

SKIP: Thinking (Hardly)

The Fours Team Skip is to assess the situation having seen his three-team members complete their contribution.

We are the interested team members at the head watching the Skip contemplate the situation before considering what has to be done.

What all of us should take account of in reaching the decision is:

Our suggested Fours team game plan was.....

...some simple expressions of the plan to be included.

And should refer to length, limit for losing ends, bowls in head, four player roles.

So the Skip, as we do standing at the head, asks questions accordingly to get a relevant decision:

Have we the agreed minimum number of bowls in the head.

Have we a back bowl.

What has opposition skip done with his previous bowl.

What do we expect our opponent will do as he has last bowl.

Where are we in the position / number of ends of the game (risk)

Being above the shoulders during the game: Trouble shooting in ‘battle’

- Devise and use a 2-end roll up checklist for yourself to be ready for ‘battle’.
- The value of drawing another to get even closer to the jack.
- The risk of drawing another that widens the head.
- The risk involved in any one delivery choice.
- Don’t be greedy – protect and defend, or decide to minimize / reduce loss damage.
- Where will the jack go if hit and what is the anticipated outcome.
- Draw for second / third shot when the opposition holds shot(s).
- Return to the basics if / when you become anxious or sloppy in standard.
- Avoid lapses by concentrating positively every time on the very next delivery.
- Be aware / alert to the times / situations where you could / do lose concentration in an event.
- Pace yourself mentally / emotionally throughout the match.

‘Attitude’

All about practising habits

Website menu: Tactics

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- Seeing is believing...a bowl wide or short or long needs adjustment and your eyes tell you the appropriate detail...register and physically correct and retain the revised picture.
- If a delivery is short, aim the next one to finish longer.
- Don't bowl short (repeatedly).
- Never underestimate your opponent, remind yourself you are in good company.
- Deliver every jack precisely to the required winning length.
- When your opponent goes beyond the head, cover the shot for insurance.
- Force your opponent to change hands.
- Force your opponent to cope with differing lengths.
- Losing a sequence of single shots may not require change if your team always had many more bowls in the head, yet lost to a solitary opposition bowl; the score will turn in your favour.
- When weight / length is poor, focus on shots one yard through and visualise this range.
- When opposition draws closest, focus solely on having more draw shots in the head per end.
- When opposition attacks your shot bowl every time, he could be attacking under pressure. Focus on having a minimum of 2 bowls in the head to keep up the pressure.
- When mistakes occur in the game, evaluate quickly and remedy during the game.
- If your jack delivery is inconsistent, continue to focus on the skill to meet requested length.
- If losing concentration, watch for reasons and have remedies to get back into future deliveries and the remaining game; set delivery objectives every 5 ends to assist your concentration.
- If a poor starter in events, prepare physically and mentally prior to the game and use the roll up ends to be "in the game" before anyone else and set objectives say for the first 5 ends.
- Red alert signs if making same mistake twice.
- If too many bowls are short, narrow or wide, create a red alert mechanism to reduce the volume of mistakes.

Attacking or maintaining the momentum

- Deprive the opposition the opportunity to deliver / drive easy winners.
- Use a margin for error when you attack.

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- Attack when you have an unassailable leading margin.
- Calculate the risk prior to attacking.
- Vary the tempo of the game.
- Drive to dominate the head and opponent.
- Always add shot when holding with one bowl to play.
- When your opponent wastes a delivery, add another to the head or score to make them pay.
- Choose the option delivery that gains another shot or forces the opponent into reduced options.
- Don't widen the head when holding.
- If as third, you call shots up and the opposition do not contradict this call, there is a possibility their bowlers have added tension because of the call staying in the 'system'.

Defending or chasing from behind

- Deprive the opposition the opportunity to deliver / drive easy winners.
- Play their shot before they get the opportunity (to convert).
- Mat positioning is an important strategy to use to defeat an opponent.
- The first battle is to get the mat and determine / dictate the strategy.
- Dominate the head with plenty of bowls in the head.
- Create opportunity with pressure bowls and positional play.
- When your opponent falls short, plug holes to limit his later attempt for entry into the head.
- Use a smooth delivery and play a safe shot when losing big numbers.
- Do change a losing game – consider changing hands, player delivery options and length.
- Tactics are the balance to defend / attack, position / pressure, add to count / cover.
- Play 75% defence, 25% attack.
- Be patient: build heads and look for and anticipate opportunities.
- Take time if losing badly, recover mentally / emotionally (Bryant).
- Don't attack by driving with one bowl in the head.
- Don't attack immediately where opponent has a resting toucher.
- Do widen the head if opponent holds resting toucher.
- Know when to play 'in the draw' or a block to hang onto shots.
- Push bowls plug holes - push up our short bowls and plug holes to disallow opposition entry.

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- Subtle move of the mat, one mat length forward / back from the prior location may catch opposition and having them falling short or just going through if we are fully alert to our ploy.
- In teams, refrain from indicating negative scores / calls so simply stating that...we are down...is ample prior to specifying the direction of a delivery.

Lachlan Tighe, 2016

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