

SECTION A - INTRODUCTION.

1. Section B of these notes discusses three different skipping approaches that Skippers can use. They vary from autocratic to democratic with “laissez faire” somewhere in between. Skippers need not use the one approach all the time. They can use each of these three different approaches at different times during the one game
2. Section C discusses a procedure to deal well with the situation where a Player disagrees with the shot the Skipper calls.

SECTION B - THREE DIFFERENT APPROACHES SKIPPERS CAN USE.

APPROACH ONE – AUTOCRATIC.

3. In the traditional way of skipping, Skippers give orders to the three placed Players about the shots they will play. **Ideally** these Players accept the orders without question. This method uses an autocratic (dictatorship) approach.
4. In practice, this approach does **not** always work well. Some Players show by their action (voice and/or body language) that they class a particular shot as **wrong**. Sometimes their actions suggest that they have some **doubts about the shot’s correctness**. (Appendix A identifies some reasons why Players disagree with a Skipper’s call.)
5. Other Players have these thoughts but do **not** tell them to the Skipper. Some Players in this group play their own shot. (*In this case, the Skipper has little or no power over the Player.*) Some do not consciously play a different shot, but they do not concentrate as hard as they should when playing the shot.
6. In such situations, the apparent Dictator (the Skipper) does **not** have complete power over the shot played and/or the desire of the player to play it. Sometimes Skippers do **not** realise they have little or no power over Players. This situation reaches its extreme when Players play their own shots.
7. In all the above cases, Skippers make their decisions on inadequate evidence.
8. But other skipping approaches exist. Skippers (or Teams) could adopt a democratic approach or even a “laissez faire” one. The next two sections discuss these two approaches.

APPROACH TWO – “LAISSEZ FAIRE”.

9. A **“laissez faire” approach** allows one or more Players to decide their own shot and **play their own shot**.
10. This approach gives a Player all the power and the Skipper none. It has a major disadvantage - Skippers, who use this approach, **cannot** build a head according to their own ideas and plans. Thus no Skipper (or Team) should want to use this approach for all, or most, of a game.

11. Skippers can use a “laissez faire” approach for a variety of reasons.
12. **Reason One** - They believe it will give Players a greater desire to play the shot well because these Players have chosen the shot to play
13. **Reason Two** - They cannot make up their mind what shot to play and decide to leave it to the Player.
14. **Reason Three**. - They aim to gain information about a Player’s preference for playing a particular hand and/or particular shots. This objective of –“gain information” could refer to a general preference. (*Example. The Player prefers playing the forehand.*) It might also refer to a preference regarding the specific set up of the head under consideration. (*Example. With these type of heads, the Player prefers to draw rather than play an up shot.*)
15. **Reason Four** – In the game so far, a Player has played poorly. The Skipper reasons that if the Player chooses their own shot, they will play it better.
16. **Reason Five** - Sometimes they feel (possibly unconsciously) that if something goes wrong then they (and others) can blame the Player for choosing the wrong shot.¹
17. Sometimes Skippers go **part way** toward a laissez faire approach for a particular bowl. They give a Player **limited power for that bowl.**

18. *Examples. (a) “ You can play either hand - just aim to finish seven feet behind the jack.” (b) You can play a forehand draw shot or a yard-on shot on the backhand to push out the Opposition’s shot bowl (c) The Skipper asks – “Which hand would you like to play? After the Player chooses, the Skipper chooses the shot to play-relevant to the hand that the Player has chosen.*

APPROACH THREE – DEMOCRATIC.

Democracy – for the whole team.

19. A democratic approach to skipping arranges a situation where each Team Member has a genuine chance to influence the decision making about the shot to play. Some Skippers use this approach on an all-important shot.

20. *Examples. (a) On the last bowl of the day the Skipper must change the head in order to win the game. The Skipper asks all three placed Players what shot they think s/he should play. Each of the Players gives their opinion. The Skipper **may** use the majority vote (if a majority exists) to decide the shot to play. (b) An option exists for a conversion shot that will gain three shots. However if the shot misses, it will leave the Opposition with a chance to gain five shots. Again the Skipper asks for the Team Members to vote.*

21. A democratic approach involving **all** four Team Members **may** need so much time that it will prove impractical for most shots in competitive bowls games. However – probably - the fewer the options available and the easier to describe them, the less time will a democratic approach take.

¹ Probably - Skippers who use this approach should not skip.

Democracy – for a Skipper and one Player.

22. A democratic approach can also occur between **one** Player and the Skipper. The following possible situations exist -

(a) The Third stands at the head with the Skipper and the Skipper and the Third confer about the shot to play.

(b) The Skipper and the Third discuss the shot to play when they change ends. (*This approach differs from the situation where the Skipper tells the Third the shot the Skipper intends to play – on the changeover.*)

(c) The Skipper calls a Player to the head with the objective of – (a) Gain the Player's ideas about the shot to play and/or (b) Decide – together – the shot to play.

(d) The Skippers shows a Player a possible shot and the angles required to achieve the desired result. Then the Skipper could take a variety of approaches. (Appendix B discusses this situation.)

23. **The Third stands at the Head.** Skippers can use this approach for a variety of reasons.

24. **Reason One** – The Skipper aims to teach the Third about building a head – or vice versa.

25. **Reason Two.** The Skipper wants the Third to understand the reasons the Skipper has for calling a particular shot. Achievement of this objective will help to achieve the objective in Reason One.

26. **Reason Three.** – Thirds can more easily visualise the shot to play if they see the head at close range.

28. **Reason Four** - The Skipper wants the Third to see just how the bowl finishes near the end of its path.

29. **Reason Five** – The Third scores and/or records a score for the bowl – if the Team uses the Individual Bowl Scoring approach for evaluating the Players.

30. **Reason Six** – The Skipper wants the Player to play some part in deciding the shot to play.

31. The amount of power the Skipper gives to the Third in this situation usually depends on the attitudes held, and the approaches used, by the Skipper. The Skipper can say I plan to play and ask what the Third thinks. But if Skippers want a Third's **real** opinion they should **not** give **their** opinion. They should ensure that their Third gives their opinion **first**.

32. **The Skipper discusses a shot with another Player.** In this situation, the possibilities vary between the two extremes of (a) the Skipper dominates the discussion to (b) the Player dominates. Usually the second possibility means Players play the shot they want to play.

33. Whether a Player will suggest a possible shot depends on (at least) the following three possible situations –

(a) The Skipper wants to have a genuine discussion and the Player rates the Skipper's approach as genuine.

(b) The Skipper wants to have a genuine discussion. However the Player hesitates to really discuss the options because the Player has the background of an in-charge Skipper. Thus

such Players tend to (i) offer fewer possibilities and (ii) avoid debating the options with the Skipper.

(c) The Skipper wants to give the appearance of wanting to have a genuine discussion but does not really want such a discussion. In such a case, the Skipper can dominate the discussion by making it clear the shot they favour.

34. In general whether a Player will suggest a shot depends on the Player's view as to what power Skippers should have, what power the particular Skipper wants, and what power the particular Skipper should have in the situation. It will also depend on how the Player feels about how the Skipper calls shots and the Skipper's choice of shots.

35. But suppose Skippers want to give (some) power to the Player in a two-person discussion. To achieve this objective, Skippers must - Get Players to state the shot they think they should play. They should do so because, if Players knows their Skipper's view, some Players will tend to go along with their Skipper's ideas.

Actions open to a Skipper – after obtaining a Player's view.

36. Once Skippers know a Player's views, they can compare the views with their own views.

37. A variety of possibilities exist. The following paragraph lists them. Comments about some of the possibilities occur after the listing.

38. A Skipper can –

(a) Have a **different view** - **but agree** with the Player's view **after** considering it.

(b) Have a **different view** - but **decide to allow the Player to play the shot the Player wants** to play.

(c) Have a **different view** and *try to persuade* the Player of the wisdom of the Skipper's view – and **genuinely succeed** The word “genuinely” aims to show that such Players have changed their mind and now **really** believe that they should play the Skipper's shot.

(d) Have a **different view** and *try to persuade* the Player of the wisdom of the Skipper's view – and **fail** – but the Skipper **allows the Player to play the Player's shot.**

(e) Have a **different view** and *try to persuade* the Player of the wisdom of the Skipper's view – but **fail** and **order the Player to play the Skipper's shot.**

39. The previous possibilities show that Skippers can give different amounts of power to Players.

40. In deciding how much power they will give to a Player, they should consider (at least) the following five factors

(a) The possibility that they have overlooked something

(b) The importance they give to the shot that they want to play,

(c) The possibility that the Player will have a poor attitude to playing the shot.

(d) The possibility that the Player will play the shot poorly

(e) The amount of difference between the shot the Skipper wants to play and the shot the Player prefers.

Skippers have overlooked something.

41. Skippers can agree to the Player's shot if a Player points out one or more advantages and/or disadvantages of the Skipper's shot that the Skipper has **not** seen.

Importance of the Shot.

42. Sometimes a Skipper will place great importance on a Player playing a particular shot. In such cases, a Player will have little chance of changing the Skippers mind – unless such a Player can show such Skippers that they have overlooked a most important aspect of the head.

Players will not play the shot well.

43. If the Player concerned has very little chance of playing the shot successfully, perhaps the Skipper will gain more advantage if the Player plays the Player's preferred shot.

Skipper and Player choose very similar shots.

44. Suppose the Player's preferred shot and the Skipper's preferred shot rate as very similar, In such cases, Skippers may do better to let the Player have their own choice. If the Player gets to play the Player's preferred shot, the Player may feel favourably disposed to the Skipper. If the Skipper insists on the Skipper's shot, the Player may feel annoyed with the Skipper for that shot and possibly for other later shots.

A Poor Attitude to playing the Shot.

45. Skippers who allow the Player to play the shot the Player prefers do so to help ensure that the Player has a favourable attitude to that shot. Skippers who insist on the Player playing the Skipper's shot run the risk that - unconsciously - the Player will concentrate less on playing the shot very well.)

SECTION D - A DIFFERENT PROCEDURE FOR PLAYERS

THAT DISAGREES WITH THE SKIPPER'S CALL.

46. The autocratic approach provides no opportunity for Players to take the initiative. However some just ignore the Skipper's call.

47. The following paragraphs suggest a different approach to when a Player disagrees with the Skipper's call. It aims to open up the problem rather than hide it. It takes an active approach to dealing with Players who disapprove of the shot the Skipper calls.

48. Someone in authority (e.g. Selectors or the Club Coach) announces that, in future, Players who do **not** like the Skipper's call should tell the Skipper. They shall do so with the understanding that the Skipper **must** then ask them to carry out the following actions -

(a) Come to the head.

(b) Consider the head and state the shot they think they should play – and **give their reasons.**

(c) Listen (again) to the shot the Skipper wants the Player to play and the reasons the Skipper has for favouring the shot (*However if Skippers already rate the Player's shot as better, they should delete this step.*)

49. This procedure would reduce the power of the Skipper if Clubs emphasise the word “must” in the previous paragraph. For this short time, the Player has power over the Skipper. However the Player only has the power to “force” a right to visit the head and have a discussion.

50. At this stage the possibilities listed in paragraph X exist. A discussion at the head can prove very limited and the Skipper can take back power at any time after the Player comes to the head.

51. The procedure aims to bring out disagreements between Player and Skipper rather than hide them. Once brought into the open, the Skipper has more information upon which to base their decision.

52. Skippers will make the final decision – including a decision where they decide to give the power to the Player to make the decision.

53. Some people believe that a good relationship between two people will exist if both parties believe that each can **influence** the decision making of the other. If Skippers have a **genuine** discussion about the shot to play, they give the Player concerned **some** chance of **influencing** the decision.

54. The above procedure should allow the Skipper and the Player concerned to have this relationship.

A BATTLE FOR POWER.

55. The above procedure aims to improve the decision making that occurs in a team by bringing into the open the feelings and opinions of the Players concerned.

56. However, in some of the situations described above, the Skipper and/or the Player concerned may believe that their discussion involves a battle for power.

57. Some Skippers may see the use of the previous procedure as undermining their power.

58. In this case, they see the Player as challenging their authority. Such Skippers will not believe that a Player merely has genuine doubts about the correctness of a call and wants the chance to discuss the shot.

59. The following table shows four possible situations that can occur if a Club introduces the suggested procedure.

THE PLAYER WANTS TO	THE SKIPPER WANTS TO –	
	HAVE A GENUINE DISCUSSION	RETAIN ALL THE POWER
GAIN POWER	<p>(A) This situation rates as unlikely to improve the decision making of the Team unless the Player has a good idea overlooked by the Skipper and wants to tell the Skipper. Probably, over time, the Player will challenge the calls without having a good idea Then the Skipper will eventually realise that the Player wants to gain power and a battle may occur. Probably, in this case, the Skipper will stop trying to have a genuine discussion. The situation may then move to Situation B.</p>	<p>(B) This situation produces a battle between two persons. It will have little chance of improving the quality of the team’s decision making. Further, Skippers may reject a good idea from a Player that the Skippers have overlooked simply because such Skippers want to retain, and demonstrate, their power. In most cases Skippers will have the ultimate power provided the Selectors back up a Skipper’s right to decide the shot Players should try to play. If Situation B exists, Skippers will not want to have the Player in their team.</p>
HAVE A GENUINE DIS- CUSSION	<p>(C) This situation aims to make use of the procedure described above (paragraphs x to y) that aims to improve the decision making of the Skipper.</p>	<p>(D) In this situation the Skipper will not want to use the procedure. If “forced” to so by the Selectors and/or the Club Coach probably the Skipper will just go through the motions and will not give up any power. The Players of such Skippers will eventually realise that that they have no chance of influencing the Skipper’s decision making and they will give up trying. Apparently such Skippers will have “total” power. However Players will not want to “obey” such Skippers in this situation. Probably such Skippers will not get the best out of their Players. Probably such Skippers will not even realise how their Players really feel.</p>

60. As described and discussed in the table above, the four situations appear as one approach or the other. In practice a Skipper and/or a Player may take one approach on one occasion and another approach on a different occasion. Such switching of approaches probably will not contribute to achieving better decision making. Probably it will lead to misunderstanding of the motives of the parties involved. Probably such misunderstanding will reduce co-operation between Skippers and their Players.

AN ADDITIONAL SITUATION – “E”

61. In Situation D, Skippers want to retain their power to issue orders regarding the shot the team should play. Sometimes such Skippers will achieve this situation **and** their Players do **not** want to gain power. In addition the Players do **not** want to discuss the shots called. They willingly accept the Skipper’s right to select the shots to play. Further, they have such faith in the Skipper’s calls that they play the called shots without question and/or they believe in the approach.

62. These Players have **not** given up trying to influence the Skipper as in situation D. **They do not want to have such influence.** They accept the Skippers’ right to make calls. Thus they do not have a poor attitude to playing the called shots as occurs in situation D.

63. Some Skippers will want to achieve Situation E. Perhaps some special ones will achieve it. Some Skippers will achieve it with some, but not all, of their team.

64. However if Skippers do achieve Situation E, they do **not** have the possibility that their Players can improve their decision making.

SECTION D - CONCLUSION.

65. These notes have shown that Skippers can take a variety of approaches to skipping.

66. They also show that Players can have a variety of reactions to how Skippers’ skip.

67. Skippers should study the possibilities the notes discuss. If they choose wisely between the possibilities and use a wise approach to the varying situations they face they will improve their skipping.

APPENDIX A - SOME REASONS WHY PLAYERS DISAGREE WITH A SKIPPER'S CALL.

POSSIBLE REASONS	COMMENTS
1. They believe it would prove better to play a different shot because - (a) a better result achievable. (b) less danger exists in a different shot.	<p align="center"><u>ATTITUDE TO THE SHOT CALLED.</u></p> Genuine disagreement with the call and nothing to do with the Skipper as a person.
(c) they have a different approach to tactics.	<p><i>Example. Skipper believes in draw another shot (to put pressure on the Opposition Player). Player wants to cover bowls at the rear since the Opposition could play through the head pick up the jack and gain five or six shots – if successful.</i></p>
2. They believe they will have a better chance of playing a different shot with greater success.	Genuine belief that the Team would prove better off if the Player played a different shot and/or the Player would feel better if an attempt at a different shot occurs. In the second case, such Players do not feel confident they can play the shot called.
3. They believe they cannot play one part of the shot.	<p><i>Example. A Skipper asks a Player to play inside a short bowl and trail the jack about four feet. The Skipper indicates the weight the Player should play. The Player believes that if he plays inside the short bowl to hit the jack he will have to play with at least six more feet of weight.</i></p>
4. They want to educate the Skipper about (a) one or more aspects of the call made and/or (b) tactics in general	First, the Player believes they know more than the Skipper and want to demonstrate this point. Second, they may not have this belief but they do want to educate the Skipper on one particular point (principle) related to the shot called. Note - a prior agreement exists between the Skipper and the Third that (usually) the Third will aim to train the Skipper on tactics (head building).
5. They do not want to accept orders from the particular Skipper	<p align="center"><u>ATTITUDE TO THE SKIPPER INVOLVED.</u></p> The Player may not like the Skipper. A new Skipper may have taken their skipping position and they want to “take out their annoyance” on the Skipper.
6. They do not want to take orders from anyone .	<p align="center"><u>ATTITUDE TO ALL SKIPPERS.</u></p> These Players do not want to let any Skipper to give them orders.

7. Note – Players can use one or more reasons in the Reasons 1 to 3 of the table as a means of hiding their real reason (Reasons 5 to 6).

APPENDIX B.

1. The notes posed the following situation - The Skipper shows a Player a possible shot and the angles required to achieve the desired result. Then the Skipper could take a variety of approaches. This Appendix suggests some of the approaches that a Skipper can take.

2. Ask the Player their attitude to playing the shot without any attempt to persuade.

3. *Example. Would like to play it?*

4. Explain the shot and try to persuade the Player.

5. *Example. I think it would help the Team if you would try this shot.*

6. Explain the shot and try to persuade by a (subtle) challenge.

7. *Example. Do you feel capable of playing the shot today?"*