

CPD LEVEL 2 – TECHNICAL AND TACTICAL COACHING

Team Tactical Play – Coordinating Skip and Lead Roles

This module focuses on how the Skip, Vice Skip, and Lead work together to control the head, manage momentum, and adapt team tactics to match situations.

It develops the coach's ability to teach integrated tactical play, ensuring every player's actions contribute to a coordinated plan.

Participants will learn how to analyse, structure, and coach communication, decision flow, and tactical alignment across all positions.

Session Aims

- To understand how team tactics are formed and executed collaboratively.
- To develop coordinated communication between skip, vice, and lead.
- To practise tactical decision-making through structured scenarios.
- To improve the team's ability to protect, develop, and convert the head collectively.
- To help coaches evaluate and strengthen teamwork and decision flow.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this CPD, coaches will be able to:

1. Explain how each position contributes to overall team tactics.
2. Coach coordinated decision-making and communication.
3. Analyse team interaction and tactical rhythm.
4. Design scenario-based training to develop tactical cohesion.
5. Reflect on leadership styles that promote unified team performance.

1. Understanding Team Tactical Play

A successful team functions as one unit with shared tactical intent.

Each position — Lead, Vice, and Skip — plays a distinct yet interdependent role.

Traditional thinking often limited each player to a fixed role — for example, the lead being expected to simply deliver the jack and step aside.

Modern team tactics reject that idea. Every player contributes to the development and control of the head and shares responsibility for tactical awareness, communication, and support.

While roles remain defined, decision-making and head-building are now viewed as collective team processes, not isolated duties.

Role	Primary Focus	Contribution to Team Tactics
Lead	Sets the platform	Establishes jack length, early rhythm, and line control.
Vice Skip	Connects play and communication	Supports skip's plan, maintains structure, and protects the head.
Skip	Directs and executes tactics	Makes key strategic decisions and adapts the plan mid-end.



The Team Tactical Model

1. Setup Phase (Lead) – Establishes the desired jack length and sets rhythm.
2. Development Phase (Vice Skip) – Protects or strengthens the head and relays observations.
3. Decision Phase (Skip) – Directs tactics and executes high-value shots.

2. Attributes of a Tactically Aligned Team

Category	Attributes
Technical	Consistent line and length across the team; synchronised tempo and pre-shot routines.
Tactical	Shared understanding of risk vs reward; consistent communication hierarchy.
Leadership	Calm authority from the skip; supportive communication from the vice; discipline from the lead.
Psychological	Mutual trust, patience, and emotional control during pressure situations.
Composure	Teams display unity and focus — regardless of scoreboard.

“Team success comes not from one brilliant bowl, but from four minds working to one plan.”

3. Building Tactical Cohesion

Team cohesion is developed through communication, clarity, and consistency. Each player must understand the tactical intent behind every bowl.

Every bowl delivered has a tactical purpose, regardless of position.

The lead, vice, and skip should all understand how their bowls influence the developing head — it is a collaborative effort, not a command hierarchy.

A unified team continually shares observations, supports one another, and works toward the common tactical picture.

Key Coaching Principles:

1. Common Language – Use agreed phrases for direction and shot type (e.g., “cover”, “trail”, “protect”).
2. Information Flow – Communication should always move up and down the rink smoothly.
3. Shared Observation – Encourage all team members to read the head and contribute insight respectfully.
4. Emotional Alignment – Keep team energy consistent; the skip sets the tone, the lead maintains rhythm.
5. Reflection & Feedback – Regularly review ends and discuss what worked tactically and why.

4. Team Tactical Scenarios

Situation	Team Tactical Response
Team is holding early, but head open	Vice directs the defensive bowl; Skip holds the attack until protection is set.
Opposition dominating length	Lead changes the jack length to reset the rhythm.
Momentum shifting against the team	Vice maintains composure and communication; Skip simplifies tactics.
Holding shot but unprotected	Vice calls positional bowl; skip waits for confirmation before next play.

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Tight score, final end

Lead focuses on safe line; skip keeps team calm; vice provides feedback after each bowl.

5. Coaching Integrated Team Tactics

Coaching Focus Areas:

- Reinforce role awareness — each player must know their function.
- Practise situational adaptation — change of length, hand, or tempo.
- Build decision discipline — avoid emotional or impulsive tactics.
- Develop collective calmness — the skip leads composure, the vice reinforces it, the lead reflects it.

Exercise	Objective	Setup and Method	Coaching Focus
End Structure Simulation	Train coordination between roles.	Team plays six ends; each position has a defined tactical goal.	Team rhythm, consistency, and purpose.
Communication Rotation	Develop clarity and hierarchy of messages.	Each player takes turns leading communication for one end.	Tone, direction, and clarity.
Momentum Management Drill	Practise regaining control after losing ends.	Simulate being behind by 4 shots; reset tactics and rhythm.	Calm recovery and simplified play.
Scenario Play – Build/Protect/Attack	Reinforce situational tactics.	Skips call alternating scenarios; leads and vices respond.	Adaptability and alignment.
Pressure-End Challenge	Practise composure and clarity in a tight finish.	Simulated final end under time pressure.	Team unity, communication, and composure.

⚠ Modern Team Philosophy Reminder:

This CPD does not follow the old-school approach where each position's duties are fixed and isolated.

A truly effective team plays interdependently — every member contributes to reading, developing, and enhancing the head.

The skip leads strategy, but tactical understanding and ownership belong to the whole team.

6. Discussion and Reflection

Discussion Points:

- How can communication improve tactical alignment?
- What happens when emotional control breaks down mid-game?
- How can we maintain consistency under scoreboard pressure?
- Which team habits promote trust and efficiency?

Reflective Questions:

- Do I always understand the tactical reason behind my shot?
- How can I support my teammates better during critical ends?
- What role does my body language play in team composure?
- How does our team recover after losing an end or making an error?

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7. Summary – The Team Tactical Mindset

“A great team is one where every player knows what the next bowl should achieve — even before it’s played.”

A tactically unified team:

- Plays with clear purpose and shared understanding.
- Communicates efficiently and respectfully.
- Adjusts rhythm, line, and length together.
- Demonstrates patience, adaptability, and focus under pressure.
- Wins not just by skill, but by connection and control.

Assessment Task

Design a 30-minute team tactical practice including:

- One communication-focused activity (shared observation or decision flow),
- One team tactical scenario (build, protect, or attack), and
- One composure-based activity (pressure-end simulation).

Describe how you would measure team communication, tactical cohesion, and composure.

Glossary

Term	Meaning
Team Tactical Play	The coordinated decision-making and communication between all positions.
Momentum Control	Managing the psychological flow of the game to regain advantage.
Communication Chain	The structured flow of messages up and down the rink.
Head Development	Building or adjusting the head tactically to create scoring options.
Tactical Rhythm	The team’s consistent tempo and strategic flow across ends.
Unified Play	All players contributing toward a shared tactical plan.

End of Module Summary

This CPD module develops integrated team tactics and communication alignment across the Lead, Vice Skip, and Skip roles.

It aims to create coaches and players who think collectively, adapt intelligently, and play with unified intent — controlling not just the head, but the flow of the game itself.

