

The inevitable question: Success

This past month two questions were put to me requesting a response.

- Why do the same few clubs succeed in winning the premier league championship?
- What do you do to peak for a competition (in this year 2016 it will be the world championships)?

Success comes about through having a goal, desperate motivation, undoubted talent and doing the hard work required to succeed at the level.

These top bowls clubs constantly turnover their best crop of players, recruiting to force pressure on current team members. I feel they 'suffocate' good players who coast, thus ensuring these good players fall off the pace, replaced by the next batch of motivated talented bowlers wanting to succeed.

An observation though: I am not altogether sure about the level of loyalty to the club from these talented members if in fact they move around a bit. Before we get carried away though, clubs, and within some, members do not display great reciprocal loyalty.

The response to the second question coincidentally comes following a few sessions I have had with individual bowlers striving to be at the next level, be it at state or international standard. Some of these bowlers, good as they are, fail in one vital area – they have no goal other than representation at the next level. Lacks desperation!

What are you *peaking* for?

Medals at World 2016, state titles or pennant premierships?

Or is it simply attendance and representation at either the Games or in State teams, or in premier league sides, which is truly *peaking*, at others that are better than you, to me.

To all players in any of these three competition levels, for you to be in that top team you need to know:

Your present skill level,

The present skill levels of the best players in that competition level,

Your competition performances for the year,

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The current performance results of those best players,
How do I get there (that higher level).

Not everyone has the skill and talent to be the best in your level of competition. But you should know what the best level is and compare yourself to it. It would be great if that best performance level is you.

However you can gauge what is the next level of skill (performance) above your own and set out to progress to that next (higher) level. Once there, review and reset the standard for the next level. Like climbing a ladder, one rung at a time. This applies both individually and for a team (of bowlers).

That's the general principle. Now some specifics to achieve that peak, as per the request for 2016.

- Set a realistic objective.
- Set timelines for progress toward the final objective.
- Use a coach to co-ordinate your efforts.
- Construct a year round calendar for training and competition.
- Have the coach assess your technical skill deliveries now.
- Appraise those skills monthly and improve upon them.
- Have coach co-ordinate instruction / training in tactical and mental skills.
- Review all facets of skill monthly with coach as progress in improved attitude.
- Set objectives and plans for all events over the year.
- Coach conducted competitions debrief basing it on specific competition objective.
- Increase the amount of training time, maybe and simply, by reducing the amount of time you play games.
- Enjoy the challenge.

All the people making contact with me on this question are telling me there are no coaches around to assist and certainly not to do the role I set out here. I say there are coaches out there who are willing, so tap into them even if it is only in a small way. It is progress, that rung up the ladder. Be your own coach and soak up what other (better) bowlers do. Seek out and talk to these better players. Use the web to sift out approaches toward success from other sport.

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As Safuan (Said) would vouch, I often used to say to him ‘...if you want to soar with the Eagles, don’t mix with turkeys’. Look at his three world titles from 2005 to 2008.

It is a disappointment for all of us that in 2016, there is not an abundance of coaches able to help the aspiring premier league / state level / national player reach their goal.

Our bowls associations take pride in your representing them in competition. By not providing adequate coaching they do the players a disservice in their support for the players to win.

Maybe the associations will see the merit in fostering better level coaches who can and will assist you the bowler, and the bowls association, revel in your competition success (winning) rather than the self satisfaction simply of your representation.

Lachlan Tighe, 2016