

September edition of "Bowls International" Newsletter.

Library Newsletter

(A) The Sept 2022 edition of "Inside Bowls" magazine is now online and ready to read free of charge. Click here: <https://www.insidebowlsmag.com/sep22/index.html> for all the latest news and information from around the world.

The Sept 2022 edition of "Bowls International" is also out. The cover photo is the Scene at Victoria Park when India secured a historic gold medal in the Women's Fours.

As for a report of the Games, the magazine will bring a special Commonwealth Games souvenir issue next month full of interviews, results, reports and photos from all the action around the greens. As for the content of this month, there are two articles worth reading.

(1) Tony Allcock in his column 'Raising Your Game' touches on an interesting topic - 'When friends become opponents'.

As a competitive bowler, how would you handle the situation if you are drawn against your best friend, partner, sibling or someone in authority? Tony had such experience when he was still a teenager. He played his father in a club singles final. He resolved to the fact, thinking it would be an honour to be runner-up to him. The fact was that he won and became the club champion which was generously accepted by his father.

A few years later in the semi-final of the county singles, he played against his best friend. This time, he felt a very different one to whom he played his father. Leading up to the date of the match, they never mentioned who was going to drive to the venue or in whose car. Their close friends avoided showing their preferred support. On the actual day, they travelled to the green separately. All through the game, both found pressure of playing against their best friend. Though he won that match, it was not one to be remembered.

It was evident that neither of them could cope very well with the situation. The poor standard of play was a clear indication that emotions had taken over and clouded focus, concentration and arrested self-confidence.

Tony stresses that self-confidence will assist in overcoming such situations. He gives the following tips for success:

- 1 self-confidence comes out of a solid base of purposeful practice. There is no substitute for hard work and practice.
- 2 Don't compare yourself with your opponents. Your opponent in singles is a human like you and has four bowls like you.
- 3 The need to focus on yourself and not the opposition who may be a friend, family member or team mate.

-4 Don't focus on the uncontrollables such as your opponent, the rules, the weather, green conditions, the past, the outcome, and other people's expectations. Keep your focus completely locked into what you can control.

-5 Dwell on the positive - get in the habit of looking for the upside of things.

-6 Be a good self-coach. Get in the habit of being a forgiving, positive coach to yourself. When you play a bad bowl, learn from it, log it, and let it go. Forgive yourself for them and then move on.

Then Tony gives a good example of someone who could be a friendly opponent and at the same time a silent destroyer. He is the bowls legend the late David Bryant. Tony played third to David Bryant in the Triples and won a gold medal in the 1980 World Bowls Championships in Melbourne. This started a lifelong friendship between them. During this time, they had played against each other on a couple of occasions on the 'indoor singles circuit' and David had won both. Tony witnessed that David could comfortably engage in a friendly conversation with him and then immediately stepped on the mat and delivered the most destructive bowl imaginable. Tony acknowledges that David was one of the most ruthless opponents as he had cultivated the most amazing power of concentration and focus through his immense self-confidence in his own ability.

(2) David Rhys Jones in his article " The Green Green Grass of Home" talks about a popular topic - the green.

David has experienced a wide range of playing surfaces. He has played on greens as slow as eight seconds, and as fast as 20 seconds. When greens run at 10 seconds or less, it's a matter of hurling your bowl as hard as you can, more or less up the centre of the rink. Everyone - elite bowlers and novices can do that equally well. Bowling is all about using the bias of the bowl, and the hand-and-eye skills of the player to roll the bowls close to the jack and/or to play shots that need special skills to take out the opponent's shots, or to trail the jack for a count. Those are things you can't do on heavy greens.

Why do greens get heavy? The problem is that the greenkeepers often over-water the greens to make them look good. David Bryant used to say that not watering the green is good for grass, because it forces the roots to dive deeper to look for water, and the turf becomes healthier and more viable. After all, it's the roots that hold the surface together, and a good root system strengthens the playing surface. You can cut the grass as short as you like - but you can never kill it. Some people might say that greens that are not watered regularly will become patchy when they dry out. It may be tricky, but such a patchwork surface presents challenges that can be overcome through a combination of intelligence and skill. The point is that when greens speed up, more options become available.

It's important to realise that greens can be too slow or too fast. Below 12 seconds it's such a hurl. Above 18 seconds (especially if it's windy), it's so difficult to be consistent. The ideal pace is between 14 and 16 seconds. Green running below 12 seconds are in the UK (also in Canada). Maybe the Southern Hemisphere weather is more conducive to producing hard, flat, fast greens, those timed above 18 seconds will be found in Australia and New Zealand. Interestingly, most bowlers are content to play on their home greens as they get used to it.

David then concludes that bowlers should decide what sort of green they want - and engage in a meaningful conversation with their greenkeepers. Educate beginners, and encourage them to explore the wondrous subtleties of bowls as it should be played.

(B) Lots of bowling videos can be found on Youtube. Here are some of them.

(1) Just a clip of how the Indian bowlers played the last end of the Women's Fours in the 2022 Commonwealth Games when they were leading 15:10 to South Africa. The Indian bowlers played good position bowls and held high spirits. They deserved to win the gold medal.

m.youtube.com/watch?v=URqE5ToLS5Q

(2) "Good Bowling" is a very good coaching video produced by Bowls England. Tony Allcock is acting as the main host with guests: David Bryant, Andy Thomson, Amy Monkhouse and Ellen Falkner sharing their experiences. Topics include basic things such as grip and delivery as well as all the skillful shots with demonstrations.

This is more than a coaching video for beginners. I find it is more helpful and interesting to veteran players to understand how those elite bowlers carry out their performance.

m.youtube.com/watch?v=3YAbfRM-ZFM&t=1918s

(3) Bowls England National Pairs final games were held last week. Though the scores were not close, they are good games to watch because of the players. Let's watch the men's game. The green was a bit tricky and the players spent some time finding the centre line. I got familiar with Pit Brett as he often plays in the World Indoor Championships at Potter Resort. It is always a treat to watch his performance. This was the first time to watch him playing outdoors and his performance was equally excellent.

Brett was in good form as he just won the Men' Triples gold medal in the 2022 Commonwealth Games.

This video consists of 5 parts. The first part is the 2022 National Men's Pairs semi-final. This is a good game to watch. Baker/Brett v Box/Walters. Four first class bowlers. A lot of good shots. Then you can skip the rest as the 2nd and 3rd parts are last year's games and the 4th part which runs at 4:44 is the Final and you can also skip it as the game was one-sided.

m.youtube.com/watch?v=MtBowu_geWY

(4) Bowls England National Women's Pairs Final is also a good game to watch.

Tolchard & Stevens (Devon) v Johnson & Rowe (Suffolk)

Both teams consistently played the better hand and kept the same length of long jack. There were good shots from four of them. Sophia Tolchard was the one who caught your eyes with her consistent drawing shots. She just won the Women's Triples Silver Medal at the 2022 Commonwealth Games.

The video also consists of 4 parts. You better skip the first part which is the semi-final and also the 2nd and 3rd part which are old recordings. Play fast forward at 4:42 for the Final game.

m.youtube.com/watch?v=ZPqFsanStYI&t=18316s

(C) Quotable Quotes

(1) "It is usually beneficial to play one side of the rink both ways - ie. backhand up and forehand down."

(2) "Don't always try to get shot. Bowls in the head are just as important."

(3) "In Singles, always establish a favorite length or jack whether indoor/outdoor/heavy green/fast green. It should be your most 'comfortable' length and one which can inspire confidence."

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The librarian,

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