

BERKSHIRE BOWLS COACHING SCHEME

Coaching Part 2 - Week 9 Coach's Notes

Solving Difficult Heads: Split Bowls • Draw the Shot

ROLE OF THE WEEK

Decision-making under pressure

LESSON LENGTH

60 minutes

1. Why Week 9 Matters

Week 9 brings together the technical and decision-making work developed throughout Part 2. The pupil must choose between a controlled contact shot and the draw, then commit to that choice under a final-end score condition. The lesson is therefore not only about execution; it is about matching the shot to the score, the head and the pupil's realistic ability.

CORE PRINCIPLE: Choose the shot that achieves the required result with the most acceptable risk, then commit to it with a normal delivery routine.

2. The Decision Before the Delivery

The coach should prevent the pupil from stepping onto the mat before the problem has been defined. Use the shared sequence: Score requirement → Required result → Available options → Preferred hand and target → Main risk → Commit.

- State the score position and the number of shots required.
- Identify the nearest opposing bowl that must be beaten or moved.
- Compare the draw route with the controlled-contact option.
- Name the preferred hand, line and intended finishing position.
- Identify the main risk, then make one committed decision.

3. Exercise Analysis: Split Bowls

The Split Bowls exercise develops a narrow target combined with controlled weight. Four bowls are placed about 60 cm in front of the jack. The inner pair create a gap of about one bowl-width, while the outer bowls restrict easy alternatives. The delivered bowl must travel through or close to the centre of the gap, separate the bowls and remain useful in the head.

The challenge is not simply to hit the gap. Line, positive weight and the result after contact all matter. A bowl that reaches the target on a good line but stops short may show better learning than a bowl that makes accidental contact through excessive force.

- Target: the centre of the gap, not one individual bowl.
- Weight: sufficient to complete the split and leave the delivered bowl in the head.
- Original guide: approximately 6:1 on a 12/14-second green, used only as an approximate starting point.
- Result: separation of the object bowls and a useful delivered-bowl finish.
- Method: controlled weight; no firing shot.

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4. Coaching Split Bowls

- Demonstrate the line through the centre of the gap and name the intended finish.
- Encourage a positive bowl that reaches beyond the target area.
- If one side is contacted repeatedly, correct the aiming line before changing weight.
- If the bowl passes through without sufficient effect, retain the line and add controlled weight.
- Use Bowl 2 to test one stated adjustment.

5. Exercise Analysis: Draw the Shot

The Draw the Shot exercise returns the pupil to the foundation shot under scoreboard pressure. It is the last end; the pupil is three shots down and needs only one shot to win. The head is crowded, but the task is deliberately simple: draw one bowl closer than the nearest opposing bowl.

The principal coaching danger is that pressure or the appearance of the head persuades the pupil to attempt more than the score requires. The coach should reinforce that a winning bowl need not finish beside the jack. It needs only to reach a scoring or useful position that gains the required shot.

- Read the head before stepping onto the mat.
- Identify the clearest draw route and a realistic finishing area.
- Keep the delivery routine normal despite the score condition.
- Avoid unnecessary weighted shots when one draw shot is sufficient.
- Review Bowl 1 and use Bowl 2 to correct or repeat.

6. Draw or Controlled Contact?

Question	Favour the draw when...	Consider the split when...
What does the score require?	One shot is enough.	Contact offers a realistic chance to change several bowls.
Is there a route?	A usable drawing line and scoring area exist.	The draw is blocked or offers very little margin.
What is the risk?	A miss is likely to remain harmless or useful.	The split can improve the head without excessive force.
Does the player have the shot?	The draw is within normal capability.	The player can deliver controlled weight accurately enough.

7. Pressure and Commitment

Pressure often changes tempo, target attention and delivery rhythm. The coach should not add more technical information at the moment of delivery. Once the decision is made, use one simple cue and allow the pupil to deliver with the normal routine.

- Pause and breathe before stepping onto the mat.
- State one plan, not several options.
- Use the normal stance, rhythm and follow-through.
- Judge the bowl against the stated intention, not only the score outcome.
- Review after the bowl rather than changing the plan during delivery.

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8. Common Faults: Cause and Response

Observation	Likely cause	Coach response
Split bowl finishes short	The pupil is aiming at the bowls rather than through them.	Set a finishing point beyond the target.
Repeatedly hits one side	The aiming line is not centred through the gap.	Re-centre the line before changing weight.
Uses excessive force	Contact has become the only objective.	Restate the intended final position and return to controlled weight.
Chooses weight when one draw is needed	The crowded head appears more difficult than the score requirement.	Ask: "What is the simplest way to gain one shot?"
Delivery changes under pressure	The pupil rushes or becomes outcome-focused.	Reset breath, target and normal routine.
Changes decision on the mat	The plan was not settled before delivery.	Step off, restate one option and recommit.

9. Differentiation and Progression

- Less confident pupil: widen the split, shorten the distance and open the draw route.
- Developing pupil: use the standard layouts and require the pupil to state the intended result.
- More capable pupil: narrow the gap, increase distance, reduce attempts or add an alternative head.
- Pressure progression: move from two consecutive bowls to one final attempt only after the pupil has demonstrated the required technique.
- Decision progression: present two heads and ask the pupil to justify why one calls for a draw and the other may justify controlled contact.
 - Issue Dead Ends and Dead Bowls and When the Jack Is in the Ditch as take-home rules resources. They should not reduce practical exercise time.

10. Coach Questions

- What does the score require from this bowl?
- Which bowl or area must be beaten?
- What is the safest realistic option?
- Where should the delivered bowl finish?
- What is the principal risk?
- Was the result mainly affected by decision, line, contact or weight?

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11. Evidence of Learning

Learning is demonstrated when the pupil makes a decision that fits the score and head, states the intended result clearly and delivers with an appropriate line and weight. Success is not limited to winning the exercise. A well-selected shot, normal routine and purposeful Bowl 2 adjustment are all evidence of progress.

- Chooses draw or split for a stated reason.
- Names the hand, line and finishing area before delivery.
- Uses controlled rather than uncontrolled weight.
- Maintains the normal routine under pressure.
- Reviews the result accurately and identifies one adjustment.

12. Link to Week 10

Week 10 is a consolidation and guided-game session. Week 9 should therefore finish with the pupil able to transfer the course language into gameplay: read the head, identify the required result, choose the shot, commit and review.

COACH SUMMARY: Do not let the crowded head or score pressure make the task more complicated than it is. Define the result, compare the risk, choose one shot and coach the pupil to commit.