

Suicidal Skipping... Don't do it!

25 things you should NOT do as a skip...

TONY ALLCOCK
From the 18 Times
World Champion



TO CONCLUDE my series of articles on the role of the skip in a rink, I will focus on the 25 don'ts - the habits we can adopt or acquire that might actually be detrimental to your performance or that of your team-mates.

In the main, it is important that the instructions you deliver to your team-mates are informative and useful, and also concise. Regurgitating information or explaining the obvious such as 'you're tight,' will not aid a player's performance.

You must also ensure you are decisive when on the mat and know your players as well as you possibly can, not just 'think' that you know them.

So...here we have it...the 25 things you should NOT do when skipping...

DONT...

1. Have perceived expectations about the players in your rink. It is your responsibility to find out about them.
2. **Ever assume!**
3. Become dictatorial.
4. **Adopt an autocratic approach.**
5. Regurgitate information that is pointless - or commence a running commentary on bowls being delivered. Most players usually see what they need to correct without it being reiterated.
6. **Be false by being too kind about every bowl your team-mates deliver.**
7. Show negative facial or physical movements which can be seen by your players.
8. **Give too many instructions.**
9. Offer too many choices of shot to the players in the rink. This leads to indecision.
10. **Become so concerned with the needs of your players that you forget your own.**
11. Be too intimidating with specific requirement of jack length by being confrontational with your body/foot in respect of the request.
12. **Allow too many people to give their opinion when deciding on a crucial shot.**
13. Ever go to the mat undecided - the result will definitely be a poor

execution of the required shot.

14. **Enter into 'idle conversation' when trying to concentrate.**
15. Ask a player to specifically 'concentrate' - it is too general. You need to direct the thought process in order for this to apply.
16. **Conveniently forget the limitations of a hand when under pressure.**
17. Ever be pressurised to play what may be seen by onlookers as the 'correct' shot. They are not the ones experiencing the situation.
18. **Imagine that a player with straight bowls will be able to easily get around short bowls. You need to be realistic about this.**
19. Make dramatic tactical changes without mentioning it to your players. They may disagree but this information will support your decision and may arrest confusion.
20. **Relax when faced with a comfortable scoreline lead. Invariably, this lead will be caught if you do.**
21. Hurry when losing. It is a fact that teams that are winning comfortably find it beneficial to play quickly - perhaps to get to the bar.
22. **Ever forget that there are, predominantly, four hands on every rink and each will present a variance in line and weight.**
23. Deliver bowls without sufficient thought. If you do, it is at this time you are vulnerable to all the technical faults creeping in and these just love to find a way into a player's technical armoury

during this time.

24. **Play or practise too much; it is a sure way to lose form.**
25. Ever assume before a match that you will lose (for whatever reason) as bowls has a wonderful record of following the exception rather than the acknowledged rule.

If you have any questions at all or want further clarification on some of the points listed in this article, please contact me through the editor and I will be delighted to respond to your query;
patrick.hulbert@keypublishing.com



Perplexing to say the least: Two of England's greatest ever players, Tony Allcock MBE and David Bryant CBE, ponder what shot to play next. Tony's series of articles on the role of skip have given an in-depth insight into the position, showing the best skips are less authoritarian and more like a facilitator for the rest of the rink.