

*Website menu- mental skill*  
*The formula for consistent competitiveness*

## **Bowls, A Formula For Consistent Competitiveness**

Years ago I recall gold medallist Kel Kerkow was asked this question by a bowler. How do you address a form slump mid game?

Kel responded by saying...focus, concentrate.

A premier league player asked if I could answer this concern, question of his. I lead well for nine ends, go off my game for six ends, then return to form to finish the game close to the level I started the game. What do I do to address this?

And one other bowler put this question to me. I want to be the best lead in Australia and represent Australia. What do I have to do to achieve that goal?

As I listened then and now as I give some more I thought to each question does the bowler know what he has to focus / concentrate on?

In all three cases I think they sought a 'formula'.

Where do I start. Consistency is a word I would resort to in response to all three queries, but how do we acquire it.

A suggestion I provide is for these three bowlers (all good bowlers) to know precisely what is occurring when they deliver the perfect delivery in training and games. They need to know they have a pre delivery routine, they sight the line, how they get down and extend out and follow through and are aware of all parts of the body that enable that to happen. Do a repeat perfect delivery to end on the original for reinforcement of top standard – I call that 'caterpillar'.

However, the three bowlers must know, feel, observe what they do well every delivery in training prior to taking that consistent mindset into any game. And when they bowl a crap bowl in training to make an instant comparison to how they differed to the perfect delivery, done also in training.

That requires a mental mindset, which good bowlers don't always have, whereas champion bowlers, most often, have and apply in events.

Bowlers, when you deliver the 'ripper' delivery you love, store it in the memory, treasure it, recall it, repeat it, at training.

It can be brought then to your game. What we do in fact in bowls to my eternal annoyance is recall and repeat all the negative / bad stuff. And you do it (enough with the negatives) at training so negativity is near perfect when you compete, as it is your usual behaviour. Yuk!!!

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Let's overcome that with some suggestions on performance.

Performance, erasing problems

A change in mindset is necessary for you and my three bowlers above. Part of that barrier I see in all bowlers is the unrealistic expectations you have: train to be better, not perfect.

And train to see the elimination / erasure of these sample mindset barriers below hindering your consistency:

- Negative verbal instructions
- Negative 'commentating' from team members
- Not watching your poor bowl finish its flight
- Negative / moping body language
- Self centred leads ( in team games !!!) chasing their bowls
- Team members sapping our energy with their moans and groans and defeatism
- Seeing and not believing that your repeat mistake is the last one
- Bowlers asking skips the score, not focusing on the directions or instructions
- Bowlers asking skips where the jack is and not allowing the instructions to be conveyed

Working to recall your very good delivery combined with working to erase the negative behaviour on the training track, may help all three bowlers when they enter the fray of future competition games.

When all is said and done, these premier league bowlers are not too far away from Kel in their technical skill. What they need to address is the gap he has over them in mental mindset, which is his superior concentration and focus skill.

**Lachlan Tighe 2017**