

*Lachlan Tighe*  
*Team behaving automatically*

## **Team (members) behaving automatically**

Here I was in May (2020) watching pennant finals and was bemused by how few players, and there would have been excess of 100 in that period of watching, behave automatically to the heat of the battle.

Even last August (2019) when the two players I coach had the good fortune to defeat two Australian team players in the national indoor event the thing that surprised me was the inability of the name players to react automatically to their plight. As if they only know how to win, not deal with unforeseen situations. Our boys did though.

A few years back an AFL player who starred that day remarked on how his team, Hawthorn, as a team was now doing support things and how these were tangible signs of team support and cohesion and the results were in some way an outcome of this trust and support for and by all team members.

What caught my attention was his comment that it did not come naturally to be supportive and especially the times when teams, and or players, are struggling for form.

Hence his ‘manufactured behavior now becoming automatic’ comment.

What he said was that Hawthorn spent time on the training track encouraging, guiding and preparing players to demonstrate support in the forms of verbal and body language and though the players did not take to it initially, the training of these (mental and team) skills made it into an automatic practice as the players not only had to do it (applying the skill), but are starting to see the benefit of the outcome to the spirit and performance of the team where they have won four games in a row.

As it turned out they won three consecutive AFL premierships from that year.

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In bowls there are those who do not understand the value of the contribution of morale boosting gestures in our team settings. Despite all pleas to common sense and to view how other sports are developing these (skills), the best we have in bowls is an occasional 'high five' and even then done while some fellow team bowlers express some disdain for that 'flair'.

Many of our teams lose games in our respective bowls competitions as much because of the total lack of support provided by other members to a particular player. My attempt to address this is to approach the issue by having a job description / role for each bowls team member that included these mental skill aspects of team support.

Like the Hawthorn side, your team, your club, your representative teams, your coach might have to introduce training sessions within the season that instils into team members the beneficial facets of team support and importantly address, negate or even eliminate the negative (spirit) that occurs also in training, which habitually becomes second nature then on the playing (green) field.

My pBus squad will experiment with this behaviour factor you can rest assured.

**Lachlan Tighe, 2020**