

Kicking Goals: Lessons From Soccer

Not long back I was handed a DVD and a CD from England on soccer coaching at league and international level. A bit antiquated this form of media nowadays.

Two things impressed me.

First, the quality and quantity of professionalism of the material presentation.

Secondly, as usual, the parallel lessons to be learnt from other elite sports, particularly the coaching.

Let me grab one example on soccer citing what I read, and then, make my own comment as a comparison related to bowls.

SIMPLE GAME PRINCIPLES

Soccer – stresses there are a few fundamental principles of good team play which are taught in practice drills. Their five key principles are outlined below with my noted comment on comparisons.

Bowls – although everyone learns to play the game, is there anywhere where we can read / learn the fundamental principles of good team play in bowls?

PRINCIPLE 1

Soccer – support the player with the ball.

Bowls – support the player about to deliver the bowls for the team.

PRINCIPLE 2

Soccer – play safe when defending.

Bowls – skip safely to avoid big losses; it is our team, not your team, skip.

PRINCIPLE 3

Soccer – take risks in attack.

Bowls – take risks when in front early or even because it is early in the competition and take risks where there are bowls in the head as you have effectively managed risk well.

PRINCIPLE 4

Soccer – use your wings, use the space.

Bowls – use the hand / side to best team advantage; done easily by playing a preferred hand prior to the opposition.

PRINCIPLE 5

Soccer – shoot whenever opportunity arises.

Bowls – sometimes opportunities are so limited, as a skip, it is tactically imperative to snatch them as skip when presented to your team. Examples like blocking entry for opposition bowls, pushing your team bowls at select short bowls before it becomes ‘a great wall of China’. And a pet one I call ‘bocce’ which is to add with the last bowl when we already have the shot. A lost easy opportunity to blast the opposition.

The point for all these principles, if agreed to that is, is they can be trained for and coached in readiness for the application at a major event.

Like Nike ads say, just do it!

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