

Pressure

Known, Accepted, Overcome

In recent weeks pennant season 2017 began here in Victoria. And in the very near future the countries in the 2018 Commonwealth Games will have all announced their national teams for these Games.

Pressure is on with all the above bowlers from the elite to our lowest pennant level. And why.

Well in so many cases it is because the pressure is self imposed. Expectations one has, or others have of you, far exceeding what you can deliver.

In a book I read by David Alred, he described pressure thus. As the interference with the skills to concentrate on a process, consciously or subconsciously, causing deterioration in technique and decreasing the level of performance. His chapter on thinking correctly under pressure was familiar and in 2009 with Jersey national team I had two acronyms, that being TCUP (Think carefully under pressure.) and HICCUP (Heck I can't cope under pressure.) with the idea they went for the first one.

PRESSURE PRACTICE

It is observed weekly in all clubs that few practice in readiness for the forthcoming competition, which here in Victoria is the weekly club pennant system.

The view I have is a disconnect between the way our bowlers practice for weekly pennant. I dare not use the word train, as it would not be relevant, and what will be expected of their skill set in that pennant.

I wonder if a failure to deliver training and practice during the week relevant to the forthcoming pennant would often result in a reduced ability for many club players to perform (under pressure) in the actual pennant match.

**Website menu- ...mental skill
PRESSURE duly dealt**

Training as I would apply it as per all other sports would amount to:

Basic repetition of skill acquisition;
Being accountable and measurable, my technical skill audit;
A record of the training performance so as to know we are moving to our goal;
Acceptance that records are facts;
Known facts indicate a level of progress, or the opposite sometimes.
Incidentally, now in season 2017, I am aware of a few clubs whose coaches are conducting technical skill audits as part of the club structured training. Well done those clubs and coaches.

Performing under pressure is a skill. It probably comes under the list within mental skills. Regardless, it is a skill you the player, we the coaches, can work on in training so enough practice will see the expected improvement.

A highly regarded successful AFL coach, Paul Roos, said it is the team that stays composed (under pressure) that plays to the game plan; has team members that play their assigned or selected role; do the team things; and does it longer than the opposition, that generally wins.

BALANCE - implicit & explicit

Why is it when our head is full of interference and thoughts about technique, we don't play well?

I reckon it may be because we forgot to take dead aim. Bryant described it thus, 'Rivet your focus on a spot out on the green on your line.' Now as our iconic bowls legend he wrote that book and statement maybe 25-30 years ago.

Did anyone else take any notice?

It is the single engaging process of taking dead aim - really seeing that very small target / spot in extreme detail - that helps displace the potential interference and allows your subconscious to deal with the finer detail of technique.

**Elbows- attitude, all about practicing habits
Lachlan Tighe, email l.a.tighe@bigpond.com mob.0409 532 953**

**Website menu- ...mental skill
PRESSURE duly dealt**

The mechanics of a delivery swing is called an implicit swing skill developed from our youth as a motor skill. Rolling balls when we were kids; throwing and catching balls around the home.

The Alphington coach course program in August we convened where we had players calling the finish of each delivery by the time the bowl had travelled around 7-8 metres is a system and tool for self improvement of our sensory awareness skills. The intended outcome is for the player to be able to recognize the difference in delivery from the effective to the (varied) poorly delivered options.

What is important is your comparison so that you start to become much more aware of what it is you've done (delivered) through the feel of the body in delivery mode. That program gave us responsibility for developing our technique thus encouraging us to understand more about exactly what we're doing. How that delivery felt and what we can do to improve it.

Lachlan Tighe, 2017