



**PURPOSEFUL
PRACTICES**
A G U I D E T O
S E L E C T I O N
A N D U S E

4. A Bowler who often plays second in a rink or triple team

'I have been playing three years and generally play second. I am occasionally asked by my skip to play a shot to change the shape of the head to give him a better chance of drawing to the jack. I find this very difficult and am nervous about playing this type of shot'

Inexperience in both reading a head and shot selection will be contributing to this player's apparent lack of confidence. It is likely that the draw is seen as the overriding shot of choice creating a mind set on the mat that is in conflict with the weighted shot requested by the skip.

The goals for this player should be to:

1. Develop a greater range of shots
2. Develop a greater awareness of head reading
3. Build up the confidence required to play the range of shots necessary for the position of second.

The first priority should be to practice a range of weighted shots by using the training sets designed for this purpose.

- Using a helper spend 5 minutes simply drawing continuously.
- Once the player is comfortable and warmed up move on to the exercises involving weight building up the speed until a comfortable controlled weight is established for that player.
- Move on then to No. 4, 5 & 6 and discuss the options with the player and allow the player to experiment with different weights at each head.
- Use a variation of No.19 'Follow through and stay' by adding more bowls would greatly increase this players awareness of what is possible. It is the bowl in the hand that is intended to end up shot.

Reviewing and evaluating the session will reinforce the lessons learnt. The second session should include working with the team using both Freezing of the Head and or the Phantom Four.

A third session should be arranged to go through the practices again and review how well the player is progressing in match situations.

3. An inexperienced Bowler

'I am a bowler who has just started bowling this year and enjoy social bowling with a small group of friends. I find that sometimes I bowl reasonably well getting close to jack and others I am all over the place. I would like to be more consistent.'

This likely to be a problem of line and length coupled with a lack of concentration due to the social nature of the activity. It is highly likely that the player has been developing faults without being fully aware of it.

The coach in this instance should look at the basic delivery first and suggest slight adjustments if necessary.

The goals for this player should include;

1. To establish a smooth consistent delivery.
2. To establish a routine on the mat that helps to maintain concentration

First session

- Using a helper set up No. 11 Jack Practice and encourage a smooth delivery.
- Once a satisfactory action is achieved it is possible to spend a short period using a training 'set ' based on the draw. This should get the player to feel the rhythm of a smooth delivery as there is little time to reflect on inaccurate bowls. Spend no more than 10 minutes on this.
- Move onto No. 14 for 10 minutes
- Progress onto No. 15 and be prepared to stop as soon as some measure of success is achieved.
- Review progress with the player identifying what has been achieved.

Second session

- No. 15 about ten minutes
- Move onto No. 13 to reinforce line and length. About 15 minutes.
- Move onto No.16 & 17
- Finish with a short game against an opponent who can act as a good role model for line and length.

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INTRODUCTION

How to use the Manual

This manual is intended to provide support material for all levels of coaching but more particularly for newly qualified coaches. It should be treated as a supplement to the existing manuals please refer to the basic advice that is currently offered in the coaching manuals published by the EBCS. It is intended as a resource.

There are self test scenarios at the beginning that you can attempt after reading the purposeful practices.

Example answers are provided at the end. These are not intended to represent the 'right' answer but merely an insight into how an experienced coach might approach each situation.

This collection of purposeful practices has been compiled from many sources both in the UK and around the world, and from practical experience. I.B. Paddy (Regional Coach)

Each practice is scored to allow a percentage score at the end so that progress can be monitored.

If you are a player then ask a coach for advice regarding the type of practices you should be using.

Remember:

- Practice means just that it is not a roll up for fun.
- Make sure not to practice faults
- Set objectives for each session and use the assessment method to monitor progress.

2. A club bowler who often plays skip in a rink or triple team

'I have been playing four years and generally play skip in the club leagues. I find that I lose my ability to draw after I play a weighted shot, and struggle to get back to it.'

A problem that many players experience. The adrenalin 'rush' caused by the weighted shot is likely to result in the problem of being unable to revert to an accurate draw.

The goals for this player should be to;

1. Enhance the confidence in the draw shot in a game situation
2. Make the weighted shot become a normal and accustomed part of the player's repertoire.
3. Establish a routine that allows time for the adrenalin to subside slightly before attempting the next shot.

Research indicates that the brain can retain the memory of a physical action for around 25 seconds. Visiting the head after a heavy shot and calmly visualising the draw shot is often found to be helpful for players who experience this type of problem.

1. Use No. 4,5, & 6 to build up the experience of playing weight.
2. Create a circuit on two rinks up one way, down the other, by combining one of No. 4, 5 or 6 and one of No. 7, 8, 9, or 10.
3. Start off with four bowls and reduce the number on each circuit until the player is using only one bowl . A weighted shot followed by a draw.

Walking up the rink having played weight and then moving across to a draw shot on the other rink will simulate what is required in a game to calm the player down.

Ensure this is fully understood at the end of the session.

It may be necessary to have three or more additional sessions, keeping to the same format but varying the length each session.

1. A player who has set a goal of playing in the County A team at lead in two years time

'I have been playing nearly four years and generally play lead. I also enter singles competitions'

For this player the goals should be based on achieving a high level of consistency in the following areas.

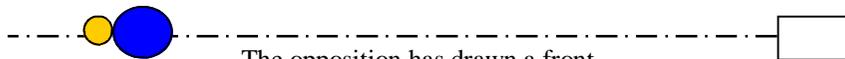
1. The ability to maintain control of the Jack length.
2. The ability to repeat a good bowl
3. The ability to increase and decrease length
4. The ability to maintain concentration and focus

A programme could be devised based on developing and monitoring the skills of jack casting and drawing consistently on both hands.

- The programme would begin with No. 11 or variations on it depending whether the player was practicing with a partner or alone.
- Follow this with No. 15 (repetitions)
- No.s 16 & 17 increasing and decreasing weight
- The pressure of a match needs to be simulated so No. 2 could be used.

To maintain a high concentration level keep these practices short only allow 20 bowls or jacks and record the scores. This also helps with a player's motivation as each skill is measured and can be reviewed at the end of the session.

- Another very difficult exercise for a lead or singles player is shown below. The challenge is with four bowls to obtain shot. A novice player is likely to use excessive weight in this situation.



The opposition has drawn a front 'toucher' with the first bowl.
You have four bowls to obtain shot.

The coach has the opportunity with this exercise to develop a better game sense. An experienced coach will ask questions at this stage rather than give answers. E.g. How can you make this shot easier for yourself? Where does your opponent not want your bowl to finish?

How does a coach find the 'right' challenge for a particular player?

Challenge

When working with any player identifying the level of difficulty for purposeful practices is one of the coaching skills that develops with experience.

The best advice is to build up slowly. Make the practice achievable and gradually increase the level of difficulty. In this way players feel that they are progressing.

The Comfort Zone

Practicing those skills that are easily achieved and that the player is comfortable with is known as working in the comfort zone. To make progress the practices adopted need to be slightly outside this zone.

Caution

Players prepared to move outside their comfort zone in practice gradually develop new or higher level of skills. However if the challenge is so far outside their comfort zone that it is not achievable, then the players' self confidence will be seriously damaged.

The function of the coach is to maintain and increase confidence by correctly assessing the level of difficulty required to ensure that progress takes place.

SELF TEST SCENARIOS

Which practices would you select?

- 1. A player who has set a goal of playing in the County A team at lead in two years time**

'I have been playing nearly four years and generally play lead. I also enter singles competitions'

- 2. A club bowler who often plays skip in a rink or triple team**

'I have been playing four years and generally play skip in the club leagues. I find that I lose my ability to draw after I play a weighted shot, and struggle to get back to it.'

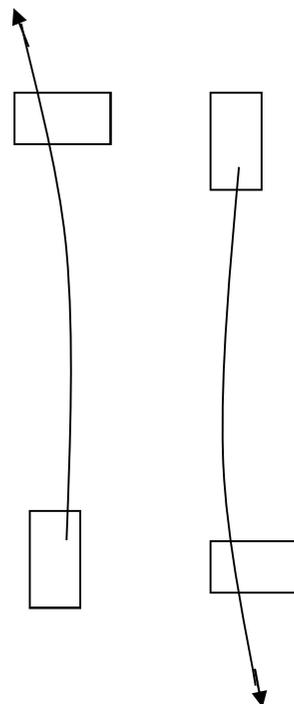
- 3. An inexperienced Bowler**

'I am a bowler who has just started bowling this year and enjoy social bowling with a small group of friends. I find that sometimes I bowl reasonably well getting close to jack and others I am all over the place. I would like to be more consistent.'

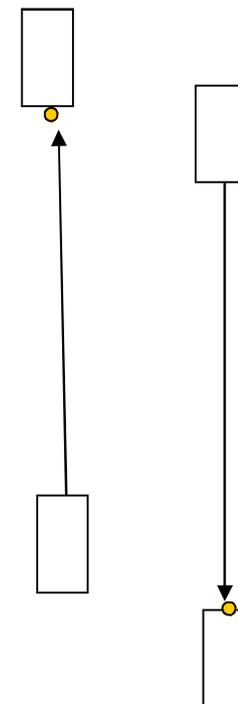
- 4. A Bowler who often plays second in a rink or triple team**

'I have been playing three years and generally play second. I am occasionally asked by my skip to play a shot to change the shape of the head to give him a better chance of drawing to the jack. I find this very difficult and am nervous about playing this type of shot'

Exercise 5
75% of maximum weight



Exercise 6
100% of maximum weight

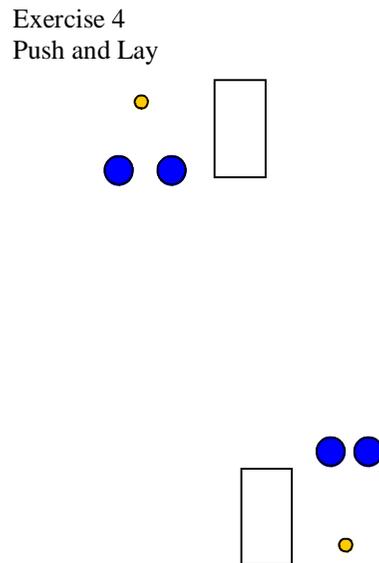
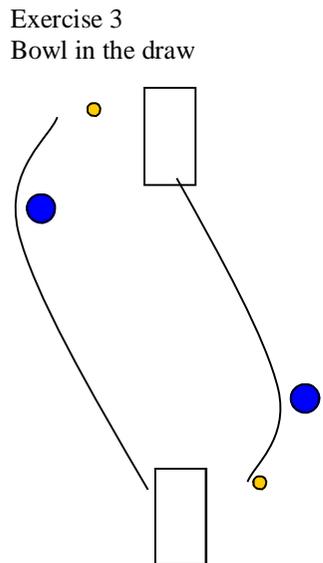
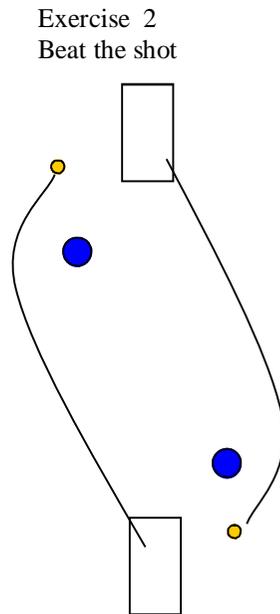
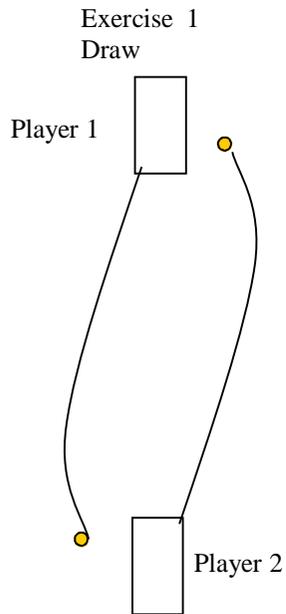


The objective with these two exercises is to gain accuracy by practicing weight with control.

This can be very tiring therefore the coach should limit the time spent to around five minutes.

Only conduct this practice if it is safe to do so. Rebounding bowls and jacks can be hazardous to players on adjacent rinks.

Each exercise is practiced on the forehand and backhand.
20 bowls for each hand.



Preparation and planning.

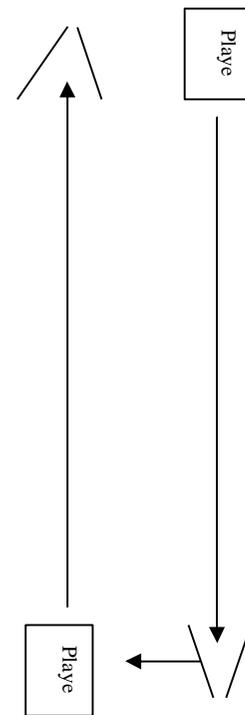
1. Which of the practices in this manual would you use with each of the bowlers?
2. How could you make each one progressively more challenging?
3. Make a list of all your chosen practices and describe how you would approach each session.

Where to find examples answers.

At the end of the manual you will find examples of how an experienced coach might approach each scenario. In each case the reasons for using particular purposeful practices are given. Suggestions are also presented for further sessions to ensure that any improvement is maintained.

It should be mentioned that although these are fairly typical examples, each player has individual needs. Only by working sympathetically with them on the green will a coach arrive at a programme that suits those needs.

It is good practice to question the player prior to the first session and have a programme outlined that can be modified as you develop a better understanding of the ability and personality of the player.



**An exercise in jack casting
for Leads or beginners**

Mats are placed off-centre at 27 m.
Two one meter sticks are placed alongside
the mats.
One player on each mat casts two jacks into
the 'vee' gaining 2 points for landing inside
and one point for being within half a metre .
**The players cast the jacks continuously for
10 minutes.**

Repetitions or ‘Sets’

Training ‘sets’ are based on a technique used by athletes to build the up stamina required to produce a high level performance in competition. They have the added advantage of generating confidence in performing the skill under pressure as it has been achieved hundreds of times in practice.

Advantages of using ‘sets’ or repetitions in the sport of bowls;

1. Establishes the ‘feel’ or rhythm of line length and weight very quickly.
2. Builds confidence in that the shot has been practiced successfully many times in practice and has become part of the bowlers’ comfort zone
3. Simulates the effects of fatigue fairly quickly reinforcing the knowledge that low energy levels and dehydration effect performance.

Disadvantages of using ‘sets’ or repetitions:

1. A players age and physical condition may seriously limit this style of practice. Great care should be taken by the coach before adopting this practice
2. A bad delivery fault can be rapidly reinforced due to the intensity involved.
3. If fatigue is not addressed in a positive way to build awareness then the drop in performance will damage a players confidence.
4. If pairs of players are involved the size and type of bowl used need to be approximately the same

Advice

A coach can use this method with a player of any ability provided that care is taken to limit the time involved., particularly with very young or old players.

Because the players are bowling continuously a delivery rhythm is developed faster than any other method. There is very little time to dwell on poor deliveries as another bowl has to be sent.

Be vigilante and stop the exercise if a fault is identified, talk it through and then continue.

When used with beginners ,(or used as a warm up method), there is no need to assess and monitor progress. The purpose initially is to establish the ‘feel’ and rhythm of bowling.

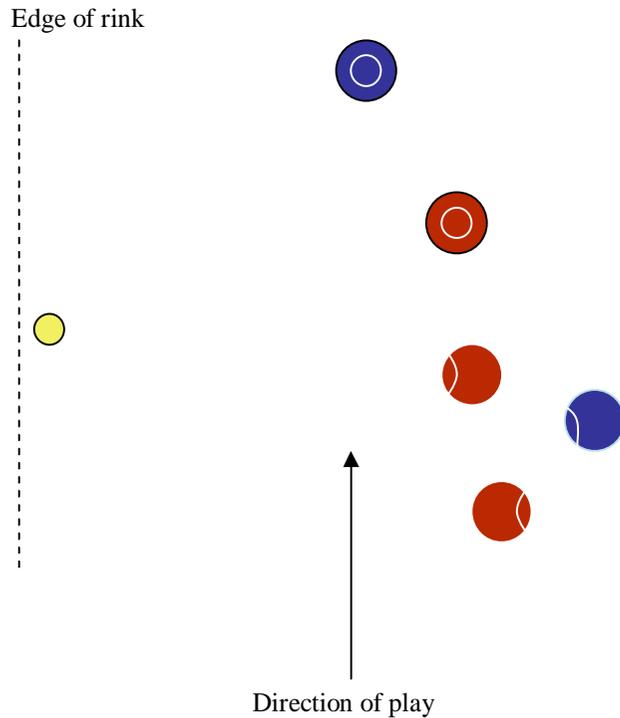
GAME SITUATION PRACTICES

Purposeful Practice 1

Scenario: You are **BLUE**
 It is the last end of the game.
 You require two shots to win, but lay two down on the end

Objective: To draw the winner

Scoring: 5 points if you draw the winner
 10 points if trail the jack for two shots



REPETITIONS OR TRAINING SETS

A Training Set

- A practice exercise normally comprises the delivery of 20 bowls
- Several skills practices are chosen and will vary depending on the individual player.
- No more than five practice exercises are put together to make a training set for that individual player.
- It is normal to practice in pairs although the coach may use another person to return the bowls.
- Each set is performed on the forehand and the backhand bear this in mind when designing a training set for a player.

Almost any purposeful skills practice can be turned to good use as

Purposeful Practice 24

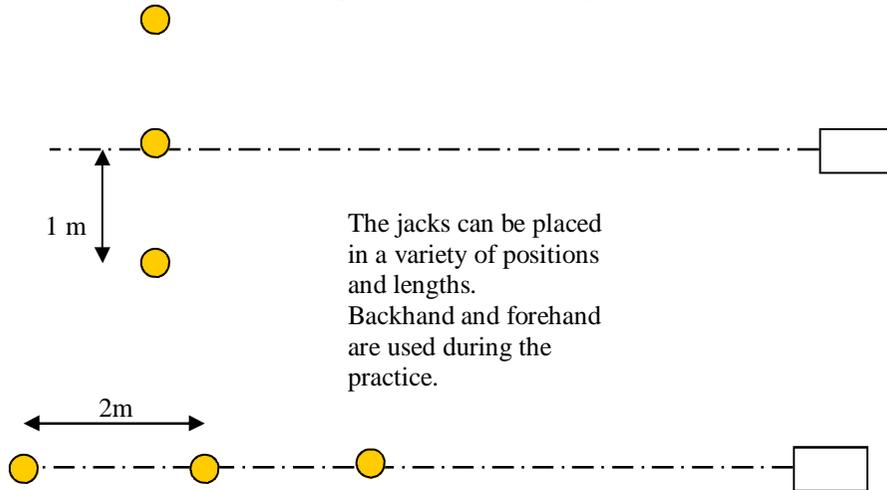
Scenario: **'Ian Shuback's Perfect End'**

This is an example of the challenge being appropriate to the level of ability of the player. As a prospective World Champion the level of difficulty was set at an extremely high level.

Objective: To produce high quality performance with every bowl and
To generate a high confidence level in competition

Scoring: Only perfection is good enough.

1. **Draw three touchers with the first three bowls** to a variety of jack positions.
2. **Nominate one of these with the last bowl** and use sufficient weight to remove it and stay for shot.



Coaching advice

Still a good practice for the average club bowler but change the challenge e.g. draw within 60cm of each jack with the first three bowls. Then nominate which one to beat with the fourth. Beginners/newer bowlers would be 1m away

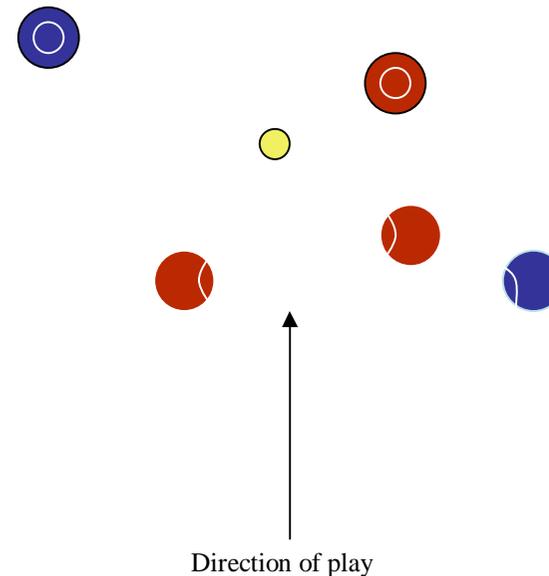
Purposeful Practice 2

Scenario: You are **BLUE**
It is the last end of the game.
You require two shot to win, but lay three down on the end

Objective: The jack must go into the ditch

Scoring: 5 points if the jack goes into the ditch and you lay one shot
10 points if the jack goes into the ditch and you lay two shots

DITCH

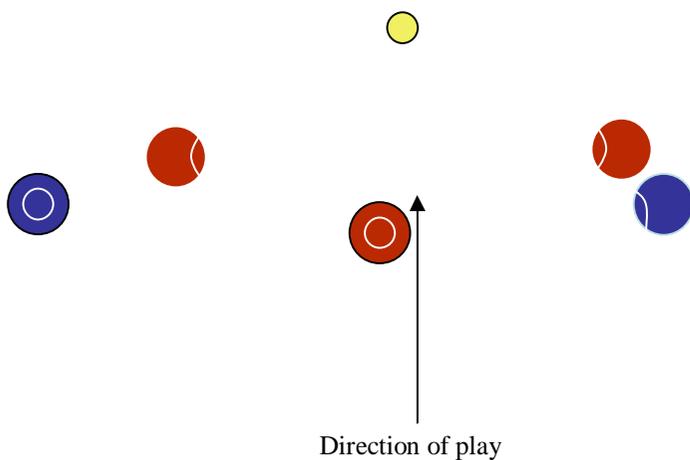


Purposeful Practice 3

Scenario: You are **BLUE**
 It is the last end of the game.
 You require one shot to win, but lay three down on the end

Objective: You must draw the shot
Coaching advice: Vary the distance from the jack depending on the skill level of the players

Scoring: 5 points for drawing shot
 10 for a dead length toucher



Purposeful Practice 23

Scenario: **A Bowl in the Draw**

Objective: To practice drawing inside/outside short bowls which appear to be in the draw.

Scoring:

Ten points for each bowl that beats the front bowl.
 Ten attempts will give a percentage e.g. five out of ten = 50%

Method

Use a target jack and two target bowls. Position the jack on the centre line at medium length and place a bowl each side of it and 2 m short in the line of draw to suit your bowls. Draw on the forehand and backhand either inside or outside the short bowls. To do this adjust the position of your feet on the mat. Move to the inside of the mat to go outside of a bowl. Using your original focus point increases the delivery angle and enables you to draw around the object bowl.

Move to the outside of the mat to go inside of a bowl
 Using your original focus point reduces the delivery angle and enables you to draw inside the object bowl.



Purposeful Practice 22

Scenario: **Beat the shot at the front**

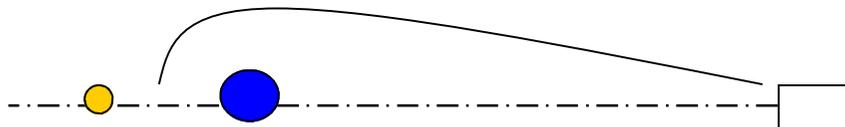
Objective: To beat a good bowl at the front and apply pressure to your opponent

Scoring: Five points for beating the shot behind
Ten points for finishing between the jack and bowl
Record every ten bowls

Method

Use a target jack and a target bowl if available.

Position a jack on the centre line at medium length and place a bowl 30 cm in front of it. Deliver your bowl to draw into the gap or rest on the jack. Vary the length and use forehand and backhand.

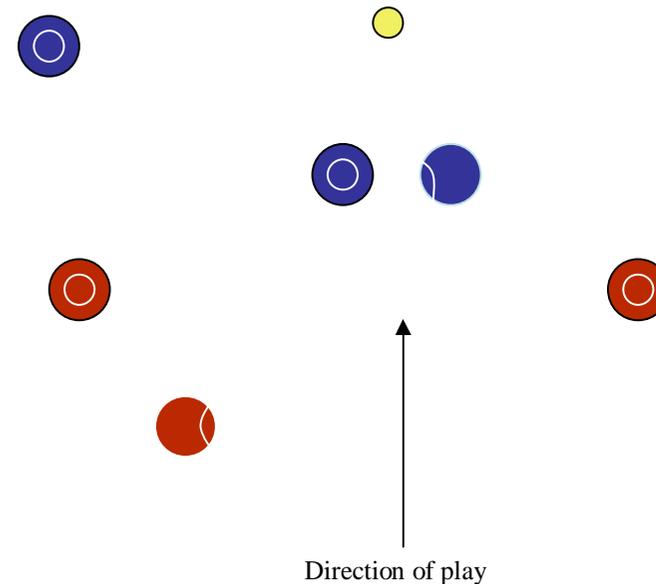


Purposeful Practice 4

Scenario: You are **RED**
It is the last end of the game.
You require one shot to win, but lay three down on the end

Objective: To split the two bowls and stay for shot

Scoring: 5 points if you split the bowls and stay for shot
10 points if you split the bowls and get a toucher within half a metre

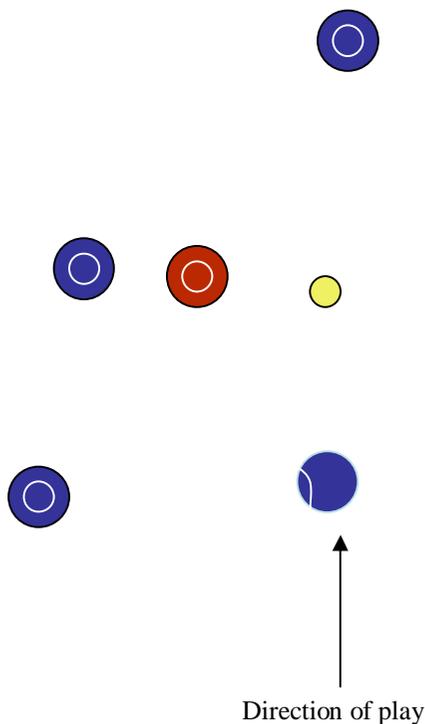


Purposeful Practice 5

Scenario: You are **BLUE**
It is the last end of the game.
You require four shots to win, but lay one down on the end

Objective: Take out red bowl and stay

Scoring: 5 points if you score three shots to draw
10 points if you score four to win



Purposeful Practice 21

Scenario: **Beat the shot behind the jack**

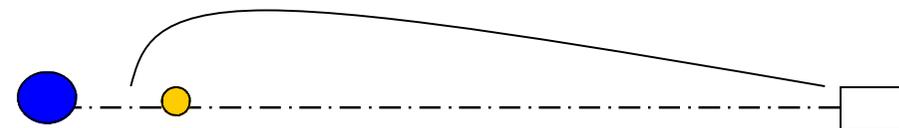
Objective: To beat a good bowl and apply pressure to your opponent

Scoring: Five points for beating the shot behind or in front
Ten points for resting the shot bowl and beating the shot
Record every ten bowls

Method

Use a target jack and target bowl if available.

Position a jack on the centre line at medium length and place a bowl 30 cm behind it. Deliver your bowl to draw into the gap or rest on the object bowl. Vary the length and use forehand and backhand.



Purposeful Practice 20

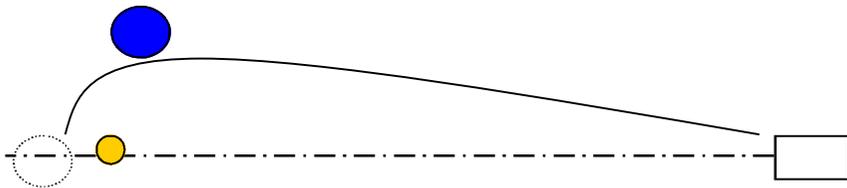
Scenario: **Using a jack high bowl**

Objective: To play up to a jack high bowl and drop in for the shot.

Scoring:
 Five points if you miss and finish 60 cm behind
 Ten points if you come off the jack high bowl and stay for shot
 Record every ten bowls

Method

If available, use a target jack and two target bowls. Position a jack at medium length and set a bowl at jack high 30 cm away to the left and right of the jack. Deliver your bowl at draw weight to rub off the jack high bowl and drop in for shot. Vary the length and use forehand and backhand.

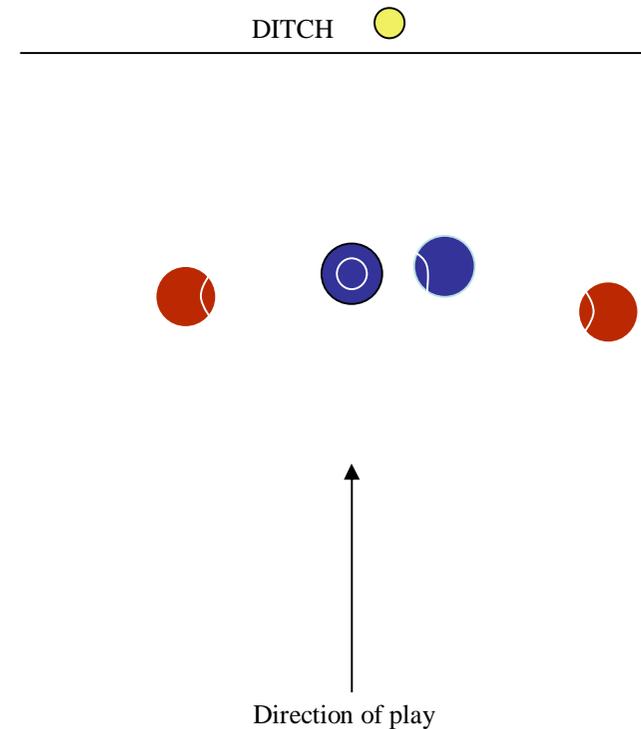


Purposeful Practice 6

Scenario: You are **RED**
 It is the last end of the game.
 You require three shots to win, but lay two down on the end

Objective: To push both bowls into the ditch and stay on the green to count
Coaching advice: Vary the mat position to make this achievable

Scoring: 5 points if you score two shots for a draw
 10 points if you score three shots to win

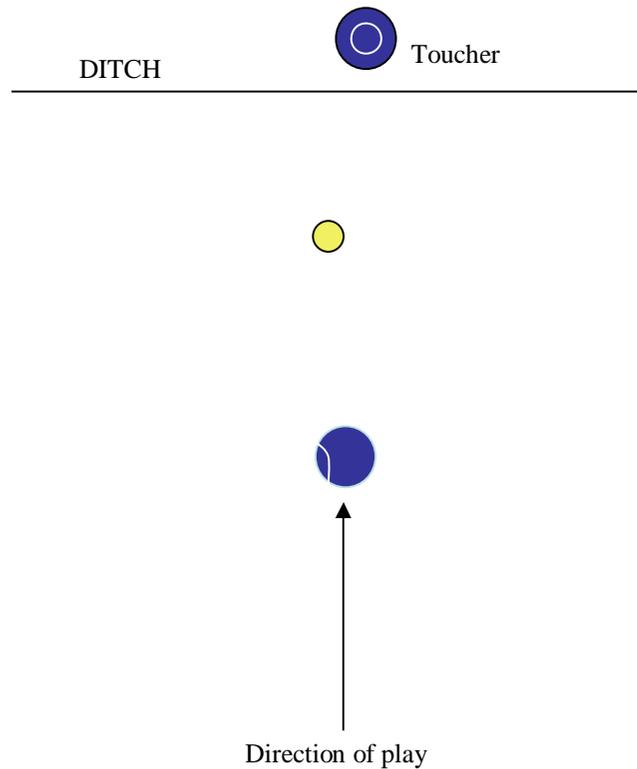


Purposeful Practice 7

Scenario: You are **RED**
It is the last end of the game.
You require one shot to win, but lay two down on the end

Objective: Draw to win or save
Coaching advice: change the position of the front bowl and ask if that makes a difference to the difficulty of the shot for the player.

Scoring:
5 points if you get second bowl
10 points if you draw the shot
Ten attempts then record score



Purposeful Practice 19

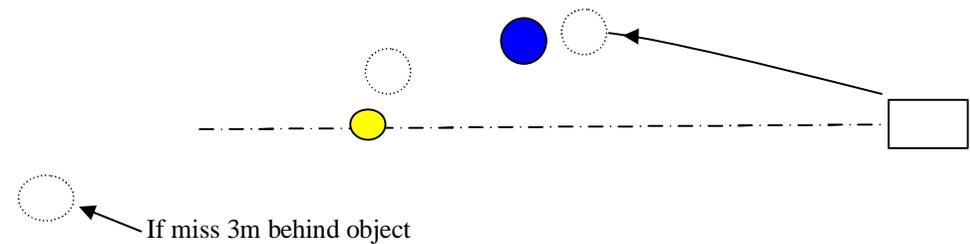
Scenario: **Follow through and stay**

Objective: To play on to a short bowl with sufficient weight to push it through the head and then follow through into a scoring or saving position.

Scoring:
Five points for a miss that finishes 3 m through
Ten points following through close to the jack
Record every ten bowls

Method

Place a bowl ½m short of a jack set at a medium length.
Deliver your bowl with enough weight to move the object bowl forward so that your bowl follows through for the shot or to save. As a guide to correct weight, a ratio of 6 to 1 is usually effective on a 12 to 14 second green



Purposeful Practice 18

Scenario: **Promote a short bowl**

Objective:

To promote a short bowl so that it becomes shot or finishes close to the jack

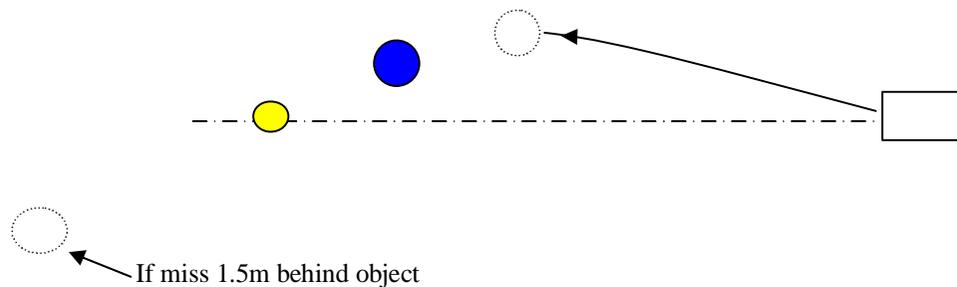
Scoring:

Five points for a miss that finishes 1.5 m through
Ten points for moving the target bowl 0.5m closer
Record every ten bowls

Method

Place a few bowls about 1.5 m short of a jack set at medium length. Deliver your bowl with enough weight to hit it and move it forward ½m. As a guide to the correct weight to be used, a ratio of 3 to 1 is suggested. To promote a bowl ½m you need 1.5 m extra weight with the necessary narrower green.

Vary the length and use forehand and backhand.

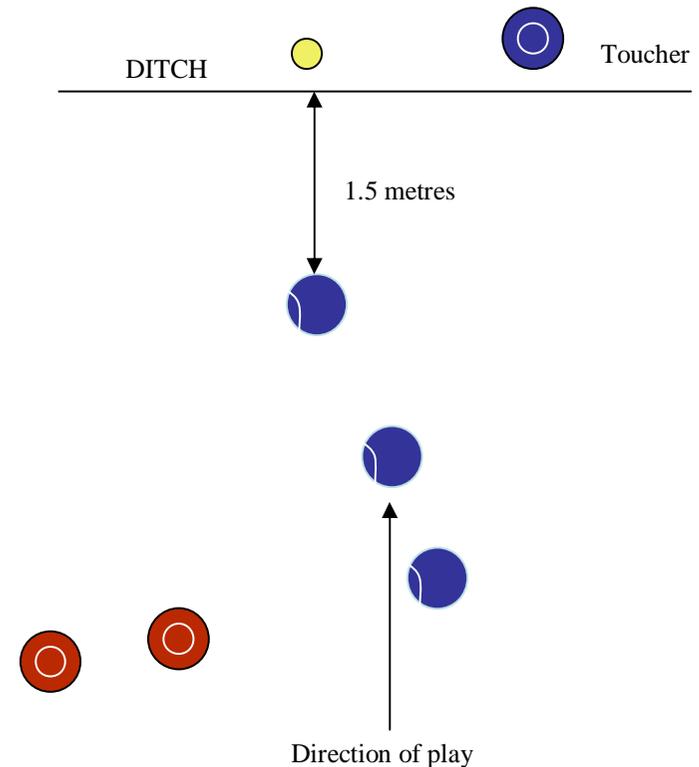


Purposeful Practice 8

Scenario: You are **RED**
It is the last end of the game.
You are two up on the game, but lay four down on the end
One hand is blocked by your own bowls

Objective: Draw to win or save

Scoring: 5 points if you get second bowl to win the game
10 points if you draw the shot
Ten attempts then record score

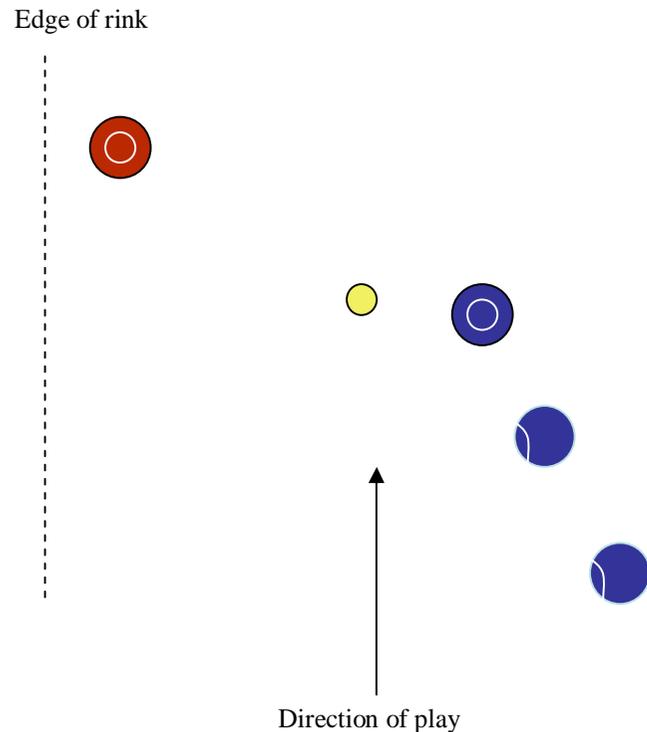


Purposeful Practice 9

Scenario: You are **RED**
It is the last end of the game.
You require two shots to win, but lay two down on the end

Objective: The jack must be trailed towards the back red bowl
Alternative: red to play across the head taking out two blue bowls and staying for shot

Scoring: 5 points if you trail the jack out of the rink or score one shot
10 points if you trail the jack and lie two shots
Ten attempts then record score



Purposeful Practice 17

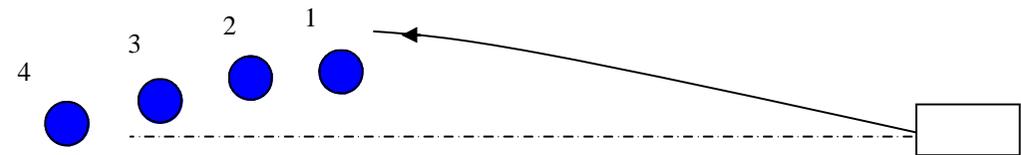
Scenario: **Weight (Length) Control —increasing length**

Objective: To progressively deliver bowls with increased weight and develop a feel for increased weight so that you can, when required, play a metre on shot

Scoring: Five for a bowl ½m away from previous bowl
Ten points for a bowl 1m away from previous bowl
Record every ten bowls

Method

Use four bowls. Deliver a medium length bowl to any point on the rink without crossing the centre.
Draw the second bowl to a position ½m to 1m behind it, similar for bowl 3 behind 2 and bowl 4 behind 3. Vary the length and play on forehand and back-hand.



Purposeful Practice 16

Scenario: **Weight (Length) Control —Decreasing length**

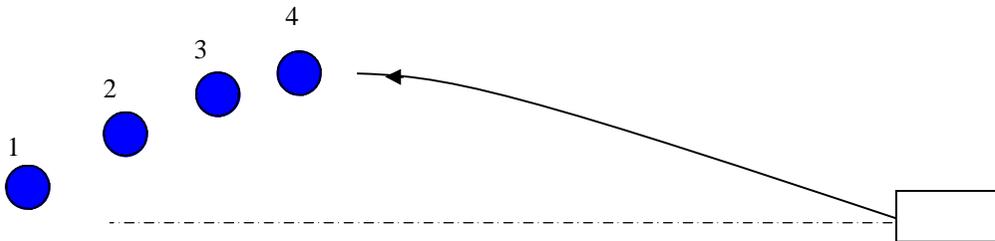
Objective: To progressively deliver bowls with less weight and to develop a feel for reducing weight so that you can, when required, play a bowl short of a nominated position.

Scoring: Five points for a bowl 40 cm away from previous bowl
Ten points for a bowl 60 cm away from previous bowl
Record every ten bowls

Method

Deliver a medium length bowl to any point on the rink without crossing the centre.

Draw the second bowl to a position 40 to 60 cm short of it, similar for bowl 3 short of 2 and bowl 4 short of 3. Vary the length and play on forehand and backhand.

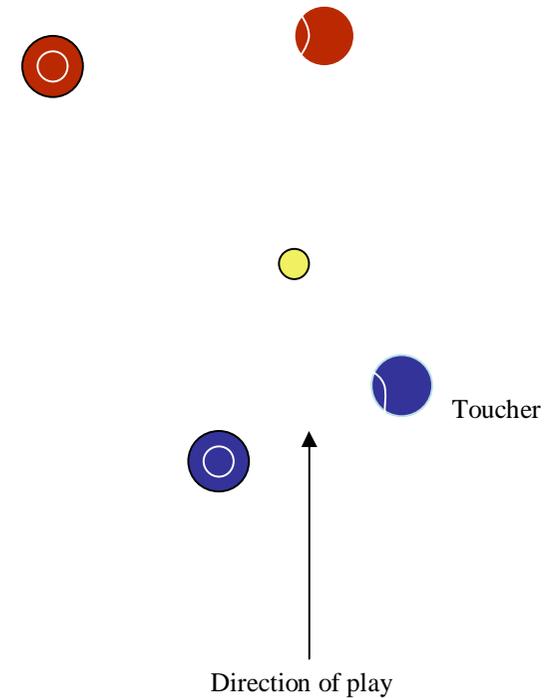


Purposeful Practice 10

Scenario: You are **BLUE**
It is the last end of the game.
RED needs two shots to win

Objective: To cover the back two red bowls

Scoring: 5 points if the bowl finishes between the jack and the red bowls
10 points if the bowl finishes between the red bowls and the ditch
Ten attempts then record score



Purposeful Practice 15

Scenario: **Weight (Length) Control — Repetition**

Objective: To develop a feel for the correct weight so that weight control and taking green occurs without conscious thought.

Scoring: Five points for three touching or close
Ten points for four touching or close
Record every ten bowls

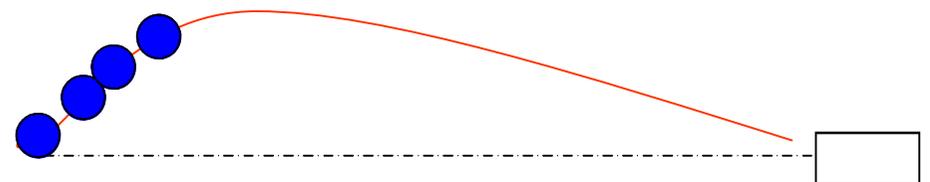
SKILL SPECIFIC PRACTICES

Method

Use four bowls. Deliver a medium length bowl to any point on the rink without crossing the centre.

Draw the next three bowls on the same hand using the same weight and green so that they finish close to each other. Vary the length and play on forehand and backhand.

Initially, as an aid, set up a marker to indicate the aiming line so that the only variable is control of weight.



Purposeful Practice 14

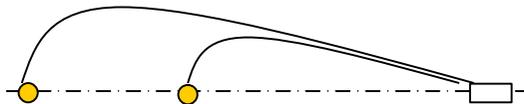
Scenario: **Bowl to Full and 3/4 Lengths**

Objective: To improve weight control and take the correct green

Scoring:
 Five points within 60 cm
 Ten points within 30cm
 Record every ten bowls

Method

Place two target jacks or markers, one at full length and one at 3/4 length on the centre line of the rink. Bowl alternate forehand and backhand to draw to the 3/4 length and then the full length jack positions. Aim to deliver behind the jack. Practice and set a goal to finish within 60 cm of the jack and as you improve reducing to 30 cm of the jack.



Purposeful Practice 11

Scenario: **Jack Delivery**

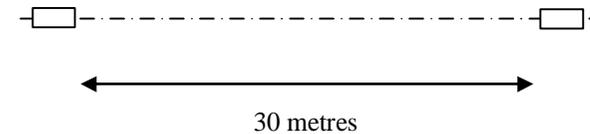
This practice can be used as warm up for leads or singles players or for two beginners developing their skills

Objective: To consistently deliver a jack to a nominated length

Scoring:
 1 point for each jack within nominated distance
 First player to 10 points wins

Method

Use two mats placed on the centre line 30 m apart.
 With a partner, deliver 10 jacks to each others feet, varying the distance when the jacks are consistently within 60 cm of the nominated position for lower grades and 30 cm for higher grades.



Purposeful Practice 12

Scenario: **Maximum Curvature of the Bowl**

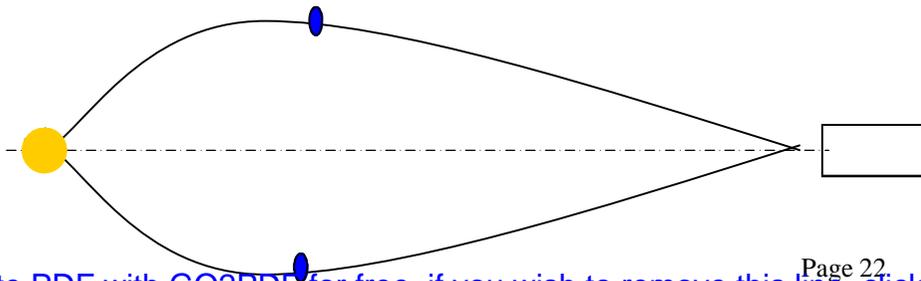
Objective: To establish and prove the maximum curvature technique of the draw shot by correctly reading the Green

Scoring: Five points for each bowl passing directly over the markers. Attempt 20 on each hand record the score. Possible score = 100 therefore you can work out your percentage

Method

Set the jack at full length and gauge where the bowl will start to bend (on both hands, place markers at these points).

Deliver bowls to pass directly over the markers to obtain the correct "green". When the line is established, move the jack and/or the mat to alter the length and re-establish new shoulder positions. This practice is to assist reading the green - do not worry too much about the weight. Concentrate on the perfect green for each bowl.



Purposeful Practice 13

Scenario: **Drawing to Mats**

Objective: To consistently achieve line and length.

Scoring: One point for one bowl on target
Two points for two bowls on target
Five points for three bowls on target
Ten points for four bowls on target
Record every ten bowls

Method

Use two mats and four bowls.

Place the mats on the centre line of the rink, one at each 2 m mark.

Deliver your bowls from end to end, both forehand and backhand, either to rest at each end of the mat or in the middle.

Vary the mat positions when goals are achieved.

