

Lawn Bowls Leadership

The following article, written in 2005 by a bowler who submitted a thesis on LEADERSHIP, shared his brief synopsis with me way back then.

I discovered it in my file this week, this being 2018, read it and thought it had relevance all these years later.

Forgive me for being part of his content, though I feel humbled, indeed proud, he saw me in this light.

Read on.

‘...I have four priorities in my life: my partner, my work, my post graduate studies and improving my bowling. Most of my time is spent on these four areas.’

‘At the moment I am seeing a greater crossing over between my studies in educational leadership and the rest of my life. In fact it seems very rare that a day goes past where I don’t draw parallels between what I am studying and all other areas of my life. In particular I see a lot of comparisons between the sport of bowls (primarily the role of leadership within a group) and that of leadership in education.’

‘When I read the words of Fullan (2002), *‘To accomplish lasting reform, we need leaders who can create a fundamental transformation in the learning cultures of schools and of the teaching profession itself’*, I am drawn to look how we can use the work of elite coaches to ensure transformation can occur.’

‘The training that I have been involved in with our elite bowls coach, Lachlan Tighe, has many similarities to leading change within a school environment. (Lachlan Tighe is coach to the Malaysian Bowls Team as well as consultant to State and other national squads).’

‘Lawn bowls, not dissimilar to teaching, is notorious for resistance to change. As such it makes sense to look at successful change agents in both organisations to see what works.’

‘Consider the following from one of Lachlan’s weekly commentaries (2003)

The absence of true leadership may be seen as a reflection of the prevailing culture in the club / team as it implies ‘...that is the way we do things around here’ reaction. Leadership is most required when the doubt sets in with the ‘...true

believers' when values and standards are under threat.

The culture that best signifies success is one that is inclusive.

Though set and lead by the team / club leader(s), the successful culture embraces the club and team people via:

- *Selecting, motivating, rewarding, retaining and unifying members of the club / team*
- *The marshalling of the resources within and beyond the organization to pursue the vision set by the leadership in the team / club'.*

‘My experience as an elite bowler with Lachlan’s coaching has enabled me to clearly see the role of distributive leadership in changing culture and in creating sustainable change. Andy Hargraeves (2003) puts it eloquently with ‘*Leadership must be embedded in the hearts and minds of the many and not rest on the shoulders of a heroic few*’. However, while eloquent on the topic of leadership, I think I have learned more from observing and studying those who are practicing it successfully.’

‘What then are some of the lessons for building successful teams that I have learned from playing bowls and from my studies on leadership?’

- Success comes from building a strong relationship within the team.
- The strength of the relationship is relative to the understanding that every team member has their roles and their responsibilities.
- Every person in the team understands they can make a difference and actively do so.
- Every person in the team is a leader. Every person in the team acts as a leader in the way that they operate and support one another.
- Every team member knows what success is and they have a plan for how they are going to achieve it. This plan is closely aligned to the team plan.
- Every person in the team is a part of establishing the vision for the team.
- Every person in the team is committed to the vision.
- The team encourages feedback and gives constructive feedback.
- The team needs to have fun, be dynamic and understand that improvements can only be made when we change what is currently being done.’

‘I think that these principles are all things that are highly important to any successful team in both sport and within a school setting.’

‘I will finish again with a quote from Lachlan (2003):

People fall into three classes

- *Those who make things happen.*
- *Those who watch things happen.*
- *Those who have no idea what happened.*

‘I think I know which class I want to belong to. And I know which class Lachlan saw himself in.’

From the Files of Lachlan Tighe