

BERKSHIRE BOWLS COACHING SCHEME

Coaching Part 2 — Week 3 Coach's Notes

Drawing Around Obstacles and Player Communication

ROLE OF THE WEEK

Move from aiming to option selection

EXERCISES

Square and Diamond

1. Why Week 3 Matters

Week 3 moves the pupil from simply finding an aiming line to selecting a useful route through a more complex head. The Square and Diamond exercises are not only draw practices: they require the pupil to identify what must be beaten, choose a hand, nominate a finishing area and commit to the chosen option. The lesson also introduces a simple communication sequence. The player should be able to state the situation, intended shot or useful finish, chosen hand and factual result. This helps turn internal decision-making into clear, repeatable game communication.

CORE PRINCIPLE: Do not begin with the jack. Begin with the job: what must the bowl achieve, and where is the useful finishing area?

2. From Jack-Focus to Useful Finish

A common developing-player habit is to treat the jack as the only target. In both exercises, the winning bowl may only need to beat or rest against the nearest opposing bowl. The coach should therefore redirect attention from “get close to the jack” to “finish in a position that completes the job”.

- Identify who is holding shot and which bowl must be beaten.
- Look for more than one route before selecting the preferred hand.
- Name the intended finishing area, not merely the object bowl.
- Use draw or controlled wrest-out weight only; no firing shots.
- Commit before stepping onto the mat.

3. The Square Exercise

The Square exercise presents a partly blocked head. Four bowls are placed approximately 3 metres apart with the jack in the centre. The two front bowls partly restrict the normal draw route. The pupil imagines the opposition holds four shots and must select a draw or controlled wrest-out option to beat the nearest bowl.

- Technical demand: adjust the draw line to reach a bowl or useful resting point rather than the jack.
- Decision demand: compare possible hands and decide which route offers the best chance.
- Length demand: reach the head positively; a short bowl cannot complete the task.
- Learning test: Bowl 2 should use the information supplied by Bowl 1.

If the front bowls are less than 1 metre in front of the jack at about 45 degrees, a normal draw to the jack may be unavailable. The coach should demonstrate the slight line change needed when the target becomes a bowl or a resting position.

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4. The Diamond Exercise

The Diamond exercise adds a hidden-jack problem. The front bowl obscures the jack, while the two side bowls provide visible length references. The pupil must avoid guessing and use the surrounding bowls to construct a picture of the hidden head.

- Use the side bowls as horizontal guides to the required length.
- The bowl does not need to reach the jack; it only needs to produce the required result.
- Compare both hands before choosing.
- Retain draw or controlled wrest-out weight.
- Ask the pupil to explain why the selected hand is preferred.

COACHING INSIGHT: When the jack is hidden, visible bowls become information. Teach the pupil to use them as references rather than treating the head as uncertain.

5. Shot Selection: A Simple Sequence

Question	Purpose
What is the situation?	Establish who holds shot and what is required.
Which bowl must be beaten?	Stops unnecessary jack-focus.
Where is a useful finish?	Defines the job before choosing the line.
Which hand gives the clearest route?	Compares access and obstruction.
What result will count as success?	Creates a realistic expectation for the delivery.

6. Player Communication

The communication element should remain factual and concise. It is not a lengthy tactical speech. The weekly lesson plan uses the following sequence:

- State the situation.
- State the required result.
- Confirm the hand.
- Name the target bowl or intended finishing area.
- After delivery, give one factual result and use it for Bowl 2.

Good communication supports decision-making. Vague phrases such as “somewhere near there” should be replaced by a short factual message: hand, target or finish, and required result.

ROLE AND SCORECARD LINK: The player directing the head should provide the instruction or factual information. Other players should avoid competing advice unless asked. Briefly introduce where the score for each end and the running total are recorded; fuller scorecard practice belongs in the Week 10 guided game.

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7. Common Faults: Cause and Response

Observation	Likely cause	Coach response
Aims only at the jack	The pupil has not identified the actual job.	Ask which bowl must be beaten and name a useful finish.
Clips a front bowl	The selected line is too tight or the other hand is clearer.	Widen the line or compare the alternative hand.
Stops before the head	Attention remains on the obstacle rather than the finish.	Set a positive finishing point beyond the blocker.
Changes line and weight together	The review has not isolated the main cause.	Keep the successful element and change one variable.
Guesses when jack is hidden	Visible reference bowls are not being used.	Use the side bowls as length guides.
Communication is vague	The intended outcome has not been defined.	Require one factual message: hand, finish and result.

8. Differentiation and Progression

- Less confident pupil: shorten the jack, increase spacing and begin on the preferred hand.
- Developing pupil: practise both hands and require the option to be named before delivery.
- More capable pupil: reduce spacing, offset the layout, increase distance or use the diagonal-ownership variation.
- Decision progression: ask for two possible options, then require the pupil to justify the preferred one.
- Communication progression: move from coach-led questions to one concise player statement.

9. Coach Questions

- What is the actual job for this bowl?
- Which bowl must be beaten?
- Where would a useful bowl finish?
- Which hand offers the clearest route, and why?
- What did Bowl 1 tell you?
- Was Bowl 2 a correction or a repeat?
- Was the result mainly affected by line, length or shot choice?

10. Evidence of Learning

Learning is shown through improved decision quality as well as bowl position. A pupil may miss the intended result but still demonstrate progress by reading the head correctly, selecting a sensible route, communicating clearly and making an informed second-bowl adjustment.

- Identifies more than one possible route.
- Names the hand and intended finish before delivery.
- Uses visible bowls as references when the jack is hidden.
- Reaches the head with positive length.
- Uses Bowl 2 to correct or reproduce Bowl 1.

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- Gives concise factual information after delivery.

11. Game Application and Link to Week 4

Finish with a one-bowl-left challenge. The pupil must nominate the preferred option, deliver and explain whether the result was mainly affected by line, length or shot choice. Week 4 develops this further through reading and solving a small head.

COACH SUMMARY: Help the pupil define the job, choose the route, communicate the plan and use the first result intelligently.