

Lesson 5: Building Consistency in Delivery

EBCS Level 2 CPD – Advanced Tactical & Strategic Coaching

Learning Objectives (for the coach)

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

- Identify the key technical and psychological elements of a consistent delivery.
- Use observation and diagnostics to detect variability in stance, swing, release, and rhythm.
- Apply progressive drills to help players stabilise and repeat their technique.
- Introduce cues, routines, and feedback that promote repeatability under pressure.
- Measure delivery consistency using grouping tests and simple metrics.

Background (why this matters)

Consistency is the foundation of performance in bowls. Even technically sound deliveries can break down if they are not repeatable under different conditions. Variability often arises from:

- Stance changes (feet placement or balance).
- Swing path variations.
- Timing or rhythm fluctuations.
- Grip and release inconsistencies.

Coaches must help players establish a repeatable routine, refine rhythm, and use external cues to anchor delivery. Consistency builds confidence, which in turn improves decision-making and performance under pressure.

Practical Activities

Session Options:

Option 1 — 90-minute CPD Workshop:

- 1) Introduction to consistency and diagnostics (10 min)
- 2) Baseline grouping tests (15 min)
- 3) Progressive consistency drills (35 min)
- 4) Pressure drills (15 min)
- 5) Reflection and review (15 min)

Option 2 — 70-minute On-Rink Player Session:

- 1) Baseline consistency test (10 min)
- 2) Rhythm and routine drills (20 min)
- 3) Landing-spot and grouping drills (20 min)
- 4) Pressure application (15 min)
- 5) Review and homework (5 min)



Progressive Consistency Drills:

- Grouping Test: Deliver 12 bowls to a set jack length; measure spread with tape or circle markers. Calculate MAE (mean absolute error).
- Rhythm Exercise: Use four-count delivery (step marker and rhythm count) to stabilise timing.
- Landing-Spot Routine: Place discs/coins on rink; players deliver to roll over target points to reduce variability.
- Release Gate Drill: Create a small corridor with cones/rails just beyond the mat to guide the delivery line.
- Consistency Ladder: Deliver bowls to progressively longer jacks, aiming for consistent grouping at each length.
- Pressure Consistency Test: Deliver 4 bowls in sequence; score 1 point for each within a 60cm circle. Repeat under observation.

Questioning Prompts

- 'What felt different on the bowls that grouped closely together?'
- 'Where did you focus your eyes during delivery—did that help repeatability?'
- 'How does your rhythm change when you speed up or slow down deliberately?'
- 'What single cue helps you repeat your best delivery?'
- 'How do you reset if a bowl goes off-line?'
- 'What did you learn about your delivery when under mild pressure?'

Coach Notes (ethics, inclusivity, safety)

- Emphasise progress over perfection—help players see reduced variability as success.
- Keep drills adaptable: shorten distances or widen targets for newer or mobility-limited players.
- Reinforce positive language: frame errors as feedback, not failure.
- Ensure props (cones, discs, rails) are stable and not trip hazards.
- Encourage inclusive feedback in groups, where peers notice and support consistent behaviours.

Reflection (self + peer)

Coach self-reflection:

- Did I help players link rhythm and stance to repeatability?
- Which drills reduced variability most effectively?
- Did I balance technical cues with confidence-building feedback?
- How did players respond under added pressure?

Peer feedback:

- 'I noticed you reinforced consistency by... (specific). This seemed effective when... (evidence). Next time, you could... (suggestion).'



Player homework:

- Practise one 10-minute grouping drill, 3 times per week.
- Record scores using MAE or percentage in a circle.
- Write down one rhythm or landing-spot cue that helped with repeatability.

Outcomes (what you should achieve)

- Ability to diagnose causes of inconsistency in delivery.
- Confidence to deliver and progress consistency-building drills.
- Skill in reinforcing routines and cues that anchor repeatability.
- Use of simple metrics (grouping tests, MAE) to evidence improvement.
- Uphold safe, inclusive, and supportive coaching practice.



Appendix A

Progressive Consistency Drill: Grouping Test (Measure Spread & Consistency)

Objective:

To assess and improve a player's consistency by delivering multiple bowls to the same target and measuring the spread. Results can be expressed using **Mean Absolute Error (MAE)** to give a clear performance metric.

Setup:

1. Place the jack at a fixed length (short, medium, or long).
2. Player uses **12 bowls** (e.g., 3 ends of 4 bowls, or borrow extras if coaching individually).
3. Prepare measuring tools:
 - **Measuring tape** or chalk circles (e.g., 0.5m, 1m, 1.5m radii) around the jack.
 - Recording sheet for distances.

Method:

1. Player delivers 12 bowls to the same jack position, focusing on **repetition with consistent line and weight**.
2. After all bowls are delivered, measure the **distance of each bowl from the jack**.
 - Record each measurement (e.g., 0.35m, 0.95m, 1.20m).
3. Calculate the **Mean Absolute Error (MAE)**:
 - Add up all the absolute distances from the jack.
 - Divide by the number of bowls (12).
 - Example: $(0.35 + 0.95 + 1.20 + \dots) \div 12 = \text{MAE}$.

Coaching Points:

- Stress rhythm and repeatability rather than "trying too hard to get close."
- Watch for delivery changes between bowls — inconsistency often comes from altered stance or tempo.
- Encourage player to review: *"Were misses consistently short/long, or random?"*
- Emphasise that **consistency** (tight grouping) is more valuable than one close bowl among wild variations.



Progression:

- Repeat at different jack lengths (short, medium, long).
- Compare MAE values across sessions to track improvement.
- For advanced players: split analysis into **line error** and **length error** (by marking a centre line).
- Create a scoring overlay:
 - Within 0.5m = 3 points,
 - 0.5–1m = 2 points,
 - 1–1.5m = 1 point,
 - Beyond = 0.

Outcome:

- Provides **quantitative feedback** on consistency (MAE score).
- Encourages repeatable technique rather than one-off good deliveries.
- Helps identify whether errors are systematic (all short, all narrow) or inconsistent.
- Builds a progressive record so players can see measurable improvement over time.

Progressive Consistency Drill: Rhythm Exercise (Four-count Delivery for Timing)

Objective:

To stabilise a player's delivery rhythm using a **four-count timing system** (stance → backswing → step → release). This promotes consistency in line, length, and smoothness of delivery.

Setup:

1. Place a jack at a chosen length (medium distance is best for starting).
2. Mark a **step point** (chalk/tape/disc) where the lead foot should land.
3. Coach (or player) provides a **four-count rhythm**:
 - **One** – Set stance, focus.
 - **Two** – Begin backswing.
 - **Three** – Controlled forward step to the marker.
 - **Four** – Smooth release of the bowl.



Method:

1. Player rehearses the motion without a bowl, counting aloud or with the coach's guidance.
2. Deliver 4–6 bowls with the four-count rhythm, emphasising smooth timing.
3. After each end, review whether tempo felt steady and if delivery errors reduced.
4. Repeat across multiple ends to ingrain rhythm.

Coaching Points:

- Stress *flow*, *not force* — the rhythm should feel natural, not robotic.
- Watch for rushing between counts (common on “three” and “four”).
- Encourage player to self-assess: “*Did that feel in time?*”
- Reinforce that rhythm anchors the whole action, keeping swing and release consistent.

Progression:

- Shorten the count (e.g., silent “one-breath routine”) once stable, to mimic natural play.
- Vary jack lengths — can the player maintain rhythm across short, medium, and long?
- Add **mild pressure** (timer, observer, or scoring) to test if rhythm holds.
- Integrate with **Grouping Test** — compare MAE (mean absolute error) with vs without rhythm count.

Outcome:

- Builds a stable and repeatable delivery rhythm.
- Reduces common timing errors (late/early release, rushed delivery).
- Provides players with a mental “anchor” under pressure.
- Improves consistency across lengths and conditions.

Progressive Consistency Drill: Landing-Spot Routine (Target Points for Consistency)

Objective:

To improve delivery consistency by using **external focus markers** (coins, discs, chalk spots) as landing points, ensuring the bowl travels on the intended line with repeatable weight.

Setup:

1. Place the jack at a chosen distance (medium is a good starting point).



2. Position **discs/coins** at the natural aiming points (the “shoulder of the green” for forehand/backhand).
 - Mark 2–3 different landing spots along the rink.
 - Alternatively, use a chalk spot directly in front of the mat for initial focus.
3. Brief players: *“Your job is not to hit the jack, but to roll directly over the landing spot.”*

Method:

1. Player delivers 4–6 bowls, each aimed to cross over the landing spot.
2. Observe whether the bowl passes consistently over the marker.
3. Reinforce the principle: **hitting the same spot repeatedly produces a consistent line and draw.**
4. Repeat on both forehand and backhand.

Coaching Points:

- Stress *external focus*: “hit the spot” instead of internal corrections (“move your wrist”).
- Watch for body alignment — stance and step should naturally point towards the landing spot.
- Encourage player feedback: *“How did that feel when you rolled over the spot?”*
- Remind them that trusting the bias is key — the landing spot is the *start* of the draw, not the finish.

Progression:

- Use smaller landing markers (coin → disc → chalk dot) to increase precision.
- Move the jack to different lengths and adjust landing spots accordingly.
- Add a scoring system: 2 points for hitting the spot, 1 for within 15 cm, 0 for missing.
- Combine with **Grouping Test** — record whether MAE (mean absolute error) improves when using landing-spot focus.

Outcome:

- Reinforces repeatable aiming points, reducing line variability.
- Builds trust in bias and green-reading.
- Creates a mental routine that transfers into competition: pick spot → roll over it.
- Strongly supports consistent delivery under pressure.



Progressive Consistency Drill: Release Gate Drill (Corridor for Delivery Line)

Objective:

To train players to deliver bowls with a consistent swing plane and release line by guiding them through a narrow “gate” placed just beyond the mat.

Setup:

1. Place the jack at a chosen length (medium to start).
2. Just beyond the mat, set up two **cones, discs, or lightweight rails** about **30–40 cm apart**, forming a small gate.
3. Align the gate directly on the intended delivery line (forehand or backhand).
4. Brief players: *“Your task is not to chase the jack, but to deliver every bowl through the release gate.”*

Method:

1. Player delivers 4–6 bowls, each aiming to pass cleanly between the cones.
2. Observe whether bowls consistently pass through the gate.
3. If a bowl clips or misses the gate, it indicates inconsistency in swing plane or release angle.
4. Reset and repeat, alternating between forehand and backhand lines.

Coaching Points:

- Emphasise **smooth pendulum action** — the arm should swing directly through the corridor.
- Check stance and step alignment: the lead foot should also point down the gate.
- Reinforce external focus: *“Send it through the gate,”* instead of body corrections.
- Encourage reflection: *“What happened when you missed the gate?”*

Progression:

- Narrow the corridor to increase difficulty (from 40 cm → 30 cm → 20 cm).
- Move the gate slightly further down the rink (2–3m) to extend the consistency challenge.
- Add scoring: 1 point per successful pass, target = 10.
- Combine with **Landing-Spot Routine**: place a landing marker beyond the gate, linking start and finish.

Outcome:

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- Improves **release consistency** — bowls start on the intended line more often.
- Builds confidence in swing plane discipline.
- Provides immediate feedback on misalignment or release faults.
- Reduces variability in delivery, supporting tighter grouping and accuracy.

Progressive Consistency Drill: Consistency Ladder (Progressive Length Grouping)

Objective:

To develop consistency in delivery by challenging players to maintain tight grouping at **progressively longer jack lengths**. This drill reinforces adaptability while keeping focus on rhythm and repeatability.

Setup:

1. Place the jack at **short length** (e.g., 23–24m).
2. Set two further jack lengths in advance: **medium** (~27m) and **long** (~31–32m).
3. Mark target circles (chalk, string, or discs) around each jack — start with 1m diameter.
4. Brief players: *“We’re climbing the consistency ladder: short → medium → long. Your grouping must stay consistent at each length.”*

Method:

1. Player delivers 4 bowls to the **short jack**, aiming to group them tightly within the circle.
2. Immediately move to the **medium jack**, deliver 4 bowls, then to the **long jack**.
3. Record how many bowls finish inside each circle.
4. Compare grouping across all three lengths.

Coaching Points:

- Emphasise rhythm and pre-shot routine — only weight should change between lengths.
- Watch for overcompensation (players often over-hit to long jack after short).
- Reinforce smooth tempo adjustments, not jerky changes.
- Encourage reflection: *“What adjustment worked best moving from medium to long?”*

Progression:

- Shrink the circles (1m → 0.75m → 0.5m) to demand tighter grouping.



Berkshire Bowls Coaching Scheme



- Add a **reverse ladder** (long → medium → short).
- Randomise lengths: the coach calls the next jack length before each bowl.
- Use scoring: 2 points inside 0.5m, 1 point inside 1m, 0 outside.

Outcome:

- Builds adaptability in adjusting length without losing grouping.
- Reinforces the link between **tempo, weight, and consistency**.
- Creates measurable improvement by tracking scores at each length.
- Prepares players for real-game scenarios where jack length changes end to end.

Progressive Consistency Drill: Pressure Consistency Test (Scored Grouping Under Observation)

Objective:

To test and reinforce consistency by requiring players to deliver multiple bowls into a tight target zone under observation, simulating competitive pressure.

Setup:

1. Place the jack at a chosen distance (medium length is ideal to start).
2. Mark a **60 cm scoring circle** around the jack using chalk, string, or discs.
3. Each player has **4 bowls per attempt**.
4. Create observation pressure — teammates or coach watch closely, or score aloud.

Method:

1. Player delivers 4 bowls in sequence to the target circle.
2. Score each attempt:
 - 1 point = bowl finishes within 60 cm circle.
 - 0 points = outside the circle.
3. Maximum score per round = 4 points.
4. Repeat over several rounds, recording scores to track consistency.
5. Introduce observation pressure — others watch, or add a light consequence/reward.

Coaching Points:

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Berkshire Bowls Coaching Scheme



- Reinforce use of **pre-shot routine** to manage nerves.
- Watch whether tempo or delivery changes when observed.
- Encourage reflection: *"Did pressure make you rush or tighten up?"*
- Emphasise **process over outcome** — stick to rhythm and routine, let results follow.

Progression:

- Reduce circle size (60 cm → 45 cm → 30 cm).
- Vary jack lengths (short, medium, long).
- Add competition: who scores the highest in 3 rounds?
- Apply scenario: *"You need at least 3 points this round to win the game."*

Outcome:

- Builds the ability to repeat consistent delivery under pressure.
- Provides a measurable score to track improvement over time.
- Highlights whether technical or mental factors break down under stress.
- Reinforces confidence in using routine and rhythm when observed.

Appendix B – Glossary of Coaching Terms

Grouping Test: Delivering multiple bowls to the same target to measure consistency of placement.

MAE – Mean Absolute Error: Average distance bowls finish from the target (ignores whether short or long).

Rhythm Exercise: A timed delivery routine (e.g., four-count) to stabilise tempo.

Landing-Spot Drill: Using external targets on the rink to improve delivery focus and repeatability.

Consistency Ladder: Practising deliveries to progressively longer jacks to test repeatability at different lengths.

Pressure Consistency Test: Measuring repeatability of delivery under observation or scoring pressure.

