

World Indoor Bowls Championship 2022

Insights & Observations

I had the sheer pleasure of coaching the Australian male champion for this world event over in Bristol, Englan recently.

Some readers might be interested in how we set about preparing Rob to perform well, and, my observations while in attendance.

Preparation insights

WHAT:

Was the preparation for the event

Four simple approaches that I view as working in training & taken into the competition.

- 1 Where your mind goes, everything else follows (mental skill)
- 2 Trust in your delivery execution (mental & technical skill)
- 3 Enjoy the path, the thrill, so few tread, being a world champion (mental skill)
- 4 Level of quality supervised intensity training, and documents, will prevail

Was the tactical skill

- have a written game plan with a series of measurable objectives for yourself

Was the mental skill

- Training sessions to incorporate more stress / pressure (including the experimenting ideas) related sessions to reinforce and train your coping mechanisms;
- Our training / coaching is measurable, is fun & is so applicable to World finals,
- Change in your normal trained behaviour during a contest signifies a lapse in competitive behaviour (not walking to head, not recording stats., not staying down and through, showing anxious irritation);
- Fitness level will be rewarded;

Actually happened in the event

- Rob won 1/3 games winning 2-0, 1-1 losing in sudden death, losing game 3 0-2;
- Measured objectives were ok until latter parts of game three
- Our training at the venue included Danny's retreat, Pappa's full house

Observations from the event

- Observing and impressed with very good players having discipline in high standard to maintain draw bowling which wins the games - Amy Williams (Wales) Julie Forrest (Scotland) Stuart Anderson (Scotland) Alison Merrien (Guernsey)
- All the training on composure under pressure cannot guarantee a lapse in the competition, players are only human, saw it with numerous players.
- Unforeseen issues that occur during the week of competition have to be dealt with in each individual's way and may be the difference in the result.
- Training we did was excellent, reinforced stuff, but, not enough.
- The standard of ML & MW has to be raised as ML sees far too many bowls even closer, which means at elite level MW is more the standard to chase.
- Watching other games too, it was apparent tactical (superiority) wins over technical prowess if technical prowess is evenly balanced.
- Stylish technique is not necessary, consistent repetitive delivery is the requirement.
- Coaching from the rink side is flawed where the coach displays anxiety, even displeasure, pushes for their way of reading a head, their choice of delivery rather than the player's.
- Coaches who have prior sport experience / exposure seem to be the most capable.
- Best players are invariably full time professional bowlers so those not so defined have a battle to contend, given the need for life / sport balance.
- Players from other countries who joined in our training commented on the merit of our process over result, the focus on the caterpillar concept as a tool for consistency.
- Same players however did not maintain composure long enough in the heat of battle.
- Former Canadian official sharing with me the comment from Tony Alcock... first two bowls win you singles games, the other two deliveries are of little consequence.

WHAT NOW?

For Rob as a player in 2022, my thoughts

- I have written my thoughts to him which are thus personal and specific

For me as a coach:

- Review the planned program - What could I / we have done better see next 3 points.
- Amount of coach supervised training was inadequate in the three months prior.
- Amount of training at the indoor venue was limited.
- I did not pursue / push for more training time, oops the motto...no limits?
- Having answered the question above, apply review observations.
- Focus on fundamentals (more) as introductory component of each session
- Games (sense) coaching & training emphasis.
- Pose the question of all players being coached - do they have the motivation to raise standards, increase effort, chase and commit to stated goals.
- Pursue tactical skill improvement by experimentation in coaching.
- Improve mental skill (toughness) of the players wherein training is as intense as any competition they enter.
- Players to review performance with me after events.

Enjoyed the thrill of this journey, this experience, over in Bristol with Robbie as a mate.

Lachlan Tighe, 2022