

Behaviour Limiting Aspiration?

Mindset as player

I would encourage the keen bowler to see the development of their skill as a reflection of their willingness to alter their behavior. I would suggest to them they should never overlook the value and even power of effective, deliberate, enjoyable training.

Mindset as coach

To have a major impact on a bowlers' ability to reach their aspiration and potential, I reckon it is necessary to observe them doing a delivery / drill right or correctly and then immediately saunter over to them and say how well they did it / that, reinforcing the correct way while it is hot in their mind, their emotion.

To make an impact on a team is another thing indeed.

Teams are built on relationships, players have to know each other, as then you will be prepared to do more to help one another because you care.

Do we nurture a philosophy as the coach?

As coach, is your aim to inspire – teach - lead the team to become winners?

Do you want all to be united - everyone on board and going in the one direction (equated with my bus concept referred to in this website)?

Do you see the need to set a role for everyone - bowls and fours teams can really learn here.

What about the motivation to strive for excellence?

And as coach what is a strong club culture – belonging – pride – positivity.

I have borrowed the no dickheads approach having read about it felt it and even heard it said from a prominent AFL player and know some profile sport coaches who made it their own policy.

I call all of the above a mantra, but the practical approach as a head coach seemed to be this:

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As coach be the driver.

Key to all was know your role, play your role.

To know your role we had a game plan - in devising roles in elite bowls, we thought about our game plan, how we wanted to attack the game, how to defend, thus training was to be game related (my columns from 2001 & 2005 as it applied to bowls even way back then).

I have never had the energy to waste time on those who, using a polite term, did not want to buy in.

Success for me in team bowls at elite level is:

One, the change in attitude and spirit had made the difference in acquiring success.

Two, team-first ethos was the key and players belief in that ethos, that buy in again.

Learning

A well credentialed sports scientist made mention of his philosophy being to rekindle youthful learning and create a 'no limits' mindset for players.

What he said was the importance of learning with the minimum amount of information and performing with the minimum amount of essential thought, which I took to mean don't over analyse.

As players / coaches, too many attempt to start improvements by overloading in detail or theory before doing the task, rather than just having a go first then working out the detail / theory while trying the task.

He continued saying the most productive approach to improving any skill is to see it as a behaviour change; and never underestimate the power of effective, deliberate and enjoyable practice, a theme we hammered home at the recent seminar with coaches prior to knowing about the sports scientist.

His final comment I liked was to say performing under pressure is a skill, just like any other. It is a skill you can work on and practice to improve.

The way I view my coaching sessions is we need to encourage the players to have a go, sometimes they want all the information before they try. I say have a go first, experience the attempt so that you have something

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to reflect on when we talk about the experience, the actual outcome as compared to what we hope might be the outcome.

Too many of us bowlers (and coaches) attempt to start our improvement by overloading on detail and theory first and then we get around to the execution rather than just having a go at what is asked of us. Have a go, then, work on the detail and theory as we go along.

Technical

Too often players are tweaking their technique.

Even coaches try to impose one style on players, their preferred style. It should be all about the natural technical style of each player.

Years ago, I met a bio-mechanist at the AIS and we talked about the mechanics of delivering a bowl. Nowadays he is the respected sports scientist with a successful AFL club in Australia.

What this guy told me, if memory serves (I was that impressed I scribbled notes), was the need to keep the body moving in sequence. By that he meant use the biggest muscle sequence to start a movement, which is the bending of the knees to recruit your legs to transfer our body weight and the major impact is when one sequence starts as the previous one has reached its maximum (speed).

It is sensed as a flow of bodily energy, pure unadulterated rhythm.

On another note, is the sense of being grounded, sensory awareness. That tendency to rise up out of the delivery; consciously grounding yourself through that pre-delivery routine and follow through will give best weight transfer and execution. A YouTube video on my bowls website shows a warm up training routine geared specifically to disciplining us to stay down during the complete delivery.

And, finally, talking about behavior, I might add those of us who are coaching should take it as a given we must strive to continue our learning (of our sport). I read about a bloke named Mark Gibson, a gold coach, who was cited as saying that he questions anyone (coach) on how they can empathize with the player / pupil if we have no recent recollection of learning anything ourselves.

I looked at myself in the mirror and was able to reflect that since 2012 in my life I have undertaken to learn about and apply more than a handful of new experiences, new skills.

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I feel as if I am a product of the Gibson school of seek and ye shall find.

Lachlan Tighe, 2017