

Competitive Awareness

These past weekends in Victoria we have our domestic club competition finals. I took the opportunity to watch five events, thus ten teams competing.

Many of the games were close. Momentum is momentary and alive for action, if, it is obvious and aware to the players. Can be great for us as a team, and soul destroying if the opposition grasps it.

When they do (have momentum) we have to be switched on to minimize it or to derail it.

Three simple examples from observations on those finals weekends. I knew the players in each of the three examples so refer to them as the team hence the mob they played I call here the opposition. This mat example came up twice and both times the player or team could have made an impact or influence on the momentum of the opposition.

One:

The mat was flipped over by our man during the game. In this example the team had the opposition appeal against his action in turning over the mat. Adjudicated by the umpire (from the opposition club) in favour of the opposition and apparently our man went off the boil in his performance levels after that decision and the team got pipped on the post.

I reckon the player should have asked the umpire to literally show him the rule in the rules book as he was correct and the umpire in error. How might that have affected them, not us, if our man was proved right. Know the rules ladies and gents and use them to advantage.

Use them to counter momentum from the opposition in such legitimate situations.

Two:

In this example, the player in the team observed the opposition flip the mat over. He was unsure if he should make any noise as in call for an umpire or ask his mates what they thought about the behavior. He did not. He was unsure of the rule.

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My advice to him later when he told me of the incident was he should have called for an umpire. He was unsure of the rule. He was within his rights and the spirit of the game to do so.

The possible consequence of such a call might be too our favour - it may have caused annoyance to the opposition, it may have disrupted their momentum as they were doing so well, it may have distracted them. It was a valid call with these possible outcomes. All of which may have turned the momentum and the score.

Your uncertainty (of the rule) should be transferred over to them. See how they react.

It also enables your team to get together to foster a sense of cohesion. It also enables your team to set the tempo.

But all of the above is based on the uncertainty of the player as to the rule and that the call is to clarify the legitimacy of the action, flipping the mat over.

Three:

Scores are close in the finals. An opposition bowl ended up on the edge of one rink, a full two metres behind the head, in effect a back bowl of sorts. And nearly everyone playing on the rink had a look at the bowl to gauge if it was in or out. Even spectators close by came and looked and cast an opinion.

The team skip seemed unsure but let it go. Opposition skip was not going to declare as it is his bowl that remains in play.

Remember we are talking finals.

The momentum was running the opposition's way. My take on this is the skip, even his team mates, should call the umpire to adjudicate, to stop their tempo, to again cast a little irritation among their four, to enable us to get together to reappraise what we need to do to get into the game, to settle emotionally, to be supportive to one another, to win.

To do nothing is in itself a decision.

These three examples are an indication of some limitations in the mental and awareness skills of celebrated bowlers.

Enough to be the difference in winning and losing at high levels of bowls.

Lachlan Tighe, 2019