

AO 2023 Observations As A Coach

Technically numerous bowlers who competed are very competent, some being marvelous technicians. Do I see the same level of skill in the mental, tactical and team skills?

Possibly not as evidenced by these observations that follow.

Distractions a former AO winner turns around to chide their support crew for talking, too much, too loudly; what level of mental toughness has that player.

Disconnect from the 4s team, same player actually; leads for the team, generally ok, but as soon as the two bowls are delivered, walks around the green to be on the bank behind the rink at the other end. Where oh where is the understanding of being a member of the team; and what about that skip - don't accept that behavior, challenge the player to be a part of the team.

Decision making (1) my mate Danny as a fellow coach pulls his hair out in not seeing a game plan and not understanding the need to protect what we have at times. Saw that with players far too often and they wonder why they don't get to the finals.

Decision making (2) you watch a player bowl 2 rippers on a BH with the elite opponent not altering the situation. Then I observe the player change hands, why I don't know, and this 3rd bowl is a dud though the elite player still was off the boil; so our player does what? Yep another dud FH and again the elite player just had one of those horror ends. Upshot the player only scored 2 when could and should have scored 4 shots; they lost by 2 finally; says it all actually.

Fragile, even our best have such times. You can be 19-2 up, yet take an eternity to get those final 2 shots and when the time seems to be an eternity we, the spectator, can see all the nerves and anxiety on display. Train for these moments as you should expect to be in them if hoping to be in future finals with and against elite bowlers.

Skipping teams, two aspects for skips who form a team for the AO. The major event in the bowls world. Make sure you know the technical skills of all your players and have a game plan all know. Accept and apply if wanting to be at the pointy end of an AO. No good having a 3rd who is a formidable driver when we don't see that skill of the player being used.

Young female elite players do two things well - enjoy the bloody contest no end, and, can they drive, you bet, and, they are called on to do such with gusto. The more mature age female shall be left behind if they don't step up and adopt and adapt to the younger female approach to the competition at elite level.

Committee meetings would be how I explain a 3rd and a skip taking an eternity to discuss whatever the skip is going to do. Ever heard of a game plan ladies and gentlemen and once you know that plan and objective, then the decision is there right in front of you; and please remember, with the exception of singles, all other formats are of certain number of ends, so you don't have to win every end; though your game plan should apply every end, unless of course you are being trounced then it is plan B or C.

Technically fluent would be how I describe the elite men & women players, enough said.

Good sportsmanship sighted everywhere; what a pleasure.

Coach Lachlan Tighe, 2023