

BERKSHIRE BOWLS COACHING SCHEME

Coaching Part 2 - Week 6 Coach's Notes

Positive Weight: Beat the Front Bowl and Trail the Jack

ROLE OF THE WEEK

Transition from draw to controlled weight

LESSON LENGTH

60 minutes

1. Why Week 6 Matters

Week 6 is the point at which pupils move beyond ordinary draw weight and begin to use positive, controlled weight for a specific result. The two exercises are deliberately related but not identical. Beat the Front Bowl teaches the pupil to reach beyond a visible obstacle. Trail the Jack adds accurate contact and controlled jack movement.

The lesson should not be presented as an introduction to force. Its purpose is control. The pupil must still select a line, name a finishing point and preserve a repeatable delivery. The additional weight is only useful when it produces the intended outcome.

CORE PRINCIPLE: Positive weight must still be purposeful, controlled and connected to a clearly named finishing result.

2. From Draw Weight to Positive Weight

A common beginner response to an obstructing bowl or difficult head is either to remain short or to add too much weight. Week 6 teaches the middle ground. The pupil is asked to reach beyond an obstacle or move the jack a limited distance without turning the shot into an uncontrolled drive.

- Positive draw: enough weight to reach beyond the front bowl and finish in the scoring area.
- Controlled yard-on weight: enough additional weight to contact and move the jack by a limited distance.
- Firing weight: specifically excluded from both exercises.
- Finishing intention: the pupil should know where the bowl or jack is meant to finish before delivery.
- Useful miss: a bowl that reaches the head may still provide information or a useful position; a short bowl cannot achieve the task.

3. Exercise Analysis: Beat the Front Bowl

The object bowl is placed approximately 1 metre or less in front of the jack. From the mat, it may hide the jack and attract the pupil's attention. This creates the main learning problem: object fixation. The pupil sees the obstacle and delivers to it instead of delivering beyond it.

- The object bowl is an obstacle and reference point, not the target.
- The pupil should picture the scoring area behind the object bowl.
- The hand should be chosen according to the clearest route past the obstacle.
- The bowl must be positive enough to reach the head.
- The second bowl should correct either the line past the obstacle or the finishing weight.

COACHING LANGUAGE "Look beyond the bowl." "Where must your bowl finish?" "Keep the line and change only the weight."

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4. Technical Risks in the Front-Bowl Exercise

Observation	Likely cause	Coach response
Bowl finishes short	The pupil is bowling to the visible object.	Move the intended finish beyond the obstacle and ask the pupil to state it.
Repeated contact with front bowl	The route is too narrow or the pupil changes direction in delivery.	Review the aiming line and compare the alternative hand.
Bowl passes but runs too far	The route is suitable but the finishing weight is excessive.	Keep the line and reduce only the finishing weight.
Delivery becomes forceful	The pupil associates positive weight with effort.	Restore normal rhythm and ask for a longer finish, not a harder action.

5. Exercise Analysis: Trail the Jack

Trail the Jack adds a smaller contact target and a specific movement requirement. The source exercise uses a final-end situation in which two shots are needed to win, and the jack must be moved by approximately 1 yard. The pupil therefore has to combine line, controlled weight and tactical purpose.

The jack is considerably lighter than a bowl. Good contact does not require excessive force. The coach should help the pupil visualise the contact point, direction of movement and intended jack finish. The pupil should not simply aim at the jack and hope for a favourable result.

- Name the intended contact point on the jack.
- Identify the direction in which the jack should travel.
- Choose a bowl line that remains accurate with added weight.
- Use controlled yard-on weight rather than a firing action.
- Expect the second bowl to adjust from the movement or miss produced by the first.
 - Use the exercise only where the rink layout, pupil ability and supervision make controlled contact safe.

6. Line Changes Under Added Weight

As weight increases, the bowl normally has less time to take its full draw. Pupils may therefore miss on the narrow side if they use their normal draw line without adjustment. The coach should not teach a fixed universal correction because green speed, bowl bias and delivery vary. Instead, use the result of Bowl 1 as evidence and ask the pupil to identify the line change required for Bowl 2.

- Begin at short-to-medium length.
- Use a simple head and a clear intended trail.
- Ask for controlled weight before increasing difficulty.
- Change one variable at a time: line, weight, distance or head complexity.
- Do not progress while the pupil is merely throwing harder.

7. Tactical Understanding

The exercises should be linked to a game purpose. Beat the Bowl at the Front applies where an opponent has placed a strong front bowl but a draw route still exists. Trail the Jack applies where moving the jack creates the shots required or transfers the jack towards a favourable area.

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Question	Why it matters
What does the score require?	It determines whether one shot, multiple shots or risk reduction is needed.
Where should the bowl or jack finish?	The target is a result, not simply contact.
What happens if the bowl is short?	In both exercises, a short bowl cannot complete the required job.
What is the main risk?	The pupil should recognise clipping the obstacle, missing narrow or moving the jack too far.
Is controlled weight within the pupil's capability?	The chosen shot should be realistic, not merely theoretically available.

8. Coaching Sequence

- Explain the game situation and required result.
- Ask the pupil to name the hand, line and intended finish.
- Demonstrate the difference between positive draw and controlled yard-on weight.
- Allow two consecutive bowls.
- Correct delivery or shot execution immediately and briefly.
- Use the second bowl to test the correction.
- Finish with a short trial-end decision: draw beyond or trail the jack. Issue the Trial Ends handout and provide the Guide to Buying Bowls as a take-home resource.

GOLDEN RULE Never miss an opportunity to correct a delivery or explain how the intended shot can be achieved.

9. Common Faults: Cause and Response

Observation	Possible cause	Coach response
Pupil remains short in both exercises	Fear of the obstacle or contact.	Set a positive finish beyond the head and praise a bowl that reaches.
Added weight pulls the bowl narrow	Normal draw line retained under greater speed.	Re-establish the aiming line for the selected weight.
Jack moves too far	Excess weight or heavy contact.	Keep the line and reduce the applied weight.
Jack barely moves	Insufficient weight or glancing contact.	Identify whether the next change is line, contact or weight.
Pupil uses a forcing action	Confusion between controlled weight and firing.	Restore normal delivery rhythm and a controlled finishing intention.
Pupil cannot describe the intended result	Focus is only on hitting the object.	Ask where the bowl and jack should finish before delivery.

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10. Differentiation and Progression

- Less confident pupil: shorter length, wider route, simpler head and broad finishing area.
- Developing pupil: standard layouts, both hands and an explanation before each bowl.
- More capable pupil: increased distance, narrower contact, offset target or score-pressure condition.
- Mixed group: retain the same exercise but vary distance and success criteria by pupil.
- Progress only one variable at a time so the source of success or failure remains clear.

11. Evidence of Learning

The lesson is successful when the pupil can distinguish the two weights, state the intended result and make a purposeful second-bowl adjustment. Contact alone is not sufficient evidence. The quality of the decision, the controlled delivery and the final position all matter.

- The pupil reaches beyond the front bowl with a positive draw.
- The pupil names the jack trail and contact intention before delivery.
- The bowl remains controlled as weight is added.
- Bowl 2 reflects a stated change in line or weight.
- The pupil can choose between the two shots in a simple trial end.

12. Link to Week 7

Week 7 develops controlled contact with bowls through Promote a Short Bowl and Follow Through and Stay. Week 6 should therefore finish with the pupil understanding that controlled weight is judged by the result after contact, not by the amount of visible effort in the delivery.

COACH SUMMARY: Teach the result first, preserve the delivery, require positive reach and use Bowl 2 to refine line, contact or weight.