President Shield Report

By

Donna Wingett – Boys Coach

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Well here we are again, another year has come and gone and we have now come full circle. Where do we start?

After a very long and tiring bus ride, we were all looking forward to checking in and getting settled before heading to the bowl – The apartments were great and had everything that we required. Would still prefer for us to be closer together although I am not sure whether this is possible.

Squads: The boys did struggle with squads although they did excel when they did their team squad – which is a good sign to me.

We still need to figure out the best way to book their squads, this yr we spread their squads out but maybe too far apart. It is not easy to find the correct balance. This year, we booked them 3 singles, 2 doubles and one team’s event; this still did not seem to satisfy some, who continually want to bowl. Again, you cannot please all, some wanting more squads, others not wanting as many, where do you draw the line. I do think it was better having the extra squads, it gave them all plenty of opportunity to make whichever masters they wanted and if they didn’t need the extra squads, they were told that they could sell them.

Again this year, I ran into problems, with people, not liking who they had to bowl with, or questioning WHY they weren’t bowling with a certain group. Prior to Nationals, I had sat down for days, - back in January, to sort out the squads. Unfortunately because there are 7 in a team, numbers do not even out. I worked long and hard on these squads trying to give each person a chance at a medal, putting them as high up in their grade as possible for every event = giving them every opportunity to win.

Even though a lot of them were disappointed in their squad efforts, I was not overly concerned, as to me the whole reason we are there is for Shield – this way of thinking does not sit well with some. Yes it is nice to win your singles, doubles or team event but what good is that when you can’t take that to the shield format. Overall I was pleased with their efforts.

Shield: The Boys all gelled very well again and were definitely one team, unfortunately this could not be said for the girls. The girls behaviour leading up to the squads and during in my eyes was just childish and pathetic. This unfortunately did have an effect on the boys, with them all basically being made to take sides. This is not on in my book. The young lads from our development squad were behind the boys watching, cheering, and helping where ever they could. It was definitely a sight to see when so many kids walk in with all the same shirt and jacket – dwarfing any other team presence. Our development squad boys also sat in on the team meetings to give them an idea of what is discussed and the expectations, even the ones with two very unhappy coaches.

The boys started slower this year than in previous years, and seemed to be lacking motivation. We went into the second day just behind but definitely not out of it. At the start of the second day they performed slightly better until the last game, where they basically handed over the points. They were leading going into the 7th frame and then just opened frames left right and centre. I must admit that I was so disgusted with their last game on day two, that I walked away going into the 10th frame, scared of what I might say - I thought it better to cool off first. Once back at the rooms we had team meeting and once again (I think they conned me) came up with a reward to do well on the last day. The Deal was to white wash a min of one team and win no less than four points for the rest of the day – I would take them go-Karting. They white washed the first team up and took no less than 5 points on the 3rd day, so maybe there is something to be said for Bribing your team, as this is now the second time I have done it and it seemed to work wonders.

Wade was a massive help as our Team Technical Advisor, once again. Helping the boys with their equipment and suggesting different surfaces to suit the conditions. The boys seem to have a respect for Wade and his knowledge and are willing to try his suggestions, which does seem to cut out the continual rotation of balls, trying to find one they are happy with. But once again, these boys seem to have an unrealistic view of their equipment. No matter how bad they are bowling with a certain ball. they will constantly keep using it and are unwilling to change from it, because they have this opinion of, it’s the best, even though it is obviously not working.

Training: Well I think this year has proved one thing for sure. We need to go back to drills and spares. Even though, at every training session, we concentrated on sparing, it obviously was not enough. This year was long, even though not as long as last year - trying to keep the kids focused at times is very hard. Even though we say Training is compulsory, some seem to think that they are above those criteria. I think we need to start cracking down on that. Combining the development squad in the training sessions I think helped with the bond that the boys had and also will make it easier in the years to come when they themselves make the shield team.

Masters: We had 6 out of the seven boys make it into the master’s finals along with Blayne from our development squad. Fantastic effort seeing the squad scores were not the greatest. Results were mixed. Some had made it through to the Second round automatically = because of their position, others had to work their way through. The results were very good. We had Zack Caldwell in the top 8, Nick Hohn in the top 4 and Jake Otago winning a massive five game final to win the Australia Junior Masters Tournament.

Behaviour: I had no issues with boy’s behaviour, as they all conducted themselves to our satisfaction. This year we had regular room checks – in the aspect of tidiness, this has been lacking in previous years...

General: I still feel that providing breakfast, lunch and dinner for the bowler’s everyday is the best way to go. Yes it does make extra work, but knowing that they are properly feed and getting what they need so they can perform at peak is a comfort. This year we had few illnesses while away even effecting management, but headaches were minimal. Some still try to get away with not having anything for breakfast, even though we had up and goes available especially for them, they would then get their parents to buy food for them once we get to the bowl, pretty pathetic in my eyes.

As far as the Development Squad is concerned, the boys were all excited and very eager. As the girls drafted, I think they got the most out of it. Each development squad boy was very helpful and keen to learn and help.

Transport: I will never ever, ever, recommend for a parent to drive a coach. After several mishaps and the Junior Association having to pay for the said mishaps, I really don’t think it is worth the stress or the cost.

Personal: On a personal level, to my fellow coaches and managers for this year’s shield event, I would sincerely like to thank you for your tireless work, commitment, energy and support. Thank you all so much. Grant is a pleasure to work alongside and is infectious with his excitement and passion; he’s not a bad cook either. Wendy is just a power house, who has everything under control at all times and everything planned to the second and goes above and beyond the call of duty. Alice, well what can I say about Alice. She is amazing. Alice fitted in so well with the team once again and I hope she continues. She was an absolute gem and nothing was too much trouble. Karen was also an absolute asset to the team as was Leanne. These ladies, got the snacks and lunches ready every night, looked after the laundry, did the shopping and helped with meals, and were always on hand to do whatever you asked at any time. Josh helped a lot, taking the younger ones under his wing.

I would also like to thank my fellow committee members, Greg and Wendy for all their support and help through-out the year.

Unfortunately, this was not a very pleasant experience for me. The girls attitude (between themselves), which disrupted the boys. Being questioned over every move or decision I made, even before shield, I found very belittling. The lack of support from some so called coaches back home was also very disturbing as well as frustrating – considering none have been in these shoes. Even though the boys have now won three years in a row (which apparently is a first since it became separate divisions) and all away from home - seems to mean nothing.

To my shield boys, it was an absolute pleasure. You all have your little quirks and own personalities. I was extremely pleased with how well you all blended together. Some criticised our selections, but I stand by the boys that were chosen and again they showed WHY THEY WERE SELECTED. I would like to thank each and every parent who showed us support and encouragement, it meant the world to me and I know it meant a lot to my boys. To those moving onto youth, I wish you all the best and just remember, you are only limited by your own expectations. To those that will be trying again for next year’s shield team, I look forward to working with you all again = hopefully

Yours in Bowling

Boys coach

Donna Wingett