

Estimate Distance Skill **Measuring Depth Perception**

Even the 2018 Commonwealth Games illustrated how far we have to go to develop elite bowlers, let alone the regular bowler, in skills other than technical proficiency.

In this case it is the apparent lack of skill in estimating distance at the head from bowlers who are on the mat.

Over a period of 20 years I have included in (some) of my training aspects where those training had to judge a distance between a bowl and a jack or even a bowl and a bowl, and, do it from the mat.

And while I am on that, my current series of YouTube clips has one solely on the bowler telling you the viewer, within seven metres of the bowl leaving their hand, where their bowl shall end. This is another aspect of estimating distance.

Anyway back to depth perception, and training to acquire that skill.

I conduct a role play done on the green – players at the mat located, first at maximum distance, then at minimum distance, verbally advise how far the bowl is from jack.

Have a tall and a short player at the mat at the other end of the green and all squad members at your end to observe the validity of the advice and outcome.

The coach places a bowl about two metres in front of the jack, which means the players on the mat still have sight of the jack.

Coach rolls over the bowl one revolution toward the jack and asks if jack still visible to each player.

Continue rolling the bowl a revolution until the player indicates the jack is no longer visible.

Outcome of their calls is always, that experienced players know that you lose sight of the jack at maximum length when the bowl finishes on the rink line at a metre short, and minimum length when the bowl finishes on the rink line at a ML short.

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One unforeseen consequence from this training is the capacity for players when at the head to make better instant observations of which bowl is shot, etc., rather than the stupid practice of crossing fingers to 'read' the distances between bowls at the head.

Lachlan Tighe, 2018