

Pennant Season Appraisal

Here in Melbourne, Victoria we have an 18-week bowl's season interclub weekly competition referred to as pennant. Somewhere in the vicinity of 50,000 players reputedly compete.

One Melbourne based bowls club, following a successful Pennant Season by all teams, documented very interesting information to share with their members. The club hierarchy believed the content helped explain club achievements this season, and importantly, should assist all individuals & teams to further improve for next season.

The club reminded members that one of the main reasons for introducing a "measurement" system was to gauge whether club Pennant Teams were in the "ballpark".

Benchmark data, based on a measurement system (Bowls within a Mat Length) has been gathered from clubs across each Division over several years. Amongst other things, this data shows the standards required for pennant teams to be finals contenders in their Division.

Division 2, the benchmark is for at least 36% (approx. 15/42) of bowls to be in the zone.

Division 4, the benchmark is for at least 32% (approx. 13/42) of bowls to be in the zone.

Division 7, the benchmark is for at least 24% (approx. 10/42) of bowls to be in the zone.

So the club asked its members -how did we go this season?

1. TEAM PERFORMANCES:

Division 2 Pennant Team average was 35.7% (Premiers! On Grand Final Day one rink's average was 40.5%)

Division 4 Pennant Team average was 30.8% (Finalists)

Division 7 Pennant Team average was 21.7% (Not Finalists, but avoided relegation)

What does this tell us?

The benchmark averages are reliable because both club teams which played finals were definitely in the "ballpark".

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Not surprisingly, the team which missed finals was below the "ballpark".

What are the implications for next Season?

It reinforces the value of measuring each bowl - a practice that will continue as it is also a tool for selectors.

2. FRONT & BACK END PERFORMANCES:

The club has important information relating to the "Front End" (Leads & Seconds) and the "Back End" (Thirds & Skips) in each team, especially the notion of benchmarks (BM).

Remember, the benchmark (BM) for Front End is expected to be slightly higher than the BM for Back End.

Division 2 Front End average was 36.3% (BM=38%) and Back End average was 35.1% (BM=34%)

Division 4 Front End average was 30.1% (BM=34%) and Back End average was 31.5% (BM=30%)

Division 7 Front End average was 18.8% (BM=26%) and Back End average was 24.7% (BM=22%)

What does this tell the club?

1. The Back End players were better than the BM average across ALL THREE teams.
2. The Front End players were under the BM average across ALL THREE teams.

What are the implications for next Season?

Based on this information, it is clear that our main IMPROVEMENT FOCUS for next season needs to be "more bowls in the head" (within a Mat Length).

This improvement needs to come especially from our **Front End** players. It also reinforces **the important roles played by the Lead & Second** - a rink / team is **unlikely to be successful without a very effective Front End.**

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The club document noted this improvement might seem daunting, to some, in reality it only means an extra 2-3 Mat Length bowls from each Front End player each game.

For example, Division 7, improve by at least 3 bowls (from 8 to 11)

Division 4, improve by at least 2 bowls (from 12 to 14)

DIVISION 1, improve by at least 2 bowls (from 15 to 17)

The club noted for members that Division 1 benchmarks are Front End 40% (17 bowls), Back End 36% (15 bowls) & overall team 38% (16 bowls).

3. INDIVIDUAL PLAYER PERFORMANCES:

Because all members measured every bowl from every player in every team, we have data for each individual player throughout the season.

Division 2, all players averaged 13-17 bowls in the zone, with 81% averaging 15- 17.

Division 4, all players averaged 11-15 bowls in the zone, with 69% averaging 13- 15.

Division 7, all players averaged 6-14 bowls in the zone, with 65% averaging 9-14.

What does this tell us as a club?

Generally, players were selected in teams commensurate with their performances.

Taking account of the measured performances, what are the implications for next Season?

Several players have the potential to push for selection in higher Division teams.

All players should strive for further improvement so the club can continue its progress.

Provide individual players with regular measurement feedback during the pennant season (probably once a month) re: their performances. This information would be confidential to each player.

Coaching Coordinators to implement an Off-Season (April - July) training

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program to further improve individual bowlers and their capacity to play all positions: Lead, Second, Third & Skip.

Prior to next season, obtain feedback from every player re: their pennant aspirations.

For those of us in any competition representing the club anywhere in our world of bowls, how good does this club sound as a trendsetter for wanting to perform better one for all and all for one?

Lachlan Tighe, 2018