**Getting the Jump....avoiding the slump! – by Pamela Bryant**

**Goals**

-Set goals for performance in singles events, team games and pennant.

-Have an efficient and measurable improvement regime for practice.

-Have motivation to achieve a signature shot, and dominate as a draw bowler.

-Have the ability to visualise and perform the above with absolute confidence, at any time, in any conditions.

**Tactics for Singles**

-Play to your own strength.

-Be aware of your opponents weakness.

-Get second shot!

-Don’t lose your head (wasted shots won’t be in the count)

-Always choose the narrower hand if true, in wind consider the kindness of that wind.

-Always play the shot most likely to score.

-In tight situations (close to boundaries or ditch) just beat the oppositions bowl. (Remembering you may have to use the mat and/or narrow your line on unused grass or if playing on a ditch rink)

-Play their hand, when confidence tells you, you can.

-Play safe according to the scoreboard.

-Think it, See it, Do it! Play the shot you have confidence in, and that which provides the best outcome or set up.

The first thing a bowler must do in facing a new green or a new opponent is to plan and prepare for your game, **before** you arrive at the club.

Have some practice swings (with or without a bowl) and visualise your shots at home with confidence in the comfort of your favourite chair.

Know your strengths and weaknesses but deny the doubt.

Once at the club, observe the following;

* What surface is it, what grass is it, and what stage of growth is it at? (Carpet runs slower in sun and heat, sand based plastic runs faster watered and slower dry)
* The locality, where is the nearest, largest body of water?
* What is the direction of play? (n-s, e-w or something in between)
* What are the prevailing weather conditions?
* In which area of the green could those conditions affect play?

Once on the green note the eccentricities of the green, and during the roll up, tick box in your mind that which you determined above before you stepped onto the green.

Next, note

* the lay of the green (are there patches, moss, runs or edges not cut and rolled to their extremities. Learn to recognize and avoid these areas.)
* the weather conditions, and more especially what is the truest hand, the narrow or the wide, and what makes it so.

Is it:

* A body of water.
* Wind/Shade/Buildings. (Special to the club).
* Rain/Cloud/Sun. (Some patches retain more water, cloud on grass slows your bowl, cloud on carpet quickens it, grass faces the sun.)

During the roll up, observe the angle of your aiming line from the centreline say at 10ft out, it might be in the middle of the painted lines (which you can observe from both ends) or you might take it from the bank, drawing your eyes back to a 10 foot visualisation point. (You may have to visualise an imaginary centre line if the mat is up.) If you decide for instance that, 10 feet out, where the mat is behind the “T”, the angle is 1 foot; this line will remain constant for every bowl drawn to the centreline, regardless of where or how far up the green the mat is. Any movement of the mat makes looking at the bank useless.

How do I find an aiming line? (Pace)

* 13Secs, 16Secs (See attached)
* Draw your eyes back
* Make sure you are comfortable. Not straining your neck.
* Note constant angle all the way up the green.

Visualize your shot relax (take a breath) exhale and deliver. Watch your bowl right through to its dying stages, REGARDLESS OF WHERE IT FINISHES! (Also watch the angle your opponents bowl travels (and their position on the mat) in the first ten feet, and note where it finishes. Its line may be different to yours after the first ten feet, so where it travels is of no interest at this stage.

No matter what bowl you chose to use…the first 6-10 feet of grass you take will be identical to that of any other bowl! Scary isn’t it? So if in doubt, if your opponent has it over you, and they’re finishing in the right area, watch the line their bowl takes in the first 6-10 feet! It’s a good start in clawing your way back.

(Generally – play the narrow hand as the less distance a bowl travels the less the margin for error. A bowl is more likely to finish in a favourable position, in front or behind a jack on the narrow hand but would finish wide or narrow on the wide hand. With strong cross winds on 16 second plus greens it might be expedient to play the wide hand.) (The bowl is easily blown away from the jack on the narrow hand, but on the wide hand, if you concentrate and take the correct line your bowl will travel in towards the jack)

If playing the narrow hand in strong **cross** winds (under 16 secs.) stand to the wide side of the mat (against the wind). I.e. if it is a left to right wind, stand to the right of the mat and vice versa.

In strong **gusty** winds it is sometimes better to play the wide hand or around the clock

To become a master of the wind you must practice in it, learn the effects cross winds, up and down winds, diagonal winds and gusting winds have on your pace and arc of delivery in each direction. Always play the truer hand.

Local knowledge is a good tool to have and if playing away on a very windy day BORROW YOUR OPPOSITIONS TOOLS! See what hand they choose across the rinks. How much green they’re taking, where they’re standing on the mat, and where they’re placing the mat.

I would also strongly suggest that you avoid changing your hand if you have dominated it. Get the opposition to change their hand.

Good Bowling All!