

## Skips, Useful Or Useless

### QUESTION:

I am the one this time actually posing the question to you, bowlers & readers.

Why do we need skips in fours teams, specifically pennant teams?

### RESPONSE:

What prompts me to ask the question, and provide my own response, is a series of dreadful situations I have been privy to in this season which are all too familiar to all of you I bet:

Skips with no game plan

Skips unable to sense the conditions, behaviours of players, us or them

Skips who have no back bowl end after end

Skips who tells selectors he blames the front end for the team loss

Skips who allows the length to be anywhere

Skips who does nothing to energise the team when losing (badly)

Skips who drive anyway as he blames the others in the team for the situation

Skips who are tactically deficient, bloody useless to be exact

Skips who have as much personality as this computer screen

Skips who do not embrace the club training program

Skips who are poor role models to newer players seeking best practice in the sport

Skips who are defeatist at the first sign of a contest by the opposition

Skips with unrealistic expectations of their players at certain levels

Skips who have no idea of the skills set, or defects, of any one team member

Those observations were made in 2017 at the Australian Open, The Victorian Open, state contests, club championships, premier league pennant and why not, at lower grades of pennant.

I reckon we lay the blame for all of the above on...*selectors*.

Fancy allowing any team, in any sport, to go out on the playing field (green) with no plan as to how we play the game to use our players to WIN.

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It is called a game plan.

Selectors and the coaches can require skips to outline their plan and where there is no plan given or a reluctance to do one, don't have that person as a skip in the team. Yeah, hello!

If skips have no game plan, well, why shouldn't each player on the mat have all the choice about what to deliver next bowl as there is no rhyme or reason to the skip decisions.

Some of you will say it is about holding shot, or getting shot every delivery. Not so. We only need to be holding shot when all deliveries are complete that end.

A former Australian cricketer was recently asked in his capacity as a fast bowler what allowed him to be successful and his answer on TV was that he had skippers who had a plan, knew what they wanted from him, and he knew his role.

I would add if you know the plan during the week you can train, with your team, to hone your skill for the role you will play in the fours bowls team at the weekend.

I find it infuriating that in 2018 we see even our best national and state players go into games on raw skill (technical) without enhancing their tactical, team and mental skills as well.

Not good enough. Our approach should be to borrow from the best in other team sports.

Everyone I know here in Victoria loves pennant, whereas I disregard it. I love the club camaraderie, but my reaction is as much due to an abrogation of true team commitment and best seen by a continued absence of teams with skips having a game plan, teams not training as teams.

The bloody skips want the role, bugger me they don't want the responsibility that goes with it.

Thanks

**Lachlan Tighe, 2018**