

## ‘Commitment, uncommon’

Since 2016 I have had an opportunity to coach elite level players in Canada, NZ, visiting national players from Thailand and premier level players here at home.

As recently as the weekend, the same old story. Players cringing when, having asked my advice as to how to be better, utterly dislike my opinion that getting better requires a commitment to intense training, to stop playing as many games of bowls and to gauge your progress.

Someone, somewhere is going to come into this sport of bowls (as a player) and do a ‘Roger Federer’ in his short space of time and shake off all the also rans and set the standard. Which is what Novak Djokovic has done in tennis. And Roger Federer has returned to do again.

Not in bowls, but in their level of commitment to topple all comers.

In recent years watching (or importantly listening and observing) players from all levels of bowls performance, and support team personnel, I am amazed how content everyone appears to be with their ‘program’ of bowls preparation. May say the same about the bowls administrators in some cases.

Some of the players appear to be out there playing incessantly, might I add winning too, but heck, what is winning a turkey triples, or similar social games, doing to improve their development of skill for elite bowling.

When do they give over the time for supervised quality game training.

Ian Schuback gave me heaps (of criticism) about the level of preparation of a well known international. I thoroughly agreed with Ian, however he was one who well understood the need to train more than you play. And train with the intensity required to succeed at a high level.

So the ‘better’ player beats ordinary opposition. Well hello, wowee !!!

**Website menu: coaches corner**  
**Commitment, uncommon**

And as better bowlers what about extending their skill levels to that point of near excellence. Wouldn't any national selector and national coach give their eye teeth for players with that attitude.

Whenever I coached elite squads here or overseas, I made a point of demanding members expect a commitment (level) from me their coach that equated to their own high expectations. Most were surprised by that demand – in any other elite level credible sport I would 'get the flick' as their coach if my level of commitment was not to their standard and expectation. How else are they to succeed? And that attitude is applicable to the coach as a voluntary professional.

The other aspect about commitment is the need to be self-centred, even selfish, in your priority management. And time is one source of priority. Gee I had that very chat with a lady bowler who wants to be better. She needs to diarise her daily life to ensure she gives over the time to be better, without losing balance in the other facets of your or her life.

I get so flustered observing elite bowlers squander time unnecessarily with clashes of commitments, excess mickey mouse games, bowls practice that is what social bowlers do, other bowls commitments they take on that could be performed by fellow members. And what goes by the wayside is the purposeful training to hone those skills to surpass the rest of the elite bowlers.

The one gratifying thing is that the rest of the bowls' world has as yet not done a Federer.

Multi-skilling may be a delight and novelty in contemporary work places, but anyone wanting to excel in the playing or coaching of our sport at an elite level has to be able to say NO so as to do justice to their ambitions, let alone their goals.

Maybe many of the elite players, and coaches (and those pushing toward elite level), ought to walk the talk or take a walk and let a newer, if it be even younger, more desperate competitive person come in and take a shot at excellence for the long run.

**Lachlan Tighe, 2018**

attitude, all about practicing habits  
Lachlan Tighe, email [l.a.tighe@bigpond.com](mailto:l.a.tighe@bigpond.com) mob.0409 532 953