

website article
Club pennant competition planning

***Taking a lead in steering your bowls club/
bowls association competition objectives.***

Whilst at the Australian Open on the Gold Coast, Queensland, recently I was approached, nigh on daily, to respond to the regular query as to how to get our club, the players, to commit to win the pennant competition.

And now upon my return I have ventured to a handful of clubs in response to that very same issue which arises as Victorian clubs prepare for their prolonged pennant season.

I find the solution to their issue quite easy.

The board or committee is voted in by the members. The board/committee set down the collective competition objective for the club. Then they appoint selectors who will set criteria and choose players to meet that club objective. And the board/committee will appoint a coach to develop the skills of players to perform in competition.

All good. However, the people I met these recent times could not spell out what each group's (committee, selectors, coach, players) responsibilities entail.

Here is where my advice is sought and so here is an expanded statement on the various roles and responsibilities. The following content relates to the seasonal weekly pennant, however the principle applies even to national teams.

1. Role & responsibility of the CLUB COMMITTEE

- Set out pennant season competition objectives / goals for what we would expect to achieve for all the club sides with emphasis on the top (two) sides; examples may be:
 - Gain finals berth for each of the top two sides;
 - Promotion of 50% of teams into the higher pennant level;
 - No club side to be relegated.
- Reinforce idea that Saturday pennant and our top two sides are our 'flagship' sides.
- Have the Club members made aware of the club committee objectives.
- Expect the Selection committee to make decisions to reinforce the club objectives.
- Select, appoint, even recruit, the right members as selectors for the top sides rather than conduct an election for the role.
- Head coach appointed and all coaches to contribute to pennant practice.
- Club leaders, everyone is a potential leader in the club (team).
- Ensure the decisions are for the club good rather than the individual need.

2. Role & responsibility of SELECTORS

- To make decisions that reinforce the club objectives.
- Set and disseminate selection guidelines / criteria to include a reference to compulsory training attendance.
- Choose the best performed players in the top side.
- Require compulsory attendance at head coach supervised training every Tuesday & Thursday.

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- Require rink team debrief post match.
- Require pennant Performance Reports based on game plans and player ratings.
- Communications to pennant bowlers via email; noticeboard.
- Season planning, specifically ensuring no club games are permitted to be organised beyond 5 p.m. on Tues. / Thurs. for the club pennant players.
- Recruitment of young keen bowlers.
- Require compliance from all players on post match performance report scoring.
- Commitment to formal progress review of top team after every 5 rounds of pennant.
- Form a leadership group for top two sides as a start.
- Leadership group responsible for – culture, standards, communications & team selection, team plan, skills training plus recruitment, invitees into squad.
- Leadership group, maybe 6 people – 2 team captains, coach, 2 skips, a selector.
- Preparation – Pre Season
- Pre Season plans shared with top team as from August EXAMPLE a half day session and September have 4 Saturdays pre pennant season with a **full day** program of game / training.
- Review performance facts and stats about all the players from the previous season.
- Review performance facts and stats about each of the teams from the previous season.
- Review performance facts and stats about the finalists in the relevant pennant divisions from the previous season.
- The holding of informal meetings with, selectors, current players, targeted recruits.
- Do not pander to personalities. Remember it is all about the club collectively.
- Do be seen as firm and fair in encouraging the club approach.

3. Role and responsibility of HEAD COACH

- Conduct supervised pennant training every Tuesday & Thursday 5.30-6.30.pm
- Conduct game review for the top two sides.
- Includes being formal advisor to weekly Selection panel meeting.
- Includes being a tactical advisor / trainer to top teams & skips as requested.
- Coordinate the tasks of fellow club coaches.
- Coordinate availability of coaches for the players unable to always attend the compulsory pennant training.
- Bowlers - identification of skills of the pool of club players.
- Winter training program (July & August).

4. Aim of the club TOP TEAM

- Win the pennant final for promotion into a higher division next season.
To achieve this each one of us must do our best within the team by the following:
- Set agreed team goals for example:
 - Agree on how many games to win in season;
 - Agree to win 8/9 home games;
 - Win more ends per game than our opponents;
 - Have at least 2 rinks win each week.
- Set agreed team plans such as:

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Have all players strive to score a 5/10 rating on each game debrief score sheet.
Our front end team (lead & 2nd) have 2/4 bowls in the head 15/21 ends as a minimum per game.

Set agreed objectives, roles for each position in a team.

Identify at least one person per rink, ideally half the members of the side, as morale lifters operating for the side.

- Acknowledge establishment of a leadership group by the club for the teams.

5. As a PLAYING MEMBER in the top team aim to

To be a member of that team, I agree I need to commit my contribution by:

- Commit to train with team members Tuesdays 5.30 p.m. - 6.30 p.m.
- Commit to train with rink members Thursdays 5.30 p.m. - 6.30 p.m.
- Know, accept and succeed in the agreed role of the position in which I am selected.
- Commitment to team game plan goals.
- Abide by a commitment to contribute to player meetings.
- Abide by a commitment to season planning.
- Agree to not arrange club games that clash with team training, Tues. / Thurs.
- Make a commitment to game plans, and openly discuss, agree, apply and review.
- Abide by a commitment to game debrief performance review:
 - Based on game plan, statistical analysis, skip input, coach observation, selectors.
- Preparedness to train more diligently the following week(s) when my previous game performance rating score was <5.
- Be prepared to improve skills under supervised coaching to contribute to the team.
- Show by example I am part of the '*win*' team mindset prepared to work for success.
- Don't be passive as passive members more often are 'passengers.'

The BUS Concept

I want to look at the DESTINATION (of the club) written on the front of the bus so as to ensure I am jumping aboard a bus being taken in the right direction.

And before I jump on the bus I want it to appear contemporary and be well resourced (fuelled for energy).

Then where I am willing to be on the BUS, for me as a coach, the bus driver, or you as a player in that team, or a selector, or a club committee member, I ask myself:

Let's get the right people on the bus.

Get the wrong people off the bus.

Get the right people in their right positions.

Let the passengers off where they do the least damage.

Take the role, take the responsibility.

Do we have the right people on the bus in all capacities.

If not, is the leadership able or willing to pursue the recruitment of the right people connected to all aspects of club success as set by our committee?

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6. FACTS & STATS.

Observations on Pennant performance previous seasons

Selectors have a role in reviewing performances from the previous season. This would entail each player, the teams, the finalist clubs in our relevant pennant division.

Additionally the selectors could refer to factors affecting our forthcoming season:

- Club Leadership, i.e. those with office bearer roles, selectors and those assigned by others, e.g Skips in a side;
- Recruitment for top sides and expectations they have / club has;
- Fostering new blood;
- Player performances - measured statistically, debrief paper;
- Player motivation - by member attendances at training; prospects of every player, fair treatment in selection.

How do we get to that NEXT level of performance?

Simple, by having measurable objectives for each player, each rink in the top two sides, and training to acquire that higher level of skill.

AND, by rewarding those taking on their responsibilities and commitments, AND, not rewarding those shirking or flouting their responsibilities. Which (rewards and omissions) can all be in the hands of the selectors.

Known history for pennant finals success

Selectors can determine from pennant records what pennant result information is valid to use as a tool for evaluating performance next season.

For example, facts from Division One pennant here in Melbourne from a previous season:

- There are four sections for Division one.
- The best winner of the four sections won all 17 pennant games, amassing 278 points.
- The average for the four winners was 15 wins from 17 games, accumulating 250 points.
- So a club to win their section premiership this season has to set sail for 15 wins.
- If a goal is to be in the final four of the section, then information on the fourth placed teams last season is the guide.
- The best record of a fourth placed club was 10 wins, a draw, 6 losses and 177 points.
- The average of the fourth placed clubs in sections was 10 wins, 7 losses, with 169 points.
- If the goal of a club is to finish midfield, or about 6th, the average sixth placed team had 8 wins, 9 losses and gained 147 points.
- The club also has to be aware of the positions that force you to be relegated, which is second last and last and the limit or measure of those positions.
- The average of 2nd last placed teams was 3 wins, 14 losses gaining only 96 points.
- Winning division two final with players performing at a 38% effective bowls rate.
- Winning whenever the front end had 2/4 bowls in the head 15/21 ends.
- Winning whenever both front end players made an effective bowl contribution at least 13/21 ends each.

Does your club leadership, your bowls association, go to this level of responsibility?

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