

# **ZONE 9 COACHING COMMITTEE**

## **A SELECTION OF PRACTICE ROUTINES**

There are many practice routines set by different Bowls Organisations, Associations, Coaches, Zones and Clubs, this is a selection in one document and is designed for bowlers playing all positions and experience. It's also important to note that, historically, new bowlers have been expected to play Lead for a number of years, then Second for a number more and finally Third then Skip. It's the opinion of the Zone 9 Coaching Committee that when they play four bowl pairs, a new bowler plays Lead and also Third so a knowledge of playing some "aggressive" shots is a necessary advantage.

**The reason we practice is to do all the basics exactly the same every time.**

### ***Purposeful Practice***

Practicing the shots or strokes of any game is considered by most sportspeople to be at least as important as playing. Bowls is no exception. The amount of time an individual spends practicing is commensurate with their level of improvement. There are bowlers who only wish to play social with their friends so they don't practice to anywhere the extent of a bowler with the ambition to play at a high level.

It has been well documented that practicing with purpose leads to an improvement in ball sense and innate ability. So, let us consider the best "rules" of practice:

- Do it alone – too often practicing with one or more people leads to playing ends and/or socialising, it therefore reduces concentration and improving the performance of specific aspects of your game, repetition of bowling a shot is the best way to improvement
- Keep records – there are a few reasons for this; 1) it helps maintain your interest and concentration at a high-level during practice sessions; 2) It highlights the areas of your game you need to improve; and 3) it gives an objective, unbiased and honest view of your overall improvement
- Only practice what your coach says. Too many bowlers improve initially and then level out. As they play more club games, well-meaning longer-term bowlers give them "tips" on improvements, then they practice the "tips" and their game goes downhill because they practice faults not suggested by the coach
- Repetition is the basis of improvement. So, as part of the shot selection for the session, concentrate on one hand only and bowl 40 shots on that hand. If you have a companion during this session, arrange with them to send your bowls back and then you bowl them again for 10 ends
- Practice on slow and fast greens at different lengths and especially on windy days – practicing this way will ensure confidence to all conditions in preparation for future games
- Practice often and consult your coach
- If you don't have access to a coach contact the Zone Committee to meet with someone for help and support

## ***Purposeful Practice (cont.)***

- Practice at all lengths, in high grades the preferred lengths of ends are minimum and maximum. Medium lengths in a game are called “roll up length” and the preferred length for most bowlers to practice. So, by making lengths minimum and maximum it takes the average bowler out of their comfort zone

### ***Keeping Records -***

Throughout the following exercises there is constant referral to keeping records. Accurate records rely on measuring each bowl. A rule of thumb is to measure every bowl finishing within a mat width as 5 points, within a mat length as 3 points and 1 point for a bowl finishing within a mat length and a mat width.

It is for reason that it is suggested to cut a piece of wood, with dimensions of around 20 – 30 mm wide and 5 – 10 mm thick, to a length of 960 mm. A standard bowls mat is 360 mm and is 600 mm long. Draw a line on the surface of the measuring stick at 360 mm to denote the width of a mat and now it is an ideal ruler for record keeping.

The piece of wood you use is best if it doesn't warp. To buy a length of wood from a timber yard will be found in the offcuts section and should cost less than \$4.

### ***Measuring***

A rule of thumb for measuring the distance from the bowl to the jack or target and allocating points is to allow for consistency in record keeping and therefore tracking improvement. Allocate 5 points for each bowl that is within a mat width (or the 360mm mark on the piece of wood), 3 points for 600mm or mat length, and 1 point for 960 mm or a mat width plus length.

Nothing else counts. If it's possible to note if each bowl in order is short, long or jack high and the weather conditions during the practice session it will indicate the exact areas improvement is needed.

Winston Churchill once said, “However beautiful the strategy, you should occasionally look at the results”. A very good analogy for practicing our sport – look at the results.

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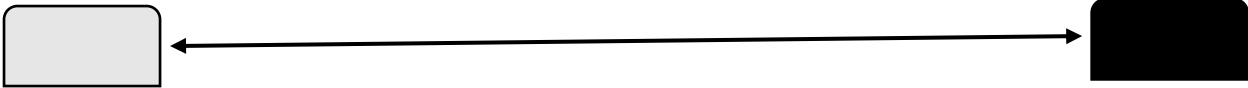
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## Routine No.1

## Jack Delivery

### OBJECTIVE

To deliver a jack consistently to nominated lengths



### METHOD

Place 2 mats on the centre line at maximum length (ditch to ditch):

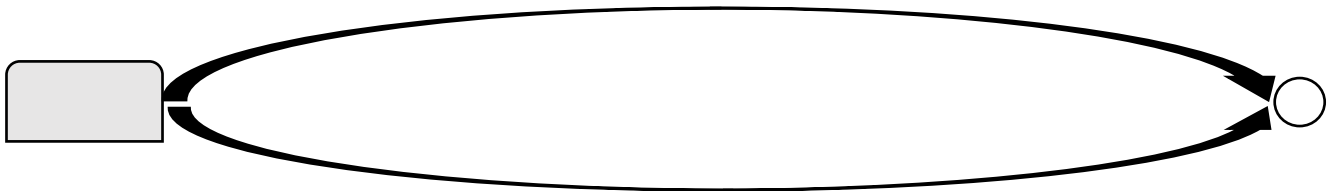
- If you have a partner roll up to 8 jacks to each other until all 8 are within a mat length – for lower grades, or mat width for higher grade - and then vary the rolling length to, say, minimum bowling length. Continue rolling to different rink lengths
- If you practicing by yourself, roll 8 bowls up and down the rink. Use the criteria above depending on the grade you play or the level of perfection to which you aspire


## Routine No. 2

## Angle of Delivery

### OBJECTIVE

To perfect a line of delivery on both forehand and backhand



  
960 mm measuring stick

### METHOD

- Line plant foot (the foot that stays on the mat) in the bowl delivery line and place the piece of wood, or yard ruler, on the heel and knuckle behind the big toe and stand back to view that the ruler is facing exactly in the line of the bias of the bowl. If not, adjust the ruler so it is in the desired line
- Take position on the mat making sure shoulders and hips are square (at right angles) to the feet, with the toe of the plant foot parallel to the stepping foot and slightly backward of level to the stepping foot toe

## ROUTINE No. 3

## Drawing Bowls to Mats

### OBJECTIVE

To consistently achieve line and length



### METHOD

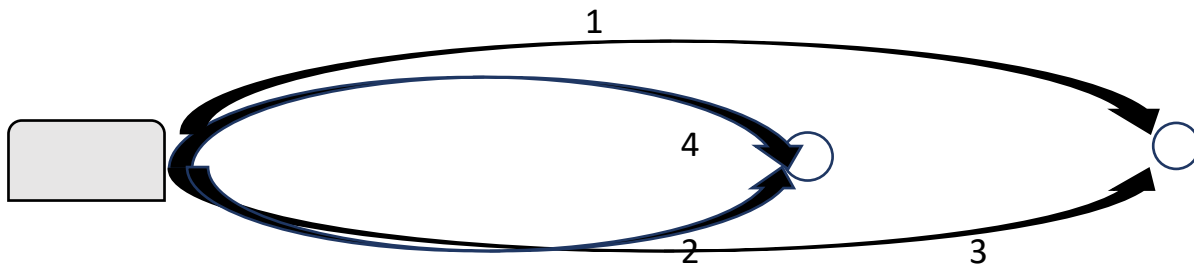
- Use 2 mats and 4 bowls
- Place the mats on the centre line on the “T” at each end – i.e. maximum length
- Bowl 4 bowls on one hand either forehand or backhand so the bowls so they finish between the front and back of the mat
- If practicing alone, go to the other and bowl them back on the same side of the rink, meaning on the other hand
- Bowl 40 bowl on each hand
- Keep records of the results
- After 40 bowls, move the mats to shorten the length of the ends and do it again

## ROUTINE No. 4

## Bowling to Minimum and Maximum Lengths

### OBJECTIVE

To improve weight control and length and reinforce the change of weight and direction in the consciousness of the bowler



### METHOD

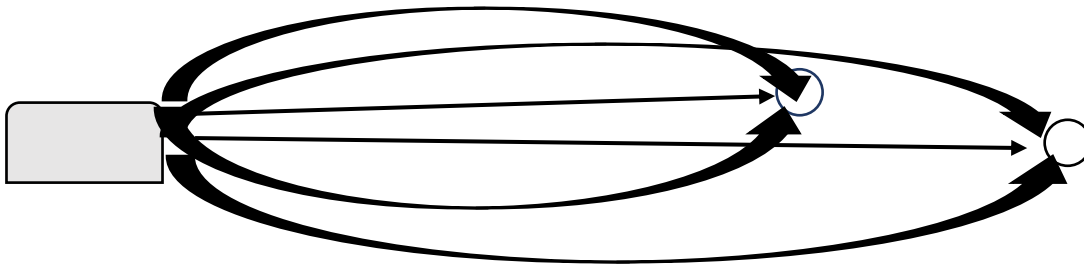
- Place a jack at minimum and another at maximum length on the centre line
- Roll a bowl on either hand to the long jack, e.g. forehand
- Roll the second bowl to the short jack on the other hand, e.g. backhand
- The third bowl is to the long jack, e.g. backhand
- The fourth bowl goes to short jack, e.g. on the backhand
- Once again, keep records

## ROUTINE No. 5

## Rolling the Jack and drawing the shot

### OBJECTIVE

Roll 2 jacks to different lengths and bowl consistently to each jack.



### METHOD

- Roll one jack to short to medium length and second to medium to long length
- Jacks not to be placed on the centre line, i.e. bowl to where jacks finish
- Bowl to each jack on both hands
- Bowls should not cross the centre line of each jack on either hand
- Keep records

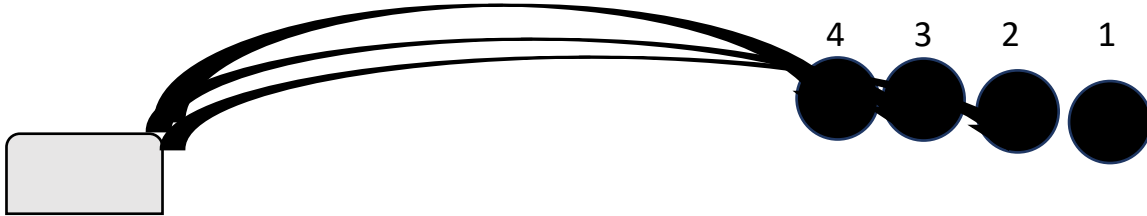


## ROUTINE No. 6

## Weight Control – The Caterpillar

### OBJECTIVE

To develop the ability to “know” the amount of weight to roll a bowl and “know” how much weight is needed to adjust



### METHOD

- Use 4 bowls
- Deliver a bowl to any length on either hand
- Bowl the other 3 bowls, on the same hand, one at a time to reach to one bowled before it
- Repeat at a different length
- Bowl on the same hand this session and complete 10 times
- Next time this routine is practiced, repeat on the other hand
- Keep records

## ROUTINE No. 7

## Weight Control – Decrease Length

### OBJECTIVE

To reinforce the ability to “know” how much to reduce weight by bowling progressively shorter lengths when required



### METHOD

- Deliver a medium to long length bowl to anywhere on the rink without crossing the head
- Deliver the remaining bowls in order 40 – 50 cms shorter than the previous bowl
- In subsequent practice sessions vary the length
- Vary later sessions on the backhand and forehand
- Keep records

## ROUTINE No. 8

## Weight Control – Increase Length

### OBJECTIVE

To reinforce the ability to “know” how much weight to increase by bowling progressively longer lengths when required



### METHOD

- Deliver a medium to long length bowl to anywhere on the rink without crossing the head
- Deliver the remaining bowls in order 40 – 50 cms further than the previous bowl
- In subsequent practice sessions vary the length
- Vary later sessions on the backhand and forehand
- Keep records

## ROUTINE No. 9

## Promote Short Bowl

### OBJECTIVE

To develop the accuracy to promote a short a short bowl so it finishes closer to the jack



### METHOD

- Place a bowl about  $\frac{1}{2}$  m short of a jack set at medium to long length
- Deliver a bowl with enough weight to hit it and move it  $\frac{1}{2}$  m
- As a guide to the correct weight to move the stationary bowl the ratio is 3:1. Therefore, to move a stationary bowl  $\frac{1}{2}$  m, the required weight is 1.5 m
- In future practice sessions, vary the distance from the mat
- Practice both forehand and backhand
- Keep records

## ROUTINE No. 10

## Follow Through and Stay

### OBJECTIVE

To play through a short bowl with sufficient weight to push a bowl (from near the jack) and stay to take the scoring position



### METHOD

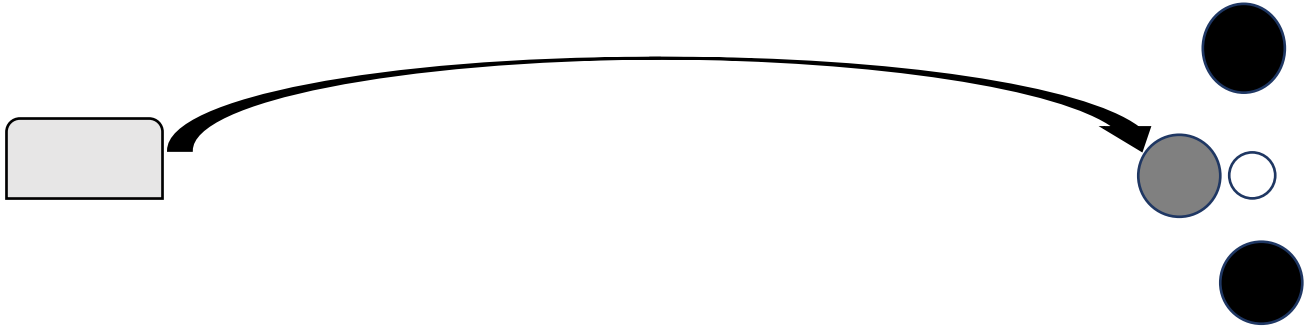
- Place a target bowl up to  $\frac{1}{2}$  m short of a jack set at medium to long length
- Deliver a bowl with enough weight to hit the target bowl and move it  $\frac{1}{2}$  m
- As a guide to the correct weight to move the stationary bowl the ratio is 3:1. Therefore, to move a stationary bowl  $\frac{1}{2}$  m, the required weight is 1.5 m
- In future practice sessions, vary the distance from the mat
- Practice both forehand and backhand
- Keep records

## ROUTINE No. 11

## Bowl to Jack High

### OBJECTIVE

To play to a jack and stay or fall in for shot



### METHOD

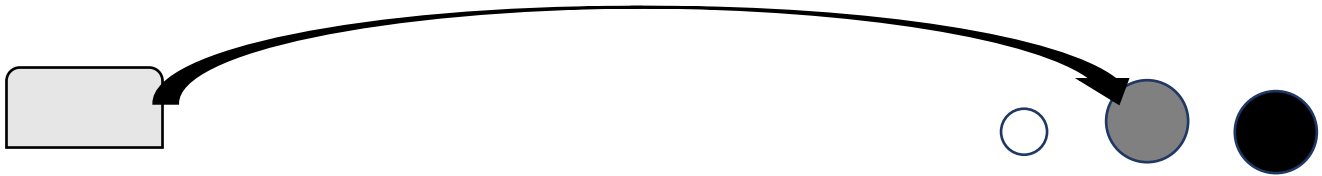
- Place either 2 bowls or 2 flapjacks on either side of a jack, flapjack jack or ½ tennis ball similar to the diagram
- Deliver a draw weight bowl to take shot from the 2 placed (opposition) bowls
- Vary the length in later sessions and bowl forehand and backhand
- Keep records

## ROUTINE No. 12

## Bowl to Draw to Beat a Bowl Behind a Jack

### OBJECTIVE

To develop the touch of being able to draw shot from an opposition bowl behind jack



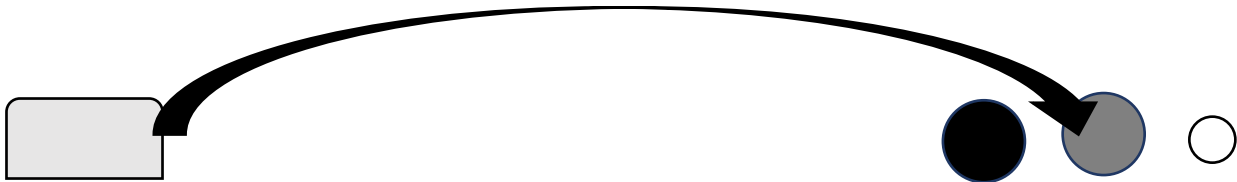
### METHOD

- Place a target jack and bowl using flapjacks, if available, at medium to long length so that the bowl sits 30 cm behind the jack
- Draw a bowl so it lands between the jack and the target bowl
- In later sessions vary the length from the mat and bowl both hands
- Keep records

## **ROUTINE No. 13      Bowl to Draw to in Front of a Jack**

### OBJECTIVE

To beat an excellent shot and put pressure on an opponent



### METHOD

- Place a target bowl and jack at a desired distance from the mat
- Position the target bowl (or flapjack) 30 cm in front of the jack (or ½ tennis ball)
- Deliver a bowl so it finishes between the jack and the target bowl
- Vary the distance in future sessions and bowl both backhand and forehand
- Keep records

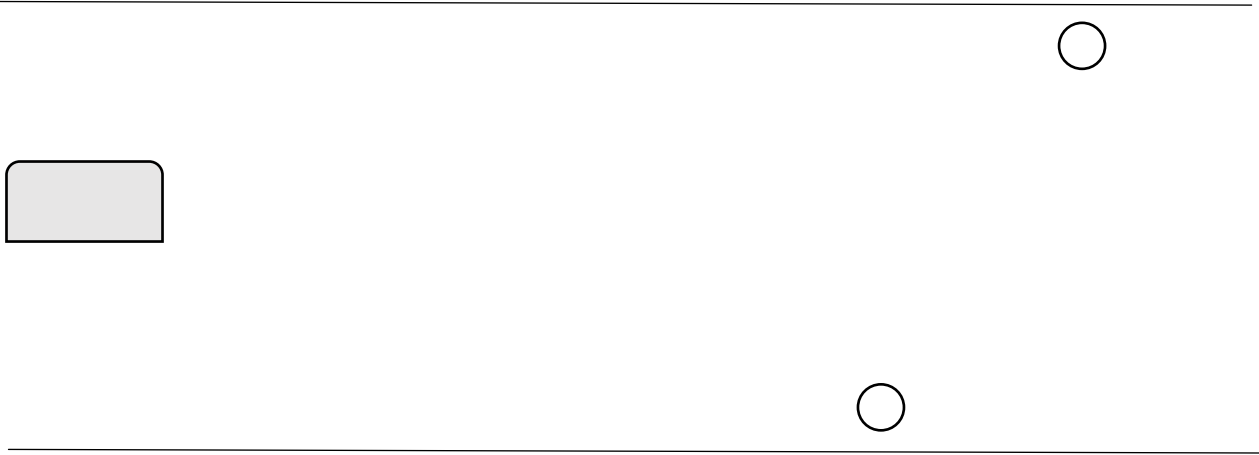


## ROUTINE No. 14

## Jack Close to Either Boundary

### OBJECTIVE

To gain the confidence in being able to adjust and draw to off centre targets



### METHOD

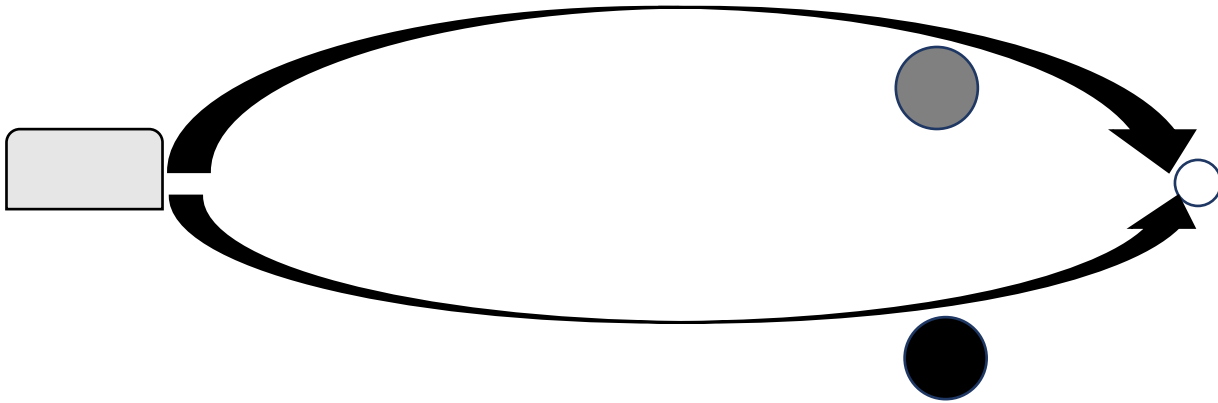
- Place a target jack at a desired length at 30 cm from a boundary
- Draw to the jack on both hands so as to get used to the direction and weight on both hands
- Drawing to little used areas of the rink may need extra weight because they're usually slower
- An alternative to drawing to one side of the rink is to place a jack on each side and bowl a backhand and forehand shot to each
- Keep records

## ROUTINE No. 15

## Bowl in the Draw Line

### OBJECTIVE

To gain confidence in drawing around and under a bowl appearing to be in the draw line



### METHOD

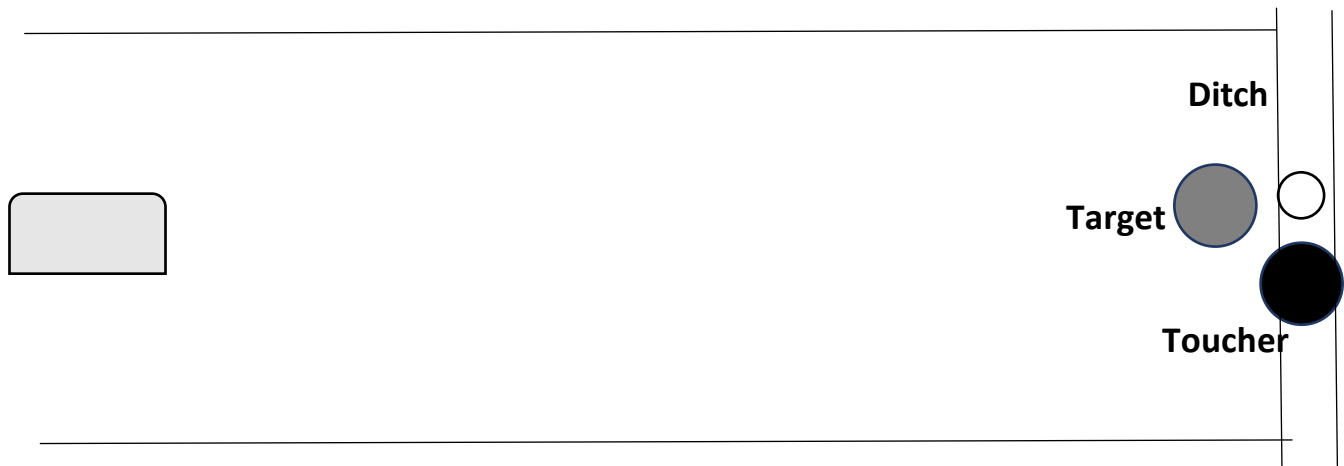
- Use a jack and two bowls as targets
- Place the jack on the centre line at a  $\frac{3}{4}$  to full length and the 1 bowl on each side at about 2 metres short in the draw line
- To successfully adjust the line of the bowl there are 2 ways:
  1. Maintain the stance on the mat and change the stare point
  2. The other is to move the plant foot on the mat, maintaining the same stare point, to change the angle of delivery. To make the angle narrower, place the plant foot to the outside of the mat and to make a wider line move to the inside of the mat. At first this seems confusing but geometry says that by keeping the same stare point, or fulcrum, by moving to the outside of the mat it will make the angle narrower, and vice versa
- Practice at different lengths and both hands
- Keep records of the results

## ROUTINE No. 16

## Jack in, or Near, the Ditch

### OBJECTIVE

To take the fear out of drawing a bowl close to the ditch so that it stays “alive”



### METHOD

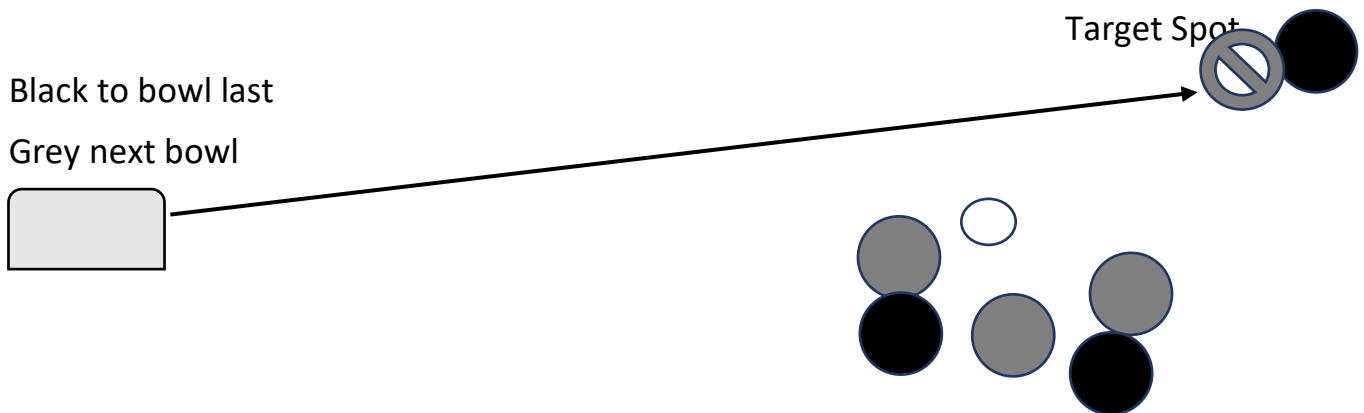
- Place a jack in or near the ditch and a toucher in the ditch less than a metre away
- Draw on both hands so the bowl is not lost and it beats the bowl in the ditch
- Practice at different lengths
- Keep records

## ROUTINE No. 17

## Position Bowl

### OBJECTIVE

To be able to bowl to places nominated by a skip as a potential trouble spot if a jack is trailed



### METHOD

- Place a marker in a place or places on a rink and draw to /them on both hands
- Practice to different places, layouts and distances
- Place bowls in the draw line to make it more realistic and difficult is desired
- Keep records

## ROUTINE No. 18

## Split Two Bowls

### OBJECTIVE

To separate 2 bowls and stay for shot

Black to bowl



### METHOD

- Deliver a bowl with sufficient weight and direction to separate the two opposition bowls at the head and either stay or move the jack for 2 shots
- Don't lose your bowl
- Practice at different lengths and both hands
- Keep records

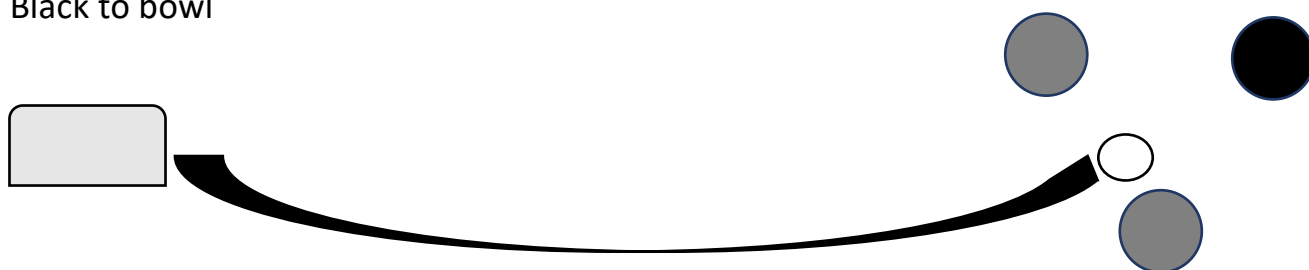
## ROUTINE No. 19

## Trail the Jack

### OBJECTIVE

To trail the jack away from the shot bowl and stay for two shots

Black to bowl



### METHOD

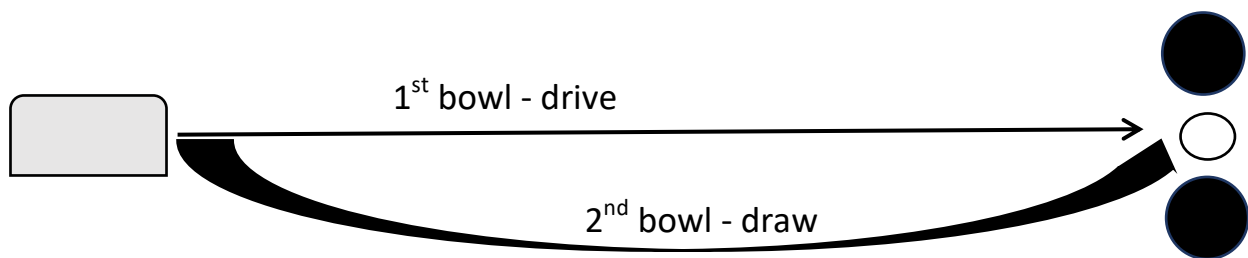
- Set the head as shown
- Deliver a bowl with enough weight and grass to trail the jack about  $\frac{1}{2}$  metre or so
- Practice on both hands at different lengths
- Keep records

## ROUTINE No. 20

## Adjust Weight

### OBJECTIVE

To be confident and accurate in adjusting weight after a drive to deliver a draw shot. Many bowlers find it difficult to reduce weight for a successful draw shot after delivering a drive



### METHOD

- It is suggested to use flapjacks or other props so the head doesn't need to be reset after an accurate drive
- Set up with 2 bowls about 15 to 20 cms on either side of a jack
- Drive the first bowl to break up the head
- Draw a second bowl to draw not more than  $\frac{1}{2}$  metre past the jack