

Skips, not again

Skips, Not Again!!!

Well, 2022 and I played a few games of domestic club pennant.

First time since 2017.

In a lower pennant grade. Good fun, no great fun, with new bowlers.

But oh my god, this is the bowls competition arena where you acquire all the bad habits and more so from that person at the other end, the skip.

I got the gig being a skip of one rink team.

Why do we need skips in fours teams, specifically pennant teams?

Examples of the issues: the skip

As we invariably were at clubs with a number of teams competing, I get to sporadically see and observe upwards of 100 players from each of the games, well beyond the 32 competing for our side and their side in our direct event, and I have witnessed a series of eyebrow raising, dreadful situations this season, which are all too familiar to all of you:

Over anxiety of the skip displayed in really negative or angry verbal / body language.

Negative component in the calls, or, telling the player what they can see (did incorrectly).

A bloody bad mouthed, bad tempered skip ripping shreds off fellow team mates.

The sniping, undermining skip snidely making asides to adjacent team skip and getting stuck into the efforts of the players, doing so from a safe distance at the other end might I add.

Skips off whining to the selectors about fellow teammates in the rink, yet, not 'having the balls' to discuss with these fellow players that performance.

Skip wandering off to have a fag (smoke), or sitting on a chair from the bank, directing.

Skip the top team letting lead set the length - game plan existence, application (different at lower grades where such skill is still a work in progress).

Skips, not again

Skips with no game plan.

Skips unable to sense the conditions, the behaviours of players, us or them.

Skips who have no back bowl end after end and wonder why they lose multiples.

Skips who tell selectors he blames the front end for the team loss.

Skips who allows the length to be anywhere.

Skips who does nothing to energise the team when losing (badly).

Skips who drive anyway as he blames the others in the team for the situation.

Skips who are tactically deficient, bloody useless to be exact.

Skips who have as much personality as this computer screen.

Skips who do not embrace the club training program.

Skips who are poor role models to newer players seeking best practice and good sportsmanship, in the sport.

Skips who are defeatist at the first sign of a contest by the opposition.

Skips with totally unrealistic expectations of their players at certain levels.

Skips who have no idea of the skills set, or defects, of any one team member.

Skips who fling the mat wildly at completion of an end, no regard for club property.

Skips who are so, so bloody serious.

Skips who are inanimate, not showing any glee when a colleague does a good bowl.

I reckon we lay the blame for all of the above on..... ***selectors***.

Sure, there is a dearth of players available to fill all the club sides.

Sure, 25% of the players have to be skips, many of whom lack either the ball skill, or, the people management skill, or sometimes lack both skill sets.

Fancy allowing any team in any sport to go out on the playing field (green) with no plan as to how we play the game to use our players to WIN.

Fancy allowing any team in any sport to go out on the playing field (green) and be allowed to be roundly abused and embarrassed by a skip simply as you the player have limited skill or experience.

And selectors can encourage the team to train together which requires the selectors to finalise teams before the final training session of the week to

Skips, not again

complete the cycle.

If skips have no game plan, well, why shouldn't each player on the mat have all the choice about what to deliver next bowl as there is no rhyme or reason to the skip decisions.

Some of you will say it is about holding shot, or getting shot every delivery.

Not so.

We only need to be holding shot when all deliveries are complete for that end.

A former Australian cricketer was recently asked in his capacity as a fast bowler what allowed him to be successful and his answer on TV was that he had skippers who had a plan, knew what they wanted from him, and he knew his role.

I would add if you know the plan during the week you can train, with your team, to hone your skill for the role you will play in the fours bowls team at the weekend.

The bloody skips want the role, bugger me they don't want the responsibility that goes with it.

You, selectors, need to improve your capacity to decide - look at the people who can manage others, not the supposedly ball skill of the player, especially at lower grades.

You want people to return next season, then allow them to enjoy the game, the pennant experience, with good natured people as skips.

Lachlan Tighe, 2022.