



Coaching 101 – Line-ups

We asked a number of successful coaches for their thoughts on a number of topics relating to line-ups.

Here are their thoughts:

Substitute

The bench or sub is one of the most important roles on a team.

Ways a sub can help a team:

- First, they must stay upbeat to help the teams' morale;
- sub can act as an assistant by lending an ear for a teammate who is struggling and needs to vent their frustrations;
- sub can act as an extra set of eyes and ears for the coach;
- a sub must emit a feeling of confidence as it allows the player who is struggling to be more at ease when they have faith in the person coming in.

The decision who to sit?

- one determining factor may be experience
- if you have rookies on the team, it is best to get their feet wet by starting them in the first game

Reasons to be proactive using your bench:

- People play better when they do not sit too long - if you have not used your sub the entire game you might want to consider taking advantage of a meaningless 10th frame by allowing the sub to have 3 practice balls.
- A smart move can also give your team a much needed boost - especially if you have two people struggling - they will certainly be looking over their shoulder wondering who is going to be pulled. Once the pull has been made and they know they must finish, doubt is removed and the bowler may be more relaxed.
- Get "Mo" on your side - nothing changes the tide in a match faster than when an experienced bowler comes off the bench and throws that big strike.
- It is more important for a team "to play their own game" rather than get caught up in matching players based on the opposition. The only time you might consider changing the lineup to get a particular matchup is to take advantage of, or avoid a favourable historical rivalry ("I always beat him, he always beats me")

Lead off

Important traits of a good lead off bowler:

- high energy, you want your team to carry a lot of positive energy;
- emotional player and one that is easily fired up when they start throwing a couple of strikes in a row;
- you want a high percentage hitter - you need a bowler in the leadoff position that can hit the pocket in order to string strikes;

- mental toughness - the simple fact is getting up on the lane first and throwing the strike will give the other team something to look at;
- being an intimidator while not being intimidated - when bowling leadoff you can't be afraid to lose to someone - you cannot show weakness or frustration. If you show frustration it will filter down;
- You must have a killer instinct. If you throw a big shot, let it be known you mean business (in a respectful manner).

Second Position

- this is a good spot for someone who is streaky, but does not have the confidence to be near the bottom
- hopefully someone who can feed off of or pick up the lead player.

Third Position

- this is often the spot where a team may want to play a weaker bowler - it can often be a spot to make up pins.
- depending on the structure of a particular team, you may want to have 3 strong players on the bottom.

Fourth Position

- this is where you need to have a solid, but calm player - someone to confidently pass the torch to the anchor bowler
- this player can set up or decide the totals before it gets to the anchor position.

Anchor

- the anchor is often the best and most clutch player on the team.
- this bowler should provide leadership and have the confidence to execute a shot which could decide the whole game
- there are times when you have a player whose average is not the highest on the team, but who likes the spotlight and the challenge of playing anchor.

What to consider when making a substitution:

- how sharp do I think the sub is - how loose are they - how long have they been sitting?
- how will my move affect totals - is it worth pulling someone who is consistent but up against a big game?
- will a move affect momentum and the rest of the team - will it give my team a boost or cause a letdown?
- how are my other matches shaping up? If the rest of the game is in good shape then there is nothing to lose by making a change;
- is my bowler in a funk or just need a small adjustment or ball change? If they are erratic, then it's much easier to keep them on a short leash;
- what spot in the order is the match? It's almost unfair to put someone in a game in the 9th frame, not to mention the anchor position. Who would you rather have throwing the 10th frame?

What is the most important part of a team?

- great teams respect each other and have confidence in their teammates;
- you need an atmosphere in which everyone has one common goal and everyone puts their egos aside;
- it is easy to succeed when, as a coach, you know your team has your back so you are not afraid to make mistakes.

When you make your lineup, is it based on team dynamics or is it based on what features a bowler brings?

- based on team dynamics - sometimes players are interchangeable, but sometimes defined roles stand out;
- some players are more comfortable in, or perform better in, certain spots in the order;
- you, as a coach, must weigh everything and come up with what is best for your team.

We hope these responses will help you better understand the thought process that goes into your lineup. As we said at the start, there is no right or wrong here the ultimate decision is yours

C5PBA Coaching Committee
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