

High Performance
Summary of recommendations & observations, 2002-2014

RECOMMENDATIONS

(The recommendations that follow within seven categories are those I consider still have future application based on my international coaching, 2002-2014).

1. BOWLERS / PLAYERS

- Players to record their delivery skills rating, to gauge comparison to international level.
- Players to set, or be set, formal written objectives / goals for themselves for training and future competition and monitoring by the coach.
- An annual calendar of squad commitments necessary.
- Players to honestly appraise each of their performances to be able to compare it to an agreed goal and game plan.
- Training and player improvement is a joint responsibility - player and coach.
- Each player needs to have a personal coach who is accessible.
- Have player's revise and balance their competition schedule to less competition, and more constructive quality training time.
- Provide opportunity or reward for squad to compete in the Australian Open to enhance competitive spirit and reward performance and commitment.
- Squad members required to enter in selected domestic tournament events.
- For future events, players must have a prescribed game plan set by the skip, or by the player for singles.
- The players, having competed in championships, to use the experience to analyse their performances in both training sessions and the event.
- Require all bowlers to provide a report on their experience as a requirement for future selection.

2. COACHES

Audit - Coach content for player personal development programs:

- How to assess a game.
- Game plans for players in any event format.
- How to assess a players / team performance.
- What to watch for in a game.
- Training the skills in technical, tactical, mental, fitness and communication.
- Debriefing events.
- Goal setting for the players.
- Setting a calendar of commitments (chart) to plan for competitive success.
- Coach development - seminars, workshops; attendance at national camps; individual coaching skill; squad / team program skills; goals as coach.
- Identify and develop skilled coaches capable of servicing the squad member(s) spread around the country.
- Conduct a PD workshop on 'Communication Skills' in a forum both on and off the green for the targeted coaches to develop, improve or enhance their communication skills and capacity to impart that skill to squad players.
- Have to provide to the players what they NEED, not what they want in terms of preparation for success.

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- Coaches have to ingrain players with the need for skill development, and even time management skill. No one can help a player if the player has no goal, no coach assisting, and no feeling of what is a standard to aspire to in bowls.
- Changes should be introduced to move the attitude forward.

3. COACHING & TRAINING

- A planned training program is an essential obligation.
- Coaching for each individual member is a necessity.
- Provide more one on one training with the national coaching staff, additional to squad training sessions.
- Provide more selective training locally, for players being considered for overseas competition, on greens comparable to overseas conditions.
- Teaching games for understanding skill: The difficulty as elite bowls coaches is that the players already are operating at a higher level of both skill and competition. Thus it is a matter of ... hey I am already good enough. And players get there despite we coaches (never having helped them). And they do it playing plenty of games.
- Simulate difficult head and game positions, and train with repetition until the player can manage these mental and tactical skills.
- Coaching to be more 'directive' of players in planning and training, to ensure the players can apply their trained skills in all competitions – players be made aware their approach to training may influence their future selection.
- Coach to place more emphasis on training players for improved tactical, mental and communication skills for ongoing success.
- A physical training program for each player which can be planned, recorded, monitored and evaluated.
- Feedback and advice has to be positive, constructive and supportive in manner.
- There are mental and tactical skills, which players need to improve to compete adequately at World events, and these medals will not be gained by competition alone. If Bowls and the coaches do not address these mental and technical skill problems, then players will be no better qualified for the next international event.
- By practicing the positional shots required for excellence, by repetitive training.
- Provide the players with access to a sports psychologist, who can identify and improve those who are lacking the mental skills necessary for success.

4. COMPETITION

- Competition - rationalizing events to be suitable to national program; ranking events for priority within the country.
- Ensure accessibility for players for all national events, source new events.
- A budget that includes Squad tournament entries.

Lachlan Tighe, *Elbows* squad coach

email l.a.tighe@bigpond.com ph 613 9853 5497; 0409 532 953; www.lachlantighebowls.com

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5. CULTURE - a winning BOWLS & TEAM culture

- Dr. Bob Morford, a director of the Malaysian Institute of Sport, ISN, made a statement, along these lines, that profoundly affected the four of us; paraphrasing, it was on the assumption of the natural athletic talent, ...the success of a sport revolves around the (quality of) coaches.
- Stated elsewhere as ... coach driven programs.
- Bob maintained that the calibre of high quality coaches made the difference to all aspects of a HP program.
- Continue to foster the current successful culture and philosophy with special emphasis on securing and having quality people in your program.
- Continue to ask regularly - Do we have the right people (in their right playing and non-playing positions)?
- A winning sport culture to me is one where:
 - Players are ferocious in their desire and discipline.
 - Coach is honest with players in their approach in training and development.
 - Selectors are ruthless pragmatists in choosing the best players.
 - Everyone, whatever their role, is striving for success, sharing leadership.
 - Everyone, whatever their role, is working harder than others to win
 - Everyone, whatever their role, is teaming to win.
- Have the new squad members review and set the future objectives.
- The team leadership should be reviewed to ensure the appointed players have the qualities as the future of your team.
- An emphasis be placed on changing the attitudes and approach with the future squad members.
- **Change, for the better, for future success.**
- **Excellence** ... has never really gone out of fashion.
- The high performance culture to focus on the goals, values, attitudes and practices necessary to achieve the national outcomes of improvement and excellence for each individual and the team as a whole.

6. MANAGEMENT & HP PROGRAM

- Have a HP (high performance) committee that reflects the extended representation from all aspects of the high performance necessary contributions.
- Competition targets and goals be set and disseminated every future international event so players know what they are expected to aim for to retain squad positions.
- Educated through regular workshops to share team leadership / responsibility.
- Host a series of bowls workshops for coaches, bowlers, selectors, team managers.
- Establishment of a three-year calendar to the world championship events that includes:
 - Setting timelines and guidelines of action for the HP committee.
 - Selecting a squad of bowlers for that period.
 - Securing a consultant coach(s) at various times over that period, or
 - Appointing a national coach and recruiting other coaches.
 - Devising a schedule of national squad training camps for that period.

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Identifying national events for squad members to compete in that period.

Identifying international events for HP representation in that period.

- Identify and recruit relevant selectors for the future.
- Identify and recruit relevant coaches for the future.

Audit - Objectives

- Reality - which are top countries in each of the eight (8) playing formats.
- Reality - where is our country ranked in each of the eight (8) formats.
- Players - to each of you playing in any of the eight (8) formats, what do you think you can achieve in that competition format.
- The previous answer you gave is now the target, are you committed to achieve your own target.
- Structure / system - HP committee composition; terms of reference for committee; have a triennium calendar; expand funding; link clubs and association within HP; improve selection system providing some flexibility; pathways undertaken in all aspects of HP.
- Performance targets for the future can be realized if the HP program is fully funded, supported, implemented and all parties adhere to the obligations.
- All support personnel are to be at elite level in their field of operation.
- If players wish to be successful at World Bowls or Games, there are a lot of questions which players, coaches, support staff and selectors, (the team) must address. Would urge these discussions be done in a collective (team) sense to face up to the national deficiencies or else no improvement

7. SELECTION

- Selection criteria to be quite specific.
- Selection criteria important to squad morale so decisions are known by bowlers to be made on hard evidence (measurable results, skill ratings, behaviour, training).
- Early team selection assists in the nurturing of team spirit.
- Selection advice to squad members should be two (2) months prior to events and preferably be a three (3) month notice of advice.
- Selection criteria to include player compliance with formal coach requirements.
- Selection criteria to include a requirement of player setting goals for next year.
- Let not age be a determinant of whether players stay or go in the squad – performance, capacity to learn, improve and contribute are better criteria.
- Players be entered in tournaments to ‘trial’ them in team positions.
- Endeavour to have one selector (other than the coach) as a non-playing selector.
- Specific medal / performance target be set for every event format.
- Criteria to include a minimum base of skill rating – measuring the technical delivery skill of all bowlers.
- Criteria to include a measure of commitment per attendance at winter training, fitness sessions, recorded training performance.
- Criteria to include observable behaviour of improved attitude, game reviews, event performance and team spirit.
- Coach to be one of the selectors.

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- Take account of a player's history / behaviour at previous international events.
- Selection panel policy be reviewed annually.
- Player appraisals - selectors and coaches to be more aware of these components:
 - Skill competence - technical, tactical, fitness, communication, mental
 - Team orientation
 - Capacity to learn and alter behavior
 - Attitude, difference of committed to involved; leadership
 - Adequacy for international competitiveness
 - Requirements - goals, game plans, debriefs, statistics, self appraisal
- Rotation of players in (fours) teams be a regular feature of selection to minimise any notion of tribal protection of playing positions by the incumbent members.
- If the national squad players believe they do not see the need to improve their skill levels then the coach and selectors need to demonstrate the culture they want and remove the players from the squad.
- If the national squad players believe they are limited in the capacity to improve their skill levels because of work, or other, commitments because of restraints on time necessary to address these skill deficiencies, then the coach and selectors may have to revise the selection criteria to address this deficiency and sub-standard performance in skills.
- Countries will not win World Bowls or Games medals, unless team position specialists improve their requisite skills above their present level, and selectors identify players who have the dedication, skill, desire, commitment, motivation, and necessary work ethic, to be the best of the best.
- Selection panels be rostered in a season to 'rove' the specified events to observe squad players and spot talent prospects.

Who and what makes the best bowlers - Selectors?

The best bowlers as the right bowlers for any national squads in my mind will be those who are *elite* in mindset and are:

- Highly self motivated, first and foremost.
- Talented, with the capacity for a high(er) degree of skill.
- Focused on their established goals.
- Eager for improvement, coaching to pursue that improvement.
- Never ever satisfied, able to want to be better, always.
- Planned, prepared and trained with an intensity for success at elite level.
- Hungry to succeed and win.

Lachlan Tighe, April 24 2015