

Awareness Is Sensory

I actually think AWARENESS is a sensory skill rather than a mental one. Bear with me as I think out aloud.

Awareness can be raised, heightened easily by focused attention of bowlers at supervised training sessions, which have repetition in practice. My notion of caterpillar as repetition is such an example of awareness, more later.

Awareness is emotional intelligence. If you come to train or to the bowls competition, in a bad mood, you are in negative mode and it could percolate over onto teammates, training partners. If a bowler is more self-aware you recognize that mood state and you can choose to leave it at the bowls gate, so as not to negatively impact on your bowls teammates.

My touch on awareness is that it is sensory and thus as a skill can be learned, improved and to some extent measured (by observation at least). My sensory skill coaching and training is a basic feature of my coaching.

In this new year, I held a session for bowlers and the drills required their feeling of motor skill / biomechanical awareness. Nearly all the bowls coaches I meet tend to be (technique) instructors basing the technical capacity of the bowler on how they as coach have a preferred technique. At elite levels that coaching method needs to shift from technical to an extensive coaching of all the other (six) skills.

As elite bowlers the awareness of bodily sensations in delivery movement could be the difference (between winning and losing). Calling on my prior experiences in elite sport, a prime way to increase physical efficiency (bowls delivery) is for you the bowler to become far more aware of your own physical sensations during the delivery from the first movement to the completion of the follow through. That is you the bowler doing and feeling it, not me the coach or any other coach. Might I say observing bowlers I can tell what is and what is not moving in a pure sensory mode.

Hell, how many times has some bowler wandered over or contacted me and asked if I would look at their delivery. These bowlers define that as

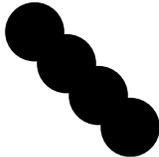
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coaching. If I was to provide a response am I coaching or imposing my preferred technical approach on them?

Bowlers don't need to bowl like the coach or to satisfy the coach. Bowlers can be shown how to be more aware of their physicality in the delivery for their action to be more fluid for their style of delivery.

That new year session the bowlers were made to arouse those sensory tools to their physical factors in the delivery of their bowls. What do they need to increase their awareness? Bowlers differ however. Making yourself aware of those parts of the body flowing into the delivery is a start.

My caterpillar routine mentioned above illustrated here has sensory awareness.



It is visual, because you see the outcome of the next bowl with its proximity in finish to the original delivery.

It is auditory when that second bowl taps or rests on that original delivery we hear the sound of the bowl on bowl.

It is kinaesthetic where you are able to feel the hip movement taking the body lower, the shoulder blade extending the hand that bit further, the knees lowering your body and weight to start the forward motion.

The tactile awareness is in the soft grip the bowler can recall to be able to deliver such excellent deliveries.

So when someone says how does it (delivery) feel, you the bowler should be sensing all that above.

The mental awareness is the riveted focus on the spot on the green, or wherever it is you focus, as the flow of the body is in execution phase.

Awareness using the senses can develop and excel, through relevant training and coaching. At this bowls session I mentioned, the players were asked to tell me from their position on the mat how far away their bowl was from the jack. Their calls on distance estimates improved over the session as

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much because I asked them after every bowl, which meant numerous estimates and once I showed them cues and parameters on the green itself, they were able to use these to gauge a distance. Example: a jack spotted on the 2m. mark is just that, 2m. from the ditch, thus any bowl going behind the jack cannot be more than 2m. from the jack, as a start.

Awareness and sensory skill is knowing what is happening around you.

Self awareness is knowing what you are experiencing. It is there as feedback.

Being made aware, you have the capacity to change. Awareness is relevant input. Awareness is feedback, primarily from within your body, the environment, equipment, other bowlers on the green and of course coaches and selectors.

Improvement and change (for the better) can come about as a consequence of quality feedback.

Lachlan Tighe, 2018