

# Zone 9 Coaching Committee

## *Self-Improvement Workbook*

A process to allow serious bowlers of all grades and experience to identify areas of their game that need improvement and to make the appropriate changes. It's an intensive, self-searching exercise that will reveal a lot of information.

It is suggested that you may need to consult an experienced coach to assist you in confirming any areas needing change



# Zone 9 Coaching Committee

## Self-Improvement Worksheet

### October 2018

The obligation of the Zone 9 Coaching Committee is to provide the tools to improve the standard of bowls to allow members and therefore clubs to play higher grades and bring home Zone and State Pennant Flags. The following worksheet is designed to help you recognise the areas you need to work on to improve and to give some hints and ideas. Nothing replaces the advice and support you will gain from your Club Coach so this analysis will give you a basis of topics to discuss, work on and practice over the next few months.

***The aim of this worksheet is to encourage all bowlers to develop the good habit of doing everything exactly the same way every time they deliver a bowl.***

If you study top bowlers you will notice their delivery is same every time, in other words they have developed a strategy which includes a smooth delivery with great timing. The purpose of this publication is to encourage you to develop these habits. There is no doubt that a common ability is excellent ball sense, which is innate but can be improved with practice.

We will review the basics of the Committee recommendations of the delivery that you may choose to revisit in the future to improve your line and length.

To start, let us review what you want to achieve from playing bowls:

What I want to achieve from bowls (state if your preference to play pennants, the position and grade, or if you concentrate social bowls with friends):

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Where am I now? (list your experience and bowls competence)

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How effective is my delivery & what needs improvement? (it may help to have a coach look)

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Any other relevant information I need to consider

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Does my bowl usually end within a mat width of the centre line?  Yes  No

It mostly finishes: (X in box/s)  wide  narrow  on-line  short  Jack high  long

How many hours a week do I play?  Practice?

How many hours a week am I willing to play and practice to reach the level I want?

Play  Practice

Now let us consider how badly you want to change and if you're "prepared to pay the price" of improvement. At any time we wish to change something in our lives there is a price to pay: if you want to lose weight the price is changing your lifestyle and diet; if you wish to improve your fitness the price includes time to go to a gym or develop a home-based exercise programme; if you want to improve your bowls standard the price may be changing your weekly timetable to include research and practice time, there are many examples and they apply to all aspects of our life.

Am I prepared to pay the price to improve my bowls?  Yes  No

What do I need to improve in my game? (be very specific and list all areas)

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## Strategy

The definition of Strategy can also be known as the habit or technique you have developed that starts at picking up your bowl and finishes with delivering the bowl. Typically, there will be between 15 and 20 steps. For example: pick up bowl; check bias; decide on the line the bowl will take; etc.

List the steps in order in your strategy: (there's no right or wrong answer, it's your strategy)

Make sure you list all steps, preferably in pencil so you can make changes if necessary. There may be more or less than 20 starting from picking up the bowl and ending with delivery

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 \_\_\_\_\_
- 7 \_\_\_\_\_
- 8 \_\_\_\_\_
- 9 \_\_\_\_\_
- 10 \_\_\_\_\_
- 11 \_\_\_\_\_
- 12 \_\_\_\_\_
- 13 \_\_\_\_\_
- 14 \_\_\_\_\_
- 15 \_\_\_\_\_
- 16 \_\_\_\_\_
- 17 \_\_\_\_\_
- 18 \_\_\_\_\_
- 19 \_\_\_\_\_
- 20 \_\_\_\_\_

There are three very obvious outcomes that are most commonly highlighted as present outcomes:

- Wide and/or narrow line - grass
- Weight control
- Adjustment

### **Wide or Narrow Line**

Ideally, a bowl is best when it finishes on the centre line. If a bowl is short and wide it can be used by an experienced opponent to deflect from to reach an obscure or hidden jack.

There are a number of factors that lead to a bowl finishing narrow or wide:

- Direction the feet are pointed
- Stance - squareness of body in relation to the feet
- Delivery technique
- Follow through
- Use of the mat
- Adjustment
- "Knowing" what to do

### ***Direction the feet point during delivery***

#### ***We cannot stress enough the importance of the direction in which you stand!***

The biggest cause of inconsistency many bowlers make is to stand on the mat with their feet pointing in a direction other than the line the bowl travels. The results are they deliver the bowl with their arm travelling across or away from their body and it is difficult to maintain a consistent delivery unless the arm travels parallel to the direction pointing in the direction the bowl will travel.

An easy way to practice facing in the correct direction is to use a "yardstick" or a straight, unwarped piece of timber 960mm long, and place it on the mat along the line of the inside of the heel and big toe knuckle. Take your normal stance on the mat and stand back to see the direction you are actually facing.

Why place the stick on the instep and not the outside line of the foot? Because the pendulum swing travels parallel to the instep and therefore the line the bowl will travel. The direction of the "plant" foot can be identified when stepping on the mat.

Ideally, the resting place of the delivered bowl will be within a mat width of the centre line or the line of the target if it's a positional spot. Any short bowls that are wider than a mat length can be used to "wick off" and reach the jack or target and should be avoided at all costs.

## **Stance – squareness of the body in relation to the feet**

Ideally the shoulders and hips will be square to the feet at all times during the entire delivery. Why? Because if either hips or shoulders are pointed away from the square position the bowl will travel in that direction resulting in a “fat” or “skinny” result.

When taking position on the mat, the ideal stance is to place the “step” foot next to and parallel to the “plant” foot with the instep next to the knuckle of the big toe on the plant foot.

### ***Delivery Technique***

Stand on or behind the mat, look at the distance to the jack and swing the bowling arm with the bowl in hand 3 or 4 times to estimate the weight needed to reach the jack or target. Then place your anchor foot in the line the bowl will travel and crouch as low as possible with the heel of the stepping foot alongside the ankle of the anchor foot. In delivering the bowl, swing the arm back in an arc and as it comes (slowly) forward take a normal walking step (straight out in front) and release the bowl as close as possible to the ground and 8 to 10 cms in front of the stepping foot. Lastly, stay down in this position until the bowl travels at least half way to the target.

A logical question to ask at this stage is: “Why should I bowl in a crouched position?”

Answer: To make sure the bowl travels accurately along the desired line. We stated earlier that the shoulders and hips should be square to the feet and if they turn the bowl will follow that line. Also, the less movements in the delivery, the less the chance of inconsistencies in the direction and accuracy of the bowl.

Another reasonable question is: “What if I’m unable to bend as low as mentioned above?”

Answer: We accept that as we age our bodies lose a certain amount of flexibility, so, bend as low as you can.

Another alternative that may help is to investigate doing some exercises to rebuild muscle strength. Before attempting the following please consult your medical professional to make sure it is safe for you.

A couple of useful and easy exercises some people use are: 1) steady yourself by holding on to a table or bench and crouch (knee bends) as low as you can as many times as possible – the number of knee bends you are able to do will increase the longer you do the exercise; 2) another muscle strengthening exercise that be done every day at home is lunges – again it may be necessary to steady yourself by holding on to a table or ledge – stand straight up and take a long step forward, bending the front knee, then stand up again. This exercise will give best results if it is done with both legs.

Strengthening leg muscles will help reduce tiredness from playing bowls.

### ***“Know” the Type and Amount of Adjustment/s to be Made***

Top bowlers, like other elite sportspeople, automatically make the necessary adjustments to rectify a less than perfect bowl because they have an innate, or natural instinct, more commonly called “ball sense” or “eye/hand co-ordination”. Thus, they “know” what they need to do and don’t have to think about the solution. Over-thinking adjustments causes many bowlers unnecessary stress resulting in anxiety or even panic. The result is that they “rush” the next shot and don’t achieve the result they seek.

This is shown when watching top line bowlers. They often bowl what seems to be an impossible shot and are successful, more importantly, they have a relaxed attitude. Why? Because they “know” they can make the shots to win games, tournaments and championships

### ***Behavior***

Our behavior is made up of three components: beliefs; attitudes; and values. Research shows that the hardest of these components to change is beliefs. They are our long-term controlling factors and are a result of the teachings from our parents in early childhood, early social environment (friends) and teaching throughout our school days.

Beliefs in turn influence attitudes which are the basis of our values. Some examples of beliefs we live with may be such things as:

- “You don’t have good ball sense”
- “You’re not a winner”
- “Success is for other people/families, not us”

The list is dependent on each person’s past and would too long for this publication.

There is not going to be a dissertation on psychology, we just want to set the scene for analyzing values

Every day we hear a reference to values, whether they be for the country, state, club or family. But there is no definition of what these values are and we are left with confusion. We may not realise how many values we actually have. In fact, we have different values in all areas of our lives, whether it be family, career, spiritual, bowls, winning, home ownership, the suburb in which we live, the list goes on. Compiling your lists will be left to you and will be dealt with in Appendix A at the end of this work sheet.

Before we move to the next topic it should be noted that our values change with our circumstances as we as we progress through life. Just think about the changes when you married, had children, grandchildren etc.

### ***Practice.***

Hopefully, a commitment to changing a present mind set or attitude is being prepared to “pay the price” of change - nothing will change unless we really want to make it happen. Of course, it will depend on what we want from the various areas of our life and the amount of time we are prepared to devote to each.

The secret of improving our ball sense and shot making ability is to practice. All elite sportspeople spend time practicing, professional golfers, tennis players and others practice regularly – up to three or four days a week, as do top player in all sports – even elite bowlers.

So why not club bowlers? There are a number of reasons, here are some:

- They don't care if they improve or not, wanting to play once or twice a week
- They work or have family commitments and can't devote the time
- They don't think they need to practice
- They don't want to spend the time or pay the price

Whatever the reason, this section is for those who choose to improve.

It has been stated that the ideal time to spend practicing for minimum improvement is 3 times as long as you play. This means if you play twice a week for 3 hours a time the optimum time is 9 hours – BUT who is prepared to give that much time to spend on a green? Clearly, not too many people.

So, with the time to be allocated, what should be done?

- Firstly, bowl alone – when others join you it's too easy to play games and forget your plan for the day
- Secondly, have a plan of what to achieve in the session with no more than 3 components, these are the areas you have highlighted as the weakest in your game at present. It may be your forehand, direction, weight, speed of your delivery etc
- Keep records of each bowl, whether it's short, long, narrow, wide, jack high or on the centre line. Many bowlers don't think it's necessary to go to this trouble, there are a some of reasons why it is, it allows you to maintain concentration, and, more importantly shows how you are improving and your strengths. Keep running totals
- Don't just bowl at three quarter length which is known as “roll-up” length and where most people practice. It's rare to see top grade bowlers play at ‘roll-up’



length because they practice and play at maximum and/or minimum ends which is the strategy used in games

- Always practice on windy days and on heavy greens because many games are played in less than ideal conditions and it's important to be able to adapt
- Don't forget off centre targets and those close to the ditch, it's important to take the fear out of playing to targets away from the centre line

Here is a list of some suggestions for practice:

1. A jack is placed at both minimum and maximum lengths on centre line – draw 1<sup>st</sup> bowl on either hand to long jack, the 2<sup>nd</sup> bowl to on the other hand to short jack, 3<sup>rd</sup> bowl to short jack on original hand, 4<sup>th</sup> bowl to the same hand as 2<sup>nd</sup> bowl. Allows for confidence in changing length
2. Place a jack on the brink of the ditch or in the ditch (with a jack indicator on the bank) and draw 2 bowls on each hand to the jack Takes fear from the ditch
3. Similar to No. 2 but have a jack near the ditch about 2/3 of the distance from the boundary line and draw a forehand and backhand bowl to each jack. Gives confidence in drawing to the ditch
4. Place a jack near each side of the rink at different lengths and draw a bowl on each hand to each jack. Gives confidence in drawing to bowls away from the centre line
5. Mat is placed on the "T" at maximum length with jack placed on the centre line at minimum length then draw 2 bowls on each hand to the jack
6. Mat is placed on the "T" at maximum length with jack placed on the centre line at maximum length "T" then draw 2 bowls on each hand to the jack
7. Position coloured markers at between 1 to 1.5 metres apart on centre line from, say, maximum (on "T") length back towards opposite "T". Draw a bowl to each marker on either hand and next time around the circuit bowl on the other hand. The alternative for this exercise is to start from minimum length going back. An exercise to allow for quick and confident adjustment of lengths
8. Position 2 coloured discs about 15 to 20 cm on either side of a white jack disc on the "T" at one end and the mat on the opposite "T". There are a number of alternatives for this exercise: a) drive 2 bowls on each hand to hit the jack or either coloured disc; b) practice 1 or 1.5 metre on-shots; c) drive a bowl on either hand to hit the jack or coloured disc followed by a draw shot on the same hand and then repeat on the other hand.
9. Position a marker in a short position (say 1.5 metres) on each side of the centre line to allow most bowls to draw under to a jack placed on the centre line
10. Position a marker in a short position (say 1.5 metres) on each side of the centre line to allow most bowls to draw around to a jack placed on the centre line
11. Place a bowl or coloured marker on the centre line at any desired length with a jack about 30 cm behind and another bowl or coloured marker around 60 cm behind on the centre line. The purpose of the exercise is to draw around the short marker to be in front of the back bowl. This exercise can be set at short or long distances from the mat and reinforces "touch" bowling

12. Place a marker representing the jack on the centre line and one or two other markers at different distances behind the jack on both sides to represent positions the skip wants a bowl come to rest. Again, the distance from the "T" or mat can be varied
13. Place 2 jacks about 2 or 3 metres apart on the centre line and another on each side of the "T" at about 1 to 1.5 metres towards each boundary line. The exercise is to draw a bowl to one hand to the short centre line jack and the second bowl on the other hand to the long centre line jack, then drive or on-shot a bowl at each wide jack, the backhand to one and the forehand to the other. The exercise gives practice at drawing to different length jacks and the ability to change from draw to accuracy at driving
14. Without having a jack as the target bowl, a bowl on either the forehand or backhand at any legal length then bowl the other 3 bowls to the original bowl. The exercise is called a caterpillar and is designed to reinforce consistency in line and length
15. Place a bowl (probably in preference to a coloured marker) at any position on the green with a jack beside it, probably less than 15 cm, and bowl 4 bowls to move the jack up to a metre without touching the close bowl. Excellent for accuracy and to reinforce confidence in all shots
16. Place two bowls touching, or very close to each other, with a jack between them. Then bowl 2 bowls on each hand to "niggle" the two-target bowls and remain on the jack to score shot. The distant from the mat can be varied to give practice to "touch" at various lengths
17. Place coloured discs at various lengths from minimum to maximum length and roll at least one jack to finish within a mat width from each disc. To practice rolling jacks and useful for leads and singles play.

These are suggestions to help you choose and it's easy to add to or vary it to suit your needs.

### ***Towards and Away-From a Target***

Without being made aware of the difference between the above many people may be concentrating on the wrong goal. Those who are moving towards an outcome are "goal directed" on winning. Those who concentrate on playing away from losing are actually "goal directed" on losing. While this may seem strange to some people, think for a minute about a time you played a game and didn't want to lose to your opponent. Things probably went along well for a time and then you fell in a heap and lost.

On the other hand, when you were "psyched" up to win you most probably did. So, when you're preparing for a match concentrate only on winning.

### ***Want and Will***

Interesting topic? So, what is the difference between "I want to win" and "I will win"?

By saying “I will” do something, say, give up smoking, what is really being said, “I will stop smoking (someday)”. You see, there’s no real commitment or timeframe,” but I will do it”. It’s wishy-washy and ill-defined.

On the other hand, “I want to stop smoking” is definitive, positive and conclusive because it allows you to plan when it will happen and the event or goal you are defining.

It’s no different in bowls, if you really **want** to win you **will**.

How many times do you say “I’ll try” and do that shot or something else and it doesn’t happen?

The word “TRY” is another wishy-washy word to make its way into our language. Have you ever asked someone to ring you on a particular day and they say, “I’ try” and they don’t contact you? In other words, “try” is another way of saying “no”. The only place for it is in either code of Rugby where a player puts the ball over the opposition’s defensive score line and is awarded 4 points. Then it’s called a “try” because the scoring team has the opportunity to try for 2 more points by kicking a goal.

So, “I’ll try” in bowls should be replaced by “I’ll do it” and how do you know you can do it? Because you’ve practiced every shot in the game of Bowls and now have confidence.

### ***The Best Bowlers in the Club are better than me***

Another shortcoming of a lot of bowlers is they rate others as better than themselves. Most games of bowls will have the outcome of the winner being the best on the day. This all comes down to the negative Beliefs we have learnt in our earlier life. Winning comes down to how much you want to win and the level of confidence you have in your ability. Don’t under sell yourself in these games but focus on winning instead of not losing.

### ***Bowlers with Physical Challenges or disabilities***

Many bowlers are challenged by such ailments as: Arthritis; muscle weakness; spinal problems. We cannot give medical advice so it is recommended sufferers consult a health professional.

However, for those who suffer from muscle weakness, particularly in the legs, some simple exercises can be beneficial. Particularly knee bends, steady yourself by holding on to a table or bench and bend your knees and straighten up, do this say 10 times three times a day (or as often you can do physically) and build up over time. It is surprising how quickly strength builds up in the legs. Another easy exercise is to walk for, say, 10 minutes a day and again increase the time as you gain more strength.

For those who have bad back problems it’s worth considering a bowler’s arm, there’s no stigma attached to using an arm if finances allow.

## **Values**

Earlier we discussed how Values are important in all areas of life and it's important to know what they are and, equally, that they are prioritised. Another is we probably need to be aware of those of our Club. If there is incongruency it will cause discontent and you are likely to leave the club or give the game away. In most areas of life there are around 15 values and sometimes more.

By way of example, let's look at values on Bowls: (list them as you think of them)

1. Comradery
2. Communication
3. Winning
4. Prize money
5. Sense of belonging
6. Competition
7. Enjoyment
8. Exercise
9. Sport
10. Involvement

That's a reasonable list to start and it possibly extends to 15 or 20 when it's complete.

The next step is to prioritise them with the most important to the least important **to you**

Start with Comradery and go to no. 2 asking yourself if it's more important than Communication and continue through the list if it ends up as the most important go to No.2 on the list. Maybe Enjoyment is the second most important to you, so restart with Communication and continue until you have finished prioritizing the list.

When you have finished doing this process on all areas of importance in your life it's surprising what you learn about yourself. Some of the areas to consider may be:

- Career
- Money
- Love
- Family
- Yourself
- Religion/spiritual
- Winning
- Relationships

## ***Weight Control***

A lot has been written on this subject and it's important for each of us to research the best way for us. The most asked question of a coach is, "How do I master weight control?" Here are some thoughts that have helped in the quest for some people

In an attempt to answer the question, we must look at a number of issues:

- Innate Ability
- Practice – do the basics well and often
- Repetition
- Confidence Be Able to effectively do Every Shot
- Know What to, Do - Don't Think
- Adjustment
- Understand the Dynamics of the Head
- Attitude

Before we consider these issues let's look at the attitudes that confront a new bowler. Firstly, we tend to perform best in the first two years of starting to play the game:

1. **We do the things our coach taught us.** All Bowling Clubs have well intentioned members, a lot of whom will give what they consider to be good advice. After a period of time we start to try some of the techniques these people bombard us with and we find our game starting to plateau and frustration sets in. So, we incorporate more "new" ideas and we are in a spiral to mediocrity and bad habits.
2. **We concentrate.** Early in our bowling career we concentrate on the basics of our game, how we deliver the bowl and what we need to do to improve the last shot. After a while, as we get to know the other members of the Club and tend to enjoy their company and banter and our level of concentration drops which leads to a reduction in our ability, focus and enjoyment.
3. **We practice.** We go to the Club as often as possible to practice and improve. After a while some the faults mentioned above appear in our game and we practice them until they become the basics of our game and we keep practicing them until they form the best part of our game. Does this sound familiar??

Having set the scene, let us now consider the subject of this session and see how to change our game by improving weight control. Lawn Bowls can easily be defined as: "a game of adjustment and repetition". The best bowlers do all of the basics consistently and well.

## ***Innate Ability***

Every elite sportsperson has innate abilities of movement, timing and/or ball sense which allows them to excel in their chosen field. This is not seen anywhere more than bowls, the top bowlers are well coordinated, smooth natural ball players, many have been successful in other ball sports such as cricket, tennis, golf or baseball to mention a few. It is a pleasure to watch them bowl because every delivery is the same every time and they are able to adjust the weight in the next bowl to take advantage of the last one. In fact, they can pick up any

bowl and put it close to the target even if they haven't used that bowl before – they just know what it will do and the grass they must take for an effective result.

### ***Practice – we cannot overstate the importance of “practicing with a purpose”***

Without practice there is unlikely to be any real improvement no matter which sport is played. The people who practice the most are the best players, what is the first thing a professional tennis champion does? They find a court, take their coach and hit balls for hours practicing every aspect of their game. The same scene is found in golf, on non-playing days top golfers spend hours practicing every shot. Football, cricket, netball, baseball, hockey etc. all players spend hours training and practicing.

So, what about lawn bowls??? The top grade (or elite) players spend a lot of time on the green practicing all shots. Tony Taylor, a Zone 9 representative, suggests that we should spend 3 times as many hours practicing as we play every week. Also, practice alone with no more than 3 aspects of the game each session – maybe: on-shots, draw to centre line and delivery technique; or draw to short ends and long ends and off-centre jacks. There are many aspects to improve our game and it will depend on your needs.

Crawford Linton espouses the importance of practicing weaknesses, he doesn't feel as confident on his forehand so that's what he practices (many bowlers would like to have this bad a forehand eh?). Terry Warder, another grade 1, Zone 9 representative bowler has just been named as Zone Bowler of The Year and he can be seen practicing regularly at Harbord. These are just a few of our champions who spend much time on their game.

### ***Repetition***

A lot of club bowlers go for a roll-up and play ends and socialize together and claim this is a practice session – to some extent it is, but the best form of practice is bowling alone and concentrating on just a few areas, as mentioned above. Practice is about repetitive learning to make sure we do every shot the same way each time so we can do those shots when they are needed in competitions and pennants.

Repetitive practice cannot be over stressed for the improvement you will see in your performance and it doesn't matter if you can only spend one or two hours per week. The commitment of the Zone 9 Coaching Committee is to assist all bowlers in the zone to have a delivery that is the same action every bowl.

### ***Confidence***

Self confidence in bowls is being able to do any shot depends on the amount of times we have practiced done it/them. This worksheet isn't an appropriate time to analyse the psychology of what gives each of us individually the emotional and mental makeup we have now. We will, however, postulate that it is about the origins of our beliefs, attitudes and values. All of these tend to change as we progress on life's journey.

### ***KNOW What to do – Don't Think***

At a club level the average bowler tends to overthink a required shot and is reluctant to “try” something new or isn't confident about doing it successfully. So they think of all the alternatives and what may be needed to be successful. The result is they become confused and unsure of which is the best alternative and they usually fail to get a result.

On the other hand, high grade and elite bowler can easily identify what is needed and end up with a positive result.

WHY??? Because they know what to do and (as Nike says) “just do it”. The reason they know what to do is because they have practiced all shots often over a period of years. On the other hand, the club bowler labours under the misperception that playing twice a week is as much practice that they need.

A past world champion, Peter Belliss, has written two books, the latest is titled “Perfect Bowls with Peter Belliss” in which he stresses the importance of the emotional and mental aspects of playing Lawn Bowls. In particular, KNOWING what the adjustments to make after a wayward shot, fast or slow green, or to counteract an opponent's good shot.

At first, it will seem daunting to learn to know what to do in bowls but perseverance will pay dividends.

### ***Adjustment***

It has rightfully been said that there are 3 main aspects of being a good bowler – grass (line), length, and adjustment. Once again, it's important to stress the need for practice and knowing what to do. If a bowl is a foot short or long or skinny or wide the hardest thing a club bowler can do is effectively make the shot. Once again that old chestnut, practice the exercises listed earlier.

### ***Understand the Dynamics of a Head***

This, of course, is the basic requirement for bowlers who aspire to become skips or thirds. It is also a difficult and time-consuming skill to gain, it can take years or not ever be achieved. This is where a competent coach or experienced skip can help train aspiring bowlers, all it takes is commitment by clubs that identify it as a need and eager bowlers and the ability to ask questions

Playing team games isn't the only game where understanding the dynamics of a head is vital, when playing singles there is a critical need to know which shot to play and the consequences of playing or not playing it.

### ***Attitude***

We have discussed values, attitudes and beliefs. The deepest emotion of the 3 is beliefs and they are hardest to change because they are formulated early in our life. Beliefs are given to us by parents, friends, school teachers and others whom we trust and respect. They control attitudes which in turn form our values.

As a result, our attitudes to the career we choose, how we accept our environment and how we perform in all areas of life, including our belief in the ability to love, win, lose, work etc. To change an attitude often means revisiting our early life and accepting or rejecting our early learnings and experiences. As mentioned above, this isn't the forum to address these issues but self-analysis can definitely help.

### ***Overcoming Errant Bowls and Mistakes and Faults***

This is a list of common faults made by many bowlers. Once again, it may well be your best interests to discuss your delivery with an experienced coach.

### **Short Bowls**

- Bowling arm bent on backswing
- Bowling arm bent at time of delivery
- Dropping head during or after delivering bowl
- Arm not firm when releasing the bowl
- Releasing the bowl too early
- Lifting arm too high and/or too fast after delivery
- Not staying down after release of delivery, stepping forward or backwards too soon
- Weight not on front foot at time of delivery
- Not following through after delivery
- Not enough delivery "weight"
- Backswing too short
- Stepping too soon

### **Over Bowling**

- Back and forward swing too fast in delivery
- Stepping too late or too long
- Exaggerated backswing
- Flicking the wrist at point of delivery
- Stare point too far up the green
- Holding bowl too high in set up
- Too much weight in delivery

### **Bowl Wobble**

- Bowl not square in hand, dimples or lines on the bowl not pointing to the bowling arm shoulder
- Bowl not at right angle to line of delivery
- Twisting the wrist at the time of delivery
- Fingers not positioned properly on the bowl, ideally the index finger and little finger should be placed on dimples or lines of the bowl at the bottom of the bowl and thumb on the dimples or lines towards the top of the bowl
- Little finger and/or thumb too high at side of bowl
- Bowl size too big for bowler's hand
- Holding bowl in front of body instead of beside body



## **Narrow Bowls**

- Stare point too close to the mat or inside the line of the bowl
- Looking at the jack – the hand follows the direction of the eyes
- Delivery arm swing across or away from the delivery line
- Stepping across the line of the bowl (towards the centre line)
- The bowl not held at right angle to the delivery line
- The bowl held in front of the body at the beginning of the delivery

## **Loss of Balance**

- Feet not facing straight along the delivery line
- Stepping across the back foot
- Non-bowling arm not secured on the knee of the stepping leg
- Dropping the shoulder of the bowling arm too far
- Bowling arm too far forward at point of release
- Step too long
- Forward swing of delivery too fast
- Body weight not moving forward
- Knee of anchor foot too straight

## **Loss of Aiming Line**

- Feet not facing along the delivery line
- Line of shoulders, feet and hips not at right angles to delivery line
- Stepping across the delivery line
- Not looking at stare point when delivering bowl
- Shoulders and/or hips twisting at point of delivery
- Backswing too long
- Stepping wide
- Delivery hand swinging across body away from delivery line
- Backswing moving in a sideways arc

## **Length Control**

- Not swinging the bowl beside the body 3 or 4 times while concentrating on the distance to the jack
- Loss of rhythm often caused by forward swing being too fast
- Not following straight through after delivery
- Taking eyes off stare point

## ***Summary***

There are three P's in the game of Bowls for those who choose to improve – Practice, Practice and Practice. Get to the point where you're confident you can DO every shot and KNOW you can make any adjustment or alteration to a not-so-good shot.

Make sure pride doesn't stop you from seeking help from your club coaching committee, or by contacting the Zone 9 Coaching Committee.