

Elite Training Habits, Q# 1 and 2

As mentioned on the website, one of the players in our squad (pBus) did a bit of research during the covid lockdown about elite players and the manner of their training.

He reached out to numerous State, National and International players (23 in fact) to pick their brains and absorb as much information to adapt into his training regime to reach his goal.

The questions asked each player of interest was as follows:

- What have you found to be your most effective / successful training regime?*
- How do you plan each training session?*

Below are the responses to the two questions with player names deleted for privacy:

- Train with the number of bowls you have when preparing for team events.
- Shot selection and weight control drills are best for short training sessions.
- Set strict drills with no distractions.
- Work on weaknesses until it is fixed / sorted.
- Training with the best players possible and playing in lots of events with them.
- Get a coach and practice weaknesses with them (shots that don't work during games).
- Grouping drill (23/30) (caterpillar drill) or jack and 2 bowls drill.
- Caterpillar to start each training session.
- Jack and 2 bowls test, 40 bowl tests all recorded.
- Sunday would be when to draw up a schedule.
- Best drills include 40 bowl drill, grouping drill and jack 2 bowl drill.
- Jack and 2 bowl drill and game simulation.
- Practice each weakness until you are completely comfortable with it.
- Start each session with jack and 2 bowl drill.
- Small first to 11 games at a high intensity – play 3 games each worth some \$\$.
- Match practice is the optimal practice method (play jack where it lies).
- Depending on what event is coming up defines what skills will be worked on.
- Singles means roll up and do grouping drills.

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- Leif Selby tip in roll up, first jack roll, throw the jack to the comfortable length and play from there. (play your natural length).
- Find the best person you can and have a hit out as best preparation.
- Start ramping up training a month out from the competition date.
- Drills and weaknesses are training priority.
- Be adaptable and willing to change mid-session to work on immediate weakness.
- Drills 60%, Match play 40% of training time.
- Replicating pressure environments when training to emulate real game situations (scoring, drill %'s).
- 1%ers – exercise, diet, hydration, organisation, communication, planning.
- Always plan training sessions to work on weaknesses, play matches where she focuses on those weaknesses.
- Plan training a week in advance (calendar and excel spreadsheet).
- Always gear training towards the next major event to be played (singles/team event).
- Solidify your strengths, upskill weaknesses.
- Training 3 days per week.
- Ramp up training from 3 weeks before the event.
- Trained 4 times a week in younger days (mostly practice games).
- Bases each practice session around 2 things. What he struggled with in his previous game and secondly, what event he is playing in next.
- Plan the season in advance (decide on what events you really want to go after and build towards them).
- Work your practice schedule around the match schedule (aiming for 5 times playing bowls per week) (including games).
- If you need a small break during the season, that is fine as well.
- Keep practice sessions short and sharp (maximum of 90 minutes) break each session into 30-minute blocks.
- Skip practice includes, drawing to off centre jacks, drive to draw drills, draw to the ditch drills.
- Keep a good balance. Practice Tuesday, Thursday. Play Saturday and Sunday is either state games, club games or break days.
- Gym sessions are great to keep the mind and body focused and healthy for events.
- Always consider weather conditions when reflecting on a training session. Not every day will be championship level bowls.
- Always go to training with a focus in mind and something that you want to accomplish in the session.
- Repetition is a big part of her training regime.
- Singles practice includes setting up practice heads with 2 opposition bowls within a foot and play the end out (first to 11) (no driving) she

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- aims to win within 6 ends to put pressure on herself (repeats until successful).
- Shadow bowls are also another good way to practice for singles as this closely replicates a high-quality game of bowls where you only have 1 shot to execute the skill.
- Practice weaknesses in front of people to get comfortable with discomfort.
- Video your delivery every month and nit-pick it so you can make it great.
- Practice weaknesses routinely.
- Repetition until he is happy with how he is bowling for a specific skill.
- Practices by setting up heads with other bowls or playing a singles match against himself using 2 sets.
- Experiment Tuesdays (different lengths and shots), drills Wednesdays, Saturday morning before the game is finding rhythm.
- Doesn't plan for sessions, but has goals surrounding weaknesses that are to be met before he finishes.
- Drills, drills and more drills at the pressure of a game.
- Plans drills each month with the goal of completing 20 drills each month including 2x Jack and 2 bowl drills each week. Pick 2 others and that makes up the drills for the week.
- Drill circuits and bowls pyramids are also great.
- Plans sessions around skills needed for the next big event he is going to play.
- Make practice so difficult that the game feels easy in comparison.
- Out-practice your opponent to achieve the most success.
- Training specifically for upcoming events in the particular discipline that is coming up.
- Always include a drill in each session when planning it. Sometimes intensive drill sessions are appropriate.
- "We must be more intense and deliberate with our practice than in our matches".
- 90% of practice on his own, 10% match practice.
- Whole session of working on weakness (45-60 minutes).
- Works on rhythm, follow through, delivery preparation (routine) and also periods of experimentation.
- 2 main training philosophies, Match practice against quality players with something on the line and practicing with a bowl 20-30cm in front of the jack and aiming to draw shot. He doesn't finish the drill until he has drawn 4 bowls in a row in this distance.
- Plans training around his upcoming events and competitions, usually completing drills relevant for the skills he will be using in the game based on his position.
- Game based practice mixed in with specific drills that he records.

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- He adds or drops sessions based on how he is going, if he is going well, he will drop a session and if he isn't going well or has something that has to be worked on, he will add a session or 2.
- 6-week training block when coming up to major events

The website will provide all twenty three (23) player responses over the year 2023 in the WHAT'S NEW menu.

That is a lot of interviews and a wealth of information to all we bowlers, and coaches, and as good an insight as to how you the bowler can adjust your thinking, your approach to markedly improve your game based on this knowledge.

Keep an eye out for the next commentary on elite player training on this website.

Coach Lachlan Tighe, 2023