THEORY OF ALIGNMENT

by Macka Jensen

Theory does not mean teaching bowlers to know what they do not know; it means teaching them to behave as they do not behave

1. THEORY

This is the department of science which deals with the principles or methods of the delivery technique as distinguished from the practice or system of rules and the principles in performing the delivery action. These subjects are as follows;

2. THE AIMING LINE

a. Definition: This is the sighting angle used to offset the bias of the bowl from 0 to approximately 30 degrees right or left of the jack or target (***See Diagram 1.)***

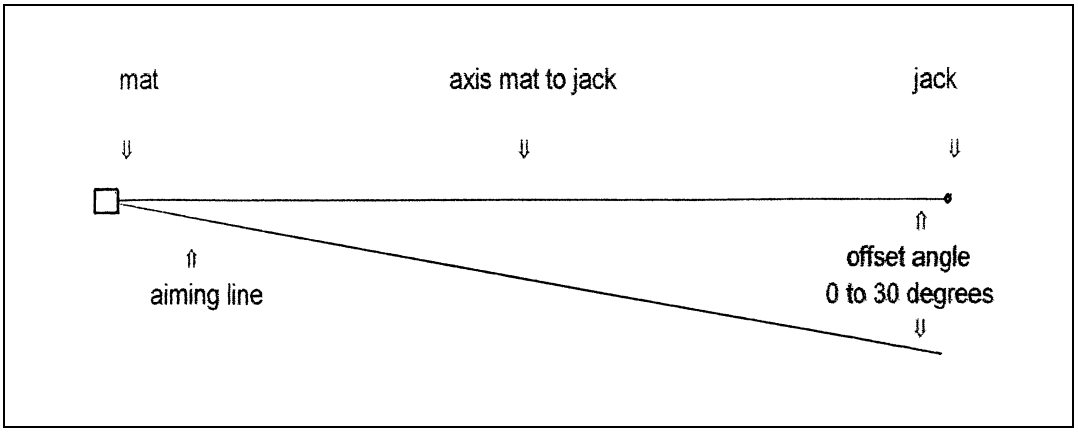
b. When delivering a bowl:

(1) Draw shot; when playing the draw shot the width of the aiming line whether it is right or left of the jack or target can be anything from approximately 10 to 30 degrees. The width depends on the make, shape, weighting of the bowl and speed of the rink. These combining factors are explained briefly as follows; the older type make of bowls have a wider bias and the newer type bowls have a narrower bias. If the rink speed is slow the angle is narrow, if it is fast it is wide,

(2) Advanced shots; when playing advanced shots e.g. on-shots, running or drive shot, the offset angle can be anything from 0 to approximately 25 degrees right or left of the jack or target. ***Additional; see Angles of the Green. National Bowls Coaching Manual 1999***

(3) When delivering a jack: It is the direct line of sight to the where the jack is required to be delivered.

Diagram 1 Aiming Line



c. Width characteristics: The width of the angle between the axis of rink and the aiming line is governed by the speed of the green and climatic conditions. It is vital that bowlers know and understand that from day to day and hour to hour during the game, that changes in the width will take place and the aiming line and aiming point should be adjusted accordingly. Some of these are as follows;

(1) Decreasing slow green;

(a) On a slow green it takes a faster time frame for the bowl to travel 27 metres e.g. 8 to 12 seconds,

(b) The increase of wet or cold weather conditions will in most cases require bowlers to take a slightly narrower angle and make a slight increase in the speed of the delivery,

(c) This change can be noticed when the delivered bowls consistently come to rest too short and wide of the head.

(2) Increasing fast green;

(a) On a fast green it takes a slower time frame for the bowl to travel 27 metres e.g. 17 to 21 seconds,

(b) The increase of dry or hot weather conditions will in most cases require bowlers to take a slightly wider angle and make a slight decrease in the speed of the delivery,

(c) This change can be noticed when the delivered bowls consistently come to rest too long and across the front or back of the head.

3. THE AIMING POINT

a. Definition: This is a constant focal point established on the aiming line to converge alignment and adjustment of length.

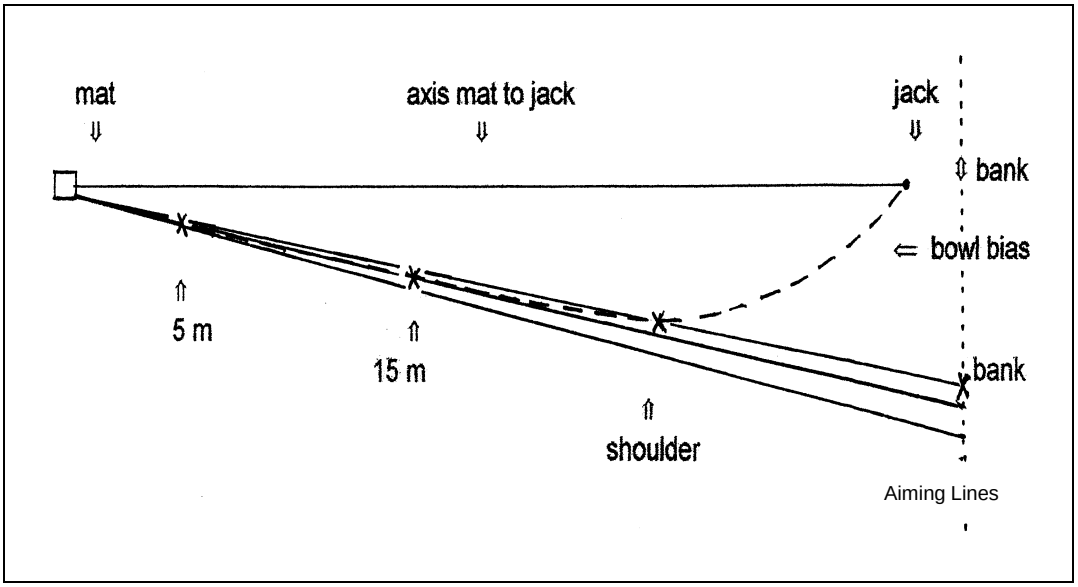
Its position can be anywhere from 5 metres forward of the mat or up to the front bank of the rink.

b. Purpose: It is the point to which;

(1) The eyes are focused
(2) The forward step is taken towards,
(3) The body bends towards,
(4) The senses estimate the length and weight of delivery (sight and touch),
(5) The forward delivery arm hand swing towards,
(6) Where the follow-through culminates with eye, hand and aiming point alignment.

c. Position and method of use: The choice of position is in accordance with the player's visual and physical ability or personal preference but it must be constant e.g. 5 or 15 metres out from the mat, the shoulder of the green, right or left angles of the jack or target or a position on the bank. When the aiming point is selected the delivery action is towards the aiming point culminating with eye, hand and aiming point alignment. The closer the aiming point too the mat the wider the aiming line, ***(see Diagram 2).***

Diagram 2 Aiming Points



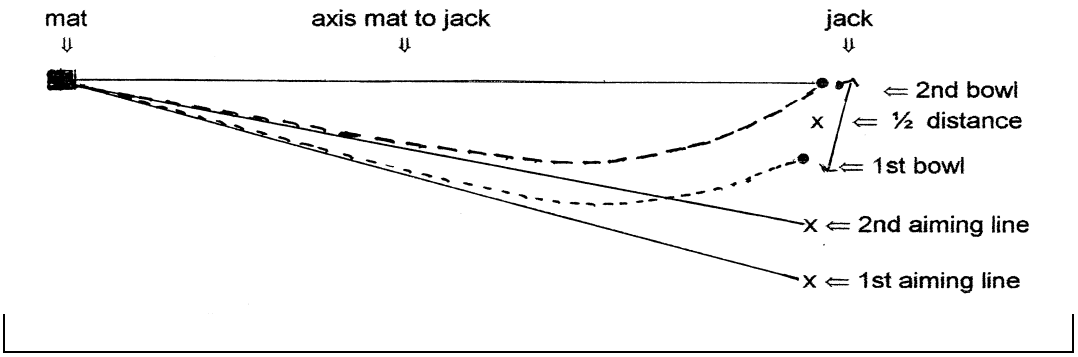
4. ADJUSTING THE AIMING LINE

When playing the draw shot, should your bowls come to rest, or form a regular pattern to one side away from the jack then your aiming line may need adjustment. To avoid over adjustment in the early stages of learning, probably the simplest method is to halve the width your bowl is away from the jack and adjust your aiming line by adding or subtracting that width e.g. should a right handed player playing on the forehand determine that the bowl has come to

rest at the head 2 metres to the right of the jack, then the aiming line would be adjusted 1 metre to the left, ***(see Diagram 3).*** Using another example, should bowls come to rest 2 metres to the left then the aiming line would be adjusted 1 metre to the right. If play is on the backhand then the adjustment method is vice versa. This method also applies to on-shots, running or drive shots. The accuracy of aiming line adjustment is greatly dependent upon the precision of the eye, hand and aiming point alignment in the follow-through action.

Diagram 3 Adjusting the Aiming Line

Note: As the expertise of the bowler alignment increases with training a greater degree of adjustment should be made e.g. half, three-quarter then full width adjustment.



Theory is often the last key on the rink that opens the door.