

Coaching

Severalls Jubilee Bowls Club now has 4 qualified coaches. As well as hosting sessions for new members our coaches are also available to help seasoned bowlers.

Top Tip

Why does the bowl wobble when I release it?

This is a common question and one that often receives a simple answer when in reality it may be caused by a number of things. Two of these causes and how to safeguard against them are set out below.

1) The simple answer is that the bowl has been delivered at an angle and not along the running line around the centre of the smooth surface of the ball. This can severely affect the line and length of your delivery. If you always check your hold and how the ball is placed in your delivery hand before you step on the mat, it should be avoided. This is why I encourage bowlers to take time to settle themselves before they actually step on to the mat.

2) It could be caused by the grip; an ideal delivery will mean the last finger, at the point of delivery on the bowl, will be the middle finger on the delivery hand – however, if the little finger is the last one on the bowl it will wobble. As the little finger is to one side of the bowl's running surface it will naturally cause the ball to run slightly off the centre line of the running surface. When gripping the ball, the position of the little finger can be difficult. Some bowlers, because of the way they grip the ball, will always have a slight wobble on their bowl when it is delivered and this could cause the bowl to follow a tighter line. If it is 'controlled', i.e. the bowl is delivered deliberately slightly off line and therefore runs straighter, it can be a very useful skill. David Bryant was one such bowler. However, if it is 'uncontrolled' the bowler should consider how they hold the ball and ensure the little finger is not pressing firmly on the surface but is just supporting the ball in your hand. This problem can occur with both the claw or the cup style of grips. Again, it is important for the bowler to set themselves and ensure they are holding the ball comfortably in their delivery hand before stepping on to the mat.

Stop Relax Breathe and be calm

I have often heard bowlers after they have delivered a good bowl say they wished they could do it again. They approach the mat for their next delivery, tense and breathing heavily. Their delivery is all tight and alas the bowl fails to achieve any of the glory of the previous delivery. How many times have you heard the cry "Why can't I do it again?" Well, I think you can. If you have done it once you can do it again and again and again and again. As they often say it is all in the mind. So, let's see how we can train the mind

to repeat the good shots time after time. Let's see if we can become that bowler that everyone admires because you can always repeat the good shots and correct the bad. When you have delivered a good shot your brain registers the success even before you are conscious of the details of your delivery. You know when it has all gone right. You know when the bowl leaves your hand that it will achieve what you were aiming for. So, what do you do for the next shot you play? Whether you simply want to put another shot in or play that precise block or the perfectly placed wood behind the jack, what must you do to have a chance of achieving perfection every time?

1. Relax – when we deliver the bowl the tighter our arm and body the less likely we are to achieve a good outcome. Do not rush onto the mat. Take your time breathe deeply and spend time assessing and deciding what it is you want to achieve. Be prepared for your delivery before you get onto the mat. Shut everything out and concentrate purely on the correct delivery to be made.

2. Ensure that your grip is comfortable, and you have the bowl the right way in your hand (even well-seasoned bowlers deliver wrong bias bowls now and again). Ensure that you step onto and are standing in a relaxed fashion on the mat. No sudden movements. No jerky steps or wild swinging of the arms. Just a thoughtful controlled swing of the arm along the line of your chosen delivery. Remember, your brain remembers the feeling of that perfect delivery you have just made, let it deliver a perfect delivery again.

3. Stay on the mat and watch the bowl until it has come to rest. Often the bowl will take unexpected deviations in the later stages of its travels and if you have turned your back on it you will not be able to adjust your next bowl. No howling with delight or damming the world. Just stay calm and relaxed ready to deliver your next perfect bowl. Remember – Stop Relax Breathe and be CALM.

If you do this you will find that your bowling will become more consistent and successful.