

Lessons from Lee Schraner

During lockdown 2021, we had an opportunity to be in the zoom meeting listening to Lee Schraner, world champion bowler and his various insights.

I wrote to my squad and told them for your collective information here are the gems under four headings I heeded from Lee's presentation:

1 A diary:

He kept notes on all aspects of his behaviour to know what works / what not in his quest for success. I wrote a column sometime this year on the writing of a diary and its reward by a bloke named Cadel Evans - well I be, he also was a world champion and winner of the Tour de France.

2 Personality preparation:

Basically he said we are all different and thus we will do it differently in how we go about the preparation. One ingredient for anyway we seek success is sheer hard work.

3 Debrief or review performance:

A given, if you don't do that you don't need to be coached by me or in my squad. I coached a bloke only last year who declined to debrief because he felt shattered by the loss. Never coached him since.

4 Leadership in 10 point form which are:

1. Inspire - I add my phrase of... hire the inspired and inspire the hired.
2. Communicator
3. Exude sheer confidence - Sam said as we heard that comment, fake it till you make it.
4. Positivity - my view is ... positive people are amazing.
5. Delegation - agree and look how our squad as a collective just adds to one another.
6. Honesty - Danny says I am mellowing, but honesty is the best policy, always.

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7. Commitment.
8. Intuition - trust your instinct as it is generally spot on.
9. Creativity - we have that feature in the form of Danny as good as it gets.
10. Authority - I like Alastair Clarkson and his FIFO (fit in or F off), but another method I use is the 3Rs - reward, reinforce (good stuff) reprimand (unacceptable behaviours).

All of us in our squad as members can take that as a lesson every time every event.

One I would add after Geelong won the 2022 grand final on the weekend.

.....choose players of character over talent in recruiting for teams.

Two squad members reacted to the Zoom presentation:

Simon:

I had forgotten about this presentation until my 15 minute warning of an appointment popped up. To be honest I wasn't in a head space for it as I admit coming out of isolation and lockdown is posing its own mental challenges for me.

But I thought it was something I shouldn't miss and am I ever glad I had that resolve as it was amazing to delve into the mind of such a champion.

Being still young in the game, I am only learning about the many people in the game but, as Jamie alluded to, I have gathered Lee is certainly a very different cat and has suffered for that fact at selectors hands.

But last night he was so honest, so raw and so open it was fantastic. He let us into his mind and admitted his errors and issues as well as revelled in his success. To hear his mindset and to delve into it.

I was struck by how we answered the question on nerves. Basically they are a human condition but it is how we react to them. And for him it is all about going back to the process and the outcome will happen.

The question re how you feed yourself at the Vic Open brought an amazing answer. For those unaware the VO is a marathon and if you win a section you can have up to three more knockout games that day and finish as late as 10 or 11pm. Then I need to be up the next day for a 7.45 roll up at a venue possibly as far as an hour's drive away.

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Lee's answer took me back to bike riding and the mention of Cadel by Lach. He basically advised he loads all day and just keeps eating. Fit a bit in here and there and keep 'loading' so you don't deplete. It follows what PRO cyclists do and their food strategy where in the Grand Tours of 21 days they chew up to 6-7000 calories per day so they are constantly eating while on the bike to keep their energy stores up.

Like you Lach I was also struck by the personality preparation. Too often you see ways to prep, enforced on people and if it doesn't suit them. It can be to their detriment. What Lee said really reinforced that. If someone needs an hour warm up then do that...if they don't need one and their first ball is at the roll up then also good. Do what works for you and go with that. Sound advice.

Thinking about this personally it made me realise it is wise to e.g. make your car trip to an away game with a like minded person. I hate being rushed and last minute. I like to create a sense of calm for myself. Another bowling mate and exceptional player is a Mr. Last Minute and I am of the belief that actually gets him up and about. The adrenaline of rushing in to get on the green just in time is what he 'needs'. So he and I would be bad car mates.

But perhaps what got me overall was (to quote The Castle) was 'the vibe' you got from him. There was an obvious intensity, desire and attitude that just made sense that this bloke has 'it'. After watching that it is obvious to me why Lee has been so successful just from listening to him for one hour.

Peter:

I thought last night's presentation by Lee Schraner was terrific. He was very honest in his assessment of what are the factors that drive him and what his limitations are. Interestingly he highlighted all of the things that he had given up for bowls over the years, but said that the moment he won the world Champion of Champions it became the most wonderful feeling he had experienced, perhaps because of all the sacrifices he had made over the years.

He was honest about his mental health problems, but importantly he has recognised these issues, taken ownership and done something positive in

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seeking help. Big Jimmy, on Inside Bowls, did a brilliant podcast with him that you can still download where he spoke in even more detail about the issues he has had with anxiety and depression. Well worth a listen.

I was fascinated that despite winning that world championship only 12 months ago he has no desire to replicate it because it would be too hard to do again. Instead he is focusing on enjoying his bowls and coaching, and giving back.

He had amazing insight into what works for him and what are the factors that led towards a negative outcome. He derived this partly in hindsight from keeping diaries that included his preparation before big tournaments. In summary:

Positive trends:

1. Have a high carb meal the evening before a big day.
2. Arrive 30 mins before roll up (not waste nervous energy waiting too long).
3. Sleep in his own bed the night before.
4. Drive himself to a match - he finds driving the car himself will switch him on.
5. Have two cups of coffee prior to the game (he feels he needs this as he suffers from chronic fatigue - and he drinks six to seven cups of coffee in the day!)

Negative trends:

1. Having less than 6 hours sleep the night before a game.
2. Long travel time on the day of play.
3. Not using his favourite bowls cloth - it makes him uncomfortable not having it on him when playing.
4. Drinking alcohol the night before a game.
5. Rushing in the morning to get ready for play.

And as mentioned already we all have our own personality traits and what drives one person may be detrimental to another.

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The other thing I took away was his dealing with pressure. In the final of the world championships he was tied 1 set all and 1-1 in the tiebreak (couldn't imagine any more pressure than that in a game of bowls). He told himself that he will try his hardest with his final four bowls, go through the process / routine he has, and not focus on the result.

In the end he gave 100% to the process and the result came.

Enjoy this read everyone.

Lachlan Tighe 26/9/2022