

*Bowls Web column –Q&A*  
*Playing weaker players*

## **How To Concentrate, Especially Against Lesser Bowlers?**

**QUESTION:**

Hello Lachlan:

Could I please get your thoughts on how to concentrate against weaker opposition?

I play One Grade and have no problem concentrating against my One Grade teammates in club championships. A sure sign that my arousal level is healthy is when I start thinking about the next round as soon as I've won the previous. I'm guessing it's because I play second in pennants and haven't had the opportunity to play back end.

In club championships I skip and play with lower graders and relish the challenge to show my pennant teammates how good I am playing back end. It's also very satisfying to get a win for my lower grades teammates.

On the weekend I played against weak opposition in the club triples semi-final. Before the game I was very aware of my inability to concentrate and was confident that once the game started I would get in the zone being an important game. I was never pumped, we won easily, but unfortunately it was a very scrappy game and I didn't play close to what I wanted. I was annoyed by it and tried 100%, but sometimes you just can't get in the zone. You know you're in the zone when nothing distracts you, you're composed and you're so attuned to your technique allowing you to make corrections easily. I'm guessing my problem started when I couldn't get pumped?

Fear of failure definitely works for me as a skip. Usually a case of, "If I don't play well we will lose." I relish that responsibility. I'm more inconsistent playing second in pennants because I think I fall into the trap of believing others will win it for us. I'm very aware of that too and only seem to play better against the stronger teams.

Do you have any suggestions for getting in the zone?

I assume having the optimum arousal level plays a big part in this so

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how do you get motivated?

Regards,

**RESPONSE**

Re-reading your content again, methinks you are a bit like the majority in that if I read correctly you only get pumped being at the back end.

I find that is because bowlers have not set goals to climb up the ladder of self improvement.

If I was to say to you I am selecting you as a second in the Aussie team can I assume you would jump at it. Yet, everyone seems to think they have to skip to be better – bullshit.

An international player I coach will be a lead and second in the 2016 world champs, later this year.

We have set that player the object of rolling the jack within a metre of the skip's request 90% of times and their first delivery objective, note that, is to be within a mat width of the jack 75% of the ends played. Thus the player is innately contributing every end by striving to achieve the objectives.

Recently whilst in Canada, I watched a Canadian national player I coach play in their national championships and she set out measured objectives for the two games daily and then would record her performance each end so she and I could check out how she went on the day. And twice she joined me to train briefly after the days event to reinforce what she needed to do.

Would most bowlers be prepared to do that, doubt it!

So mate, if wanting to be better, set your sights on something and train to achieve it.

Hope that helps.

**Lachlan Tighe, 2017**