

*Bowls Web column –Q&A
Game plan detail examples*

Game plan detail examples

Question:

Hi Lachie:

Twass good to have a bit of a chat recently and watch as three of the best young bowlers around were listening to you and bouncing comments off you.

I, maybe they too, still am unsure of what is game plan for bowls, be it the pennant fours or singles?

Response:

A few coaching peers had views on the question and I include their (edited) response as an example of some approaches to the question.

Over many years of playing competitive sport I have found there are players who do all the right things on track, but often when in the field of battle fall apart.

Front end simulations are great in practice. We emphasize this aspect at training and focus on what is called "Land the Mat."

There have been front-end combinations at training who fire and look set for a great game on the Saturday competition so ask the question what is missing when this doesn't happen.

We need to remember that the front end is not an isolated unit. It is the first half of the team, so if Thursday training is being set and done by the front without the skip you are missing the point.

The skip in the main controls the agenda; game plan, calls the shots, makes the decisions, determines the strategy, etc. A good skip will be inclusive in all of those aspects, communicate and show positive leadership and conduct, support and encourage the training.

We think if you are conducting front-end training in isolation this can come unstuck if the rest of the team is not on the same page.

We guess what we are saying is that you can practice as much as you like, but if it doesn't fit in with the game plan that the skip is going with, then the real benefits of training may well not be realized.

The great teams in all forms of sport, business etc. play as one, not as individuals or groups within the unit and take into account the experience

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and confidence that team members have in meeting expectations of performance.

Game Plan sample provided by these coaching peers:

Side Game Plan (4 rink teams):

- Meet as a side 10 minutes prior to roll up for briefing.
- Gauge playing conditions and maximize feedback from roll up.
- Teams focus on the big board.
- Provide ongoing encouragement and support to all four teams.
- Use altering the length of play to advantage. Play Minimum length to ditch and middle and alternate between Minimum and Maximum.
- Keep side losses to <10.
- Struggling teams try to finish first.
- Skips never drive at the head with their last bowl with only one bowl in the head.
- Gather for debrief when final team has finished.

Rink Team Game Plan:

Front End: (first 4 bowls)

- Place mat as instructed.
- Roll jack to within 2 mats either side of skip.
- Objective is to set foundations for "Building the Head"
- Expected standard of performance is to "Land the Mat".
- 2/4 bowls must finish behind the jack.
- Achieve at least 2nd shot following 4 bowls.
- Play a position bowl "Land the Mat" as called for by skip.
- Alter the head as requested by skip.
- Maintain a positive and supportive disposition.
- Keep accurate record of assessment scorecard.

Back End: (final 4 bowls)

- Build on the work provided by the Front End.
- Must ensure there is more than one bowl in the head.
- Must work to at least get 2nd shot.
- Add to advantage.
- Reduce damage when down.
- Convert when opportunities present.
- Play position bowls to advantage.

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- Alter the head as called upon.
- Be precise and strategic in decision making and shot selection.
- Keep end losses to < 3.
- End losses > 2 kept to no more than 2.
- Maintain a positive and supportive disposition.
- Provide feedback on bowls delivered.
- Meet during game at changeover to discuss progress and game plan.
- Use assessment scorecard to assist team debrief at end of game.

Provide feedback to selectors and coach on performance and skill practice requirements.

These comments above are an amalgam of comments from a few coaches. Hope it helps.

Lachlan Tighe, 2017