



BIOMECHANICS IN LAWN BOWLS

A CONSISTENT DELIVERY

For several years now various comments have been made about the way I deliver the bowl and in particular the direction my feet are pointing. My response to this is that my feet need to be in a position that will allow me to be most stable at the point of delivery and at the same time creates the best position for me to swing my arm in a straight line.

I know we are not all built the same and I don't expect everyone to bowl like me. You only have to watch some of the professionals to see the differences in their deliveries. The one thing that is a common factor for these bowlers is that they are very balanced and this allows them to be very consistent in their delivery.

Now this article is presented to open up discussion with fellow bowlers, and our coaches if necessary; to provide food for thought, and maybe, get you to think a little bit "outside the square"; particularly if you are having problems being consistent with your delivery. There could well be other thing to consider that will result in being more consistent and produce a more reliable and repeatable delivery. We often talk about balance, straight arm, release point, position of the eyes, stare point, etc. but what are the actual causes of us having problems with any of these parts of our delivery?

There was a very interesting article in the August 2008 edition of the Bowls NSW magazine. It talks about the biomechanics in the sport of lawn bowls and says an examination was needed to discover the basics that are to be found in the techniques of successful bowlers, regardless of their individual idiosyncrasies. It concludes that there are fundamentals in successful bowlers that enable them to produce and maintain consistency. In particular it lists; - Develop a simple,

smooth swinging delivery style; - at the moment of release, body movement should be at a minimum, if not at all; - and **balance and stability is essential**.

I think we can all relate to the simple, smooth swinging delivery style and we have some members in our own club that are fine examples. If your delivery isn't simple and smooth then why not ask yourself the questions: 'why not?' and 'can someone help me?'

Then ask yourself: 'is your body movement at a minimum at the time of release?' Some forward movement (not too much or too little), is not usually a problem but any sideways or excessive vertical movement probably is. If you are having this problem then can you identify the cause? The answer for this could be one of many reasons including balance and stability as mentioned above and below. Don't be frightened to ask one of our coaches for help.

So what do we know about the balance and stability at the moment of release? A three legged stool is always stable; ask any dairy maid! But we only have two legs and therefore the position of the feet at the end of these legs becomes critical. Have you ever considered that in order to take a step, and lift one foot off the ground, then you have to transfer all of your weight onto the other leg. Try walking slowly without moving your weight from one leg to the other.

Most people take a step during their delivery so they are transferring all of their body weight to the back foot (anker foot) and then back to the leading foot progressively with most of the weight ending back on the leading foot. This can quite easily result in too much body movement and poor balance at the time of delivery. Is the step too long or too short and in the right direction, and are there positions that the body and or the feet can be in, that might help? There could be other reasons affecting the delivery like crook knees, etc. that we can't do much about, but then again maybe there are other solutions that could be considered.

An interesting point that is made in the article is: *'that the 'feet in line position' – is effectively a tight-rope situation, which is the least favourable as far as balance is concerned. So initially it becomes a priority that we each establish a delivery*

stance that will give us the most stability and balance in order to swing the arm in a straight line.'

In addition to this the article also suggests that if we can position ourselves so that our eyes are over the delivery arm, then the aiming line and the delivery line become one and the same. Another benefit! The article also mentions: and I quote: *'What is important with the step is that it must be "towards the aiming/focus point", so that the body's centre line also moves down and along this imaginary aiming line thus enabling both forehand and backhand deliveries to be identical, it also enables a straight through swing of the arm towards the aiming/focus point and avoids the risk of "hooking" across the body or "steering" away from the body as the bowl is released.*

Importantly, it allows the eyes to remain vertically over the bowl at the moment of release.' Unquote.

Another important point is mentioned above and that is for both forehand and backhand deliveries to be identical. One of the messages we try to get across to bowlers is to **think of delivering the bowl in a straight line** and let the bowl do the work. If you can deliver the bowl so that at the point of release the intention is for the bowl to travel in a straight line then the forehand and backhand deliveries should be identical.

If you have any question in relation to this article or anything you would like to discuss then please make an appointment. Only kidding!! We are here to help any time.