

STRATEGY AND TACTICS

Strategy is more likely to be discuss between the players in one team because it refers to the approach of the game.

Tactics is more difficult to decide in advance because they are part of the ongoing situation.

In this document, I will resume some of the most important rules that you can apply to upgrade your competition.

They are not in order of importance. You can just pick some of them and decide to consistently apply them to your game and note the difference when every body knows what they are doing.

- 1) Unless you can master both sides, it is better to control one good hand, even though there are some obstacles, than play with a hand you are not comfortable.**
- 2) When you are on a fast green, if you play narrow bowls...the odds to be outside of the head is much greater.**
- 3) First, get the shot and then play position. The idea is not to get all of your bowls touching the jack. You may want to protect or to predict the movement of the jack. Remember that playing a blocker is one of the most difficult shots. Stay with your most control hand.**

- 4) If you are scoring many shots (2 or 3) early in the end...don't be greedy, start to play position to make sure that you are not going to lose those shots on just one bowl. Often a team goes from +3 to -2 because they forgot to play position.**
- 5) In some situation when you don't see the jack, stay calm, just try to play position or try to pair the bowls of the other team. Use your best draw side, because in this kind of situation, weight is more important than trying to get the jack. The goal is to make sure that you have the second shot. No big end.**
- 6) If, after the lead has played, you are -3, do not try to play fast bowls to get the advantage back, be patient, the name of the game is draw. Use your best hand to play nice draws.**
- 7) If one or two of your bowls are near the jack on any side, take care, and avoid always throwing on the same exact line because you don't want to build yourself a big target that the other team will destroy with just one bowl. Instead of putting two more bowls near the jack on the side, you can put two more bowls near the jack at the back.**
- 8) If your opponent has a very difficult shot to make because of the bowls position, try your best to let the head as it is. You want him to play the difficult shot on every next bowl. Instead, play position in the direction he is trying to move too.**
- 9) Try not to waste the last bowl on exactly the same shot, if repeatedly missing by very little, especially if you are -2 or -3 or more and you are trying to push back the jack to your bowls. Avoid the big end**

score. Use your best draw and aim to be second instead.

10) Try to refrain going back and forth to the head, you can lose your focus and tempo this way. If you have made a very difficult shot, don't move around trying to engage yourself into a conversation or another shot selection or a trip to the head. Instead, stay with your last shot, breathe calmly, every thing is registered into your brain and you can repeat the same shot if necessary.

11) Ask yourself the question: "do I stand to get more than I can lose in this particular situation"? It is alright to play into danger depending where we are in the game..." if the score permits.

12) Believe completely in your ability to play the shot you have decided. Do not let your mind overwhelmed you with doubts. Make a plan, decide your line and play your best draw with your best hand.

13) Always bowl with one shot in sight. Be very precise...keep your vision on the decided target not on the total head, just before you make your delivery.

14) In the Vice-Skip discussion, avoid getting too much informations from the vice describing every thing in the head. Instead try to focus on the strategy

and the specific shot you need to do. Your mind and your body have to focus on a specific shot, not on a ton of informations.

15)Once you have the lead, retain the initiative by playing at the good distance for your lead. The first on the jack is the one that puts pressure. If you are not first, focus on being second.

If they win the end and they play to their distance, don't overthink because it is not the distance you like...

You have the lead; all you need is that one of you can play a nice draw near the jack. If you focus on that tactic you should be able to avoid big ends.

16)Learn to relax between bowls. Be sure you are making a transition. A transition is a space in your mind where you no longer think of the shot you just made. You leave your mind apart and you come back in your body. Feel the sun, the wind, the birds, breathe deeply, smile, be appreciative, let go for 60 sec. It is important to get your mind a rest.

17)Use Wally to your advantage (visualization+intuition. Be aware that Wally will want to judge and criticize every bowl you play. Sometime he acts as very critical voice...you want to have control over Wally at all time.

18)You can play 10 bad shots in a row, but remember that it is one shot at a time. If you respect your abilities and stay focus on your routine, instead of occupying your mind with your mist shots, anytime one of your bowl can place your team in a scoring

position.

19)The better team wins not because of a particular, single, properly-executed shot but because of its overall shots in the match. That is the reason why it is important to have everybody on the same page with a well understood strategy.

20)The basic strategic aim relates to ability and performance, not Winning. If everyone focusses on what they have to do, you will perform well and in most cases your reward will be a win. In triples 2 out of 3 must play their game. In double one can drag his teammate but rarely for the total game. When you have a down the other teammate has to stay focus and play his A game.

It is not a matter of being desperate if someone has a down, it is just the fact that the others have to pay more attention to their play to support the performance of the team. It is a team effort.

21)According to the rules of the game, the Skip shall have sole charge of the team and all players must follow the skip instructions.

This was probably true at the golden age of the lawn bowling history. At the present moment we have less and less formation on “HOW TO SKIP”.

So, it has become important that every body should support every one in the team.

Do not hesitate to shear your ideas with the skip if you think it is going to be helpful. How to skip has a lot to do with personality. But there should be

some common attitudes that any skip should possess to help the team get a better enjoyable experience.

Here are some of them:

***Smile and always stay positive. Keep team harmony intact.**

***When it is time for you to play, do not make any comment or show discontent because you don't like what you see...accept what is and look at it as an opportunity to do your best shots.**

***Be clear with your demands and communicate with a loud but calm voice.**

***Make sure that you install a climate of participation and communication. Don't act as if you know every thing and you don't need any body's advice.**

***Instead of trying to control every teammate's bowl, put your mind on the strategy you want to develop.**

***Avoid negative instructions...communicate the shot you want instead of talking about the one you are afraid of.**

***Be aware of your nonverbal attitude...every teammate is looking at you! How you behave and what you think is obvious even if you don't say a word.**

***Do not let EGO come in the way...you are only one of the team.**

22)When playing at your distance, you realize that the other team is also good at this distance using the other side...let the lead play his hand but ask the vice to play in the same hand as the other team...this way you will put bowls in their way and force them to switch to the side they are not controlling. Remember that your vice doesn't have to change sides if he is not comfortable with the other team's side...Vice can stay on his preferred side, takes his reference line and focus point and deliver smoothly 1 or 2 inches inside; this way your bowls is going to cross the center line and stop on their side... just assume that you have to play a shorter bowl.

23)At the last end, if you are losing by 3 or more, do not try to be close to the jack on the side or in the front. It is too easy to change the outcome by hitting one of your bowl.

Take position right away by focusing on putting all of the lead's bowls and probably the two first bowls of the vice in the back. Establish a very nice position at the back until they realize that you are intentionally playing back. You are losing, so it is not important if they put their bowls on the jack.

With the last bowl of the vice start open up a corridor for the skip in the direction where your bowls in the back are concentrated. If it is necessary, use the first bowl of the skip to add to the number of bowls you kneed in the back. Then play your last two bowls to push the jack in the back and sometimes miracles happen. One thing for sure if every one plays for the jack your chances are minimal.

24)In doubles, triples or fours, when you are in the head, “get involved”, be ready to express your ideas, your concerns, be short and precise...only one speak to the skip but everyone can be part of the decision...show the skip what you think with confidence and let the skip decide...you are asking a precise shot, not an history of what is going on in the head.

25)Leads should practice to become proficient at placing jacks at whatever distance the skip may call for. Especially at the start of the game. I can't say how important it is to place your first jack at your natural weight. This is where you have more chances to put pressure and scores.

When you know you can roll the jack at your natural weight constantly you can move the mat around on so many occasions and still be on your exact natural weight and fool the other team as many times you want. Imagine that you have a plan because you realize that the other team does not like short and you have tempo on the game...the lead roll the jack and it goes medium, right at the place where one of them have their natural weight...bang!, the tempo changes side and they begin to play with their distances.

Conclusion

I could put 25 other different ideas that are very useful when you are on the green, playing or preparing for a competition

I have decided to publish those one as a starting point to some dialogues and exchanges we could have with people interesting to learn.

I am pretty sure I am not the only one that knows something about the game but since I started 12 years

**ago, I have never participated in a workshop (Except for
“THE HIGH-PERFORMANCE WORKSHOP” in Ontario).
Here in Québec, we could learn from each other...
I am throwing my self in the water and we will see how
the waves will hit some of you.**