

Form Slump Mid Game

In his ripper goals statement Nathan mentioned the issue, frustration, of dropping performance (level) in some big games.

Let's read comments to follow on possible tools to apply to minimise the issue, reduce the length of time it prevails, how to note it early and react, generally any suggested solutions.

Danny

I am sure I mentioned this before, but a training / playing diary is invaluable when it comes to reviewing and understanding what works well for you, and what doesn't, leading into a big event.

Not only a training diary, but a detailed pre-delivery / post delivery routine is also valuable; just like Kate mentioned this week.

It gives you something to review when you are not having a good day and perhaps find something you aren't doing.

You may think you have your pre-delivery routines locked in, but under any sort of pressure the basics are the first thing to go out the window.

You can have your written process in your bowls bag, all ready just in case you need it.

One important part of your review should be understanding where your anxiety levels are on a good day; are you calm and relaxed, can't sit still for more than a minute, happy, focussed, talkative, grumpy, distracted.

One of my club players takes himself off and listens to a guided meditation before competition. He has only started doing this again in the past few months. He had forgotten to do it over the years and only recently remembered his preparation from when he was playing well.

Simon

My immediate thought to this is 'go back to basic's.

Ensure your stance is right, your alignment, etc.

Do a quick 'audit' of the basics to ensure you are doing them as you usually would.

Are you rushing or taking too long...all those sorts of things. Even the process of checking in on those things can distract the mind from performance concerns and will hopefully assist to re centre yourself in and of itself.

Jamie

I am going to sing off the same song sheet here and say mindfulness is the biggest thing for keeping your form up throughout an event.

I recently read Gorge Mumford's book The Mindful Athlete. This is a great roadmap for how you can train your mind to stay in the present and not let outside noise in. It really uses breath as a focal point as well as feeding the right "Wolf" which means feeding in the right messages in and working with emotions like love and joy and positivity.

It's a fantastic book that I find very useful for performance and sustained performance, which is what we are talking about here.

Robbie

This has been something I've worked on constantly over the years. I've even written this in my goals previously as something I want to work on.

I've had many a game where, for whatever reason, I've "lost my touch" for a series of ends.

Definitely echo the sentiments of all comments so far about going back to the fundamentals and working through it step by step.

My way of working through a form slump is to focus on my line and the "feel" of the delivery. I mark my aiming spot on the green and make sure my bowl runs over it and also try to "feel" my delivery to make sure the bowl is coming out smoothly.

Also if things still aren't working and I feel I need to change my mindset I try to change my physical behaviour, what I'm thinking about plus any actions (like talking) to be positive in nature.

I would add to this though by saying I am still looking for new ways to overcome this as I don't think I have perfected it yet. I remember chatting to a fellow club member once who mentioned that he'd once asked Aaron Wilson what he did when going through a form slump. His answer "I just trust that it will come back to me".

Dee

I am one of the newer bowlers, but I immediately try to go back to "process"assess basic technique, diminish internal chatter, focus on delivery not outcome, slow things down.

Jackie

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Whether it's 30 minutes or 2+ hours, we are sure to have moments where we are distracted during a practice or game.

I don't consider that a weakness, we are human...and we are likely going to have a dip in performance at some point.

For me there are two keys: awareness - having the ability to recognize it quickly; and how quickly we are able to turn things around.

The first sounds obvious - but sometimes it's easy to get caught up in the "if I just adjust my line by a fraction, I'll get it" or "but I'm just missing it by a little".

Not realizing that there is actually something else going on that's making me miss my line. So being aware. The second key is the hardest - the crux of this conversation - how do we turn it around.

For what it's worth, I'll share my thoughts....when things go wrong, we tend to over complicate things...over think...try too hard. I too go "back to the basics". That's because I trust in my foundation, the technical side of things. So I tell myself not to focus on the result of the next bowl I deliver, but what it feels like when I deliver it.

One of the sport psychologists I worked with here in Canada over the years said "try not to force it, just let it happen".

Simple words, but so true.

I liked the comments about what state you're in when you have a good game.

Oftentimes people focus on the outcome - the win - and not what got them there.

What routine did you follow, how did you feel, did you do something different leading up to that game? What did you eat? It all plays a role.

We are quick to debrief and tear ourselves apart when we have a bad game...but it is equally important - perhaps even more important - to do it during a good performance.

Just like repetition is key to training, it is key to a good performance as well. We all know when we roll a good bowl - but 'why' was it good?

I also appreciated the response - "I trust it will come back".

All the hard work happens before we step into a competition - the training and preparation. Once game time arrives, we have to trust in our training. Trust we have prepared ourselves the best we can.

Then we just have to go out and put it into action.

The rest is what happens between the ears.

Leanne

This is a most interesting conversation as we will all experience this in our bowling.

The best advice I was given is trust yourself.

You know you can bowl, you have done all the training. So, believe you can do it by calling on your memory of all the preparation you have done.

Breathe, relax and concentrate on your line.

If you relax and enjoy the weight will come.

Game time is not the time to start worrying about how you are getting the bowl away, that is what you do on the training green.

Lach

Jackie mentioned debriefing above. I heed Sir Clive Woodward, rugby world cup winning coach- who says when we lose maybe going off and having a beer so as not to dwell on the result, this time.

However when we win we have an honest, intense debrief so as to know what we do to win.

Lachlan Tighe, 2022.