

ROLE OF THE SECOND & THIRD

To become a proficient second or third the full range of shots must be practiced.

Give particular attention to your weaknesses and remember you may be called upon to play any shot on your backhand or forehand.

The basis for all shots is the cultivation of a well grooved delivery. The delivery action is the same for all shots but the speed of movement is varied in keeping with the pace/weight of shot.

Seconds and thirds should not step on the mat with a preconceived idea about the shot they will play. You can only expect good results at the other end if your procedure at the mat end is correct, precise and consistent. Your total attention must be given to the shot being played; and that is the shot required by your skip.

To be a good second or third in a team of four demands all round versatility; that is a command of all shots. Besides drawing to the jack in its original position you may be asked to draw to a bowl, draw to a vacant position/spot, draw to a displaced jack to any width or length including the boundary line and the ditch. In addition to positional play you will be required to play shots over draw weight with a view to wresting a bowl, trailing the jack, pushing a bowl in for shot or running through a bowl to obtain shot. With all these shots, precise pace control is essential.

The various shots are not easy and players will need practice to become proficient in playing them consistently. Practice is essential as when faced with a particular shot in a match, recall how you performed that shot in training/practice. (Just like mathematics or arithmetic or physics where you did sufficient examples so that in an exam, you recalled the example that you did during the year and how you solved it).

The third must never try to take over the game or thrust his/her ideas onto the Skip. If the head has been altered, the experienced skip will ask for details or instructions. When asked, reply as clearly or concisely as possible, but do not go into great detail. If you are in doubt or do not want to let the opposing skip learn your tactics or instructions, do not give instructions verbally, but ask the skip to come and look before playing. Remember advice given without request is interference and the interfering third is a nightmare to the his/her skips

When your skip's bowl has come to rest and the opposing skip has possession of the mat/rink, don't move about the head to see who has shot, unless you have an understanding with your opposing third. I like to allow the opposing third to indicate if his/her skip has achieved shot. Also when your skip is on the mat ready to deliver, don't suddenly decide to study the head with a view to offering advice as any distraction at this point in time is fatal,

Always carry out skip's directions to the letter, even if you don't agree or have other ideas. Never condemn, even to yourself, the opinion of the skip when a particular shot is requested and never step off the mat after playing a poor shot and say "I didn't see it that way".

The one thing the third must padlock into is to get that saving shot for the team or at least 'Get Second Shot'. Never allow your skip to cross over 4 or 5 down. Never have in your mind "if I miss it he will get it". That is negative thinking, it is the duty of the third to produce that saver. Get Second shot. The third is like a vice skip, looking after the front end. Measuring is an important job for the third, a steady hand and propping a leaning bowl prior to measuring for shot, assessment of who is holding shot.

