

# Tactics

**A team or each rink should have knowledge of execution of advanced shots and discuss building a head.**

Assess the strengths and weaknesses of opponents

Choice of shots

When to play shots

What are the risks?

Length of end

Green conditions (wind, wet, and speed of green)

Tactical skill is basically the exercise of common sense and the avoidance of poor decisions

If coaches are to teach tactical skills, they need to start early in a bowler's development !

## **Team cohesion**

Ability to create team harmony

Skips should avoid an egotistical approach and adopt a consultative approach to team tactics

Discuss team tactics before games

Get to know what feedback the team members may wish to get: (distance from the jack etc.)

Discuss length of ends to be played

Take advantage of strengths of seconds and thirds

Communicate well with all team / rink members

**A team or each rink should discuss what shots to be play to hypothetical heads**

Tactical skill is the exercise of common sense and the avoidance of poor decision making

When players become skips they can tend to ignore instructions on tactical methods. They prefer to direct their team on the basis of strengths and weaknesses which they have gained by experience.

**"A champion team will beat a team of champions"**

## **Tactical awareness**

Think about your game. During the trial ends get a feel for the green conditions E.g. wind directions. Find out which is the kinder hand. The team should become alert to any variation in rink conditions and place the jack accordingly.

Players should be mindful of the need to avoid short bowls. Avoid bowling narrow bowls especially when holding shot. Leaders should avoid bowling "around the clock" stay on the one side which has been agreed to be the kinder hand.

Leaders and seconds should draw to the jack unless a defensive call is made by the skip. Do not niggle; this can result in a loss of bowls in the head.

Avoid hurrying your delivery. This may only be playing into the hand of the opposition.

Do not waste the opportunity to draw another shot.

## **Tactical Circumstances**

Skips should consider a change of hand if the opposition is gaining an advantage.

Discuss a change with the lead but let all other team members know that the lead should change their hand.

Early in a game a difficult or risky shot may provide an early advantage, but later in the game such shots should be avoided.

Consider the length of ends; it may be that a change to a medium length may provide a winning tactic with less scope to vary length of ends.

Skips may consider bowling to the 2 metre mark if the opponents are cautious in drawing to the ditch (particularly on a fast green) or are not using running shots effectively.

Skips should consider the number of bowls still to be played in assessing the shot to play, be it drawing another shot or playing a defensive shot. Consider the options of beating an opponent's best bowl or using a weighted bowl.

### **Shot Selection**

#### **The team holding shot has the following options:**

Add another shot

Blocking the opponent's line

Placing a position bowl in anticipation of the movement of the jack

Moving the jack into a less exposed position

Moving one or more of the opponent's position bowls.

Short bowls can be a real nuisance for any skip. The blocking effect can be both physical and psychological. The opponent must change the shot to be played; they may need to change both line and possibly weight. The block may divert the player's attention away from the shot to be played.

When holding more than one shot the skip may consider the result of an attacking shot and call for good receivers or the best back bowl.

#### **The team not holding shot has the following options:**

Draw to save or drawing the shot

Wresting out shot bowl

Move the jack to save or score

Kill the end.

If the jack is in the ditch and only one down, a skip can confidently draw to the ditch, however if more than one down then they must look at saving shots.

Wresting shots are important in providing sufficient to move bowls or provide a receptive bowl in the head.

### **Evaluation of shot selection**

What are the potential rewards or risks of each option?

How difficult is each option and how skilful is the bowler

The loss of an end by one or two shots does not always warrant risk taking. If well positioned to win the match leave the risk taking to the opposition.

Give the player two attempts if necessary. A shorter end is easier to attack and often provides a bigger target.

Some heads may provide a number of options for success.

### **Communications**

Skips should discuss tactical thinking with the team before the match. Avoid unsettling the team with unexpected changes in lengths

Environmental noises may affect verbal directions so avoid longwinded verbal directions. If a particular shot is required, it may be advisable to invite the player to the head for inspection.

Simple brief directions may be all that is required. "Beat that Bowl".

Be positive in calling weighted shots; indicate where the bowl should finish as a guide to appropriate weight.

Communicate the result of shots, be accurate with length of bowls short or long.

Use motivational messages, acknowledge good attempts to players

## **Playing the Shot**

Teams holding shot should avoid narrow bowls and avoid disturbing a resting toucher.

In drawing to cover a bowl players should treat the object bowl as the jack.

In drawing for shot or to save, avoid bowling short. A head offering resting bowls as opportunities may be better than a hand with gaps between bowls.

Wresting shots – the position of bowls – on its side or on running surface

Running shot with ditch weight

Drive: Driving fast can result in loss of control and accuracy.

## **Conditions**

### **Green Speed:**

Early morning – slow green and gradually increasing

Late afternoon – gradually decreasing with shadows

Break for lunch or afternoon tea – green may vary

Wind change

Wet Weather

### **Condition of Green to be considered**

True and level

Uneven grass cover

Two paced

Different types of grass

Area at end of green

Less grass out to the two metre mark

Surface compacted out to the two metre mark

Slope to ditch out to the two metre mark

Grass not cut as low as rest of green out to the two metre mark

Ditch rinks

Narrow on one hand

Variations in speed

Inconsistent line

### **Wind**

Tactical – head wind – playing long ends

Tail wind – playing short ends

Gusty wind – medium length – preserve effective bowl

Gusty tail wind – short to medium ends

Constant crosswinds – play wide hand and don't fight the wind

Gusty crosswind – may mean that either hand is played

Winds may be affected by buildings or other surrounds

Type of bowl used also may have a bearing on the option

## Skills required for each position in a side

### **Lead:**

Two close bowls  
Rolling the jack to the length required by the skip  
Placing the mat as required by the skip

### **Attributes of a lead:**

Calm temperament  
High level of concentration  
Realises the importance of second shot  
Patience  
Mental toughness

### **Compatibility of a lead:**

Encourage other members of the team  
Applaud good shots  
Do not criticise performance of other team members  
Present a confident and positive attitude

### **Practice for a lead:**

Rolling the jack to varying lengths  
Practice bowling a good line and length  
Practice drawing to the jack

### **Second:**

Ability to play both hands well  
Must be prepared to play shots as directed  
Be mindful of reaching the head and staying in the head  
Ability to play all shots

### **Attributes of a number two:**

Confidence and control at all times  
Able to handle pressure  
Appreciates the importance of the position

### **Compatibility of a number two:**

Present a confident approach  
Applaud good shots  
Do not criticise the performance of team members  
Promote confidence in the lead and third

### **Practice for a number two:**

Practice all shots at varying lengths  
Develop a good psychological approach  
Practice to not leave bowls short of the jack

**Third:**

Master of all shots  
Good knowledge of the game and rules  
A Steadying influence on the team

**Attributes of a three:**

A good communicator  
Always positive and confident  
Ability to cope with pressure  
Mental toughness  
Ability to see an opportunity to score shots  
Knows when silence is golden

**Problems for a three:**

Indecision at the head  
Complicating instructions

**Practice for a three:**

Practice all shots  
Develop psychological skills  
Practice measuring shots

**Compatibility of a three:**

Enthusiastic communicator with other team members  
Be aware of changing conditions

**Skip:**

Leadership qualities  
Given clear instructions  
Astute thinker  
Good knowledge of the game and rules

**Attributes of a skip:**

Ability to generate enthusiasm and inspire team  
Promote team harmony  
Excellent communication skills  
Ability to cope with pressure  
Confident  
Awareness of team strengths and weaknesses  
Analyse the opposition  
Excellent temperament

**Problems for a skip:**

Body language intimating negative thoughts  
Coping with players lapses in concentration  
Contending with players doubts on directions

**Practice for a skip**

Full range of shots  
Develop psychological skills