

*Bowls Website menu- Q&A*  
*Taking training into the game*

## **Taking Training Into Competition**

### **QUESTION**

This question I posed myself to fellow coaches I am in regular contact with. How can we guarantee that our training (standard) can be taken into competition games?

And that was revised by one of them, as his question is. What were you actually practicing on Thursday and what do you now need to practice to rediscover your 'pb' of 52% effective bowls?

### **RESPONSES**

(Mine and some from other coaches)

I well recall a world cup coach saying, when we get thrashed go out and have a beer.

When we win, especially an important one, sit down and analyse what we do so well.

My game Saturday as a lead in the fours team was the worst ever recorded, ever.

One of the new lines I added on my weekly analysis was to account for our front end being at worst, second shot by the time both front ends had finished; both as a tool to exert pressure on opponents and as a guide as to how we are helping our back end.

Last weekend, it was our second who did all that good work as I just happened to be a member of the front end team. Yet after 13 ends we were 14-14 and I only had 3 contributions from 28 though my damn jack rolling was spot perfect.

Our collective wheels fell off those last 8 ends, but I am sure the three boys got sick of carrying me, poor buggers.

Our side 4 rinks is always in the hunt till about end 14 so it seems to be we lose the steel to persist.

However, training during the week I was BOG and put in a three-hour effort Thursday, come the game the player who attended was not the LTighe from Thursday, perhaps a ring in I think. And we played at my old club on superb greens.

## ***Bowls Website menu- Q&A Taking training into the game***

Anyway, back on the training track keeping the game in perspective whilst enjoying the red wine.

Legendary AFL premiership coach, Alan Jeans, said something similar after we had been given a thrashing one day. We are all human beings, we have the occasional poor day, we have the occasional shocker, as long as we are having more good days than shockers, ignore it, move on, "You don't lose your skills in a week son!"

One of my coach colleagues gave this insight.

Reading with interest what has been happening since the Victorian Open at Shepparton. Found getting back into the groove from the quick surface over the week not an easy task, even though my head was telling me what I should be doing and the eyes (these days through glasses) telling me all I needed to know. Last Saturday got on the positive side but was disappointed with myself for taking too long to adjust.

Over many years of playing competitive sport I have found there are players who do all the right things on track, but often when in the field of battle fall apart. Front-end simulations are great in practice. I emphasize this aspect at training and focus on what I call "Land the Mat".

There have been front-end combinations at training who fire and look set for a great game on the Saturday, so I ask the question what is missing when this doesn't happen?

We need to remember that the front end is not an isolated unit. It is the first half of the team, so if Thursday training is being set and done by the front without the skip you are missing the point. The skip in the main controls the agenda; game plan, calls the shots, makes the decisions, determines the strategy, etc.

A second comment was:

One example from pennant competition last Saturday. I have encouraged the selectors to promote a couple of promising bowlers into the second side under my guidance as skip. The lead was playing his second game, the second her first game. Both had not played at this level. At training I did repetitive drills with them to "Land the Mat" over minimum

## ***Bowls Website menu- Q&A Taking training into the game***

and Maximum length. Emphasis was on pre-delivery and delivery technique, staying down on the mat and extending down the line.

I reinforced the notion to make each bowl count, land the mat and finish with bowls behind. Their practice on both short and long ends was excellent.

On the basis of training I thought we would play well as a team. (We did win be seven shots). During the course of the game, both front-end players were struggling to produce their Thursday practise form.

We had a mid-game break.

Coming back to resume the competition, the second who was playing her first game said to me that the lead playing his second game was struggling with the change of length, min to max and vice versa.

This was a strategy we had discussed and was employing against our opposition. On reflection she was also finding adjusting to length change challenging. I am glad she provided this feedback because knowing this I was able settle the front-end down and started to get the bowls from them that I knew they were capable of producing.

I might also add that I should have picked up that things were not working as expected though we did meet at times on changeover to talk about things.

I think it was a big ask by me to expect a two-gamer and a one-gamer to adjust so dramatically to length change.

I guess what I am saying is that you can practise as much as you like, but if it doesn't fit in with the game plan that the skip is going with then the real benefits of training may well not be realised.

The great teams in all forms of sport, business etc. play as one not as individuals or groups within the unit and take into account the experience and confidence that team members have in meeting expectations of performance.

And a third coach commented:

I find the large majority of club bowlers have inconsistent performances because they do not have 'feel' as part of either their pre-delivery, delivery or post delivery routine. If you ask most club players to play the same shot again they can't because they have no real idea of what they did the first time and that is partly because the only thing they are interested in is the result (where in the fact the only thing they should be interested in is the process that got them there).

***Bowls Website menu- Q&A  
Taking training into the game***

And that in no small way is because they do not train with that purpose in mind.

**Lachlan Tighe, 2017**