

## **Deliberate Practice Is Better Practice**

I first wrote about the term ‘deliberate practice’ in 2013 and I note I have written again a few times since 2013.

We in Australia recently witnessed the completion of the AO 2021 and I wonder if the winners are those players who did the most in better practice, as individuals or teams, not more practice.

Famous Australian AFL coach, Alan Jeans, was asked once by a bowler as to how they could improve. Jeansy answered, ”Don’t practice more, practice better”.

This article intends to emphasize the value of better practice. And deliberate practice is just that, better practice.

I am of the view regular practice, or practising more, reinforces and maintains current skills.

Deliberate practice is the better practice model to allow you to:  
Reach higher levels of performance,  
Gain more success under your belt,  
Improve skill more quickly and permanently.

If you are bowling solely for fun and don’t care too much about higher levels of improvement, you don’t need deliberate practice sessions. You don’t even need to do any practice having that (valid) mindset.

Deliberate practice is better as much because it is structured with a view, or purpose, to improving a skill in a session or sessions.

And the skill is measured so you know your progress.

If you want to develop your skill as a bowler, or even reach the much higher performance levels, you need to have a purpose for every session. And it may take a handful of sessions to achieve a measurable and noticeable improvement in a skill.

Oh, might I say if you are not being coached in a supervised session, the above comment is probably not being done too efficiently, too effectively.

**website Column**  
***deliberate practice is better***

I once observed a player, now in the Jackeroos squad, who I thought was typifying my 'practice more' model as he was time inefficient and standard ineffective.

Had he a coach on the green with him, both those concerns would have been erased from my observations and no doubt his session would have fitted the 'better practice' model.

And yet he is good enough to be in the national squad.

Elite athletes in teams in other sports spend unusual amounts of time on solitary skill practice.

No issue with our young Jackeroo, the issue is my perception, where I see it as more practice, not better practice, a big, big difference.

In my network of elite coaches beyond bowls, it has been put to me that if a player is ever bored or tuned out in a session they are likely not practising in a deliberate manner.

It should not be boring, though it can be a frustrating time, annoying, in striving to achieve the objective. Never boring.

Pushing ourselves as bowlers beyond the current limit, our current ability, is a challenge and so it should be.

My squad has a motto...no limits...which I hope they all strive for, though I know some still are not self challenging (enough).

But coach, you and me, we need to accept our part in the bowler development as we are the ones who:

Structure training,

Give it purpose,

Set the standards,

Provide the measures,

Train the player(s) game plan,

Relate training to game realities,

Foster the challenges,

Make it enjoyable, not boring to boot.

We need to know our obligation as the service provider to the keen bowler who is coached by us.

**website Column**  
***deliberate practice is better***

Might take this opportunity to suggest we coaches have the prime obligation to foster the merit of measuring performance, skill. Of pushing the button on game plans for players as training and for the teams they are in. Of organising sessions applied to the team position a player will be in for a future main event.

For the bowler to practice without their knowing if they have improved is a bloody waste of time, theirs and yours.

In business the saying is what gets measured gets managed, or something like that.

Deliberate practice is better because we do measure, in training and in competition. And you coach do that or create the environment where the players can do that.

Now the better practice is the deliberate model, because you the coach are there. You supervise, monitor and give the feedback necessary for the player improvement.

As coaches we do not have to be the best player as coaching and teaching is a separate skill.

It is a view expressed elsewhere in life the motivated student, read bowler, advances more quickly under the tutelage of the competent knowledgeable experienced personal coach.

One final point which I rally to...an attribute of a good coach.... is they are always a step ahead of the player. For example the bowler seeks to improve one skill but the coach determines the content and purpose is for something else as this 'else' has more long term impact on their overall improvement and the player's goals.

Be deliberate everyone, be better.

**Lachlan Tighe, 2021**