

Tactical Wisdom Never Dates

January 2019, along with 40 others in bowls, I participated in a symposium for the Sandbelt bowls region in Melbourne and along with valuable contributions from an Australian player, a coach, a sports psychologist and an IT sports specialist in video computer analysis, the organizer handed out a sheet containing an article titled “Tactics: improve your game.”

Written in January 1990, yes 29 years ago this very month, by the renowned former Australian player, Bob Middleton, he listed nine headings to improve your game, thus:

1. Strength weakness
2. Beating touchers
3. Immaturity
4. Which hand to play
5. Choosing shot
6. Drawing to the ditch
7. What shot to play
8. Scoreboard guidance
9. Visualisation

During the symposium, four of the presenters made reference to the need to visualize, hence the pertinence to heading Nine even today.

But I want to share heading Seven from Bob’s article as his ‘wisdom’ to me is gold, yet, with my recent fortnight of coaching bowlers new to me, his gold has not been seen or made aware to invest in by bowlers or coaches maybe.

Here is what he said under heading Seven.
WHAT SHOT WILL THEY PLAY?

‘Playing the shot your opponent may choose is one that many bowlers do not think of. This shot can be a winner if played correctly as you will finish in or about the area that your opponent was going to play thus forcing them to play something different which could turn out to your advantage.’

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TOPIC (Tactical) wisdom never dates

Skips tend not to utilize team players enough with this mindset as everyone on the rink even team thinks jack, jack, jack for me to be shot, thank you very much. Tactically that is oft a recipe for later disaster. Never ever, give the opponent two goes at their preferred delivery.

Players, coaches especially, have a lot to learn from such a sage as Bob; or as I was lucky enough only last week to bump into and learn and listen to the (similar) wise words of Jack Wilson, who like Bob, was himself a former Australian bowler.

Players, coaches seek out bowlers of this calibre who have been to the top of the mountain and gain from their experience, their wisdom.

Lachlan Tighe, 2019