

CPD Level 2 – Lesson 9: Observation Masterclass

Learning Objectives (for the Coach)

By the end of this lesson, the coach should be able to:

- Develop advanced observation skills to identify technical and tactical player patterns.
- Record and interpret key performance indicators during live or simulated play.
- Provide reflective, evidence-based feedback that promotes player development.

Background

Observation is one of the most powerful tools in advanced coaching. Effective observation goes beyond simply watching a player bowl — it means analysing technique, decision-making, and mental responses under real conditions.

At higher levels of coaching, your role extends from instructor to analyst. You must be able to:

- Recognise patterns in player behaviour and delivery under pressure.
- Identify causes rather than just symptoms of errors.
- Gather meaningful data to guide performance feedback and long-term improvement plans.

Observation provides the bridge between practice performance and competitive reality. It allows coaches to tailor sessions precisely to each player's needs, tracking subtle progress over time.

This masterclass focuses on how to observe effectively, record data accurately, and communicate insights constructively — transforming “watching” into professional-level player analysis.

Practical Activities

1. Observation Workshop (Off-Rink – 20 minutes)

Activity: Video Analysis Session

- Watch short clips of bowlers delivering under varying conditions.
- Identify delivery sequence, stance, balance, arm swing, and follow-through patterns.
- Record technical notes using an Observation Sheet (e.g., timing of release, head stability, eye focus).

Coach Focus:

- What does “effective observation” look like?
- How to prioritise what you see — avoid trying to watch everything at once.
- Use observation frameworks such as “Technical – Tactical – Emotional – Behavioural.”

2. On-Rink Practical Observation (40 minutes)

Activity A: Live Player Observation Drill

- Coaches are paired; one coaches, one observes.

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- Player delivers six bowls on each hand to a designated target.
- Observer records:
 - Pre-shot routine
 - Delivery sequence and alignment
 - Body balance and follow-through
 - Tactical choices and shot outcome
- Rotate roles and review differences between live observation and playback.

Activity B: Tactical Observation Roleplay

- Create a game scenario (e.g., “2 down with one bowl remaining”).
- Observe how the player selects and plays the shot.
- Record tactical reasoning and post-shot feedback dialogue.

Debrief Discussion:

- Compare observational findings.
- What details were missed?
- How did bias or focus influence accuracy?

3. Observation Data and Feedback Integration (20 minutes)

Task: Use recorded notes to deliver reflective feedback.

- Identify one strength, one development area, and one action point.
- Practice phrasing feedback that is descriptive, not judgemental.
e.g., “Your arm speed increased on the fourth bowl,” instead of “You rushed that one.”
- Use a coaching log or observation app to document findings.

Questioning Prompts

Open-ended questions help both coach and player reflect deeply:

- What do you think caused that variation in weight?
- What did you notice about your stance before the last bowl?
- How did your focus change after the first end?
- What pattern do you see between successful and less successful deliveries?
- How might you adjust your pre-shot routine to improve consistency?

Encourage the use of reflective questioning after observation to help players take ownership of their technical and tactical improvements.

Coach Notes (Ethics, Inclusivity, Safety)

- Always gain consent before recording or analysing a player on video.
- Maintain confidentiality – observation notes and footage should only be used for player development.
- Use inclusive approaches: adapt observation methods for players with mobility or visual limitations.

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- Provide balanced feedback — highlight positives before development points.
- Ensure psychological safety: feedback sessions should be constructive, calm, and player-centred.

Reflection (Self + Peer)

Self-Reflection Prompts:

- What did I notice about my own observation habits?
- Did I focus too much on faults rather than performance patterns?
- How effectively did I record data without losing focus on the session?

Peer/Senior Coach Reflection:

- Provide feedback on observation accuracy and clarity.
- Evaluate communication tone and feedback delivery.
- Suggest ways to enhance objectivity (e.g., using agreed observation forms).

Outcomes

After completing Lesson 9, the coach will be able to:

- Observe bowlers systematically using structured, objective frameworks.
- Identify and record both technical and tactical aspects of performance.
- Deliver accurate, reflective feedback that promotes learning and confidence.
- Apply observation data to plan future sessions and track development.
- Demonstrate professionalism, empathy, and analytical precision in coaching practice.

