

THE REASONS FOR PLAYING LAWN BOWLS

During a recent discussion on Lawn Bowls, I introduced a topic for discussion by asking for an opinion as to how to influence good players to want to become better players through development of their abilities up to new and higher performance levels.

The discussion identified five groupings of people playing the game.

Group A - The Social Player

One player, quite elderly, jumped in and said: -

“Oh, I do not want to get any better as I don’t want to be selected in a higher Side. They play the game too seriously for me! -- I just want to turn up and enjoy myself!”

So we would probably classify him as a “social player” and expect him to play in the lower Sides within the Club where he can enjoy himself.

Group B - Non Social Player

Another reply was by a Selector who stated that Player X considers himself above the other players because he would not play in the Social events within the Club. This was with some SCORN in his statement obviously thinking poorly of that player X!

Such a player getting his enjoyment from the challenge of having to perform closely to his best in his matches. He would not receive such a challenge from the first player - those in Group A, in a Social match event. It would be drawing a very long straw to label him as ‘fancying’ himself.

This player will attend to his skill base in practice, so that he may attain the highest level that his skills as appropriate to his selection.

Group C - Winning is the only thing.

It is interesting that the same Selector had in the previous season gone through the Pennant matches undefeated and would not allow himself to be placed in a grade that was closer to his ability. He enjoyed winning against inferior players rather than have his abilities tested against better opposition. As he likes to label players then he could well be loosely labelled - ‘A big fish in a small pond’.

Group D - Passed the 'used-by-date'.

Whilst the next did not come up in the discussion, there is yet another grouping and that is the player who has been good in the past and for some reason has lost form - health, age, injury, motivation etc., and therefore been dropped from the grade that he enjoys.

This player will not attend to the task of rejuvenating his performance but will rather claim that he has earned the right to remain at the desired level because he has earned it in previous seasons. He cannot be persuaded to freshen up his skills and so regain that former standard.

His reactions tend to be those of demands rather than to attend to the reasons for the drop in form, he will often resort to any of: -

Threaten to stop playing

Withdraw for the remainder of the season and hope that the new selectors next season will view him more favourably.

Retire from the game or

Transfer to another club next season in the hope that those different selectors will see him in better light.

This group is influenced by the 'loss of status' and are embarrassed at the perception in the eyes of their peers to have failed -- as evidenced by the demotion.

Group E - The Ambitious Player

There remain those players who regard their current standard as a passing phase on their path to superior grades. Their stated objectives may well be above those of their fellow team mates and even higher than the grade available in this Club.

Their training and practice sessions are well above those of the other members of the Club.

Who has the most valid reason?

Who is to say which group is more valid than any other? We are each influenced by our own opinions and personal objectives. We will defend them no matter what logic is placed before us.

To put a derogative label upon another's preference is very poor form and not worthy of a Selector or anybody else however, it does raise the issue of Compatibility.

Compatibility

There are probably more groupings and certainly many shades or variations of these five.

The Selectors have an onerous task when they sit to place players into teams and sides; any mix of these different groupings runs the risk of a disaster waiting to happen!

When players mention compatibility it is generally believed that we should like each other and of course that will make for a pleasant day on the greens.

However an aspect that is often overlooked is that the players in the team and side should have similar ambitions and belong to only one of the five groupings. Any mix of these will have the danger of the players not being able to play together at a competitive level as required by the actual Pennant grade.

Selectors have an onerous task to bring together those players whose standard, ambitions and approach are in tune with their fellow team mates.

An Example of (non) Compatibility

At a recent mid week Club tournament a senior side player had a day off work and thought that he would enter the Club's mid-week social tournament. He was the only senior side player entered so he requested that he be placed as a Leader so that he could attend to his own game as practice.

The Selectors of that social tournament placed him as a skipper rather than where requested. The player was puzzled as to the reasoning and after questioning it he received this reply -

"It is unfair that you play as a leader as that would mean that you will not be able to be beaten and therefore take the first prize, so we have placed you as a skipper with very low standard players."

Incidentally the first prize for the winners on the day was \$15.00 each, hardly worthy of the near argument that occurred.