

Lessons from 2018 elite bowls events

Investment Return To Associations

Let me proceed now with the theme, “**A return on investment from bowlers to Associations,**” basing a lot of what I am to write on recollections had with various bowls people in my dealings with them over 20 years.

I can say I know all about this as I was the inaugural appointee in the role of high performance manager for BA. And have also had the privilege of being both a state and regional association coach. Then again I may not know too much anyway, let's press on.

Initially let it be noted, players and officials are nowadays reasonably supported by their relevant Bowls Association for the state and Australian Sides Championship. The accommodation, food, uniforms and travel arrangements for championships are much improved for a state team from an amateur sport. Check comparisons with other small sports. This formal support makes it comfortable for players to be living away from home and focusing on bowls for the duration of these elite events.

In return the representative players need only to:

- Be on time for bowls and other team activities each day,
- Be in bed at a reasonable time each night,
- Act in ways that show respect for the game of bowls,
- Limit their alcohol intake before, during and after bowls games,
- Put the interests of the team first, their personal interests second,
- Play the best bowls they are capable of under the conditions of the day.

From my observation and reaction from others, associations put a lot in and some players take a lot out. As unfortunately do some badge wearers. But that is an aside.

Far too many players cannot deliver on these six-simple-things each day of the championships. These players are not upholding their part of the deal either with their performance on-the-green or their conduct off-the-green.

I question whether they in fact ever agreed to the deal.

What to do then?

Well, one unpopular action is to not put any more into the national or relevant State Team, ie, by providing coloured trousers, a daily player's allowance, a courtesy car so that players can travel back-and-fro, etc., etc. until all players can deliver on these six-simple-things each day over the period of the event. This waiting-to-be-given mentality undermines the determination and motivation of young people to succeed in bowls, sport and life.

Then again make sure the obvious hangers-on who play the role as officials don't take the spoils either.

Lachlan Tighe, 2018