

Website columns
Appointing a coach

Why do clubs need a head coach?

The bowls club executive are considering a HEAD coach appointment and invariably I ask them.

Why the appointment and, for the head coach, to do what?

A HEAD coach may / should have to provide quality service to your club teams, to the committed individual bowler. These are the services under the broad topic headings:

Bowlers:

Bowling fundamentals,
Technical skill - measured,
Structured training - providing purpose in developing skill of a bowler,
Playing position skill(s).

Teams:

Game plans, a lead into success,
Debriefing performance,
Selection and use of training as a tool for that,
Pennant level Standards - measured,
Team skill: teamwork is related to success,
Team talks: pre-season, Game day, pennant break,
Structured training - developing & improving team performance.

I am sure clubs would be delighted to have many, if not all, these services from their head coach.

Who else could provide that array of skill service?

Who else has an idea of what structured training is?

How do you players improve?

If I was to ask you, as players, what you need to be better, what answer would you provide?

If I was to ask you, as players, what your teammates need to be better, what answer now?

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The audience at a Division One club I presented at last year answered Q1 above with these – consistency, commitment, compatibility, composure, weight control, ambition and a member said training.

Training IS the solution to what they need.

No one, no one, responded to Q2 about teammates: Uncertain, unwilling, unable???

How do you as selectors view players improvement?

If I was to ask you what players need to be better, what answer would you provide?

If I was to ask you what teams need to be better, what answer would you provide?

If I was to ask you what positional changes you need to make to perform better next season what answer would you provide?

Why do clubs need a Head coach?

I might say all clubs need coaches, if for no other reason than providing a service.

The stronger, more successful clubs ought to have a Head coach. Repeating myself, Training IS the solution to what they need.

A Head coach is the agent who provides the skill set to players to meet the club, and team, goal. That head coach can assess where the team was and where it has to be next season.

1 competition goal, (anecdotal below)

- Performances last season (set targets & statistical data),
 - Comparison to previous year (statistical data),
 - Standard to reach to maintain / gain performance level (new targets)
- you scope areas for improvement in player approach, team influence.

2 Skills ensure improvement in team performance needs-

- Selection approach: recruitment, top side players, skip choices

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- Coaching approach; structured training, purpose for training, debriefing
- Players approach: being accountable, responsible, being better team members
- You initiate, discuss, direct and challenge approaches (including selection) that hold back improvement.

3 Discussion and direction:

- Selection influences performance and team culture as much as anything
- Skips – leadership, communicator, situation awareness - expected traits
- Game plans - a description of a fours game plan used last season
- Tactical options / acceptable practices
- Roles / tasks for each player - job descriptions = performance appraisal
- Rink team meetings - monitoring how you are going during the game
- Debriefing performance - honesty, character, rink unified voting

1 competition goal, (anecdotal experience relevant to above)

What measured areas of teams, and the players, specifically to work on off-season:

This is the example I had at the time:

1. To further improve the standard of Front End bowlers, so that we reach or better the benchmarks next season in all the club's Saturday pennant sides. Generally, our Back End players bowled at or above the "Mat Length" benchmarks for their Division, but the Front End players were just at or slightly below the benchmarks.

2. To further reduce the number of multiples lost in each match, so that we win more multiples than we lose next season in all three Saturday pennant sides. We identified this as a problem mid-season and the problem certainly reduced as the season progressed. Sometimes it was inexperienced Skips unsure how to build & protect a head. Sometimes it was the Front End (& Back End) failing to get bowls in the head. Sometimes it was greed - let's

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get 3 or 4 shots rather than protect 2 shots. Sometimes it was great bowling by the opposition! Bottom line, by making players (& Skips) aware of the problem, certainly helped address it - but we need to do more.

3. To further "educate" all players about what constitutes an "excellent bowl", so that there is greater accuracy & consistency in recording data next season in all three Saturday pennant sides. This is an ongoing issue which we continue to work on!

Lachlan Tighe, 2021