

Lesson 1: Correcting Ingrained Faults

EBCS Level 2 CPD – Advanced Technical Coaching

Learning Objectives (for the coach)

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

- Diagnose persistent technical faults in experienced players using a clear observation pathway (set-up → swing path → step/tempo → release → follow-through).
- Identify root causes vs symptoms, and select constraints or cues that address the cause.
- Design progressive corrective drills (blocked → variable → random; low pressure → competition-like pressure).
- Use feedback timing (KR/KP), cueing (external > internal), and video effectively without harming confidence.
- Track change with simple, reliable metrics and a brief player homework plan.

Background (why this matters)

Ingrained faults are stable movement habits formed by thousands of repetitions. Changing them requires:

- Accurate diagnosis: symptoms often mask causes (e.g., a narrow line may come from foot alignment).
- Constraints-led coaching: adjust the environment to promote the desired movement.
- External focus & simple cues: 'Roll past the coin' beats 'Extend your wrist more.'
- Practice design: start with blocked, low-pressure clarity, then progress to variable, random, competition-like conditions.
- Confidence protection: players don't like feeling 'taken apart.' Keep success visible, use positive language, and track improvements.

Practical Activities

Session Plans:

Option 1 — 90-minute workshop (coach CPD format):

- 1) Welcome, aims (5 min)
- 2) Baseline tests (15 min)
- 3) Fault archetypes: demo + quick diagnostics (10 min)
- 4) Station circuit (35 min)
- 5) Transfer & pressure drills (15 min)
- 6) Review & homework set (10 min)

Option 2 — 70-minute on-rinks player session:

- 1) Baseline (10 min)
- 2) Diagnose 1–2 root causes (10 min)
- 3) Corrective drill block (25 min)

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- 4) Variable/pressure drill (15 min)
- 5) Review & homework (10 min)

Baseline & Diagnostics:

- Line Gate Test: 2 cones 5m to 10m out, ~40–50 cm apart. Score how many bowls pass through.
- Length Grouping Test: chalk circle Ø60–80 cm. Deliver 12 bowls, count in-circle %.
- Use video (rear and side views) for line, swing, and release height.

Corrective Drills:

- Rail-track: chalk tramlines for stance/swing alignment.
- Foam-gate: upright pool noodles create a swing gate.
- Four-count tempo: step marker and counting.
- Landing-spot: roll to discs/coins.
- Differential learning: exaggerate errors to recalibrate.
- Pressure transfer: three-in-a-row challenge.

Questioning Prompts

- Awareness: 'When that one went narrow, what felt different before you started?'
- External focus: 'Pick a landing spot: what did you aim to roll over?'
- Cause vs symptom: 'If the line is missed left, which part would you adjust first?'
- Retention: 'If I take away the rails, what single cue remains?'
- Transfer: 'How will you keep this under mild pressure?'
- Confidence: 'What worked best today that you can repeat next end?'

Coach Notes (ethics, inclusivity, safety)

- Always get consent before video recording and review privately.
- Normalise faults as information, not identity.
- Adapt drills for juniors, mobility-limited players, or those using aids (e.g., bowl lifters).
- Use props safely: no trip hazards on the rink.
- Safeguarding: store videos securely and delete on request; follow club/County policy.

Reflection (self + peer)

- Coach self-reflection:
 - What fault did I identify, and what root cause did I target?
 - Which one cue had the biggest effect?
 - Where did I over-coach or under-challenge?
 - What metric showed a change? Will it transfer?



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Peer feedback (2 minutes):

- 'I saw you... (specific behaviour). That seemed to help when... (evidence). One idea to try is... (suggestion).'

Player homework:

- 10-minute routine, 2–3x/week:

- 6 bowls rail-track → 6 bowls landing-spot → 6 bowls three-in-a-row.

- Write down best cue + one metric (gate % or in-circle %).

Outcomes (what you should achieve)

- Ability to isolate root causes quickly with a repeatable baseline.
- Confidence to run one best-fit corrective drill and progress it appropriately.
- Deliver confidence-protecting feedback with the right cue at the right time.
- Evidence improvement with simple metrics and retention plan.
- Uphold safe, inclusive, and ethical coaching practice throughout.



Appendix A

Baseline & Diagnostics: Line Gate Test (Cone Corridor for Line Accuracy)

Objective:

To assess how consistently a player can deliver a bowl along their chosen line, using a narrow corridor as a visual guide. This provides baseline data on line accuracy and highlights common alignment or swing faults.

Setup:

1. Place **two cones (or markers)** about **1 metre in front of the mat**, straddling the chosen line.
2. The cones should be **about 50–60 cm apart** at beginner level, narrowing to 30–40 cm for more advanced players.
3. Position the jack at a standard distance (short, medium, or full length).
4. Ensure the cones are aligned with the correct aiming point for the hand being played (forehand/backhand).

Method:

1. Ask the player to deliver 4–6 bowls on the chosen hand, aiming to pass through the gate without touching the cones.
2. Observe:
 - Do bowls consistently drift left or right of the gate?
 - Is the swing plane consistent, or does the arm cross the body?
 - Is the foot placement aligned with the intended line?
3. Record results as a percentage of bowls successfully passing through the gate.

Coaching Points:

- Emphasise that the **goal is to hit the line**, not necessarily to finish on the jack.
- Note if the bowler adjusts naturally after misses, or repeats the same error.
- Use the test to diagnose whether errors are caused by:
 - **Stance/step alignment** (footwork issue).
 - **Swing plane** (arm drifting).
 - **Release** (early/late, causing wobble).
- Use questioning: *“What did you notice about the bowls that missed wide?”*

Progression:

- Narrow the gate for higher-level accuracy testing.
- Move cones further up the green (2–3 metres out) to test consistency over distance.
- Combine with a **Landing-spot Drill** — place a disc beyond the gate for a double test of line + weight.



Outcome:

- Provides an immediate visual and measurable assessment of line control.
- Establishes a **baseline** to track improvement over time.
- Helps the coach decide which corrective drill to use next (e.g., Rail-track or Foam-gate for swing alignment, Landing-spot for aiming focus).

Baseline & Diagnostics: Length Grouping Test (Chalk Circle Target for Distance Control)

Objective:

To assess a player's ability to control **length (weight)** and to group bowls consistently around a jack or target zone. This establishes a baseline for distance control and highlights whether errors are systematic (always too heavy/light) or inconsistent.

Setup:

1. Place a **jack** at a chosen length (short, medium, or long).
2. Using chalk, hoops, or string, mark a **circle around the jack** → typically **1.5 m diameter** for beginners, narrowing to 1 m or 0.5 m for advanced players.
3. The target circle becomes the "scoring zone."

Method:

1. Player delivers 4–6 bowls to the jack on their chosen hand.
2. Record how many bowls finish **inside the circle**.
3. Note whether the misses are consistently long, short, or scattered.
4. Repeat on both hands and at different lengths (short, medium, long).

Coaching Points:

- Emphasise smooth tempo and consistent rhythm — don't overthink mechanics.
- Encourage external focus: *"Roll to finish inside the circle,"* rather than *"slow your arm down."*
- Observe whether the bowler adjusts after each bowl or repeats the same mistake.
- Use questioning: *"What did you change on that delivery?"* or *"Why do you think that one went past the circle?"*

Progression:

- Shrink the circle to demand tighter grouping as skill improves.
- Change jack lengths each round to test adaptability.
- For group sessions, run it as a scoring challenge (e.g., 1 point per bowl inside the circle, target score = 10).
- Combine with **Three-in-a-row Challenge** for pressure consistency.



Outcome:

- Provides a measurable baseline of distance control (e.g., “3/6 bowls in circle at medium length”).
- Reveals whether weight errors are systematic (diagnostic for correction).
- Tracks progress over time — repeat test across sessions to show improvement.
- Helps identify when a bowler is ready for more advanced weight-control drills.

Corrective Drill: Rail-track (Chalk Tramlines for Stance & Swing Alignment)

Objective:

To correct alignment issues by giving the bowler a clear visual guide for their stance, step, and arm swing, ensuring the delivery action follows a straight, repeatable line.

Setup:

1. On the green, use chalk or thin tape to draw two parallel lines (like tramlines) from the mat towards the jack, about **30–40 cm apart**.
2. Position the mat so that the tramlines extend directly down the intended delivery line.
3. Explain to the player that these are their “rails” to keep both stance and swing aligned.

Method:

1. Place the bowler on the mat with their **lead foot** positioned between the rails, toes square and pointing along the track.
2. Ask them to deliver the bowl so that their **arm swing travels straight down the tramline**, keeping the bowl within the “track.”
3. Observe whether their step, balance, or arm causes the bowl to stray outside the rails.

Coaching Points:

- Encourage the bowler to keep head and shoulders square to the track.
- Reinforce that the **forward step should land between the tramlines** to avoid crossing over.
- The bowling arm should swing like a pendulum along the rail, not drifting across the body.
- Use questioning: “*Did you feel your arm stayed on track?*” rather than only telling them.

Progression:

- Begin with jack rolling down the rails for smoothness.
- Progress to bowl delivery, first at medium length, then varied lengths.
- Narrow the tramlines slightly for advanced correction if the bowler is consistently accurate.

Outcome:

- Provides immediate visual feedback on stance and swing alignment.
- Reduces common faults like “crossing the line” or “hooked” delivery.
- Builds consistent, straight pendulum swing and foot placement.



Corrective Drill: Foam-gate Drill (Upright Pool Noodles for Swing Plane)

Objective:

To correct and reinforce a straight arm swing by providing a physical “gate” that the bowl must pass through, helping the bowler develop a consistent delivery path.

Setup:

1. Take two pool noodles (or lightweight foam rods) and fix them upright into the ground about **30–40 cm apart**. They should form a vertical gate directly in front of the mat.
 - If outdoors, they can be pushed into soft turf or supported with cones or bases.
 - Indoors, they can be taped or anchored safely to avoid slipping.
2. Align the gate with the intended delivery line.
3. Place the mat so that the bowler is delivering directly through the gate.

Method:

1. Ask the bowler to take their stance as normal on the mat.
2. On delivery, the arm swing and bowl must pass cleanly through the centre of the foam-gate.
3. If the swing drifts outward or across the body, the arm or bowl will brush against the foam, giving **immediate tactile feedback**.

Coaching Points:

- Encourage a **smooth pendulum action** that travels directly through the gate.
- Reinforce balance: the lead foot should step naturally towards the line without crossing the body.
- Use questioning: *“Did you feel the swing was straight?”* or *“What adjustment will help you keep inside the gate?”*
- Remind the player this is about **accuracy of movement**, not just getting the bowl close to the jack.

Progression:

- Start with jack rolling to focus on smoothness and accuracy.
- Move to bowl delivery at short to medium lengths.
- Narrow the gate slightly to increase precision once confidence grows.
- Combine with a target zone beyond the gate (e.g., cone or jack placement) to connect



alignment with outcome.

Outcome:

- Immediate physical and visual feedback on arm swing plane.
- Corrects common faults like “swinging wide” or “cutting across.”
- Reinforces straight, repeatable action that improves both line and weight consistency.

Corrective Drill: Four-count Tempo (Step Marker and Rhythm Counting)

Objective:

To stabilise the player’s delivery tempo by introducing a clear, repeatable rhythm that coordinates stance, step, swing, and release.

Setup:

1. Place a **marker** (chalk line, tape strip, or small flat disc) on the green just ahead of the mat where the player’s lead foot should land.
2. Brief the player that they will deliver in time with a **four-count rhythm**:
 - Count 1: Set stance.
 - Count 2: Begin backswing.
 - Count 3: Step forward onto the marker.
 - Count 4: Smooth release of the bowl.

Method:

1. Have the player stand on the mat in their normal stance.
2. The coach (or the player themselves) counts out loud: “One... Two... Three... Four” in steady timing.
3. The bowler coordinates movements with the count:
 - **One** – settle stance, eyes focused.
 - **Two** – start backswing in time with the rhythm.
 - **Three** – controlled forward step landing on the marker.
 - **Four** – smooth, pendulum-style release in balance.
4. Repeat until the tempo feels natural and smooth.



Coaching Points:

- Keep the count steady, not rushed.
- Emphasise that tempo is about **control and consistency**, not speed.
- Encourage relaxed shoulders and smooth swing — avoid jerky, rushed actions.
- If the player tends to pause or rush, adjust the cadence slightly until it suits their natural rhythm.

Progression:

- Start with dry runs (no bowl) until the rhythm feels comfortable.
- Progress to jack rolling with the four-count.
- Then move to full bowl delivery at varying lengths while maintaining the rhythm.
- Advanced variation: player counts quietly to themselves, building self-reliance without coach input.

Outcome:

- Stabilises rhythm and timing of delivery.
- Reduces faults caused by rushing or hesitating.
- Builds a repeatable pre-shot routine anchored in rhythm and balance.
- Promotes confidence by making the delivery action feel smooth and consistent.

Corrective Drill: Landing-spot Drill (Coins or Discs as Target Points)

Objective:

To improve accuracy of line and weight by giving the bowler a specific “landing spot” target to bowl over, using external focus rather than technical body instructions.

Setup:

1. Place small flat markers (coins, discs, chalk spots, or purpose-made bowls training discs) on the green at varying distances and angles along the draw line.
2. Choose a realistic landing spot — usually the **shoulder of the green** (the point where the bowl starts to bend in towards the jack).
3. Position the mat so the target marker is clearly visible to the bowler.

Method:



1. Explain to the player: *“Don’t think about your arm or wrist — simply roll the bowl so it passes directly over the coin/disc.”*
2. Player delivers bowls aiming to cross over the marker on their chosen hand (forehand or backhand).
3. Observe whether the bowls consistently bend back towards the jack from the chosen spot.
4. If needed, reposition the marker slightly wider or narrower until the line produces the desired finish.

Coaching Points:

- Emphasise *external focus*: “Hit the spot,” not “adjust your wrist/shoulder.”
- Remind player to trust the bias of the bowl — the marker is only the start of the curve.
- Encourage consistency of tempo: weight errors show up clearly if bowls cross the spot but finish too long/short.
- Use questioning: *“What happened when you missed the spot?”* or *“Where would you place the next marker to improve?”*

Progression:

- Start with a single target marker at medium length.
- Add multiple markers (short, medium, long) and ask the bowler to vary their aim.
- Create game situations: place discs at “front bowl” or “cover position” points rather than just shoulder spots.
- Reduce marker size (coin vs disc) to sharpen precision once consistent.

Outcome:

- Reinforces correct aiming points and green reading.
- Strengthens confidence in bowl bias.
- Simplifies coaching communication by replacing technical jargon with clear external tasks.
- Builds consistency in both forehand and backhand deliveries.

Corrective Drill: Differential Learning (Exaggerate Faults → Recalibrate to Find Centre)

Objective:

To help players *self-correct* delivery faults by deliberately exaggerating the error, then recalibrating toward a balanced “centre” position. This develops awareness, feel, and control over the movement.



Setup:

- No special equipment needed — just a mat, jack, and bowls.
- Works best when a clear fault has been identified (e.g., swinging arm across the body, stepping too far, rushing tempo, etc.).

Method:

1. Identify the Fault

- Example: Player consistently delivers wide because their arm swings away from their body.

2. Exaggerate the Fault

- Ask the player to deliberately **overdo** the mistake.
- “Try swinging your arm even wider than before.”
- They experience how extreme the error feels and see the exaggerated outcome.

3. Reverse the Fault

- Then ask them to do the **opposite extreme**.
- “Now try swinging your arm uncomfortably close to your body.”

4. Find the Middle Ground

- After experiencing both extremes, guide the player to deliver with a **natural, balanced movement** between the two.
- This recalibration usually produces a straighter, smoother action.

Coaching Points:

- Always explain that this is not about *bowling correctly at first*, but about *feeling the range of movement*.
- Encourage the player to notice differences:
 - “What felt different?”
 - “Which extreme made balance harder?”
- Highlight that the “centre” position should feel comfortable and repeatable.
- Use simple external cues to anchor the correction (e.g., “swing over the tramline” rather than technical wrist talk).

Progression:

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- Apply differential learning to different faults:
 - **Tempo:** deliver one bowl very fast, one very slow, then find the smooth rhythm.
 - **Step length:** one bowl with an exaggerated long step, one with a very short step, then find natural balance.
 - **Release point:** release too early, then too late, then settle on smooth low release.
- Once corrected, reinforce with a purposeful practice (e.g., Landing-spot Drill) so the improved action transfers to outcome.

Outcome:

- Improves body awareness and self-correction ability.
- Prevents “over-coaching” — players discover the fix themselves.
- Builds confidence by showing that the bowler can control and adjust their own movement.
- Especially useful at **Level 2+**, but can be simplified for beginners (e.g., “too heavy → too short → just right”).

Corrective Drill: Three-in-a-row Challenge (Pressure Transfer Drill)

Objective:

To test whether a player can repeat a corrected action consistently under pressure. This drill moves from *learning a correction* → to *retaining it reliably* → to *executing it in a pressured situation*.

Setup:

- Place a jack or target marker at a chosen distance (short, medium, or long).
- Define a **success zone** (e.g., within 1 metre of the jack, or passing directly over a landing spot marker).
- Explain to the player: “*The challenge is to get three successful deliveries in a row.*”

Method:

1. Player delivers their first bowl aiming for the success zone.
 - If successful → continue to the second bowl.
 - If unsuccessful → reset back to zero and start the sequence again.
2. Continue until the player achieves **three consecutive successes**.
3. Once they complete the challenge, either:



- Move the target to a different length/side, or
- Make the zone smaller to increase pressure.

Coaching Points:

- Reinforce the correction made earlier (e.g., swing plane, tempo, landing spot).
- Highlight that this drill is about **consistency under pressure**, not just one good shot.
- Encourage players to use their pre-shot routine (stance, focus, rhythm) every time.
- Ask reflective questions: *“What changed when you missed?”* or *“How did you keep focus when two were already in?”*

Progression:

- Narrow the tolerance zone (from 1 metre → 60 cm → 30 cm).
- Increase streak length to 4-in-a-row or 5-in-a-row for advanced players.
- For groups: make it competitive — who can get three in a row first?
- For tactical development: use situational targets (e.g., draw behind a short bowl, promote a bowl).

Outcome:

- Reinforces the corrected action through repetition under mild stress.
- Builds mental resilience and focus when a correction is most at risk of breaking down.
- Bridges the gap between **practice and match play**, where pressure is real.

Appendix B – Glossary of Coaching Terms

MAE – Mean Absolute Error: Average distance a set of bowls finishes from the target (ignores whether short/long, just measures accuracy/consistency).

KR – Knowledge of Results: Feedback about the outcome of a skill (e.g., 'That bowl finished 0.5m past the jack').

KP – Knowledge of Performance: Feedback about the movement/process used to perform a skill (e.g., 'Your step was too short, which reduced your swing').

Rail-track Drill: An alignment aid made of two parallel lines or markers ('tramlines') used to guide stance and swing along the intended delivery line.

Foam-gate Drill: Two upright pool noodles placed close together in front of the mat to create a safe 'gate' that the bowl must pass through.



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Differential Learning: A method where players exaggerate errors or vary technique deliberately, then recalibrate to find the correct movement.

Blocked Practice: Repetition of the same skill under the same conditions (e.g., 10 bowls to the same jack).

Variable Practice: Repeating the same skill but changing one factor each time (e.g., jack placed at different lengths).

Random Practice: Mixing different skills in no set order (e.g., drawing forehand to short jack, then backhand trail, then long draw).

