

Lachlan Tighe.....Talking tactically

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'Winning Gold: a measure of coaching performance')

CHAPTER SIX THE OBJECTIVE OF GAME PLANS, PLAYER POSITION DESCRIPTIONS

Storytime

Being different and daring to introduce and apply objective, game plans, etc, was similar to my introduction in the previous chapter.

There are some in bowls who unwittingly stifle the development for elite bowlers just by doing their jobs.

Take this example – Chris O’Meagher (know to all as ‘Bear’) as a squad member had a plan for a tournament that, if successful, will see his fours team win a profile tournament. To win the team is requiring 3 wins overall.

Two wins on the board but in game 3, the team is 5 shots in arrears with one end to play. If the team wins this game they win the tournament.

‘Bears’ approach is to continue to ‘kill’ this final end until a slim opportunity arises in a replayed end where he can secure 6 shots and thus win the game and tournament.

Boy the various reactions ! The opposition grumble, two team mates feel it is a forlorn exercise, the organisers keep coming over to the rink asking the players to hasten the conclusion as this rink being last on the greens is holding up (their) official proceedings. That scenario would be enough peer pressure to have a skip concede to satisfy the situation.

However ‘Bear’ represents an approach that I believe is the future appropriate way, as it takes till the seventh replayed end before his luck, skill, endeavour dwindles as do the options, and, the eventual result of a loss occurs.

Never at any stage did he forego the game plan, nor the objective to success.

GAME PLANS

My goals as the Malaysian coach were set prior to my arrival on 25/2/2002. As mentioned in a previous chapter I wished to develop three competencies – instructional, personal and administrative or planning – for we three coaches for the overall benefit of the players.

Many bowlers believe I am imposing a strict single way of competing when I mention game plans.

If you read the notes below I hope you can see that I am merely setting parameters within which the players ought consider if they want to have a chance of success.

Game plans are all about planning to win because

- The virtues of a pre-planned match strategy is that a bowler starts with a positive idea
- The plan gives a gauge of how you progress
- Control of the game is done by taking advantage of having the jack % advantage

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- Most bowlers practice and play medium length, we practice and play minimum and maximum lengths to be comparable/competitive to the best bowlers
- In suffering an important loss, later analyse precisely why you lost and learn from it, the ladder to the top has many rungs, most of them defeats (Bryant)
- Learning from your losses is all part of the plan (G Bosisto)
- Plan to optimize your mental & tactical skills before looking at the opposition
- Do not be greedy (G Bosisto)
- You pace yourself for your match: it is the final score at the end that counts and games are won through persistence.

Game plans preparation strategy probably should entail these broad points

- Win majority of the ends
- Play either maximum or minimum length
- Set mat on 2m mark at one end constantly
- Minimum of 2 bowls ALWAYS in head every end
- Short ends head measure as mat length (panjang) and long ends head measure as three feet (tiga kaki)
- DO NOT widen the head when holding shots
- Minimise ends lost to one point, or at very worst, 2 points an end
- Don't be greedy
- Walk to the head after the third delivery every end (in singles)
- Play our strengths – their weaknesses
- Maintain then gain (shots)

Game plans – an attacking approach

- Don't change a winning game, be aware of the success of the plan and keep to it
- Choose and stay with a set mat location when winning well

Game plans – a defensive approach

- When holding shot(s) do not widen the head with your next deliveries
- If the opposition is winning, the plan options become mat location, use of hand, length choice, change of shots previously employed, short of long bowls as options, attack and defence
- Know when to play “in the draw” or a block to hang onto shots
- Push bowls plug holes – push up our bowls just short of the head and plug holes to disallow opposition ease of entry into the head

Slowing down the game can upset opposition by

- Vice Skip and skip (singles): come up and look at the head
- Play maximum length ends
- Take a little longer to finally deliver each bowl
- At the conclusion of an end kick the bowls back slowly

Game plans are the basis for your tactical thinking (refer to next weeks chapter)

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THE GAME PLAN OBJECTIVE: COMMONWEALTH GAMES 2002

I wanted to constantly reinforce to the players the idea that here is a chance at the Commonwealth Games to fulfil a dream based on the necessary planning and preparation work conducted and completed over the months that led to the Games.

I sent the following memo with an attachment on plans objectives and player responsibility to players and coaches as an example of my reinforcement to them of that belief, that self belief, my belief in each of them as valued players capable of fulfilling their dream.

To:.....Malaysian Commonwealth Games 2002 bowler

Well, 'dream time' has finally arrived.

I hope you feel we have prepared you well enough. Use the Asian Games and the Scotland tour as lessons.

I have provided you with this specific plan for your playing position at the games. Read it, take it with you to Manchester, and, refer to it daily from now until the games are over.

So, in encouraging you to enjoy this magnificent opportunity at the Games 2002, I remind you of **Attitude** and what it is...practicing the right habits.

Be like an eagle and fly high, don't mix with the turkeys.

Enjoy the challenge, do your best, and thank you for allowing me to assist you as coach.

Regards

**Commonwealth Games 2002
OBJECTIVE**

Each bowler to perform at their maximum level
Planning to have every bowler set their goals on **FIRST** getting into the quarter finals of their event
Secure as many medals as possible as an outcome of meeting that first objective
Make a reality of the statement '...in your dreams'

STRATEGY

The strategy was divided into team / individual planning which we had plotted and practiced over the 5 months:
Game planning to **WIN**
Planning for every bowler to know their goals with a statement distributed on their role for the position they are playing in at the games 2002
Planning to have every bowler set their goals on **FIRST** getting into the quarter finals of their event
Planning for every bowler to **WIN**
Monitoring performance daily – coach and bowler to meet and review that days performance

GAME PLANS

Recall

The positive thoughts/actions/ training from these words

Attitude: all about practising habits

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- great teams
- attitude: all about practicing habits
- thinking hard, not hardly thinking
- committed, not Involved
- Malaysia prepares, plans and trains to WIN
- Human beings – minimize mistakes

GAME PLANS (a general approach for everyone to maintain)

WIN majority of the ends you play

Play only Minimum or Maximum length (jack delivery then very important)

have 2 bowls in the head ALWAYS

minimize errors by keeping shot losses to 2 shots

greed - do not widen the head for the opposition,

- do not chase more shots and cause risk when holding shot

segmenting the game every 4 ends

enjoy – keep composed, show confidence, especially if you or the team are losing

do not change a game or length that is winning

Game plans for various playing position...formats

Note: Since 2002 I have reviewed the position descriptions that I originally detailed for the Malaysian squad and now I prefer this content which I share with you as follows:

Game plan - Singles players

- Consistently apply your pre delivery routine and ritual
- Visualize the bowl and delivery before you actually deliver that bowl
- The jack delivery has to be precise and within a metre of requested min/ max length
- Your goal – at least two shots in the head every end
- With 4 bowls to deliver, 2 in the head is realistic
- And your other deliveries can be behind the head if not also in the head
- Make full advantage of the extra delivery you have with the jack
- Control the game by taking advantage of that jack : it gives you 5 deliveries to their 4 or 11% advantage every end
- Segmentation – refer to your card after 3 or 4 ends, learn, focus on your next goal, apply and enjoy
- caterpillar – reinforces your very good deliveries
- discipline – as a player draw bowling is a priority
- play with confidence throughout: walk down the rink as if you own it
- be up into the head when the pressure is on you
- opportunity: play a shot when presented before the opposition takes it from you
- seeing is believing: use your eyes to keep alert
- scorecard: record coach information for later analysis
- always walk go to head after the 3 rd bowl to inspect situation and relax
- minimize losses: keep shots down to 2 per end
- composure: calm in decision making
- composure: in thinking even where you are not bowling well for a time
- composure: winners are grinners...enjoy the challenge

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Game plans for Pairs

i) Lead/ vice skip in pairs

- Consistently apply your pre delivery routine and ritual
- Visualize the bowl and delivery before you actually deliver that bowl
- The jack delivery has to be precise and within a metre of requested min/ max length
- Your goal – at least two shots in the head every end
- With 4 bowls to deliver, 2 in the head is realistic
- And your other deliveries can be behind the head if not also in the head
- Take 50% responsibility of the team bowl deliveries
- Make full advantage of the extra delivery you have with the jack
- support – always give vocal encouragement to the skip
- support – call skip to the head if uncertain
- support – do not call or signal multiple shots down to the skip, simply give directions
- team meetings- listen, learn, focus on your next goal, then go off apply and enjoy

ii) Skip in pairs

- Consistently apply your pre delivery routine and ritual
- Visualize the bowl and delivery before you actually deliver that bowl
- Take 50% responsibility of the team bowl deliveries
- Take 100% responsibility for skipping the team
- team meetings- guide and direct, review, set your next goal, then go off apply and enjoy
- caterpillar – reinforces very good deliveries from players
- discipline – as a player draw bowling is a priority
- skip with confidence throughout: walk down the rink as if you own it
- Attitude: ensure there are 2 bowls in the head
- ensure there are bowls behind the head too
- be up into the head when the pressure is on you
- do not signal or call multiple shots down to the players, simply give directions
- opportunity: play a shot when presented before the opposition takes it from you
- seeing is believing: use your eyes: ensure team is supportive of one another
- scorecard: record coach information for later analysis
- feel comfortable to go to head to inspect situation
- minimize losses: keep shots down to 2 per end
- composure: calm in decision making and dealing with team
- composure: display support with body and verbal language for team always
- composure: in skipping even where you are not bowling well for a time
- composure: winners are grinners...enjoy the challenge
- maximum length: stand a metre short of the 2 metre mark to allow the jack delivery 3 metres to the ditch for a long end

Game plans/responsibilities for EACH playing position in a fours team...

A year after the Games of 2002 I revised the game plan and job descriptions of players slightly so that I would now prefer the following statements to apply

‘...Game Plan (Bowls) –responsibilities for Team ONE, the lead and second’

For years I have observed a difference of opinion amongst respected bowlers about the preparation of bowlers in pennant teams (of 16).

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My contention though as a coach then, as is now, that the top 4-6 bowlers do not vary much in performance from week to week and it is the two tiers that follow, the middle range player and the fringe player that you work on to get the best out of them.

Therefore I was delighted to read Leigh Matthews, AFL Brisbane Lions coach, view that he wanted to produce more from his bottom six players.

And in that very same sports section there was an article on the 1957 Melbourne footy team. Remember they won 4 premierships in 6 years, where it was acknowledged there would always be 6 poor players and their (team) job was to get the best out of the bottom six players.

My job descriptions were first undertaken in Malaysia and upon return to Australia in 2003 were further edited over the editions of my web column.

The above comments are based more on the premise that if each person knows what is expected of them and their team mates there is a better chance that over the long haul (of a season) as a team we have a better than even chance of success as we have something tangible to compare our progress against.

One thing – all these game plans and role responsibilities still do not guarantee success. There is a variable called the opposition to contend with; what it can do is give a focus to each and all when we prepare and compete.

i) LEAD

- **pre delivery routine:** consistently apply it and your own ritual
- **Visualize:** the bowl, the delivery, the result before you actually deliver each bowl
- **jack delivery:** it has to be precise and within a metre of requested min/ max length
- **accountability :** take 25% control of the team bowl deliveries AND if the team has the mat you have a 33% accountability as you hold 3 of the 9 deliveries of the team
- **Your goal:** at least one bowl in the head every end
- **Your goal:** jack delivery ONLY delivered at ultra minimum or full length maximum
- **team goal :** you and the second are a ‘team’ and that ‘team’ goal is to have 2 bowls in the head every end
- your other delivery can be behind the head if the first delivery is not in the head
- **tactical advantage:** make full use of the extra delivery your team has with the jack
- **team support :** regardless of your performance be ‘in’ with your team mates
- **physical support:** once vice skip finishes deliveries join others and go together as a trio to the head
- **verbal support:** always verbally encourage the second as your ‘team’ mate and give constant encouragement to the skip
- **segmenting** the game and **team meetings:** listen, learn, focus on your next goal, then go off apply and enjoy
- **Learning :** regardless of the team result and your own performance, contribute to the competition team debrief discussion to prepare for future performances

ii) SECOND

- **pre delivery routine:** consistently apply it and your own ritual
- **Visualize:** the bowl, the delivery, the result before you actually deliver each bowl
- **accountability :** take 25% control of the team bowl deliveries

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- **Your goal:** to ensure you two as a team achieve the team goal
- **team goal :** you and the second are a ‘team’ and that ‘team’ goal is to have 2 bowls in the head every end
- **Team target :** set a ‘pb’ standard for the ‘team’ goal, e.g. have 2 bowls in the head 15 of the 25 ends and use this as a gauge for future performance
- **Scorecard :** record information for game analysis at segment meetings and team debrief e.g. ends played min / max length, No ends where 2 bowls in head, No. ends where jack delivery acceptable, etc etc
- **Discipline:** when asked, be able to adjust your draw to push up bowls into the head
- **team support :** regardless of your performance be ‘in’ with your team mates
- **physical support:** once vice skip finishes deliveries join others and go together as a trio to the head
- **verbal support:** always verbally encourage the lead player as your ‘team’ mate and give constant encouragement to the skip
- **segmenting the game and team meetings:** listen, learn, focus on your next goal, then go off apply and enjoy
- **Learning :** regardless of the team result and your own performance, contribute to the competition team debrief discussion to prepare for future performances

‘...Game Plan (Bowls) – responsibilities for the other half of the ‘Team’ - the Vice skip and Skip’

iii) Vice skip (third)

By dividing the fours team into two teams (of two) I am sharing leadership and responsibility and pressure. However these views are directed more to Premier League (and elite) standard bowlers.

I use different descriptions specifically for the third. I refer to him / her as the vice skip and did so in my time with Malaysia.

It really is a straight steal from other team sports where a captain and vice captain are a natural order of things.

The reasoning has been reinforced since returning to Australia where I listen to thirds who bemoan those old fashioned skips who effectively tell them ‘.....shut up’. Not good people management !

Now what sort of understanding of competitive team sport and people is that !!!

Worse who placed that person in a skip position in the first place – maybe one answer is that the skip is also a selector at the club. No solution in that case.

Moving on, I have suggested the vice skip (vice captain) is in charge of focusing the minds and emotions of the other team mates urging support to the skip’s game plan. One in all in, none of this ‘...we lost because of the front end players’ which obviously is a comment coming from a third or skip.

They need to be reminded they were (all) in a losing team of four.

If they valued teammates (from the same club) you don’t discard these players at the drop of a hat. That reeks of prima donna stuff that has to change, or at least change in the good clubs.

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At national and state level where teams come from all over the place and players only get together into fours teams it is much harder for these elite players to instantly 'bond' together, but, being elite they would understand the value of doing so.

a) As the bowler

- **pre delivery routine:** consistently apply it and your own ritual
- **Visualize:** the bowl, the delivery, the result before you actually deliver each bowl
- **accountability :** take 25% control of the team bowl deliveries
- **Your goal:** add to the head to ensure there are 2 bowls in the head every end
- **attitude:** at worse, be up

b) as the vice captain

- **team goal :** you build the bridge from that first 'team' goal where 2 bowls in the head every end
- **team support :** regardless of your performance be 'in' with your two 'team' mates making sure all the language (body & verbal) is positive, eliminating any negatives that opposition can pick up and build on
- **verbal support:** always verbally encourage your two 'team' mates and give constant encouragement to the skip
- **verbal support:** once skip finishes deliveries display support regardless of result
- **segmenting** the game and **team meetings:** listen, learn, focus on players next game plan goal, then go off apply as a team and enjoy
- **segmenting :** regardless of the team result and your own performance, contribute to the team meeting discussion to prepare for next segment performances
- **segmenting target :** note the specific target and use this as a source of team encouragement for segment performance
- **mental/attitude:** when asked, be able to adjust your draw to push up bowls into the head
- **mental/attitude:** do not predict delivery calls; be able to alter hands upon request
- **mental/attitude:** be prepared to call skip to head for them to decide their delivery
- **Tactical/attitude** do not signal or call multiple shots when down to the skip (it feeds the opposition), simply give advice and or direction

iv) Skip

a) As the bowler

- **pre delivery routine:** consistently apply it and your own ritual
- **Visualize:** the bowl, the delivery, the result before you actually deliver each bowl
- **accountability :** take 25% control of the team bowl deliveries
- **Your goal on a winning end:** make full use of the final delivery you have for the team to add shot(s) to place pressure onto the opposition
- **Your goal on a losing end:** add to the head to ensure there are 2 bowls in the head every end AND to contain the lost shots that end to 2 shots or fewer
- at worse, be up

b) as the captain managing the people and the game plan

- Take 100% responsibility for skipping the team
- **Plan:** you trained together, now meet before the game, monitor your game plan progress in segment meetings with the second providing detail from scorecard
- **Segment** team meetings- guide and direct, honest review, set your next goal, then encourage team to go off apply and enjoy
- **segmenting target :** set a specific target for the team(members) and use this as a gauge for segment performance

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- **Team targets:** set a 'pb' standard for the 'team' goal, e.gs. have 2 bowls in the head 15 of the 25 ends, win 3 of every 5 ends,
- **Learning :** regardless of the team result and your own performance, conduct a post-competition debrief discussion honestly and positively with the team to prepare for future performances

Mental Attitude

- skip with confidence throughout: walk down the rink as if you own it
- seeing is believing: use your eyes: ensure team is supportive of one another
- when in doubt, go to head to inspect situation do not see this as distrust of vice skip
- composure: calm in decision making and dealing with team
- composure: display support with body and verbal language for team always
- composure: in skipping even where you are not bowling well for a time
- composure: winners are grinners...enjoy the challenge
- thinking hard – don't be a 'hardly thinking' skipper

Tactical Attitude

- ensure there are 2 bowls in the head
- minimize losses: keep shots down to 2 per losing end
- ensure there are bowls behind the head
- be up into the head when the score is against you
- opportunity: play a shot when presented before the opposition takes it from you
- maximum length: stand a metre short of the 2 metre mark to allow the jack delivery 3 metres to the ditch for a long end
- make full use of the extra delivery your team has with the jack
- do not signal or call multiple shots when down to the team (it feeds the opposition), simply give advice and direction
- conditions: maximise use of (weather) conditions
- conditions: maximise use of better (winning) hand
- conditions: reminder, mediocre players play medium length

Even now in 2006, I have made further refinement for the benefit of the Victorian state ladies squad.

Draft playing schedule for 2002 games event

I will not bore you with detail as it is sufficient to suggest that a daily schedule of activity (be it for competition, training, meetings, sports science programs) prior to and during your major competition is imperative as part of the game plan preparation. A diary is a simple tool to use to be of value for the discipline of the process.

And in the Games 2002 instance the diary was used for these days from Friday 26/7 through to Sunday 4/8 every am and pm session.

Travel checklist

This checklist was developed to ensure players have all personal items and all bowls equipment and clothing for the conditions at Manchester, UK .

Most state and national squad members remain haphazard in the arrangements for some competitions solely due to a lack of discipline toward this aspect of preparation.

Personal items	Bowls items
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Sunglasses	CDs
Hat	Phillipines file/ plan
Spare glasses	Water bottles
Watch	Bowls shoes & extra laces
Passport	Sunscreen
Passport holder	Bowls jacket
Camera	4 bowls shirts
Film	4 bowls caps
tie	2 bowls pants
shirts	pairs white socks
Pen & biro	pen
Contact nos. in Malaysia	Small bowls notepad
Swimming gear	Extra scorecards
Shorts	White shoe polish
Pyjamas	Bowls (bag)
Briefs	Wind / rain jackets
Tee shirts	Pullovers
Toiletries / female accessories	Tracksuit
Gifts	Measure tape
Black pants	Bowls cloth
Street pants	
Street shoes	Other
Pairs socks	
Cash / credit card	
Air tickets	
Mobile phone	
Hand/ Carry bag	
Suit / travel bag	
Medical supplies	
Transport arrangements to KLIA	
Other.....	

A modified version of the above was prepared for the 2005 state ladies squad to assist them in an overall preparation for their competition..

The countries that improve this detail the most will benefit (one day) out there on the green as it reaps the diligence of their improved application to detail.

Game plans and Segmenting Games

Part of the plot for employing a game plan using segmentation as a prime tool in the plan is to enable refocus at various times during the anticipated maximum duration of 3 hours.

So segmenting the game into 5 end segments is a precise way of doing the focus refocus context. More on this in a later chapter.

Match analysis

HK and the Major

I met a delightful man a few times while in Malaysia named Major who acted as a team manager in HK with the mens fours.

Major's contribution was fabulous in giving one of the players, Talib, the advice to ask the opposition to check their foot fault delivery.

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The outcome was the opponent's ongoing uncertainty of foot faulting that placed in the mind of that one player, thus a drop off in contribution from that opponent who provides a maximum of 25% contribution in a team;

Similar to the NZ player encounter with Steve Glasson in the Games 2002 singles competition. Both players as I understand it were warned about contravention of a rule and apparently Glasson did it one time too many. Some other observers at the game say he was goaded by the NZ player into doing it again. I cannot say as I was observing other games. However why would you be surprised to find you are penalised for what apparently was a further indiscretion. The UK umpire does not differentiate between the players, so the next one copped the penalty, unfortunately that was Steve.

At training a Malaysian player used do the same practice, so I penalised him at training until he was forced to change his habits and then in future competitions he would be wary of not breaking the rule.