

## **Game Plan, Playing Lengths**

I keep harping on why we need to do it better in bowls as a sport.  
Why!

Here we are 2017 and still the lessons – game plan and playing length being two to spring to mind – are yet to be learnt, instilled and applied as vital ingredients to successful bowls performances.

July / August 2016 in Canada at their national championships and in discussions heard little, saw little for that matter, of either two lessons.

September 2016 in Melbourne conducting training at various clubs as pre-season programs, the message on the two lessons had to be pounded in, constantly.

October 2016, club bowls pennant commences and already the absence of the two lessons is apparent, with dire consequences.

January 2017 and a network of coaches meet and hear the various game plan models used at some clubs here in Melbourne. The majority of clubs and skips therein would have no idea of the profound views shared at that network session.

Let's reflect on this personal story some fourteen (14) years ago regards the two lessons:

'...Malaysia was going to be a smart team – thinking hard rather than hardly thinking. For them to succeed in the 2002 Commonwealth Games we had to be smarter than the other countries, to look at performance beyond the result of a game, to train in all aspects and identify all sorts of expectations for July 2002, and, once identified as factors, we trained and prepared to either control them or accommodate them. So from March onward for the next four months we set objectives and planned and trained for everything possible, so as to be able to apply the remedy.

If there are no game plan objectives how can you measure performance?

My Games 2002 observations of (many) bowls countries was their performance at the Manchester Games was a mirror reflection of their training preparation.

One 'training' day whilst waiting for the allotted Malaysian 1.00 p.m. time slot to access the green, I sat in the stands from 11 a.m. to watch (and learn) how the three other countries on the green were training as they were from the northern hemisphere. Very soon I was so staggered by what I was

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### ***Game plan, playing lengths***

watching that from 12-12.30 p.m. I counted every short bowl put down on those six rinks and in half an hour there were 59 short bowls delivered so the players from these other countries showed me how adept they were at short bowl deliveries as that was what they trained for. Where were their coaches? What was their accepted standard of delivery skill?

My Malaysian bowler colleagues wandered in around 12:40 p.m. to do their fitness toning warm-ups pre-walking onto the green and let me tell you I reminded them why WE would not accept short bowls in training as an acceptable level of skill training performance. We knew three countries would have the capacity to bowl 59 short bowls in the first half hour of a game as that is what they accepted as training standards. All we had to do is bowl fewer short bowls and most probably win games (and subsequently medals).

Accompanying that mindset we had developed game plans with a set objective that was the result of defined, measurable strategies. And, the strategies could only be applied by players so EVERY player – singles, pairs, fours – had a ‘job description’ which was both a measurable set of statements and some qualitative words. And after every training session or event we briefly used the players data scribbled on a scorecard to compare outcome with strategy, plan and objective. We trained to think hard. And if all went well (in events) the result of the game was a win for us.’

Simply for successful winning performance, fail to plan, plan to fail.  
End of lesson, maybe!

**Lachlan Tighe, 2017**