

Clive James On Excellence

The recently deceased famous Clive James once said, “The continuing approach to excellence, for me, drags you down, if I had to mix and mingle with that mediocrity.”

Let me rewrite that as I see its application to bowls excellence. “The continuing approach to bowls excellence, for me, drags you down, if I had to mix and mingle with that sporting mediocrity (of turkeys).

James, a man of letters, a man of international fame, a man with talent achieving elevated status by the effort he made of his talent.

Bowls year 2020.

Do I see excellence in domestic competition?

No.

Do I see excellence in the preparation of state or provincial sides (having coached both state and provincial sides overseas)?

No.

When I read national association websites do I find insights and knowledge about HP?

No.

Do I see excellence in national representatives in all the sport skills elite bowlers need?

No.

What in F*^n hell do they do?

Talking to a state player last month, he candidly said he agreed with me about the lack of training and preparation of the state team in all the sport skills for an elite performer, but he doesn't rock the boat or create waves so as to retain his position in the state team.

Can't blame him.

Don't blame him.

Talking to three bowlers, associated with premier league this week, they all believed the resident premier players were far more concerned in retaining a position in premier sides over any desire to work in training as a team and thus to show to fellow club members, in lower grades, the way to go about a model team training approach.

Can't blame the premier players.
Don't blame them.

The responsibility for the continuation of mediocrity is elsewhere, in management, in selectors, and based on the above anecdotes with the players, all of which continue to operate in the same lacklustre traditional way of bowls done for decades.

How do we change as a sport?

Our national bodies worldwide need to force the issue, deal with and even overcome the politics, for states / provinces to foster a program of high performance as a feeder system to the national bodies.

People in leadership positions need to get the right people steering the flagship excellence.

Those right people set systems, standards, culture, processes to foster and attract prospective elite bowlers, elite coaches, elite selectors who want to mix, mingle and sail with others in the flagship excellence.

Lachlan Tighe, 2020