

# Zone 9 Coaching Committee

## Singles Strategy

Singles is arguably the best test of bowls as there is no-one else to blame for any bad shots so we would like to address some ideas and strategies to help all bowlers improve their performance.

Singles is the ultimate leveller in the sport of Lawn Bowls because there is only one person to blame for winning or losing. Hopefully the following ideas will be of use to you:

- Bowl on the same side of the rink – forehand in one direction and backhand the other. This will allow you more fully understand the grass and weather conditions and means that you won't have to adjust your delivery too often.
- Keep driving to a minimum – a good rule is to only drive twice, to and from the game!! Very few bowlers are accurate drivers and missing the target gives away high scores. The common rule of thumb and advice from top bowlers is draw to reduce the losses rather than take the risk.
- If your opponent is ahead bowl on their hand to disrupt their line and clutter their track.
- Concentrate on your game and don't become involved in "small talk".
- Keep compliments of the opponents play to a minimum – this reinforces to you and them that they are doing well.
- For the first six ends or so don't play on-shots as this is the time for you to become acquainted with the general condition and speed of the green as well as the prevailing weather conditions.
- Keep a cool head – don't allow yourself to become flustered, particularly if your opponent gets away to an early lead. Nerves will cause you to make mistakes and reduce clear thinking.
- Roll the jack for long or short ends. Most people practice medium length ends which are referred to as "roll up length". Not a lot of bowlers can handle ditch to ditch length; this is usually a good ploy if your opponent is a senior bowler or when the green is heavy. Conversely, short ends on a quick green are also hard for most bowlers to make an adjustment to.
- Another important rule is: "when you're down you must be up". Make sure your bowls reach the head, short bowls are a waste so use the early ends to adjust to the speed of the green.
- ***Make the wind your friend.*** If there is a strong wind blowing across the green use the wide hand because bowls are less affected by gusty conditions when you are bowling with wind than when you use the narrow hand.
- In the Book by Peter Belliss and edited by Hugh de Lacy titled "Think and Play Better Bowls" the author writes on page 154, "To win singles tournaments you must play as if it means nothing and yet it means everything. This sums up the approach needed to compete head-to-head, and reinforces the principle messages of this book: performance is a factor of attitude. To play as if it means nothing implies a lack of doubt, fear or negative thinking: if it means nothing, what is there to worry about? You can relax and enjoy yourself." I'm not sure if this book is still available but if it is it's well worth buying. Peter Belliss concentrates on the importance of the mental approach to the game and it's written in an easy to read style.

Good luck and good bowling.

Peter D Ward  
(On behalf of the Zone 9 Coaching Committee)