

Elite International Bowler Habits #12

One of the players in our squad (pBus) did a bit of research during the covid lockdown about elite players and the manner of their training. Having set his goals for the coming year, our squad player decided to reach out and identify what it is at training that makes the elite performers in our sport so great.

He reached out to numerous State, National and International players (23 in fact) to pick their brains and absorb as much information to adapt into his training regime to reach his goal.

The questions asked each player of interest was as follows:

- What have you found to be your most effective / successful training regime?*
- How do you plan each training session?*
- How do you record each training session? (stats keeping)*
- What drill do you think is the best for a short training session?*
- What do you deem to be the most important skill in bowls?*
- What mental skills do you think are important?*
- What do you think has been the secret behind your successful career in bowls?*
- If you could share one thing that you wish you had known when starting bowls, what would it be?*
- What do you think it takes to become the best?*
- How did you overcome your biggest challenges to achieve what you have achieved?*
- If you were trying to teach someone what it takes to become the best, what would you tell them to 'fast track' their progress?*

Their responses are paraphrased into digestible chunks that can easily be tried in our routine to find the perfect balance that suits any one of us best.

Below is the response from a player selected for today's website column with names deleted for privacy: Including a brief rundown of the player, representation, and their winning achievements.

#12 International, Commonwealth Games, World Bowls

- Trained four times a week in younger days (mostly practice games).
- Bases each practice session around two things. What he struggled with in his previous game and secondly, what event he is playing in next.
- Weight consistency drills are the best to practice when only having a short amount of time to practice.
- First bowl effectiveness is the key. Get this specific bowl no matter what the format to be impeccable (get known for first bowl effectiveness).
- Mentally acting the same no matter what the situation is (Rodger Federer mentality).
- Find out what mindset and attitude makes you play best.
- Find the balance of being able to switch on and off.
- Have a trigger word as walking down the green to really switch on and hyper focus when needed (build it into your pre-shot routine).
- Don't have to be shot with every bowl, play the smart shot as the better you get, the better the opposition are who will punish you for the judgment errors (always be stingy for shots).
- Always relate what you do to your goals.
- Create a pathway with process goals to make it more achievable and build up to the major goal.
- Plan the season in advance (decide on what events you really want to go after and build towards them).
- Work your practice schedule around the match schedule (aiming for five times playing bowls per week) (including games).
- If you need a small break during the season, that is fine as well.
- Keep practice sessions short and sharp (maximum of 90 minutes) break each session into 30-minute blocks.
- Skip practice includes, drawing to off centre jacks, Drive to draw drills, draw to the ditch drills.

Keep an eye out for the next commentary on elite player training on this website.

Coach Lachlan Tighe, 2023