

WHO ARE OUR BOWLERS?

Of our 100+ pennant bowlers, how many are really 'bowlers'? My estimation is about 60%. Then there are about 25% who are 'pushers' who have little or no backswing – not a fault but could be improved. There are a few 'flickers' or 'flippers' and the rest, about 10% are 'chuckers' who throw their bowls out in front of them and the bowls then bounce as many as four times before they settle down to run smoothly. If the bowls land perfectly upright on its running surface not so bad, but if not, it will 'seam' as a cricket ball does – good for cricket bowlers but not so for lawn bowlers. Their bowls will turn in running more or less than expected according to which side of the running surface it lands on and wrongly gives the green a bad name.

Can we raise our performance levels higher to get our pennant sides back in the 'four' again this season? We can if we are prepared to make a few changes to our delivery action (What we sow at the mat end, we reap at the jack end) but it will require some time and effort to change poor or bad habits. Practising faults doesn't improve your standards.

***Here are some helpful hints:**

1. Release your bowl perfectly upright beneath your eyes just in front of your front foot. To achieve this, hold your bowl in one hand and ensure that it is lined up straight up your arm and you swing your arm vertically. Hold it with a straight arm just below hip level in a relaxed way. Two or three practice wings over your bowling line also helps in delivering your bowl along your bowling line.
2. A shorter step means you can lean forward over your release point.
3. Bowls is a target sport. Adopt the '**Shooters Stance**' – half side-on with feet apart so you can swing your bowl back and forward like a pendulum. Importantly, it brings your shoulder and sighting eye directly in line with your bowling line as in firing a rifle. It gets your hip out of the way, too. It's also easier to bend over lower and get your bowl away more smoothly.
4. Bowl over a spot you **can** bowl over no further than six metres in front of you, not one further up the green that you can only hope to bowl over.
5. Prop on your front foot and rely on a smooth swing for control of length and less on body movement.
6. If you still can't bend over far enough to get your bowl away smoothly, consider using a 'walking stick' prop to help with your balance and stability.

*All these hints are based on sound biomechanical principles that provide an easier, more natural way of doing something. Most bowlers adopt movements that complicate their action, increasing the risk of errors.

Adopt the KISS principle (Keep It Simple, Stupid).

Doug Cole/June 18.