

DOES THE CLUB REALLY WANT TO EARN PROMOTION?

Introduction

The design or format of the Bowls Victoria Pennant competition encourages players and Clubs to strive for higher levels of quality play which will test their abilities.

The promotion and relegation system generates the desires of being seen to either: -

Succeed by being promoted or

Fail by being relegated

The remainder of the Clubs do neither - they can be seen as having an adequate season by holding their Pennant Grade or Division neither successful or failure but rather of little noteworthy interest.

The Clubs are generally assessed by others outside that Club by the performance of the top side, lower sides being of small consequence in the eyes of outside clubs and players.

Whilst it is nice and self comforting to the club concerned to have a lower Side(s) promoted, it is of little interest or consequence to others.

Post Mortems of Previous Season

The appropriate Committee of each Club should examine the potential of the Top Side at the end of one season and determine the requirements that will achieve promotion or avoid relegation in the next season.

That examination will disclose the following: -

The strengths of the current group of top side players and

The weaknesses of that group

The opportunities the Club has to build upon the strengths and to reduce the weaknesses

The threats are those players who may be considering moving to another Club.

These issues are a common strategy used in business circles and is referred to as the SWOT principles. There is no reason why a Club should not adopt such a proven analytical method.

Incoming or Outgoing Committee

It is preferable for this examination to take place at season's end by the committee already responsible for the decision processes that had resulted in the performance levels for that completed season.

If it is left to the new incoming committee, they will be less informed of the processes that had been adopted and the problems and benefits that had arisen.

The in-coming committee may conclude that the outgoing committee was the reason for the failed previous season and therefore not come to terms with the real reasons for the less than desired results. They may then make the same mistakes as the previous committee. The Club will therefore have little chance of improvement in the following season.

Of course the outgoing committee must make an honest attempt at revealing the real causes of the performance of the season.

The SWOT Technique

The examination will need to consider all the elements that go to make up the performance of a Side in a meaningful and structured manner. It will be of little benefit to react in an emotional rather than an analytical manner.

The outgoing committee is best placed to identify the processes that had occurred and make positive suggestions for the new committee to consider and to avoid the weaknesses and threats whilst retaining those which had proven to be advantageous in using the strengths that had been identified and established.

Perhaps a neutral chairperson at such a post mortem discussion could help eliminate any emotional discussion and keep the meeting on track as a positive legacy summation.

All the discussions and analytical points should have accurate data to illustrate the facts of the findings.

Example

The examination of players' performances will need to be expressed in a meaningful manner so that strengths and weaknesses can be identified against the standards required to achieve a promotion or to avoid relegation.

Without this meaningful performance process the committee will have little chance of answering the relevant questions on performance, development or recruitment issues.

They would have to rely upon the emotional judgement methods used by the selectors when that may have been a contributing factor in the failure of the side.

It is the majority of Clubs which use the 'voting' system as a means of gathering information as to the performance of individual players.

When the Team or Side wins it is a satisfactory performance, when a loss is experienced then it was a substandard result.

Unfortunately winning or losing is poor evidence of the performance. Take the scenario:-

Our Club is playing against the undefeated opposition and we lose, did we put in a substandard performance? -- nobody knows do they?

On the other hand, we play against the other extreme, - a club which has lost every match and we win -- was that a good performance? - again nobody knows!

So winning or losing is generally an unreliable method of judging a performance.

It is an unfortunate fact that many selection panels use that as the criteria on which to make changes in the side. A major hurdle is that of the top side losing and therefore a change or two must be made. However, if our second side loses as well, where do we find a suitable replacement for the top side?

A true analytical study will be based upon how we performed against the standard of the grade under consideration. Therefore the starting point is to establish the average performance for each playing position within the grade and then to compare our players with that standard.

The strengths and weaknesses will become clearer with this approach. However if we do not have either: -

The information of the standards or

A summary of our players in a similar criteria

then it becomes difficult to make the necessary judgements.

There are several methods available from outside sources and whichever is used by the committee will need to be the same as that the new committee will adopt in the next season.

The issues to be examined and analysed are: -

Player assessments

Selection policies

Roles of the coaches

Match Plans

Player Development program

Players' participation in the decision making process.