

Lesson 11: Adapting Coaching for Different Abilities

EBCS Level 2 CPD – Advanced Coaching

Learning Objectives (for the coach)

By the end of this module, you will be able to:

- Apply inclusive coaching principles for different ages and abilities.
- Adapt drills for juniors, seniors, beginners, and para-bowls players.
- Use supportive equipment (arms, rails, ramps, noodles) to aid participation.
- Ensure sessions remain challenging, engaging, and safe for all.
- Promote respect, equal value, and inclusion in coaching and competition.

Background (why this matters)

Every player deserves the chance to succeed in bowls, regardless of age, ability, or physical limitations. Coaches must create an environment where all participants feel included and valued.

Adapting coaching means:

- Adjusting distances, targets, and drills to suit ability.
- Incorporating aids like bowling arms, delivery ramps, or foam noodles for accessibility.
- Designing sessions that are both achievable and challenging.
- Fostering an inclusive team culture where all roles matter.
- Maintaining safety and dignity for every participant.

Practical Activities

Example Adapted Drills:

- Short Jack Drill: Roll jacks to shorter lengths for juniors or less mobile players.
- Target Zone Challenge: Use hoops or discs as larger targets to reward accuracy and build confidence.
- Supportive Rail Drill: Use foam noodles or rail-track guides for consistent delivery practice.
- Bowling Arm Routine: Integrate drills where players practise smooth delivery using a bowling arm.
- Paired Play: Pair experienced players with new or less able players for shared learning and support.
- Ramp Delivery Drill: Para-bowls players use ramps for delivery accuracy games.

Sample Session Structures:

- 1) Junior Session (60 min): Warm-up games (10 min), short jack accuracy drill (15 min), fun target challenge (20 min), review (15 min).
- 2) Senior Session (75 min): Gentle mobility warm-up (10 min), target grouping drill (20 min), supportive delivery aids (20 min), pairs game (20 min), reflection (5 min).
- 3) Para-Bowls Session (60 min): Equipment setup (10 min), ramp/arm-assisted drills (20 min), team mini-game (20 min), inclusive review circle (10 min).

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Questioning Prompts

- 'What adjustment helped you deliver more consistently?'
- 'How did using an aid (arm, ramp, rail) change your delivery?'
- 'What part of the game feels most comfortable for you?'
- 'Which drill made you feel most included and challenged?'
- 'What could we do differently to help you enjoy the session more?'

Coach Notes (ethics, inclusivity, safety)

- Ensure respect and dignity at all times—never single players out negatively.
- Use adaptive equipment confidently and without stigma.
- Modify rules or formats to maintain engagement (e.g., shorter ends, reduced bowls per player).
- Maintain safe setups, especially with rails, ramps, and mobility aids.
- Promote equal recognition of achievements across all ability levels.

Reflection (self + peer)

Coach self-reflection:

- Did I adapt sessions effectively for ability differences?
- Were players engaged, included, and challenged?
- Did I use supportive aids correctly and safely?
- How did the group dynamic support inclusivity?

Peer feedback:

- 'I noticed you adapted by... (specific). This helped when... (evidence). You could also... (suggestion).'

Player homework:

- Practise one adapted drill at home or in club roll-ups.
- Write down one cue or aid that improved delivery.
- Reflect on how inclusive coaching improved your experience.

Outcomes (what you should achieve)

- Ability to adapt drills and sessions for players of all abilities.
- Confidence in using aids and adaptations without stigma.
- Promote inclusion and respect within all coaching.
- Ensure safety and enjoyment remain priorities.
- Support the growth of bowls as an inclusive sport.



Appendix A

Appendix B – Glossary of Coaching Terms

Bowling Arm: A mechanical aid that allows players to deliver a bowl without bending.

Delivery Ramp: Equipment used mainly in para-bowls to roll bowls from a seated position.

Foam Noodle: A lightweight tube used as a rail or guide for consistent delivery practice.

Target Zone: A defined area (e.g., hoop, disc) used as a larger goal for accuracy practice.

Rail-Track Drill: Using guides on the rink to help players practise consistent delivery line.

