

AURIOL BOWLING CLUB



How to play to win Being Effective as a Team Player in a Bowls Four's Game

TRAINING A BOWLING FOURS

Playing with three or four team mates is very different from singles or pairs, and for many people it is the best way to enjoy bowls. Four's is the particular favourite, and is far and away the most common form of the sport. The Team that is selected must each be suited for their ability to play in the position they are selected for. So careful consideration must be given to the role they are

being asked to perform. To examine how that is achieved it is best to analyse how that is to be accomplished so they can contribute to the Team effort.

The problem comes in many bowling clubs is that the accent is on Club Internal Competitions and judgement of a player's ability is made on their prowess in those competitions, but they are all singles matches. One against one!!!

When playing against just one other competitor the mindset is all about you getting control of the game; for you must win and only you know how to do that. It is the same in any sport when it is a singles game.

In the Team game there is no place for individualism. There is no "I" in Team, but there is in win. Each member of the Team must be selected where their playing skills maybe best utilised. The ability to play in each position is very much a skill in itself, while at the same time interlocking with the other members of the team and their skills and ability.

All players in the Team when coming to the mat in their turn must look at the Skip, observe and follow the Skip's instructions and not be in too of a much of a hurry to make their delivery.

The answer to this problem is finding Bowlers willing to come together for coaching and training into the right mindset and spirit of being team players and finding their best position in the team.

One of the key tools in this process is Friendly Matches: they are the life blood of the Bowls Club and the place to start to put into practice what has been learnt in training together in the coaching sessions. All for one and one for all.

Lead

What must be emphasized here is the importance of the draw shot. This makes it a natural starting point for the novice. They invariably have only been coached in, line and length and have yet to have gained enough experience to progress to another Team position. However, there is a tendency to wish to progress up the Team order. The idea of moving to No.3 or Skip is promotion - it most definitely is not! Playing in a position where your skills and experience count is how to give the most benefit to the player and the Team. Do not rush to get to another team position. The Lead must be able to place the mat and the jack where the Skip requires and then draw their shot to the jack and to stay in that Team position to hone their two draw shots into getting onto the jack with consistency.

Maintain Team strategy by following the Skip's direction in the line with the Team's game plan in placing the mat and sending the jack down to the length being asked for. Must be able to vary line and length at will.

The lead has an additional duty, if their team has won the end to get the mat down and be ready to deliver the jack with minimum delay or having lost the end take the collector and to collect up the bowls with assistance of other players ready for the next end.

No. Two

Having stressed the importance of the 'Lead' that is still the best position for the novice, not just for their sake, but because the demands on the No.2 are too great. No.2 is the anchor of the team, faced with the task of either consolidating a good position or salvaging a bad one. Whatever the position of the bowls, No.2 must do all in their power to leave their No.3 a dominant position to play from. So, No.2 must not only be a good draw player, but

must be able to vary line and length at will. Drawing onto the jack or putting in that all-important blocker as required.

If your Team won the end to put up the score on the score board.

No. Three

It is impossible to describe the role of the No.3 in purely bowling terms. As far as that aspect is concerned, it is enough to say that the No.3 must be an all-round good bowler, since he will face every conceivable situation when coming to the mat. No.3 must take and accept the direction of the Skip to play the shot whether to score or block as is required. One essential is a clear and decisive ability to read the head and be able to give the Skip clear indication where it best for the Skip to deliver their bowl into the head.

Have a brief exchange of information with the Skip as they meet each other in the change of ends. A No.3 also has the responsibility of measuring (knowing and able to use bowler's string measures, tape, callipers and feeler gauges as required) and in deciding the number of shots to be awarded to either side in conjunction with the opposing teams No.3.

Inform your Skip of the score after the count.

Skip

Fairness and tact. The good skip will display all these, and any other favourable attributes that the circumstances demand. The Skip's primary task is to provide his team with purposeful direction. From the opening bowl to final shot the skip must be guiding and leading the team. For this the Skip has to be able to read the head and make quick decisions and pass to the members of his team a clear indication as to where the Skip wants them to deliver their bowls so that they come to rest at the right place in

the head. The Skip has the most important and arduous task of the team. Whilst the Skip's two bowls may not be more important than anyone else's, coming when they do in the order of delivery of their bowls, they can hardly be less important.

Maintain the score on the score card in conjunction with the opposing Skip

The Quality of Leadership

At this point there is a need to look at the relationship of the Skip with the rest of the team. The Skips must conduct themselves in their communication with Team in such a way as to inspire in them a feeling of confidence and high morale; inspiring in the Team the belief that they too can achieve the same goals as the Skip wants to achieve. So that even when they lose, the Team morale remains intact. The Skip must give advice where it is helpful, instruction where it is required and encouragement at all times. The Lead must come to the mat in a positive frame of mind. Generally, the Skip will select the length of jack they want the Lead to deliver, but not always. Sometimes Skip will allow the Lead to choose their own length of jack.

The length of the jack is a tactical matter involving the team as a whole (bearing in mind the two objectives of suiting your team and frustrating the opposition). The same holds true for placement of the mat

Moment of Decision

When the Skip comes to bowl, the game comes to its inevitable climax. The tactical considerations can be many, and the Skip will rely on No. 3 to help in the decision making; as in weighing up the possibilities. It is at this juncture where the relationship between the No.2 and No.3 is at its most critical, and where No.3

requires a subtle as well as an astute mind. While wanting to provide the best possible advice, No.3 should not shrink from trying to persuade the Skip of the correctness of their views. For not only has the Skip to make the final decision as always, but this time has to deliver the bowl themselves.