

## **Fundamentals Foundation**

How do extraordinary sporting achievers get to be so great at what they do?

The answer hasn't changed ... **DELIBERATE PRACTICE**; which is identified as the key to exceptional achievement.

Applies to bowls as it does to any sport. And what is this deliberate practice?

Well, first and foremost it is attaining or acquiring the fundamentals of a good delivery. These fundamentals need to be repeated and repeated and repeated to give you that consistency we all crave as bowlers.

And to ensure you have the technical skill fundamentals, you need to ensure you regularly go out on a green with the view of deliberate practice. That is not going out regularly and playing games.

Now to add to that technical efficiency you have to give time over to deliberate practice on mental skill and tactical skill.

Example for us as a squad is giving focus recently on how to address the problem of slow starts in events.

We had part of the session time devoted to some practical ideas on solving that issue for we bowlers. But we did this once we had started the session with reinforcing the fundamentals of good delivery.

An example - jack roll.

It requires technical skill and that skill has to be acquired, then, constantly rehearsed or repeated.

Jack advantage in singles 11% - where do you get that % figure. Simple: you and opposition have 8 deliveries and the jack makes  $9 \times 11 = 99$ , so your effective use of the jack is the 1% factor you have over the opponent as you know the 11% advantage of the jack roll.

Most bowlers roll the jack in games (only) never as part of training. Thus that fundamental is not likely to be at elite level. And mentally you are telling me you are not operating at elite level if this base fundamental is not exceptional, not part of your deliberate practice.

*Website menu- tools to perform  
Fundamentals the foundation*

We play the game generally at three lengths - minimum, medium, maximum.

Let's talk about simple draw bowl deliveries within say the mat length of the jack.

Do you know how good you are at any one length?

Do you know how good you are on either hand?

Did you not know as, say a measure out of 10?

Immediately your mental skill has work to do as you are not motivated enough to measure your skill and level of achievement.

And do you even know what is an elite level of draw bowling at these lengths?

Finding out and doing is what shows (me) you are an achiever.

Over recent years observing good bowlers competing in the AO on the Gold Coast, I could sight those who had a high degree of technical competency, those who had elite level forehand skill, but would note many bowlers whose backhand skill lacked consistency of skill in execution. Wonder if any of them (some being overseas international players) took heed of that deficiency and went back and did a lot more work on their fundamentals for the backhand?

Similarly with drive delivery efficiency – many females do not employ it much if at all and many supposedly good bowlers are low in this delivery skill.

Get the fundamentals right and things fall into place, mainly success.

Consistency in weight choice and execution is a combination of all three skills - technical, tactical and mental.

A few elite bowlers are quite good at this in all three skill areas and that is why they are among the world beaters.

Others who compete in the AO regularly have narrow deliveries all because of their flawed technique, which is a reflection of not having the fundamentals right.

In recent times we have the UBC and PBL to watch on TV and more observations that arise for me is how players gain superiority. Some things spring to mind from viewing these games:

*Website menu- tools to perform  
Fundamentals the foundation*

An intimidating player because of their flawless technical skill. An intimidating player because of their persistence.

Doubt - player not reacting instinctively and hesitating to drive in normal circumstances.

Unwillingness or inability to drive (women seem reluctant to add this skill to their technical tools).

If you want to be better, if you want to even be an elite performer, get the fundamentals right as that is the base to further your ongoing success.

**Lachlan Tighe, 2020**