

# How to Prepare for the Biggest Match of Your Life

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The Voice of Bowls



**G**OOD PALS – neighbours – friends – fellow Scots. It was surely not surprising that these two guys were seen socialising over a pint or two in the Terrace Bar in Potters Leisure Resort on Saturday night – or that they chose to roll up together on the portable rink the next morning.

But, hang on a mo! These were deadly adversaries, who were building up for a confrontation in the International Arena. Paul Foster and Stewart Anderson were about to do battle for the most prestigious title and the biggest purse in their sport.

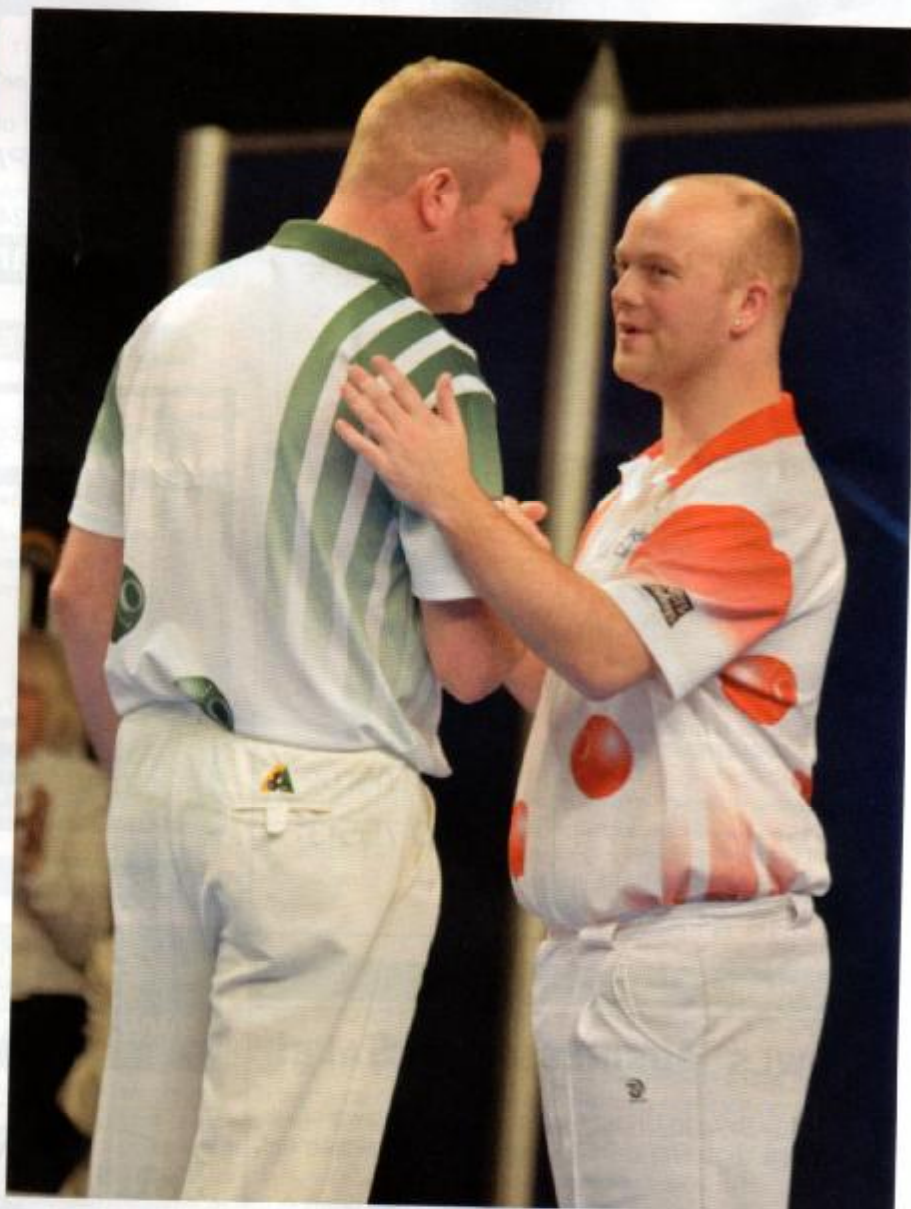
Yes, they are good mates; yes, they come from the same part of Ayrshire; yes, they speak the same language... But should they have spent so much time in each others' company before the showdown?

Could it happen in any other sport? Were they not flirting with danger? Tip-toeing across a minefield? Innocently, in conversation, it was surely possible to hand some vital psychological advantage to your opponent. On the rink, some weakness might be revealed.

But no, Paul and Stewart seemed oblivious to the dangers. First one to call it a day and go to his bed on Saturday night is a sissy? I can take my drink better than you! And what on earth do you try to do in the practice session, when you are rolling up with your opponent?

Do you play your favourite length, and show your opponent the way to the jack? Do you try to outbowl him in practice to make your point, and claim an advantage? Or do you attempt to lull him into a false sense of security by playing badly?

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Stewart Anderson and Paul Foster shake hands before the final. Anderson is seen smiling as they both went out to the wrong piece of music, with Anderson going out to *The Eye of The Tiger* and Foster dancing up the rink to the *Gangnam Style*. *Oppen Gangnam Style!*

If you reveal too much – like your unease on short jacks, or your preference for long ones – he will take note, and try to punish you when hostilities begin. Perhaps you should pretend you don't like certain lengths, or deliberately play badly. Engage in a bit of deception.

I can tell you that those of us who watched Stewart and Paul on Sunday morning juggled with the concepts of bluff and double bluff, tried to guess what

tactical ploys the two might be up to, and attempted to subject the scenario to deep psychological analysis.

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