Games Sense Preparedness

Performance statistics are valuable for me and the players, if gathered honestly. However, in coaching role, I am more likely to watch and listen to the language I observe from the participants (that includes the opposition) to ascertain attitude and behavioural states.

If I predominantly use my visual and hearing senses, there is a good chance I can introduce the 'snapshots' from games back into training with the players at the next training session, so as to make the performance analysis a function for training.

This is games sense; thus the training incorporates an equal dose of mental, tactical and technical skill work, so moving all toward a rating of skill excellence.

How analytical do you think you as coach have to be of a player's performance?

I watch with interest here and overseas the selectors and coaches gauging performance, so that I might improve my own capacity to analyse performance. At group, district and zone level and as recently as 2019 at state trials bowls competitions, most of the analysts seem to view performance with clipboards ticking and crossing every bowl delivery, which I seem to find a bit limiting for what I want to use to guide, assist and coach bowlers.

Perhaps my skepticism is guided by my preference to observe firstly with regard to the agreed game plan goals, and secondly the language and the senses at work out on that battlefield (green) as my major source of analysis, so as to use statistics to reinforce my observations.

However, I give some encouragement to those who would disagree with my preference of analysis.

For those of you who are 'stats' types, look at this interesting comparison I precised and analysed years ago from Australian Heineken Golf Classic won by Ernie Els over Peter Lonard and Paul Casey, a further 3 shots back.

Els driving average was 317m. compared to Lonard's 294m and Casey's 305m.

Els hit fairways 75% of time, Lonard 73% and Casey 85%.

Els average putting per round was 28, Lonard 29 and Casey 28.

Els birdie scores were 25, Lonard 17 and Casey 23.

Finally, Els sand bunker saves were 70% success, Lonard 50 % and Casey only 33%.

So, it is the analysis of the four-day tournament statistics that become important for these golfers and coaches to determine various game (situation) sense programs, that can either reinforce strong aspects of their competition or develop skill and decision making on process to improve on what was a deficiency for this Classic.

In Lawn Bowls my observation of others who compile stats is that it is all about data on a bowls distance from the target jack. Though valuable as statistics, personally, I am much more interested in chosen length of play, and success rate of these length choices, the number of bowls in a zone at a chosen length, the percentage of first delivery from the lead / singles player bowls ending within a mat width, ends lost with more than two shots, and scores per end to see if there is a pattern when winning and losing.

For example, in perusing the score cards from a recent elite event and determining how various teams compared to one of my (personal) goals of restricting losses to a maximum of two shots an end, I could note that one team played 54 ends and had eleven (11) ends with a losing score greater than two shots and dropped 39 shots, Compare that to another team that played 54 ends and had only five (5) ends with a score loss exceeding two shots dropped a total of 18 shots for the games. You can then deduct which team may be the more successful if that pattern continues.

If these were results for teams I coached in bowls competition, then, that first team may need mental and tactical skill training in minimizing losses using our recent performance to keep track of our progress. More so that skip and the use of his teammates would get specific coaching to address the issue.

All related to the game and the need for games sense training.

Lachlan Tighe 2020