

Communicating Choice of Shot

Skips should acquaint their teams with their tactical thinking. Brief opportunities to communicate within teams occur when changing ends. Team members can exchange views in mid-rink out of earshot of opponents. Skips should avoid unsettling their teams with flamboyant changes of end length.

Skips can use verbal head directions effectively when conditions are favourable. Noise from the environment or hearing impairments of players adversely interferes with verbal directing. Skips (and thirds) should avoid verbose information.

If the tactical circumstances are complex or if the required shot has a fine margin for error, they could invite players to the head for a personal inspection.

A simple direction such as "beat your last bowl" is often all that a player requires. Skips should avoid vague directions, such as "be up", "put one behind", or "come through the head". Sometimes they require a bowl in a position that is the same distance from the mat as another bowl at rest. In such instances, they could indicate that the bowl at rest is a guide for appropriate delivery speed or length.

They should avoid negative instructions such as "don't hit that bowl in the approach". Otherwise, they make bowlers more aware of the risks of a shot than of its positive tactical objectives.

Alternatively, skips can use visual signals in directing a head, particularly if circumstances are unfavourable for verbal directions. They should not leave their leads guessing about where to place the mat and jack. They can use the fingers on one or both hands to beckon (bring the mat farther forward), to push (take the mat farther back), or to pat downward (place the mat right there). They can plant a foot or hold a white cloth to indicate where they want a jack or bowl to come to rest. They can similarly indicate the required point of impact for an attacking shot. They can use an outstretched arm to indicate the required hand of play.

Skips should accurately communicate the result of shots. If a skip reports a delivery that is a metre short as being "two metres short", the corrective attempt is likely to be a metre long. Skips should indicate distances in front of or behind the jack, which are hard to gauge from the mat, by planting a foot in a jack high position. By converting distances along the rink to distances across the rink, skips give players on the mat a better visible guide to the requirements or result of shots. Skips and thirds must remember to mark all their teams' touchers.

Skips should incorporate positive motivational messages in their verbal and non-verbal communication. They should acknowledge careful attempts at playing as directed, particularly when those attempts produce favourable results. They should avoid any temptation to offer undeserved praise. For example, a draw to the jack that finishes over two metres past the jack is not a good attempt by most criteria and hardly deserves accolades as a 'handy back bowl'.