

Why the coaches need more say

At the elite levels of our sport, bowls, there needs to be modernization in coaching, selection, player training and preparation. It should start from the top, especially with the Commonwealth Games this year, 2018.

I shall stay within my area of passion / interest / knowledge. Coaching. And my comments refer to elite bowlers who are at premier league pennant level and above into international level.

Sir Clive Woodward is the famous rugby union world champion coach and on a podcast not too long back stated he could not coach a team that he didn't pick. The coach needs to have the power that comes as the selector and the coach. He found selectors of little value and was confounded by selectors roles and power as it is evident in cricket and bowls.

Selectors in bowls to me use two criteria: self-interest and prejudice. Gee, I hark back to national level squash mid-1980s when those criteria were in vogue at the selection table. Fortunately that changed 1985 when in squash we (I was a board member) made the head coach sole selector with others advisory to him.

A mate of mine in talking early this year to a former Hawthorn AFL footballer, coincidentally talking about selection in football, who played in their trio of national premierships, said his head coach took major responsibility for selection, with advisors to bounce off. That coach had a ripper selection approach FIFO fit in or f&*# off.

Once we get to premier league level and above, the coach at that level needs to be truly accountable and responsible, whereas selectors and skips of teams seem to get more of the power, whether they take the responsibility is another thing.

We see a lot of young players become skips based on the selectors viewing their natural talent as the reason for that role. The skills a head coach would seek, coach and imbue are the other skills of equal value: tactical, people, mental. New young skippers need guidance and the coach is the prime person given to do that job.

At international level many countries have a coach at the end of the rink steering the play on behalf of the team and the skip, unfortunately. The coach selects players who can perform in the position and they are coached

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to perform the role. The skip thus has to set a plan for the game(s) and with the coach train with the team to apply it to their best on the day. You don't

want to continue seeing players play the game to suit the preferred strategy of selectors, the old school approach.

Momentum in our events can be won or lost (momentarily) within one to two ends or about 10-15 minutes. Coaching the skips to recognize this change, to address it by training for it is imperative. A coach will perceive the players who do not adhere to this attitude and can use their responsibility to opt not to choose that player in the team, squad.

Lachlan Tighe, 2018