

*Lachlan Tighe.....Talking tactically*  
*Website Bowls Coaching Column*

(April 2009 column)

**‘Bowls spectator, commentator...competitor’**

Which of the three categories above are you in. In last months March column I made reference to the finals due to be played at Australian level and in club pennant.

My observations this past month from these tournaments and finals surprised me. Far too many bowlers, and that certainly includes rink skips, I categorise as either spectators or commentators. Or remain in these two categories far too long within the bowls event. Let me continue to describe these bowlers

**spectator**

Once finished their deliveries this bowler either stands back from the team and pleasantly watches the ‘game’ on the other rinks or, worse, is off with the fairies; these players only join in when the team has to cross over. And they walk straight onto the bank and not remain at the head to support the third/ skip.  
Or spectator bowler ii is the one who races up to join the skip, and to see the outcome of his bowl – whatever happened to being a member of the front end team;  
Or the skip as spectator, constantly chatting to fellow skips on the adjacent rinks while team mates await instructions on the mat, or, heaven help us, encouragement.  
These bowler spectators love pennant (even finals) because they have things to watch, people to talk to, on either side of their own rink. Whoopee!

**commentator**

Commercial TV channels have a nursery ground of talent to recruit commentators out on the bowling green. Players making absurd comments about wind conditions, green surfaces, delivery errors, poor skipping, poor players, etc.

Nothing, not one thing about positive team support.

All the commentators lack an awareness that all the stated variables affect everyone, evenly. Unless you are more capable a bowler than they are.

You cannot blame the ‘commentator’ as he/ she has simply picked up the practices prevailing in the sport. And it is a practice to be disposed of, urgently.

**competitor**

As opposed to competitiveness which is more emotional. The competitor, if I can cite former Australian player Jack Wilson, is so totally focused on their own rink, their own delivery, their own contribution to the rink team. And that starts from the roll up to the final delivery of our skip for the very last end of the event.

Actually, it started with the way you go about training, personally and as a team.

Recently a successful finals club shared with me a 2 page document how they planned to get all 16 players in the competitor category. I share a snippet of that paper

- Fine tuned the teams to ensure compatibility and harmony (made some open but tough decisions then worked on team morale)
- Instilled discipline in the way we trained instead practiced (used drills to improve our skills and tried to have a bit of fun with it as well)

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- Quietly focused on the weaknesses of some individuals to improve their mental skills providing challenges and allowing them to develop greater confidence in their ability.
- Ensured all four skippers “always” had a team plan and fall back mode
- Ensured that each team remained focused on the performance of their rink alone

Reading that example shows not a lot of us are in the third category, competitor.

A difficulty is that we all want to be accepted and thus join in though we might have misgivings about the approach to training of fellow club mates.

Well, check – who in fact is letting the team, the club, down with complacent approach to training. Not you.

And it is not your fault. I rest all responsibility on club committee and selectors and lastly club coaches for not standing up for a better approach so as to give our club the best chance to perform next time we are in competition.

Difficulty- the people responsible do not understand what I allude to either, so why should the majority of bowlers.

Why not aspire to that category by letting your eyes turn back down the narrow corridor called our rink, and do it every time at your own training and when supervised pennant training occurs (if it does).

And if you want to comment tune in to positive support, or clam up. Practice that at pennant training too.

POSTSCRIPT

As of last week as newly appointed Henselite’s consulting coach I am doing a separate monthly coaching column specific to their site, [www.henselite.com.au](http://www.henselite.com.au) if wanting to view another coaching column to add to the regular column I shall continue to write for this site you are reading.

Regards

Lachlan Tighe