

What Are You Looking At Coach?

(Prompt for Lloyd Iaccarino seminar for Eastern Ranges coaches)

Coaches keep looking at the ball (bowl).

Players in ball sports are told to keep their eye on the ball as should our bowlers.

But, coaches, when you observe players training or competing (if you do that at all), you are looking in the wrong place. You don't look at the ball (bowl), you look at the physical behavior / movement of the player at point of execution. In our sport, you can guarantee to watch them for about 10 seconds with no effect yet on the result and the bowl is still on its travel path to the head. Drives excluded from that travel timing.

A player wobbles the bowl. A coach may react and well say the player's grip is faulty. In watching the player deliver I might have said that player did not bend sufficiently to 'grass' the bowl, thus it left their hand, say 5cm. too far from the ground, hence the wobble.

And even if you are looking at the bowler at delivery execution it is not about knowing where to look as it is about grasping the meaning of what you are looking at. Those body movement patterns, body posture of bowler at execution are the give away clues and then allowing yourself to extract the relevant observable information.

As I scribble this mid-January 2019 the Indian cricket team recently demolished our Aussie team due primarily to the supremacy of their best batsmen; Roger Federer and Serena Williams and co. are in town for the tennis AO.

Now picture the Indian batsmen, these name tennis players.

Their reactions are sharp, sharper than most. Why? Because in watching intently the actions of the opposition bowler or tennis player, they note visual cues for them to move into position and execute so well.

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That, coach, is the observation skill you need as a bowls coach to learn and develop when watching players you coach.

One of my YouTube video clips called 'Nominate Your Bowl' intended to make players more aware of their body parts moving by having the player nominate the finishing position of the delivery within seven metres of the bowl leaving their hand.

As coach, that observation ability to recognize where the bowl will finish is an outcome of sustained observation of the player's typical delivery action and weight transfer and the intuitive comparison of such to the delivery now being observed.

And coach you can and will do that if you are prepared to do countless hours of observing players in training to know the various movement patterns and actions as part of their delivery.

Like players, you as coach need to understand it is (this) regular practice of observing that gives you the expertise in the skill.

Now, are you prepared to put in those necessary countless hours?

Lachlan Tighe, 2019