



## **GAINING AN ADVANTAGE**

1. Think positive about your contribution.
2. Communication within the team.
3. Making good use of the trial ends (Roll-up).

Our efforts through our normal coaching programs are generally geared to try to help bowlers with their delivery techniques; we also encourage various shot practice, etc. and we offer the 32 bowl test to highlight strengths and weaknesses so that bowlers can determine what they need to practice.

With the next Pennant Season fast approaching I thought what else can we do to try and gain some sort of advantage over our opponents?

No doubt you can all think of a few; some legitimate & some – well – might be referred to as dirty tricks.

When I first thought about this, three points initially came to mind and I decided I would just talk about these.

The three points I want to mention are:-

1. Think positive about your contribution and your commitment to the position you are selected in.
2. Communication within the team.
3. Making good use of the trial ends (Roll-up).

I want to start with the Roll-up.

Obviously it is the start of the game; but the main reason for me to mention this is that I believe it is an important part of the game and I do not believe a lot of our bowlers use the roll-up to their advantage.

What is the good of having a roll-up if you are not going to try and learn something from it?

In fact each week I get more and more frustrated as a skip when during the roll-up I see bowlers turning their back on the bowl and I have noticed some people are already stepping on to the bank before their bowl has come to rest.

When we teach new bowlers to bowl, we always tell them to watch the bowl until it comes to rest. This is so that you can try to make the necessary adjustments – be it line or length.

During the roll-up the most important thing to concentrate on is the amount of grass required for the draw shot. You must watch where your bowl finishes so that you know how much adjustment is required. With only 2 bowls in pennant games this is even more critical. The director at the head should be indicating how far through or short your bowl is so that you can also register that information for subsequent ends.

In the June 2004 edition of BOWLS NSW under the heading 'Coaching'; the article on the subject 'Basic Tactics' by Ken Field made particular reference to trial ends. He said, and I quote 'Full length ends are better to assess the conditions on the day and the draw grass required.'

The emphasis here being the 'DRAW GRASS REQUIRED'.

The increasing habit of "one end roll-up" is not helping in training us to make the most of the roll-up. If we are going to get serious about trying to do well in our games we should also train to make good use of this part of the game.

I keep using the term roll-up only because it is what we hear on the greens. I think we should stop thinking of it as just a roll-up and think TRIAL ENDS and use them to our advantage.

That is the end of part one – If we all take note then it is:-

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The second point I want to talk about is:-

Thinking positive about your contribution and your commitment to the position you are selected in.

How often have we heard the comment of how important a good lead is and how good bowls from the lead will put pressure on the opposition?

It is very true. And I will give you a very good recent example in a moment.

It can also be said that good bowls from the lead will take some of the pressure of the second who can then concentrate on either adding to the head or putting bowls behind the head. Depending on what the skip wants. More pressure on the opposition.

And so on through the team. Each player making a commitment and contribution to the position they are playing in.

It is true and it is of no value when we hear comments like 'I'm only a lead and my bowls never stay in the head anyway.'

When we were recently playing down in Tumut I was asked to skip a team with Andrew Caswell as lead, Bill Fletcher as second and George Thompson as third.

Andrew played such a good game he virtually destroyed the opposition on his own.

He out played the other lead almost every end with very good bowls and therefore put pressure on the opposition throughout the game. He never let up and gradually, through their body language and their comments I knew they were a beaten side well before our game was over.

In fact we all played well and I could even afford the luxury of a wrong bias.

We capitalized on Andrew's good work, it motivated us and we were able to play strategic bowls to protect or enhance our position.

It wasn't just the bowls; it was also the affect that it had on us as well as the opposition.

What I am suggesting here is how important each bowler is in their selected position and how we can take advantage of this by being positive about our contribution to the side.

Think positive about what you can contribute to your team.

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There is one main difficulty that I see in achieving this and that is that in order to get that bit extra from our bowlers we don't want people playing in positions they don't like.

If asked; a lot of our bowlers will say they don't mind what position they play and most people will still do their best. However, If you are selected in a position that you are not happy with, then it is very hard, if not impossible, to give of your best and make that commitment to the team.

What I am going to suggest is that if anyone finds themselves in this situation then the solution is to talk directly to one of the selectors or pass their concerns to the selectors through their skip.

We need that commitment to the position.

The last thing I want to talk about is communication within the team.

I don't mean talking socially, supporting one another and motivating each other; even though these are very important in their own right.

What I am talking about is communicating to get an advantage.

One of the things I found useful as a skip was getting my second and third to sometimes indicate which hand they thought was best for the next delivery.

The skip often has a few options and in order to get the best possible result, I believe, in most cases, the bowler should play the shot he/she sees.

In the event the skip does not want him/her to play that hand then it becomes important for the skip to communicate to the bowler the reason why they should not play that hand or explain the reason why the other shot is the better option. A good explanation is more likely to get a good result. If the bowler has difficulty with this choice then he/she should go to the head and discuss the options with the skip. You are more likely to succeed with a shot you are happy to attempt.

Also; during the game the conditions may change like the speed of the green, and as soon as someone notices it, I would suggest they mention it to their team. If the lead notices it first then he should communicate this to the second and third. If he does not have the opportunity to mention it to the skip then the third should, during the time when they would normally communicate as they change ends.

The last important point I want to make is the following.

If the skip or any of his team notices that there is a problem/inconsistency with part of the green that is affecting someone's bowls then they need to communicate this to each other so that the skip when deciding what shot to play can take this into consideration.

It is communicating to take advantage of the situation.

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GAME SET AND MATCH.

Roy Gallop