred way and can explain why it is the preferred way.
- 10 mins. Show last part of the DVD demonstrating the rolling of a bowl down the mat, to the portion on placing a new player with the correct skip, etc.
- 20 mins. Demonstrate what was shown on the DVD. Have all participate and correct any faults you may see appearing. Remember to some coaches this way of bowling may be entirely new.

- 30 mins. Go on to show how to reach rolling up the jack, taking green and other matters using any of the aids that you have available.
- 10 mins. Make mention of other matters in the manual i.e. fitness, Laws of the Game, footwear, etc.
- 30 mins. Allow participants to go over any aspect they may wish, reinforce those parts you may wish to cover. Round off as you wish to.
- Don't be intimidated by an impossibility!
- Be motivated by the possibility!

1.4 Coaching players

Coaching sessions by club coaches should, generally, take the form:

- introduction,
- show coaching DVD;
- explain and demonstrate,
- allow players to practice.

Coaching sessions could be:

- an hour before club nights begin,
- for the first half of a club night,
- on a separate night.

Coaching should take place in a separate area from other club activity. Once the coaching session has finished, the players should be absorbed into normal club activity. This will enable them to practice what they have learned.

Use the coaching DVD

Keep offers of tuition open – for more than a couple of weeks at the season start. Coaching is an on-going thing.

Ask for assistance from the umpires association on laws of the game.

1.5 Looking after new players

It is extremely important to look after new members. When new members arrive they won't know anyone (unless they have come with a friend) nor will they know a great deal about indoor bowls.

Don't ignore your new members when they do show up at the hall, and please don't embarrass them. Put yourself in their shoes. What would you expect if you went, as a new player, to join the local badminton club.

Here are a few pointers

- A nominated club member, preferably the coach, should meet new players as they arrive and introduce them to others. Make sure they have someone to talk to. Never leave new members alone. They will quickly feel forlorn and unwanted and wishing they had never come.
- Club members should be briefed on how to look after new members.
- New players should not be included in club games at the start of the evening, but taken aside by the coach and shown the basics of the game. They will be learning together thus reducing the risk of embarrassment. There's nothing worse than being thrust into a team, being told what to do by possibly seven other people, albeit with good intentions, and made to look foolish.
- New members may, if they feel comfortable about it, be brought into the last two games, or game of the evening.
- Endeavour to place the new player with a competent three who can assist (but not coach) the new player during play.
- A new player should be placed in a team as two for the first couple of nights. A new player can be intimidated in the lead position trying to remember all s/he has just been told. At two s/he only has to worry about the bowl, not the jack at this stage.
- If necessary alternate between two and lead until they feel comfortable then leave at lead.
- Most important; be very careful with whom you place a new player. Other members of the team are going to have to be considerate to the new player but never, never be patronising.
- Make sure the established players in the team don't start coaching the new ones. They could destroy all the good work of the coach. The coach should:
 - (a) have the authority, with the co-operation of the club captain to place new members in specific teams;
 - (b) be able to designate an established player in the team to explain proceedings as the game progresses – but not to coach;
 - (c) keep an eye on how the new players are performing and always be there to give a helping hand if needed.

It must be realised that some visitors who have never played indoor bowls before will have difficulties in mastering the game. Some never will. This situation has to be accepted but it is essential that help must be given and patience shown to all potential members.

1.6 Introducing new skills

Introduce the new skill to be learned with a demonstration. A well planned and executed demonstration can be extremely effective.

Good demonstrations need to be planned as they convey an important message for the player. It is essential to ensure the skill is demonstrated showing the correct movement or action.

The demonstration should be repeated several times stressing the perfect form of the activity and giving verbal explanations.

All the players should be able to see the demonstration clearly.

The demonstration should be followed by the player “giving it a go”. Make sure there is enough time, space and equipment for this practice.

The coach by observation can see if the players have grasped the technique, skill or strategy which was demonstrated.

1.7 Evaluation and feedback

Being a good coach is not automatic. Improvement is helped by assessing your own performance in an honest and systematic way. At the completion of a coaching session respond to each question, if it is applicable, with a Yes or No. If you answer with a No, then try to identify why, so that you are able to improve that aspect in future sessions. If convenient you might consider having another coach or observer rate you. This will give you a feeling for your performance through the eyes of another. This is valuable as it is difficult to see yourself as others see you.

- Did you provide clear instructions?
- Did all the players respond to your instructions?
- Were the key points of the activity stressed?
- Was the demonstration short, clear and well performed?
- Were the players challenged at practice?
- Did you let the players have some input into the session?
- Will the activities practiced enhance the players' performance?
- Were you positive when correcting a fault in the performance?

- Did you personally interact with all the players during practice?
- Did you provide positive feedback rather than negative feedback?
- Did the players modify their faults when you identified them?
- Did you regularly vary the tone and expression of your voice?
- Did you let the players practice and complete the task before you offered corrective feedback?
- Did you keep the pace of the session flowing so the excellent use of time was accomplished?
- Did the practice start and finish on a positive note?
- Do you feel that the players sensed an eagerness and sincerity in your feeling for them?
- Did the players leave the session feeling that their individual efforts were worthwhile?

Part 2:

The basics

2.1 Basic terms

These are some of the basic terms that should be passed on to the new player as soon as they are ready to start learning to bowl.

Back bowl a bowl that comes to rest past the jack.

Backhand playing a bowl across the body.

Bias causes a bowl to travel in a curved path. A bowl does this because the running surface is off-centre. It is a common, and mistaken belief that the bowl is “weighted” on one side. A bowl will not run in a straight line, it will always run in a curved arc towards the bias side.

Bowling area the marked area at each end of the mat from within which a bowl must be bowled. It is sometimes called the delivery area, the box, or the square.

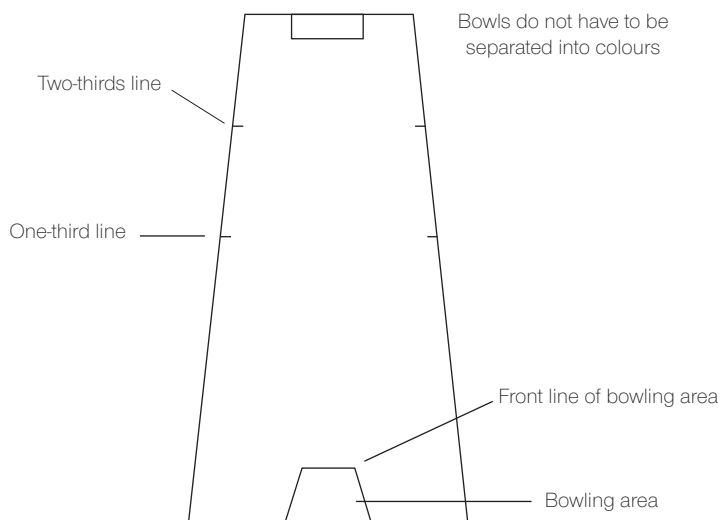
Draw shot a bowl played to come to rest at a desired point on the mat.

Forehand playing a bowl away from the body.
Front line the line running across the front of the bowling area.
Green the angle at which the bowl must be delivered to reach its target; i.e. the amount of width of the mat required for the bowl to travel to its target.
Jack the white spherical “bowl” that has no bias.
Mat the surface on which the game is played.
Short bowl a bowl that comes to rest in front of the jack.
Weight the speed at which a bowl is bowled; i.e. the amount of physical push or energy required to propel the bowl along the mat.

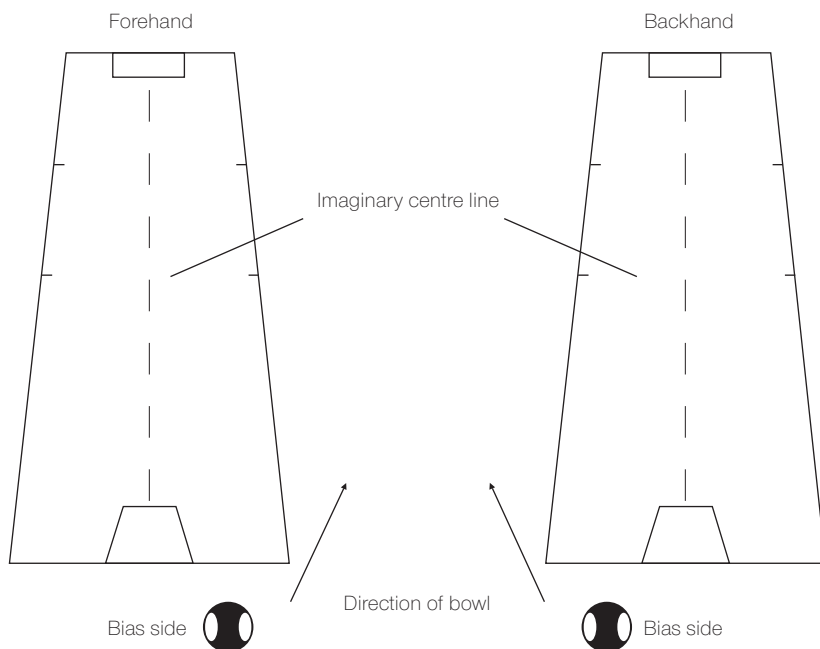
Remember to always use the KISS formula – Keep It Simply Simple

2.2 The mat

An overhead is included of the outline of a mat. This, when projected onto a whiteboard can be used by the coach to mark, on the whiteboard, the points being discussed.



The bias of the bowl should always be to the centre line of the mat.



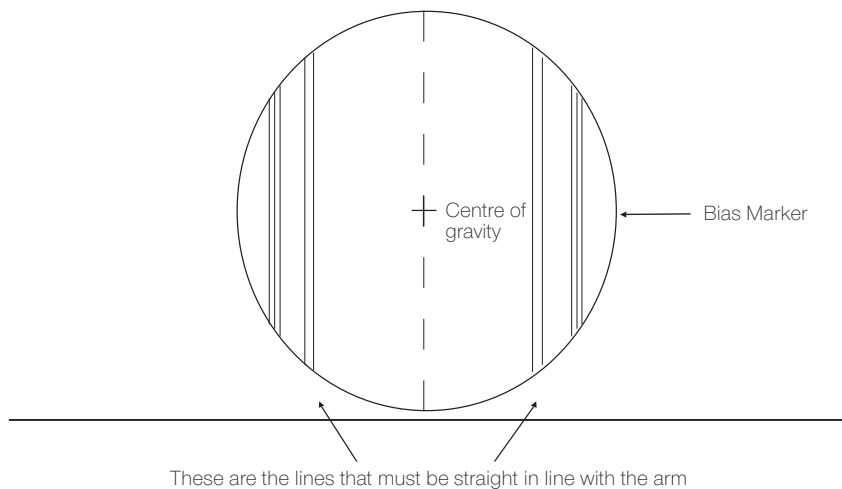
2.3 Gripping the bowl

The basic preferred way of holding the bowl is:

- (a) Place the bowl on the fingers of the hand you wish to bowl in.
- (b) Bring the thumb up to the centre line of the bowl (or as close as you can). Do not allow the fingers to wrap around the side of the bowl.
- (c) Ensure that the bowl is in a straight line with the hand and the arm, and that there is no more pressure, or “squeezing” of the fingers on the bowl, than is required to hold the bowl in the fingers when the hand is turned upside down. The bowl should not quite fall out.



When the gripping of the bowl is understood, and any alterations too the basic preferred grip are sorted out (for whatever reason), it is most important that the player has the engraved rings of the outer sides in a straight line with their arm. If this is not done the bowl will not be positioned in the hand properly and it will be bowled with a wobble.

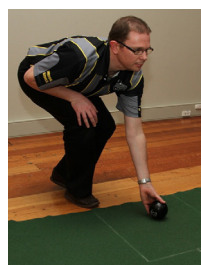
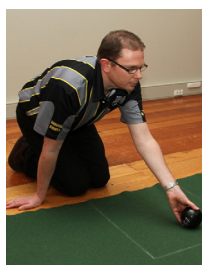
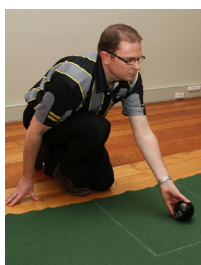


2.4 Positions for delivering the bowl

There are three basic positions for delivering the bowl. No one position is preferred over another. The most important thing is that the position is comfortable for the player. (Refer to DVD.)

The positions are:

- (a) kneeling on one knee,
- (b) kneeling on two knees,
- (c) standing up.



While sorting out the best stance for a player explain the reason why it is essential to be “angled” to the bowling mat. Since the bowl does not run in a straight line, the player must be facing the direction in which they want to bowl.

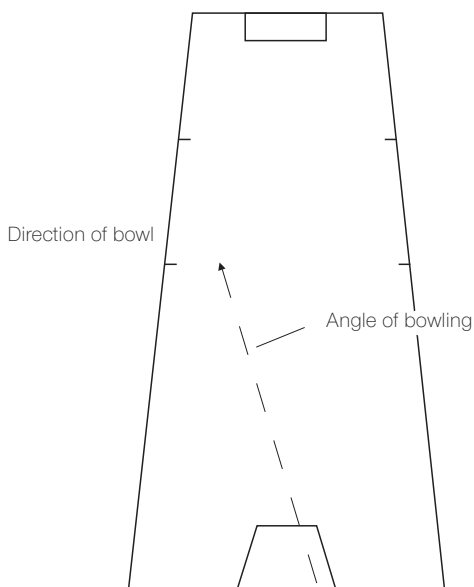
2.5 Bowling a bowl

WHERE DO WE TEACH A NEW PLAYER TO BOWL FROM?

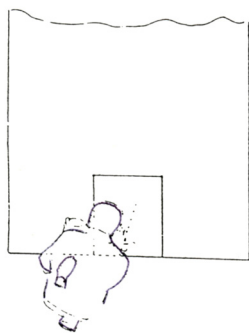
It is important to keep it simple. For new players ask them to bowl over the (imaginary) centre of the front line of the bowling area. This is a position they can easily relate to.

Players should learn to look in the direction they want the bowl to go in to a point approximately two-thirds up the mat; NOT to be confused with the two-thirds markings on the mat. This is their ‘vision line’.

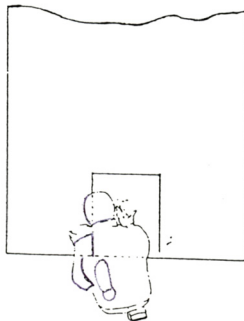
Further on in their learning and experience the new player can be introduced to the finer points of using the bowling area to advantage.



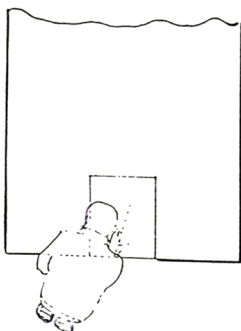
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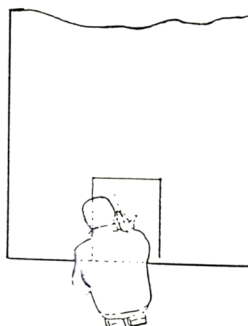
Kneeling stance,
forehand delivery



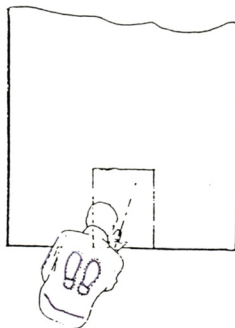
Kneeling stance,
backhand delivery



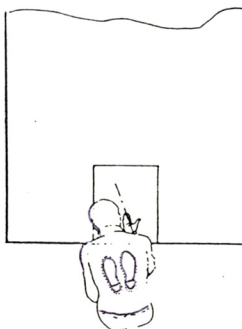
Kneeling stance - two knees
forehand delivery



Kneeling stance - two knees
backhand delivery



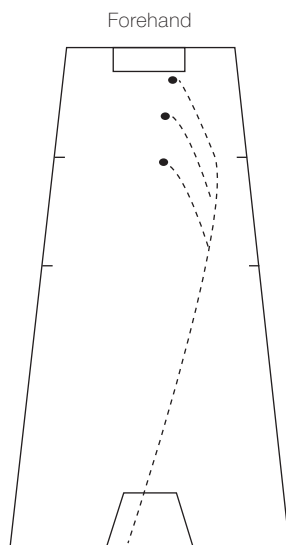
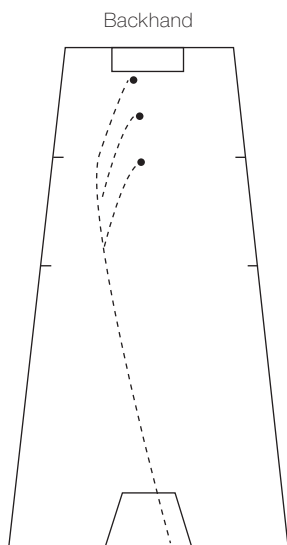
Standing stance
forehand delivery



Standing stance
backhand delivery

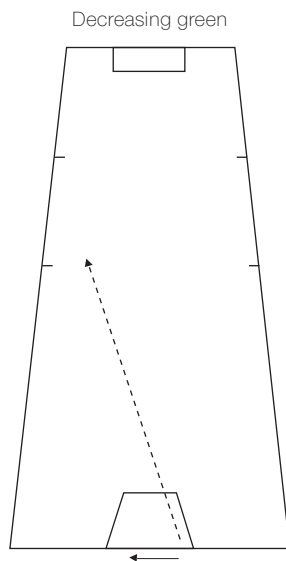
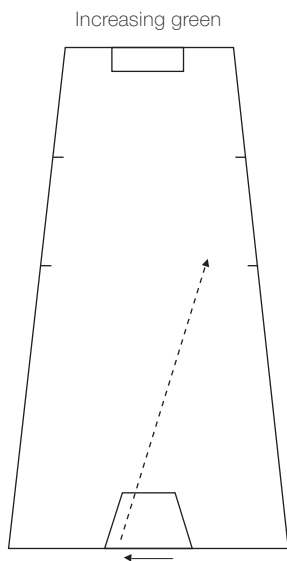
THE RUN OF A BOWL

Demonstrate to new players the run of a bowl with short, medium and long heads.



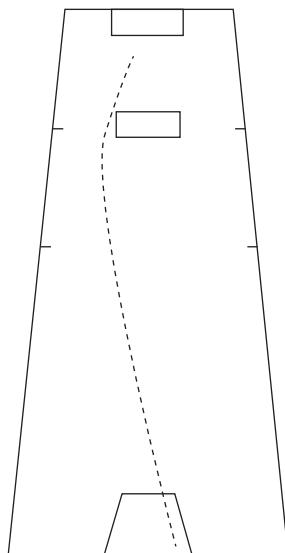
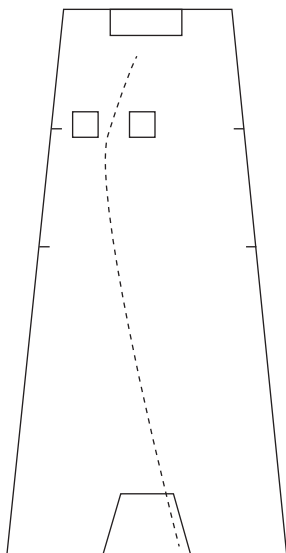
TAKING GREEN

These examples are used only in the context of keeping all instructions to new players simple. In each example, only one change is required.



EXERCISE TO TEACH GREEN

Place objects on the mat so that the player must bowl around, or between them. Use 2x2 foam blocks or lengths. Place them on, or about the two-thirds mark and ask the player to bowl to the bowling area, or the jack. This will help the player to take “green” and also get the feel for “weight”.



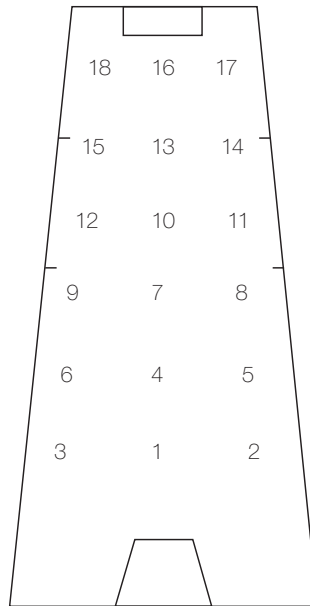
EXERCISE TO TEACH FOLLOW-THROUGH AND WEIGHT CONTROL, HIGHLIGHTING BODY POSITION

You will need a plastic bucket and 12 table tennis balls, or pompoms.

Using the pattern shown, the bucket-holder should stand on spot number one with the bucket held between knees angled towards the player. The player attempts to throw the balls into the bucket. When successful, the bucket-holder should move to the next numbered position, and so on.

The player quickly grasps the fact that the whole arm controls the weight, and that the body position shifts for different angles.

Do this exercise in pairs. Keep on the look-out for leadership qualities and note the thinkers.



THE THREE P'S

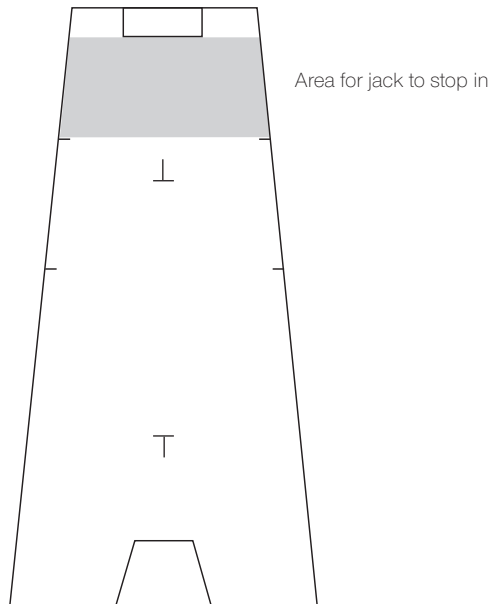
After the new player has mastered the bowl and is bowling with a reasonable consistency, there will be times when things just go wrong for no apparent reason. They will bowl bowls that are short, narrow, wobbly and some on the wrong bias. The player will quickly get uptight and feel they are letting the team down. As a coach, reassure them they are not. The solution is usually quite simple. **It will be one of the three P's that will be causing it:**

- Position: the angle, or body position, or the grip, when delivering the bowl.
- Palm out: (follow through) there could be jerking or short swinging the arm on delivery.
- Patience: calm down, relax and just try to bowl smoothly.

The most important is patience; don't get uptight, it will not help anyone.

2.6 The jack

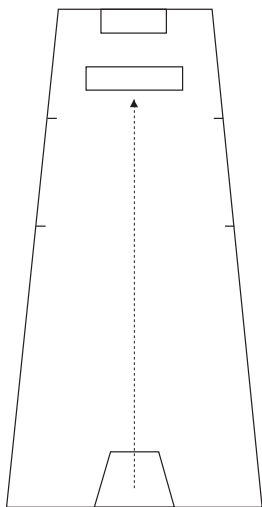
- Explain:
- what it is;
- it's purpose;
- the grip and how to bowl it straight;
- where it should come to rest;
- the importance of bowling to where the team wants it, don't give the advantage to the opposition;
- the bowling of the jack gives players valuable information about the mat.



EXERCISE IN BOWLING THE JACK

As with learning accuracy in bowling a bowl, the placing of an object to bowl the jack to will help in attaining accuracy in bowling the jack to its required position.

Place a foam block on the mat and bowl the jack so that it just touches it. When control is obtained, remove the block and make sure the player can still deliver the jack to the original spot.

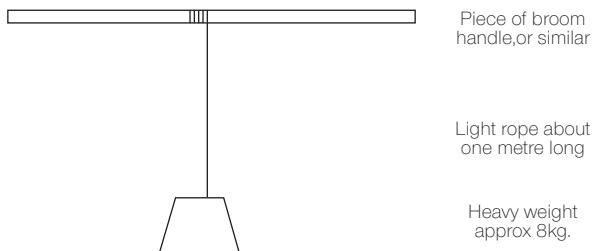


2.7 Fitness

Fitness is not normally a subject associated with indoor bowls. However, the player needs a reasonable state of fitness to be able to bend, stoop or kneel for the many hours of a tournament.

To achieve a high level of fitness for bowls, brisk walking around the block will strengthen the hips and thighs.

Wrists and fingers can be strengthened by rolling up a weight on a stick. Do as many each day as you can until you feel your wrists just starting to ache but DO NO OVERDO.



Leads and twos

This module has the objective of advancing the new player's knowledge a step further and introducing them to the role of the lead and two positions.

3.1 the role and duties of a lead

There are two duties for leads defined in the laws of the game:

- (a) Law 11a – the leads shall toss to decide the order of play;
- (b) Law 11c – in pairs the lead shall be the measurer and shall determine the score for each end.

The role of a lead is basically self explanatory – it is to lead i.e. to be the first player in the team to bowl.

The lead's bowls need to be played with precision if they are to be of value in building a head. Exactly where a lead's bowls should be is under the control of the skip as s/he has the job of building the head. (Law 12a – the skip shall have complete charge of his team and his instructions must be obeyed by his team members.)

There are as many ways of building a head as there are skips playing the game. This coaching module will follow what has been found to be the basic approach used by most skips. It is by no means the only way.

Skips generally have an expectation that their lead will know their requirements and should be able to bowl without too much direction. This, of course, only comes through experience and playing with the same team. New players need to be advised of this and need to be encouraged to talk to their skip prior to the game.

At the start of a game the first duty of a lead is to toss a coin with their opposite number to decide which side will go first (and will thus have choice of colour). coins should be tossed so that they do not land on mats as they will, over time, cause damage to the mat (Law 14h).

Opinion varies as to whether a lead should bowl the jack first, or to let the opposition go first. The skip should advise what they want prior to the game. General practice is that if you win the toss you bowl the jack first.

The DVD refers to the fact that a lot of valuable information can be gained by bowling the jack first; whether the mat is slow or fast, even or bumpy, level or sloping. All team members should watch the jack and see how it travels up the mat.

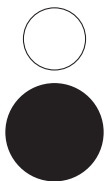
In all subsequent ends the lead will bowl the jack and go first if their side has won the previous end (Law 10f).

An essential point to get across to leads is the importance of where they place the jack. Depending upon the weight of the mat, how their team and the opposition is performing, etc. The length of a head could win or lose the game.

At this stage a recap on bowling the jack and how to practice would be useful.

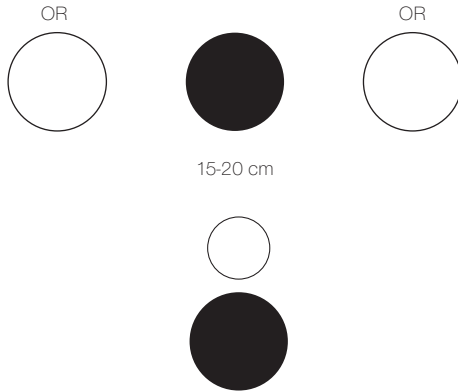
Like a game of chess there are some basic set ways to open or start a game. These opening bowl positions are considered a very good and useful way to start building a head. These should be practised by leads so that they come very proficient at them.

Team BLACK. With the jack bowled and centred, the first bowl is ready to be bowled. On a medium to long head the opening bowl should come to rest right in front of the jack but not quite touching it. In such cases the jack is said to be “hidden”. Either the forehand or backhand can be played. (On a very short end, the first bowl should always be behind the jack).



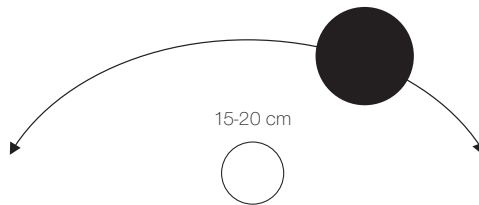
Team RED. Where should the lead bowl their first bowls to? This lead has a choice depending upon the result of the black bowl.

- If black is not hiding the jack, and there is room for red to do so, then do it.
- If black is hiding the jack then red should draw stopping 15 to 20cm directly behind the jack.

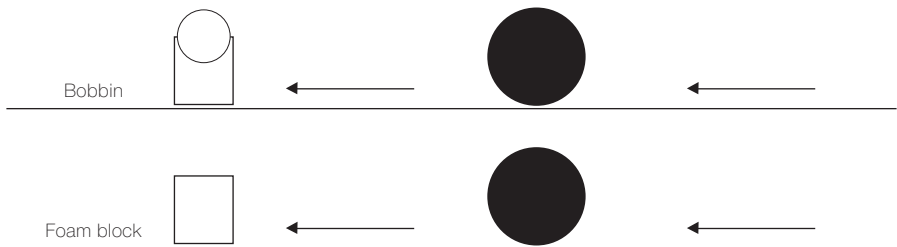


Leads should never attempt to “rake” the head.

Depending on where the first bowls lend, the next should always be behind the jack usually some 15 to 20cm behind. There are some exceptions to this basic rule and the skip should direct the leads as necessary.



To practice precision lead bowling place a jack on top of a bobbin and draw a bowl to it without knocking the jack off. Alternately use a foam block to bowl to. Practice, practice and practice.



Draw to just touch

3.2 The role and duties of a two

The duties of a two, as defined in the laws of the game, are to:

- (a) keep the score in a game of fours (Law 11b);
- (b) act as measurer and determine the score for each end (Law 11c).

Usually the two's are required to play precision, position bowls as asked for by the skip. **As a two the player will need to practice "skill shots" such as:**

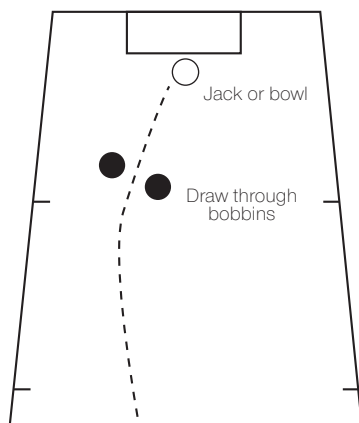
- (a) drawing;
- (b) light impact shots;
- (c) splitting bowls; and
- (d) trailing the jack.

As each position advances upwards, to does the need for the player to know and master a greater range of shots.

The aim, at two, should be to: (a) consolidate the lead's position in building the head; or (b) getting into a good position if the lead has not laid such a good foundation. Of course both sides are endeavouring to do the same thing to their advantage and to the oppositions disadvantage. This is the fun and strategy of indoor bowls as each side thrusts and counter-thrusts.

For teaching and coaching precision draw bowls use the foam blocks or bobbins. Place the aid on the mat and draw to it, but not quite touching, about 2 to 3mm clear. Use the bobbins to practice drawing through and around objects. Practice, practice and more practice using different mats and floor positions.

Replace the artificial aids with bowls and practice some more.



LAWS OF THE GAME

At this stage the bowler should be able to absorb more of the laws of the game. The etiquette of bowls should have been explained and understood. Arrange for a qualified umpire to explain the laws of the game. Incorporate some practical lessons in the session. **For example:**

- what is the difference between a “burnt” and a “dead” bowl?
- what happens when a bowl is burnt at “rest” or in “motion”?
- who measures first, who may call the umpire?
- what happens when bowls are played out of order, or the wrong colour is used?
- Practise measuring.

Use your umpires. They will be delighted at being asked and will readily help out.

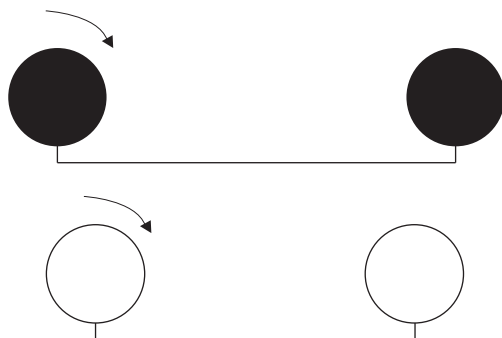
LIGHT IMPACT SHOTS

A light impact shot is one that has the objective of moving a stationary bowl a short distance – sometimes just to turn the target bowl over once.

It is a bowl bowled with more than just draw weight.

It is a bowl bowled with enough weight that, if it was allowed to pass through the target unimpeded, would come to rest a specified distance past the target.

Note that one revolution of a bowl is 30cm.



One revolution of a jack 8 cm

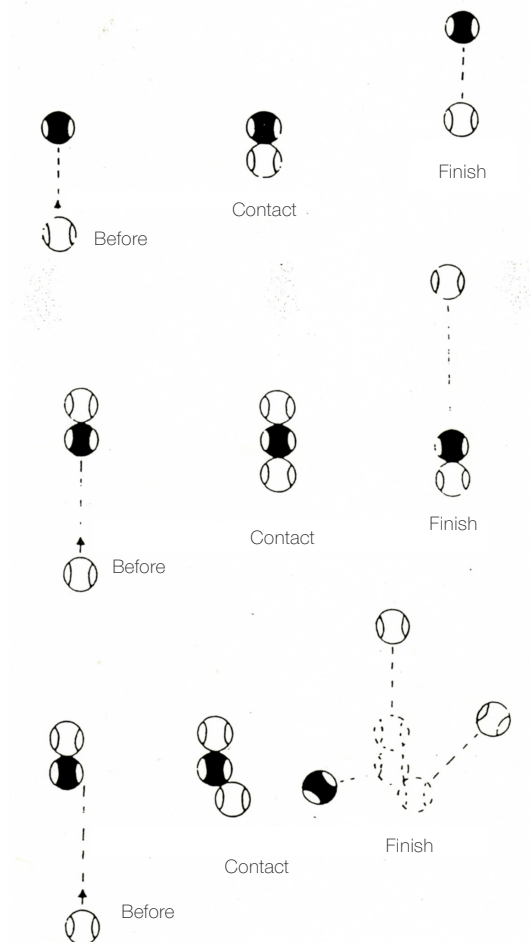
BOWLS IN COLLISION

What happens when bowls collide and how do we learn or teach this?

The necessary skills are obtained through practice and by watching games of bowls, or billiards, or snooker. The laws of motion governing how snooker balls collide apply equally to indoor bowls.

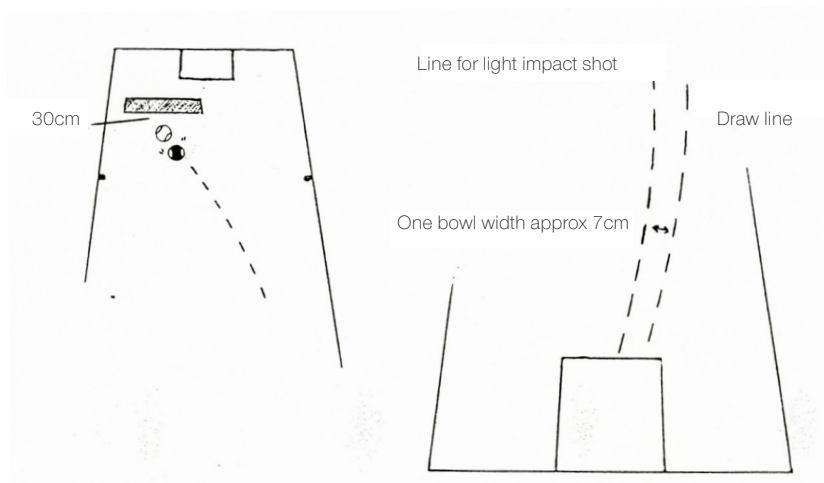
For the beginner who cannot watch every bowl colliding with another, or who has not had a misspent youth in a snooker hall there is no easy way. Nor do skips, as a rule, carry a calculator in their pockets to apply the mathematics of vectors and angles.

However, experimenting with bowls on a mat will quickly give an idea of what to expect.

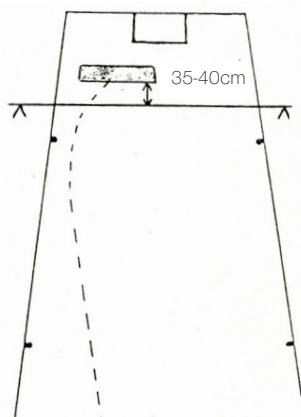


To teach new, and not so new players how to get the correct weight to move bowls the required distance, we can again use the foam blocks. Place the foam block approximately 30cm (say) behind the target bowls. The player should bowl at the target bowl with enough weight, in this example just to turn it over, so that when hit correctly the target bowl travels back to not quite touch the foam.

Note that, in this example the amount of green required is about one bowl width less than that required to draw to the target bowl.



The use of a flip-over target laid across the mat can also be used. With this device, bowl at the target so that it passes through the flip-over and stops the required distance behind it. A foam block can be used behind the flip-over.



These types of shots need to be practiced over and over again until they become automatic. Different mats and floor positions result in different greens and weights. Always practice with a view to having as much variety as possible.

Threes and skips

4.1 The role and duties of a three

The position of three exists only in games of fours. In the Laws of the Game two duties are explicitly defined:

- (a) Law 11c – the threes in fours shall be measurers and shall determine the score for each end.
- (b) Law 12b – during the temporary absence of the skip the three in fours shall assume control.

A three is required to master the complete range of shots required in indoor bowls. **They need to know how to:**

- draw;
- play light impact shots: enough to turn a bowl over, a foot on, a yard on, split bowls, trails, a oblique kick of the jack or bowl;
- block;
- run: enough to knock a bowl off the mat, split bowls and run on;
- promote bowls in the head: straight or obliquely;
- drive.

Ability at all shots from a delicate draw to a full blooded drive is required of a three in fours. There can be up to 11 bowls around the jack, or in the way before a three plays their last bowl. If a skip has to use the first bowl to break up a barrier, all is not well. Skips shouldn't have to do this; the three should be clearing the way for the skip.

The range of shots of the three is the greatest of any member of the team.

Basically the three learns all these shots with a lot of practice. A three should practice with a partner and use any aids they consider will help them be able to play the complete range of shots with confidence.

THE DRAW

Follow the methods outlined for leads.

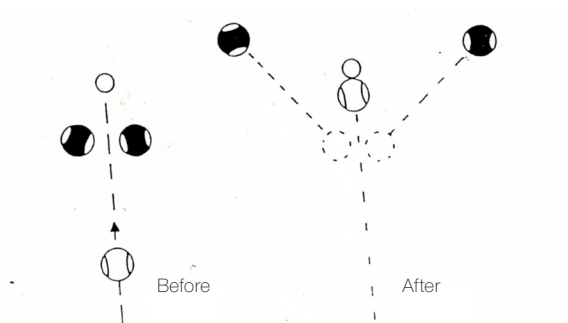
LIGHT IMPACT SHOTS

Use the foam blocks or flip over target as described for twos.

Remember that “a yard on” is just that. It is only a draw. If the target bowls was not there the played bowl would stop a yard further on. About one bowl width narrower green is required.

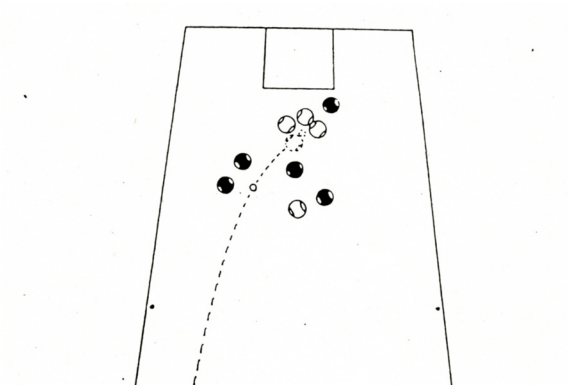
THE SPLIT

The objective is to force your bowl between two bowls that are in the head. The shot is played with weight to move the two object bowls over once, at least. Any harder it becomes a running shop. The “split” can also be used to promote a bowl into the head, or to a more favourable position on the mat.



THE TRAIL

As the name implies a trail is played just over a draw weight, to promote the jack the desired distance. The played bowl should hit the jack squarely, not obliquely and follow the jack coming to rest alongside.



OBLIQUE KICK OF JACK (Or bowl)

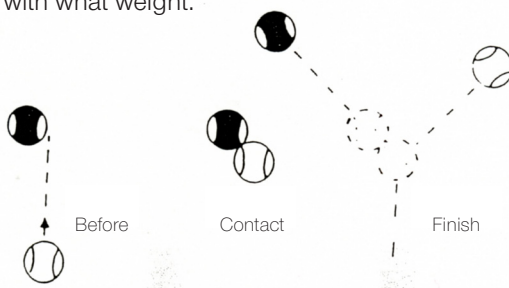
This is a light impact shot, about 30cm more than draw weight, which strikes the jack (or bowl) off centre, causing the jack (or bowl) to move to a new position.

This shot is used to promote bowls, or to “hide” the jack behind other bowls.

It is sometimes called a “wick” and is the same as the “cannon” type shots used in snooker.

Played correctly it is a valuable weapon.

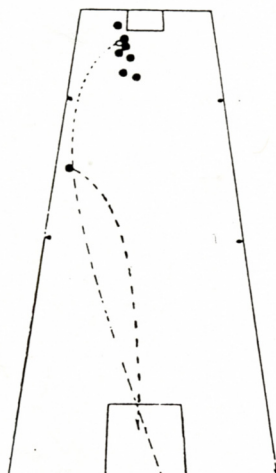
The bowled bowl should not deviate more than one bowl width on striking its target. The amount of deviation of the target will depend on how far off-centre it is struck and with what weight.



THE BLOCK

As its name suggests this shot calls for a bowl to be placed in the expected path of the opponent's next bowl; or a least in their “eye” so as to put them off and mis-read the green required.

There is probably more precision in playing this shot than a draw.



The block is usually played short, i.e. between the one-third and two-third markings. The margin of error is usually less than one bowl width either side. Weight and line are critical.

RUN SHOTS

These shots are played with quite a lot of weight, usually about twice draw weight.

On collision with other bowls, the bowls will move over four or more times or be knocked off the mat.

The amount of green required varies with each mat and floor conditions. A rough guide would be one and a half to two bowl widths from the (imaginary) centre line.

THE DRIVE

A drive is played with as much weight as the player can deliver and still maintain accuracy.

It should, as a general rule, be played from the normal bowling position and without any change to the bowling action; just a faster arm action and bigger back swing.

Remember a small amount of green is required, at most, one half a bowl width from the straight.

BOWLS IN COLLISION

Other than the draw shot all other shots involve a collision or impact with other bowls.

It is most important when learning and practising the range of shots to know what happens when bowls collide.

Use the “suspended balls” in the frame. Set them up and study them.

Set up bowls on the mat (as required). Bowl a bowl into them from about one metre and with enough weight to move a bowls over once. Repeat over and over again until the player knows how the bowls move when hit a given way. (Use small pieces of cloth to mark positions on the mat. DO NOT USE CHALK.)

There is no substitute for trial and practice.

4.2 Measuring

A three is required in games of fours, under Law 11c, to decide the score on each end. In triples, the two decides the score; in pairs, the lead; and in singles the players concerned.

Deciding the score may entail just a look at the head and removing the shot bowls as required.

Law 23d – the losing measurer shall remove such shots as he concedes.

Deciding the score may also require players to measure bowls for “shot” using callipers, tape, or even feeler gauges.

At all times no matter what method is required always look directly over the top of the head. Look one side then the other side. If a decision cannot be made, then measure.

Too many players look this way and that, can't make a decision and end up measuring anyway.

The art of using devices for measuring should be left to the local umpires to teach. They are trained to know the correct ways and to recognise the pitfalls. Use the umpires for coaching measuring.

4.3 The role and duties of a skip

Law 12 relates basically to the duties of the skip during a game.

Pairs, triples and fours teams all have a skip. The skip is the team captain or leader.

The skip has control of the team from the bowling length of the jack to the bowling of the last bowl.

How the skip accomplishes this takes a special kind of application.

NOT all bowlers will make good skips.

Too many clubs and well meaning officials make players who have a good bowling ability play at skip.

A good skip does not need the full range of shots as the three, more often only the range of a competent two.

Skips drives and forcing shots are usually desperation shots.

A good skip will need to practice shots mostly of a draw nature. They will need to be able to draw to a position, from one extreme to the other.

Use all the aids mentioned previously in this manual and practice drawing to a jack in all sorts of positions. For a skip there is no better show than being able to do this. A skip's drawing ability is required to be more precise than any other team member.

Drive for show

Draw for dough

A competent skip has to know how to build up a head, how to direct the team to bowl positions and how to close out the opposition.

Remember the opposition is trying to do exactly the same.

The art of building a head cannot be taught from a blackboard, or textbook, it can only come through experience.

It is not sufficient for a skip to just think of the opponent's next bowl. Like snooker players, skips must think two to three shots ahead and to keep at the back of the mind what to do if the shots go wrong.

It takes a special talent to be able to do all of this and be able to convey this to the team. At all times a skip's instructions to their team must be precise and understandable.

In building up a head, especially in fours, if the lead has done their job, then basically the rest of the team's bowls will be positioned to "cover" the oppositions.

Should the opposition rest out the "shot bowl" or the second shot, do the same and get the shot back.

In general, one safe shot is better than a glory shot for five, or six, that misses.

Be aware of what could go wrong. It may be better to go "one down" rather than play a difficult shot at and lose four.

Remember if you score one shot on each end the opposition can't win.

Like the three the skip needs to know what happens when bowls collide, and where to position a bowl for maximum result. The skip also sees the bowls from a completely different perspective to the team at the other end.

As the team members play their bowls, the skip should be attentive watching for irregularities in the mat and floor which could be used to advantage. Instructions can be given to the team on how to overcome any difficulties.

The skip should also communicate with their team, especially the three. Human beings are not mind readers.

The more time spent together as a team, the more players will get to know each others play, strengths and weaknesses.

The art of head building will be covered in the next module.

The following points are worth remembering when you are a skip:

- (a) The “draw shot is always on”. If you are not sure what shot to play, then draw the shot. If you can draw second shot when you are four down, it is worth three shots to you.
- (b) In playing to score, play to the jack. In playing to save, play to the closest counting bowl.
- (c) If down on the head, be up. Short bowls are no good to anyone.
- (d) If you hold shot, don't be narrow. If you don't hold shot, don't be wide.
- (e) Always be aware of the score and the time. What shot you may play can be influenced by either, or both of these factors.
- (f) Encouragement, a smile and praise to your players keeps the team spirit and their game “up”.

Part 5:

Building a head

5.1 Head building techniques

“Head building” is the name given to the skill of using the technical expertise of each team member, not only to win an end, but also to limit the opposition's chance of doing so.

The skill of head building also raises the issue of “tactics”. Tactics include:

- an appreciation of the state of the game;
- an assessment of the skills of your opponents;
- the possible effects on the team and on the opponent's team;
- the need to impose a pattern on the game.

Remember it is for the skip to decide whether such tactical matters are worth the risk of departing from recommended patterns of play.

The tactics employed and the build-up of each head are essentially the responsibility of the skip, but all team members should have an appreciation of what is going on. This saves a lot of talk and time wasting. It ensures that each player is prepared for what may be in the mind of their skip, and it maintains interest in the playing of each bowl. It keeps the team mentally in the game at all times.

By making use of a magnetic board and other teaching aids, heads can be built-up and discussed bowl by bowl with the team members involved. Try to get each player inside every other players' mind to appreciate how the team collectively thinks.

The skip is continually trying to achieve a balance between attack and defence. To attack in order to score; and to defend in order to protect potential scoring shots, and to prevent the opposition scoring.

If holding the shot, thought must be given to protecting that shot. How this is done varies with each skip but most skips will try to get another shot on the head. What ever is done is based on the knowledge that the opposition is trying to achieve some way of getting the shot themselves.

Skips should put themselves in their opponent's shoes. What would they do in the same situation? Have they been in a similar position? What did they do? Does the opponent have a predictable playing pattern, or like to play a particular shot? Which result, or action, is most likely in the present situation? Is the chance of getting that result such that they should protect against it?

These are some of the things every skip must be thinking of on every head throughout the game. If the skip does not have the shot they must be thinking attack, but not at the expense of being worse off than they are now. Remember short bowls do not help when attack is required. How the skip attacks depends on the technical skills of their players and their own tactical appreciation of the game position. Remember that the draw shot is always on.

- Draw to the jack to score.
- Draw to the closest scoring bowl to save.
- If down on the head, be up.
- If holding the shot, don't be narrow.
- If not holding the shot, don't be wide.

In general attacking options should be undertaken by (or from):

- in singles – the third bowl;
- in pairs – the third to fourth bowl;
- in triples – from the fourth to seventh bowl;
- in fours – from the fourth to seventh bowl.

The attack should be by the two and/or the three, thus freeing the skip to “save” or “add”. Likewise the protecting options should also be undertaken by those players. It is essential that the two and, more importantly, the three can play the full range of shots; dead draw to drive.

A skip should not attack unless the head is secure. When is a head secure? When it is unlikely, in the skip’s opinion, that they cannot be worse off than they are now.

The art of “building” varies with each player and the art cannot be taught like you would shots. Every game played is a practical lesson in head building, either for the things that were successful, or for the mistakes made that led to calamity. Skips should be encouraged to analyse each game so as to not repeat their mistakes. There is much to learn from watching experienced indoor bowlers perform. Study their strategy, directions, communication and encouragement to their teams.

Remember that the time on the clock and the score on the board will govern how a skip:

- builds to secure advantage, i.e. ahead on points;
- builds to score, i.e. behind on points;
- builds to secure or score if required i.e. even or close on points.

Also remember:

- to build to utilising the team’s strengths;
- to build for safety, if you have to go down try to confine it to the least number possible;
- that if the head is secure think position – if not draw to the closest scoring bowl;
- if the shot is held then cover – if not draw to the jack;
- to be aware of what can go wrong either by the team or the opposition.

As a skip, and being the one who will have the control over how the head will be built, remember your opposing skip will be trying to prevent you doing it your way, and you will be trying to stop them doing it their way. Use the strengths of your team to your advantage. Learn and understand why team members may prefer to play such and such a shot in particular situations. You don't have to agree, just understand.

5.2 Shot Play

Every shot in indoor bowls involves the selecting of the right combination of weight and green to ensure that the bowl follows a particular path and comes to rest at a particular spot, or collides with another bowl at a particular angle to give a chosen result. The draw has the longest elapsed time and the drive the shortest. In between these extremes is a limitless combination of green and weight available to the player, depending on the result desired. In effect, no matter what name is given to a shot, i.e. draw, drive, run etc. The delivery technique is the same, just a different combination of green and weight.

Some of the conditions that can affect what type of shot should and could be played in a given circumstance are:

- the type of floor e.g. T & G, particle board, concrete;
- the condition and type of mat, e.g. thick, thin.

When should a certain shot be played and why?

Again, like head building, it cannot be taught from a manual. It can only be learnt by experience. Use each game as a learning experience. Players should remember how and what they did for the good shots, and should analyse the shots that went wrong. Always remember that many times a player will think they have played a shot wrong because it did not achieve the expected result. This may not always be the case. It will sometimes be because the result was not fully known. The bowl, shot was right – the result wrong.

When a certain shot should be played, is something only a player in a given circumstance can decide. It is a personal choice.

Player "A" may decide a light run with perhaps a one bowl movement will obtain the desired result. Player "B" may well go for a more forcing shot with many bowls moving but getting the same result, i.e. shot. Who is to say which is right or wrong. All shots will be wrong if the desired result does not occur.

One way as coaches you can help players learn the value and use of the many and various shots is to use the "template" method. This allows you to put down the exact same situation of bowls on several mats and players can try different shots and see the results.

The combined use of the “chute” and the template will enable players to watch a particular shot and get an appreciation of the green and weight needed to effect the desired result. They should practice themselves to achieve the same result. No two bowlers will deliver the same and achieve the exact same shot.

Remember the cardinal rule of shot play – the least number of alterations required to achieve a result the least number of chances of it going wrong.

If a player draws from a certain stance, that stance should be maintained for all their shots, the draw, the run and the drive, thereby leaving only green and weight to come into the calculations.

The other part of shot play is when we know what shot we would play, but do not know how to play it. Players need to practice such shots. To do this use the “limbo bar” method, or set up bowls by the template method and again practice.

No matter what a player’s stance or bowling action is, all shots should be delivered without change. **The formula would be:**

- Use the “two step” method to get the line of delivery as for the draw delivery.
- Make any change necessary to the delivery line for the calculation of change of green and weight. This should be done while down in the delivery position.
- Deliver the bowl along the calculated line with the calculated weight.
- Analyse the result. Was it what was intended? If so, repeat it all to get it firmly in the mind and bowling repertoire. If not, repeat with any changes to achieve the required result. Then analyse, etc.

Psychological/mental skills

6.1 Psychological skills

Psychological skills greatly influence performance.
Few bowlers develop their psychological skills to the fullest.
Psychological skills can be improved through practice.

Psychological skills are not a quick and easy gimmick or magic formulae for success. They can help you achieve peak performance, but only after they are practised. They are like your bowling skills – they need practice too. Different bowlers will have different psychological skill abilities, however, all bowlers can develop these skills with practice.

Most bowlers view psychological/mental skills as being unchangeable, not sure how to develop them, or they are just plain silly. But they can be changed. There are a number of techniques that have been proved effective by top athletes in their sport, that you can use.

6.2 Positive mental attitude

Self image, self confidence and self worth are all the same. They represent a true picture of oneself as a bowler. This picture comes from our past experiences good and bad.

Thinking positive is half the battle, but it has to be “realistic, positive believing”.

When developing a positive mental attitude use only positive statements such as “I can”, not “I can’t have”. There should be no negative talk at practices. Use positive statements; not “I have to”, but “I want to”.

Be realistic, realise that success in any sport comes from hard work and discipline. Don’t limit yourself. Don’t fear failure. Don’t categorise yourself as a good or bad bowler, just one at a certain level. Don’t dwell on the negative, analyse your mistakes, learn from them, then forget them. Never dwell on the negative.

When practising remember, and say to yourself “Will I be able to do this when the pressure is on?” **“Am I just cruising?”**

Champions are not extraordinary people,
They are ordinary people who do extraordinary things.

Realise that life is not always fair and success does not come easy. Ask yourself “What can I do to get the most out of practice and have fun while doing it”.

6.3 Goal setting

What is a goal? A goal is striving towards some standard of competency usually within a specified time period.

Why should bowlers set goals?

- They help to maintain motivation by reflecting improvement and allowing for success.
- They help to determine what is important to you.
- They give direction.
- They help to improve performance, provide a course of action so you don't waste your hours of practice.
- They help to focus attention and effort.

What type of goals should we set?

- **Performance or technique goals.** Winning goals do not always reflect improvement or personal ability/skill. Performance or technique goals are more in the control of the bowler rather than the outcome. For example, “add two more skill shots to my range”.
- **Specific or measurable goals.** Set goals that are specific and measurable. For example, to increase your psychological skill base; to learn to centre.
- **Set long and sort-term goals.** Long-term goals, the “dream goal”, provides direction over a long period of several years. Short-term goals should be set within the long-term goal time span. These shorter goals will help you reach that dream. They must be able to be reviewed and changed as required. They keep you on track and motivated to your dream..

Goals must be difficult to reach, but must be realistic.

- Know your limitations and abilities.
- Set target dates for achieving your goals – again make them hard but realistic.
- Outline a strategy to achieve your goals.
- Make a firm commitment to achieve your goals. Ask yourself if you have the desire and motivation to pursue your goal achievement. Be honest with yourself. Write a contract with yourself.
- Monitor your goal setting. All goals set must be monitored along the way and must be set so that if circumstances change, so can your goals. Ask yourself periodically what did I do at practice, or at club, to get closer to my long-term goal?

Nobody else can do it but you. It is your job to evaluate not your coaches.

Self monitoring + self evaluation = self motivation

6.4 Centering

Centering is the act of focusing your attention on a single point in your body, your “centre of gravity”. For most people this point lies somewhere right behind the navel. To know the exact position is not vitally important. Just learn to focus on a single point within the region of the solar plexus.

Centering can help bowlers reduce unwanted tension, and increase concentration powers for body control. Bowlers can use centering to stay loose under pressure and to focus attention on their centre of control. Remember that whoever controls the centre of gravity, controls where the body moves. The act of centering has both physical and psychological effects. These effects are real and can truly aid bowling performance.

The physical effects of centering are:

- Decreased heart rate, decreased breathing rate, increased oxygen to muscles, decreased negative muscle tension.
- Better body control and balance.
- Movements from the centre of gravity allows better timing, better co-ordination.

Psychological effects of centering are:

- Feel more in control, more confident, stronger.
- Focuses attention on important elements of bowling – delivery, control.
- Directs attention away from negative thoughts or distractions.

All bowlers can centre to at least some small degree right now. However, like all psychological skills, centering under the pressure of high level competition requires practice.

PHASE 1 – Progressive relaxation and breathing skills. Along with relaxation training (see next section) spend some time focusing on the easy natural rise and fall of your stomach as you breath. Let the stomach muscles totally relax. Proper breathing comes from the diaphragm not the chest. Practice five minutes a day along with relaxation training.

PHASE 2 – Centering of attention. Focus on a point just behind the navel. Concentrate upon this point and then feel your entire body in relation to it. Remind yourself – your strength, power, balance and control all come from this point. Build in a mental cue for centering. One method is to breath in through your nose and out through your mouth on every breath. As you breath in say a cue word to yourself for example, “centre”, and when breathing out another cue like “relax”, and remind yourself to stay loose.

PHASE 3 – Practice centering during practice. Later make it a habit to centre between delivery of bowls. Use breathing and cue words to reinforce the centering drill. As your skill improves try centering in low pressure competition, for example club games. Build up to the more important higher pressure games.

The more automatic your centering becomes the more it can be used in pressure competition for balance, control, timing, concentration and confidence.

6.5 Relaxation

Relaxation is a state where one is physically and mentally free from uncontrolled tension, anxiety and thought. It has feelings of ease, looseness, and readiness. It is used to calm the body (decrease muscle tension and heart rate) to help you reach your optimal level of mental or emotional arousal (mental attitude). It can help you relax and get a good nights sleep before major competition, and it is used as a mechanism to help develop concentration, centering and imagery skills.

Phases in learning relaxation.

- PHASE 1 –** Tense-relax cycle. Tense and relax various muscle groups throughout the body focusing on the feelings associated with tensed and relaxed states. Do this for 20 minutes a day, for 7 to 10 days. Read the Relaxation Script at the end of this section. Record this onto a tape and use a walkman to teach yourself how to relax.
- PHASE 2 –** Relaxation only cycle. Relax muscle groups individually without tensing. Begin to use a cue word to signal relaxation, for example “relax”. Do this also for 20 minutes a day for 7 to 10 days.
- PHASE 3 –** Full speed relaxation. Begin to add speed to learning to relax the individual muscle groups more quickly. The ultimate goal is to learn to relax deeply in the time it requires to take a deep breath; that is “centering”. Inhale and exhale slowly. Do this 20 times a day for 7 to 10 days.
- PHASE 4 –** Utilisation state. Begin to use relaxation in anxiety provoking conditions. First under low stress, then moderate and finally under highly stressed conditions, for example club games, centre games, inter-centre and national competitions. The time depends upon individual abilities.

Remember the same relaxation training procedure is not best for every bowler. Individual bowlers will modify the technique to fit their own preference or style. Some bowlers will be more effective at relaxing than others. All bowlers can learn to improve their ability to relax. The skill must be practised regularly before it is learnt, as with all psychological skills.

SCRIPT FOR LEARNING RELAXATION

PHASE 1 – Tense-relax cycle

- Lie down and relax your entire body. If you hear noises don't try to block them out, but focus on your breathing – inhaling, then exhaling slowly. If you want to move slightly, that's OK. Close your eyes, take it easy and relax.
- Tense the muscles of your right lower leg and foot by pointing your toe. You'll tense of 5-6 seconds and then relax. You should be able to feel the tension in the foot and the calf and then totally relax. When you relax feel the warmth in the muscles. Repeat this procedure again on the right leg and then repeat it twice for the left leg.

- After tensing and relaxing the lower leg and foot, tense (for 5 seconds) and relax the thigh and buttocks region (twice for each leg). Tense the buttocks and thighs by pushing down with your butt.
- Tense and relax the forearm and hand by making a fist. Do this twice for each arm.
- Tense and relax the biceps of each arm by bending at the elbow and pretending you are doing a chin up. Repeat twice for each arm.
- Tense (for 5 seconds) and relax the back muscles by arching the back up. Tense and relax the back twice.
- Tense the stomach and chest muscles by breathing in deeply and releasing – relaxing. Do this twice.
- Tense the neck and shoulders by shrugging your shoulders (pulling them together) and then releasing them and relaxing. Repeat this twice.
- Tense the face and forehead by gritting your teeth and pulling your eyebrows together, then relax. Do this twice.
- By now you should be completely relaxed (after about 20 minutes of tense – relax). Focus on the feelings of ease and looseness in your muscles, then deep breathing cycle you are in, and the calm, focused thoughts of your mind set. To a degree your optimal level of arousal should also represent a calm, focused, semi-relaxed state.
- (Optional step) Mental rehearsal – concentrate and view yourself bowling. Try to focus on the details – clearly and vividly. Focus on doing the skills correctly and feeling the skills as you execute them.

6.6 Imagery

Imagery is a basic psychological skill which involves the ability of a bowler to mutually recreate objects, persons, skills and situations while not actually being involved in these environments. Imagery is effective in improving performance because the human mind cannot distinguish between perceptual and real stimuli. Thus imagery allows a bowler to practice physical skills, without having to actually perform them. Mental imagery also gives you a chance to deal with a problem or situation in your head before you are confronted with it in the real world.

Relaxation + imagery + concentration = better performance

When preparing to practice imagery:

- Select the right setting – quiet, dark, comfortable and free from distractions
- Be relaxed
- Be motivated
- Be realistic and patient; imagery works but it needs practice.

Develop sensory awareness, focus on all the senses, not just the visual. Develop clear and vivid images. Hear bowls collide, feel the bowls leave the hand. Practice controlling your images, start with simple skills and move to more complex ones; correctly executing them. See yourself from your mind's eye.

6.7 Suggested reading

- Hodge, K P (1994) – Sport Motivation: Training Your Mind for Peak Performance – Auckland: Reed.
- Martens, R (1987) – Coaches Guide to Sport Psychology – Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Orlick, T (1986) – Psyching for Sport: Mental Training for Athletes – Champaign IL: Leisure Press (Human Kinetics).
- Orlick, T (1990) – In Pursuit of Excellence: How to Win in Sport and Life through Mental Training (2nd Edition) – Champaign IL: Leisure Press (Human Kinetics).
- Williams, J (1986) – Applied Sport Psychology: Personal Growth to Peak Performance – Palo Alto, CA: Mayfield.

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Team coaching

7.1 Fundamentals

Team coaching is coaching a group of individuals trying to achieve a single result, i.e. to have many players performing to achieve a common objective. How, as a coach, you are able to achieve this depends upon your abilities, knowledge, charisma, people management skills, and a host of other factors. No two coaches will coach the same.

Coaching is all about communication, and doing it well. Good communication comes not only from what you say but how you say it. It is therefore, important that you present an image which reflects responsible attitudes and standards.

Set regular practice sessions. Because of the widespread nature of some of the bowling districts all participants may not be able to be together each time. Make sure each bowler has a regular programme to follow. Remember that as a coach you are not about to teach them how to bowl, but rather to unite all their bowling talents so as to have a very efficient unit with a common goal.

You must not only be able to identify any weakness and help to overcome them, but also to make maximum use of the strengths the team displays.

7.2 Motivation

One of the main requirements of a successful team coach is their ability to motivate the team members in total, or individually, to play to their best even when the pressure is on and things are going wrong. (See Part 6 of the manual.)

As each player is different in personality, make-up and ability to cope with pressure, you, as a coach must know your players well. How you approach a problem with player A may not be how you approach player B who has the same problem. Gender also has to be taken into account. Coaches usually call upon their own personal experience in these circumstances; remember how you coped.

Lack of motivation of players not only occurs during games and competition but also at practices. Bowlers do not usually display enthusiasm for practice so make practices innovative and interesting. Practices must challenge bowlers' abilities so they are continually increasing their personal skill base.

7.3 Team composition and selection

In most cases indoor bowls teams will be composed of either: singles, pairs, and fours (7 players); or several fours teams (8, 16, 24 etc players). As a coach you may not have had any input into their selection, or playing position, so one of your first priorities is to identify their respective abilities. You may personally know most of the players. Make note, use player profile sheets, talent identification, or simply allow players to prove their abilities.

As a coach you will need to be able to assess and meld all these requirements of players into a well balanced unit, or units. So what are we looking for?

SINGLES PLAYER

A singles player should be proficient at:

- drawing to the jack consistently on both hands and at any length or mat position;
- be able to adjust quickly to a change in situation;
- have a high level of skill at all shots – draw to drive.

A singles player must have a belief in themselves and their level of skill so as to be able to operate on their own with the support of other players. Confidence in their own judgement and experience will enable them to act on well based decisions. Singles players need to have a positive attitude to their game – a will to win – a fighting spirit that battles to the bitter end.

They must be fit in order to concentrate, without tiring for the duration of a long days bowling. They must be able to assess and analyse an opponent's game skills and use the deduced information to their advantage. They must have an ego which enables them to set their own goals, assess their own performances, to work at correcting faults, to make decisions, and to bear sole responsibility for their performance.

LEAD (PAIRS, TRIPLES OR FOURS)

A lead should have the ability to:

- draw to the jack consistently on every end and at all lengths;
- draw to the jack on both hands consistently;
- be able to deliver the jack to the desired, or requested length.

Leads need a personality that complements the other team members and an attitude that will allow them to relax without loss of concentration and be able to accept adversity without giving up the battle.

They need to accept that although their bowls are on the jack they will be moved as the end progresses. In pairs and triples, leads may need to have an ability to play more forcing shots. In pairs they need to be able to advise their partner and measure. A good level of fitness is also required.

TWO (TRIPLES AND FOURS)

A two should be able to:

- draw shots consistently on both hands and to all positions required;
- draw place, or position, bowls as called for.

A two needs to be able to draw, run, move bowls by collision, and to move the jack. They need to complement and consolidate the lead's position. A two should be able to concentrate on the shot called for even if their judgement of the position is different. Two's need to be able to analyse, assess their opponent's skills and weaknesses and communicate these to team members. In triples they must be able to advise their skip and to measure. A good level of fitness is also required.

THREE (FOURS)

A three must:

- have the full range of shots; draw to drive;
- be able to direct on the head when skips are bowling;
- have a good knowledge of the Laws of the Game especially when measuring.

It is vital that a three must have a close affinity with their skip in matters of approach to the game and response to situations and tactics. The three must be able to recognise, without being told, how the skip is building the head. A good level of fitness is required.

SKIP

Skips need all the shots in the book and some that are not; they are the last line of defence or attack. Skips must know when and how to attack or defend and how to consolidate a winning position. They must be able to assess the opposition in all aspects of the game and be able to use the deductions to the best advantages of their team. Skips must be able to enthuse and engender confidence to their team members so as to allow them to play to their potential.

7.4 Practices

How practices are conducted will depend on:

- The composition of the players practising;
- The district geography;
- What the ultimate goal is.

As a coach in control of practices, always remember to make them enjoyable but challenging. Just playing games is just that – playing games. You don't see top line rugby, netball, hockey or any sport, just playing a game for practice. They allow the players to practice the facets of the game that apply to the position they play in. The coach then allows the players to use the skills practiced in game situations.

EXAMPLE OF A GOOD PRACTICE SESSION

A good practice session should last about two and a half to three hours. The player composition is 4 fours teams (16 players).

7.30pm	Short introduction to the night's practice – explanation.	
7.40pm	Leads	practice jack delivery and drawing to it.
	Twos	draw and position bowling.
	Threes	shots that need attention – drawing to awkward positions – measuring.
	Skips	all the saving shots – jack to edge of mat etc.
8.10pm	Short team participation in discussion about any relevant matters.	
8.30pm	Games of fours with each player having only one bowl each. This teaches players that bowls must count. NB practice must be serious. Recap on what has been learnt.	
9.30pm	Work on a magnetic board, or similar, for discussions of game plans, strategies etc.	
10.00pm	Allow teams to play the remaining time in a serious game situation (fours).	
10.30pm	End of practice.	

When practising in game situations they must be made to be as close as possible to actual situations, i.e. pressure situations.

7.5 Effective learning environments

Coaches become more effective when they create a learning environment which is conducive to skill learning. **Effective learning environment involves the following conditions when learners (bowlers) are:**

- actively involved in practice;
- positive in their learning;
- on task;
- well challenged;
- well motivated;
- feel comfortable in their learning;
- enjoying mutual respect relationships;
- achieving high rates of success.

The effective learning environment provides the best quality of practices which ensures a high level of success in skill learning.

Effective coaching strategies promote effective skill learning. **The following are ten major strategies:**

- Establish good organisation and management routines;
- respect individual differences;
- take an active part in practices;
- foster the effective learning environment;
- promote co-operative learning;
- accept responsibility as a coach;
- set priorities and follow through;
- concentrate a high percentage of time to meaningful and useful practice;
- set a good example as a role model;
- communicate expectations clearly.

Effective coaches apply the effective learning environment and effective coaching strategies to achieve desirable learning outcomes. They also have a sincere manner with the people they coach.

Appendix 1

Communication

Open communication is the most important aspect of coaching. It can be the most effective tool in dealing with concerns before they become problems.

All players must be made to feel that they are able to discuss any matter that, they the player feels is hampering their training and performance. This may not necessarily be to the coach but may be to the manager or team captain. Dialogue must be bi-directional at all times.

Time should be spent talking with players as an effective therapy for some of the mishaps they encounter.

For the message to be effective it is not what you say, but how you say it.

One must always be able to listen, and listen again. Players often answer their own questions providing the coach is able to listen and interpret.

Not only should you have knowledge of the players as individuals, but one should also know how they interact with other members of the team and officials.

It is important that the Coach, Management and Team Captain have time to discuss any matters that may, or might have an adverse effect on the team or their training.

Appendix 2

Positive practice

Coaching becomes more effective when coaches are able to put in place a positive environment in which players are able to practice.

An effective positive environment involves the following conditions:

- 1 Plenty of room to practice in.
- 2 Know what is expected of them i.e. what is the projected outcome from the practice sessions.
- 3 Knowledge of the practice programme.
- 4 Time and space for one on one correction of any perceived problem.

Players need to be:

- (a) Actively involved in practice.
- (b) Positive in their learning.

- (c) On task.
- (d) Well challenged.
- (e) Well motivated.
- (f) Feel comfortable in their learning.
- (g) Enjoy good mutual respect from all.
- (h) Achieve a high rate of success.

The effective practice environment provides the best quality and quantity of practices which ensure a high level of success in play.

The role of the Coach, as I see it, within a representative team:

- 1 To provide an open two way line of communication between management, team captain and coach (appendix 1).
- 2 To put in place a Positive Practice environment (Appendix 2).
- 3 To put into practice Effective Coaching strategies (Appendix 3).
- 4 To instil in the players, a feeling of Positiveness and Support for each other. To ensure that they Positively complement each others bowls and results.
- 5 To help set the format of practicing.
- 6 To provide technical expertise as and when asked for.
- 7 To provide expertise and help in the areas of Motivation and Attitude (Appendixes 5,6,7).And, or use the services of outside personnel.
- 8 Liaise with management and the team captain on all matters pertaining to practice.

To be able to set up a practical session for players there are a few basics to follow:

The first session for club coaches:

DO'S

- 1 Try to use the suggested format in Section 1.3 of the manual.
- 2 Ensure that you are able to provide a positive environment for the participants (see handout appendix 2).
- 3 It is expected that all coaches are made aware of the preferred methods for playing.
- 4 Be prepared to use other people to help you, or use gadgets.

- 5 Use evaluation and feedback to help you gauge the effectiveness of the session. Section 1.7.
- 6 Do use your own valuable knowledge to your advantage.

DO NOT'S

- 1 Don't just talk.
- 2 Don't think that they have understood all you have said. Check it with practical work and feedback.
- 3 Don't just rely on your ability as a bowler to show what you are trying to achieve (unless you are an expert).

Remember that you are setting up training, and that to a lot of people, is something that they are not used to or may not be comfortable with because they may not have been asked “how they may do such & such”. To tell another person how they play the game can be quite a daunting task. It's like giving away secrets. Yet that same person would be the first person to tell within the first few minutes of trying, a prospective new player of all the things they are doing wrong.

Appendix 5

Putting your EGO on the line

The challenge response, that Positive, productive response to pressure. Your muscles are braced, stomach is churning, and adrenaline pumping. Choking is out of the question. Choking is nothing more than letting your body do the right thing at the wrong time. What's needed now is calmness and looseness.

Don't set out NOT to choke. The more obsessed you are about not choking, the worse things usually become. Always set goals to do something Positive within your game, like staying enthusiastic, giving 100% on every bowl and being assertive. Never strive not to achieve something with each bowl.

Play every Bowl as though it were the most important one of the match. If every bowl is of the same importance there should be no such things as “Big” shots. Every bowl should get your maximum effort and every shot is of equal pressure.

The tougher the situation, the more you should love it. Getting inspired when your back is against the wall is what transforms that pressure into productive energy.

Improve your Shots that fold under pressure. When a part of your play starts to fold under pressure modify your thinking and increase your margin for error.

Focus on each Bowl, one at a time. Work on each bowl as though it is the first or the last. There is no past or future, just the Present.

Take time doing everything, particularly your rituals. Make sure you do not rush your Basics. Invariably, players start speeding up as the pressure mounts. Make every effort to resist the urge to rush.

Above all make up your mind to enjoy yourself. This simple attitude can make all the difference. Try it.

Appendix 6

The mental approach to your Bowls

State 1

THE PREPARATION RESPONSE.

Purpose: To ensure you know and have thought about what you intend to do before your bowl.

When the stage starts: As soon as it is your turn to bowl.

Length of stage: 3-10 seconds.

What you should do physically: Move to in front of the mat and pause, while looking up the mat at the result point, silently verbalise, to yourself your “key” word. Project the strongest, most confident and assertive image possible. It should be as if to say. “I am confident, I will succeed with this bowl.”

Go onto stage 2

What should you do mentally: During this critical stage consciously decide what you are going to do. In a sense, you’ll be programming the computer. Considering the situation, be it your decision or an instruction. Consciously, either with silent words (-draw – run – drive), or picture (visualisation), plot out what you intend to do. Go onto stage 2.

Stage 2

THE AUTOMATIC RITUAL RESPONSE.

Purpose: To achieve the highest state of mental and physical readiness prior to delivery. This sequence of automatic physical movements deepens concentration, balances intensity with appropriate muscle relaxation, and produces an instinctive, automatic form of play.

When the stage starts: As soon as you move to the delivery area.

Length of stage: 3 – 15 seconds.

What you should do physically: Adopt your normal delivery stance, grip etc. Go through your normal pre-delivery sequences, i.e. setting your body position for the type of delivery or rolling the bowl inside the delivery area. Whatever.

Deliver the bowl. Note always deliver when exhaling, never when inhaling.

Go onto stage 3.

What you should do mentally: Concentrate on your bowl when bowling. At this point, no further thought should be given to grip, technique, or strategy. Most players benefit from a quick mental rehearsal of the shot and the desired result. No self talk is recommended during this stage.

Go onto stage 3.

Stage 3

THE POSITIVE PHYSICAL RESPONSE

Purpose: To facilitate the continuous flow of positive emotions or reduce the chance that anger, disappointment, or any other disruptive emotional response might interfere with playing the next bowl.

When the stage starts As soon as the result is known or the bowl has come to rest.

Length of stage: 3 – 5 seconds.

What to do physically: Make a quick decisive move with your body the instant you know the result, i.e. if for a good result you may make a quick pumping action with your arm and closed fist. If the result was not good, and this is the most important, make a deliberate but silent move away from the mat. Your body language should say for a good result “I nailed it”, and for a not so good result “No problem”. Never hand your head or say out loud “sorry”. It portrays a weak image. As you move from the mat both arms should be by your side to aid relaxation, shoulders should be back, head up, eyes toward the far end of the mat, projecting high energy. This produces a strong, highly competitive image.

Go onto stage 4.

What you should do mentally: Not very much is required here, just a quick thought, if a good result of well done, or for a bad result to try to erase it from your mind (a quick analysis of what may have gone wrong may be helpful but should not be in-depth).

Go onto stage 4.

Stage 4

THE RELAXATION RESPONSE

Purpose: To allow your body to recover from the physical and emotional stress of your delivery and result. It returns your arousal level to an optimal range.

When the stage starts: 5 – 10 seconds after you have delivered all your bowls on a particular end.

Length of stage: 1 – 5 minutes

What you should do physically: Move to the rear and out of the vision of those still to bowl. You should be looking forward down the mat or to your other team mates. Try not to fold your arms, as this restricts the flow of blood. They should be loosely down the sides. A short walk away from the mat may be desirable, but not essential. Prepare for stage 1 again.

What you should do mentally: Think only relaxing, calming thoughts such as “relax” or “settle down, it’s OK”. Prepare for stage 1 again.

Appendix 7

Monitoring your emotions:

Learning to read and control emotions is a valuable tool in mental toughness training. If you are aware of the times when your fighting spirit is apt to desert you, and if you can harness your intensity and confidence, you’ll have a distinct advantage over the player who allows their emotions to manipulate them. Players who respond to obstacles, by feeling challenged and being persistent are Mastery orientated. They’ve learned to define personal competency in terms of learning goals as opposed to outcome goals.

Learning goals are built around Effort and outcome goals are built around Results such as winning or losing.

Attributing one’s failure in competition to a lack of ability typically leads to a learned pattern of helplessness. “If it’s my ability that’s the problem, there’s little I can do, “the player thinks”.

First, they believe that what ultimately happens in a game is beyond their control – it was the mat, the floor, poor light or something else.

Second, they feel they don’t have the ability to successfully adjust their performance. This is the essence of learned helplessness.

Success can be defined in a number of ways, but the kind of achievement goals we set for ourselves largely determine our ration of success to failure. Players who set Mastery or learning goals are likely to experience more perceived success, greater feelings of personal control and less helplessness than those who set Outcome goals.

Mastery goals (often referred to as performance goals) deal with effort, learning competence, and improvement.

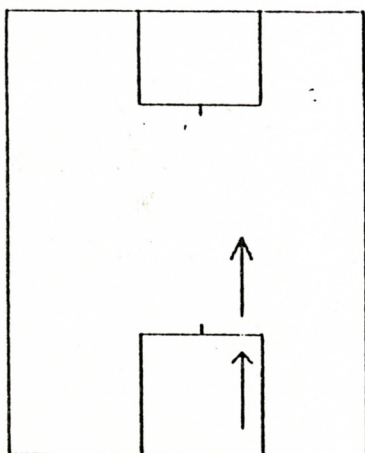
Outcome goals deal with end results, final outcomes.

Examples of Mastery goals are learning to give 100%, learning to be more positive and assertive during play and learning to play the percentages or options.

Examples of outcome goals are winning a specific game, match, tournament, or beating a specific player.

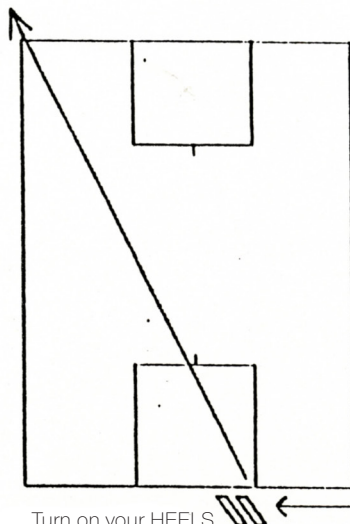
Mastery goals enable you to carve out a sense of success even when you fail. Finding success in a failed effort helps prevent feelings of helplessness. You can't directly control winning, but you can always control your effort, attitude, sense of fight and commitment.

The 2 step method of alignment to the MAT and BOWLING AREA



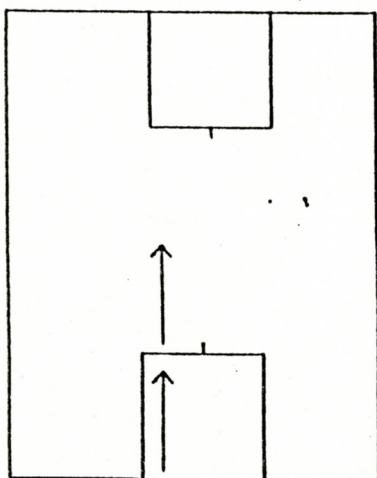
Stand with feet facing
straight up the mat

RIGHT HAND



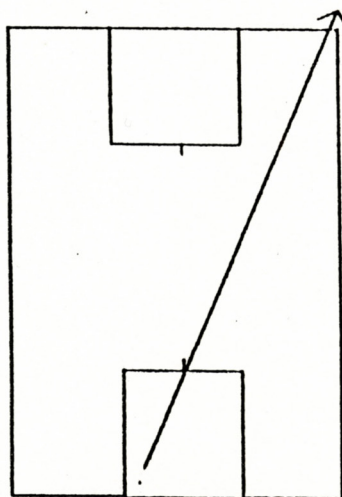
Turn on your **HEELS**
to face the far corner.
Deliver your **BOWL**

BACK HAND



Face with feet facing
straight up the mat

RIGHT HANDED



Turn on your **TOES**
to face the far corner.
Deliver your **BOWL**

FORE HAND

Whether **LEFT** or **RIGHT** handed then turn on the **TOES** for the **FOREHAND** and the **HEELS** for the **BACKHAND**.

PLAYING SHOTS

Play those that you have PRACTICED.

Play those that you have not with caution.

Don't get Down after you have played, what you think is a great shot, and your opponent takes it away.

Always have your mind into gear. Bowls is a "Thinking Game".

THE BUILDING OF A HEAD

SKIP – GOLDEN RULE

Build the head to yours and your teams advantage.

Know your players ability.

If you do not, use the Players, "GOLDEN RULE", behind the JACK.

Give your player only 1 option not 2 or more, it only creates confusion in the mind of the player.

Don't give too much away to your opponent.

Always acknowledge your players effort, even when it is not what you wanted.

THE BUILDING OF A HEAD

PLAYER – GOLDEN RULE

If in doubt go round, on the easiest hand, behind the JACK.

Try and not be tempted to "RAKE" the head.

Don't try shots you do not feel happy in being able to execute satisfactorily your SKIP says "Please yourself" the "GOLDEN RULE" is the best Policy.

Most of all think, the shot I play should be to the benefit of the TEAM, not just my EGO.

Further Coaching Information

visit www.sportnz.org.nz

Communities & Clubs - coaching.

