

Avoiding Slow Starts

Let me start by saying if I had the formula I would sell it to any bowler.

What appears below is based on my reacting to many of my squad of bowlers who uttered the concern about slow starts in events and, in the case of a few expressing the concern, these players are national champions, so the concern flows from the lower level to the top level of bowlers.

No one is exempt.

Overcoming the concern is the solution everyone seeks.

The causes, the remedies

Starting (too) slowly in competition is a curse.

Starting too slowly in competition is a cause for concern, a cause for losing.

THE ISSUE What causes slow starts?

Lethargy going onto the green for the contest.

Bringing your pessimistic or lethargic mood to the event.

Fear and concern about the pending result,

Distracted by external things: weather, domestic issues,

Over reaction to a technical mishap in warm up deliveries,

Surprised by the opposition's start,

Irritated by a team\mate at the time,

No tool to arouse yourself pregame,

No plan ready to overcome that slow start issue,

Overreacting to the scoreboard, not the process.

REMEDIES - Suggested to overcome slow starts

Pre-delivery routines as the focus,

Physical warm up immediately pre-game,

Don't sit down before the game - walk around, stretch, limber, soak up cues on the green,

Set mini goals - maybe the first bowl of each end to be a resting toucher.

Allow yourself the first two ends to 'shoot the breeze' to emotionally find your rhythm as much as physically finding it.

Elbows- attitude, all about practicing habits

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Avoiding slow starts

If you are a back end player in a 4s team, be hyperactive supporting the team to fill the void before it is your turn to deliver.

Rehearse yourself storming out of the starting blocks.

Mindset... 'This bowl in my hand is the best bowl about to be delivered.'

Accommodating slow starts tactically by constant length choice, same hand deliveries, slight weight choices all about ease of rhythm and feel, physically and mentally.

Within your game plan (you do have one don't you???) account for the emotional factor of starting slowly so that your plan includes an A plan, the B plan and the C plan. The C plan might be the first one used to take account for the slow starts, as this level of plan is your fall back plan when shit happens: in this case from the beginning.

Record your effective delivery performance and compare it to what would be your normal average (This is a concept foreign to bowlers, but the squads I coach all do this processing.)

Forget the scoreboard and record how the measured effective deliveries are going and ramp up that level (effective deliveries) as you proceed in the event.

If the tempo of the first ends is not to your liking, adjust it to make an impact on the slow start and your capacity to get into the game, quickly.

Oh, and the most important remedy-train, yes train, for this expectancy to know the tool you can use quickly to overcome the start.

EXAMPLES FROM EXPERIENCE

Today, you arrive and find you are very lethargic.

Think

- I take control over this mood, such as... Hey this is important being here.
- Change the mood while there is time beforehand, to an attitude of positivity.
- Visualize the game, your effort for it, your best.
- Be tough, be ready.
- Keep busy, talk a lot if it helps.
- Keep working hard. Do the little team things as others depend on you.
- Energize yourself, if in a team, then the others.

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Bugger, the first 4 ends of the game are a haze.

Think

- Forget those and set a mini-goal to next four ends.
- Focus on achieving a percentage in the set zone as an example.
- Relax in your own way, do you know how you do that ??? (check yourself).
- Get involved in the game with the teammates, laugh, cheer and talk.
- Get that effective delivery scorecard out and set a target to better than performance the next four ends.
- As a team member, remind yourself of the expected role you are to perform and set sail again.

From end one to this fourth end you played a poor first delivery every end, now you prepare again.

Think

- Pre-delivery and perfect execution recalled mentally and physically,
- Balance, calm, focus, skillful execution,
- Been there done this, now finish the job,
- Set a mini-target of getting 25% of first deliveries in as a minimum the next four ends.
- Set concern in opponents' mind by your persistent skill recovery being on display.
- If a team event, set confidence in the teammates minds by that persistent recovery display.
- Often said, the game is about detection and correction - I can do just that.

A final thought, very moment counts, but when yours come, be ready.

Lachlan Tighe, 2021