

Coaching Corner - Tip 1

What is the first thing you do after you have won the toss and selected your piste?

'Draw a circle and throw the jack' I hear you say - and people do, in almost the same amount of time as you take to say it.

Let's consider the first part of that statement. Most players know that the circle must be between 35 and 50cm in diameter (rather fewer that the limit for your feet/shoes is the undisturbed ground within that circle) with the proviso that anyone with shoes in the size 14 range must be able to stand completely within it.

How often, though, do you consider how big or small to draw the circle within those limits?

If one of your opponents, particularly an effective shooter, tends to stand with feet well apart, then think about the unsettling effect that drawing a minimum sized circle may have on, literally, cramping their style. Similarly, if you are playing a pointer who trundles the boule and needs a clear line to the jack, then a small circle would limit the range of width available to them to point around blocking boules.

Try drawing a 35cm circle - you may be surprised just how small it looks!

Conversely, if you have either of these types of player in YOUR team you may wish to draw the largest diameter circle possible to enable them to use their skills most effectively. Being able to point from an extra 15cm to one side, especially to a shortish jack, or shooting a bit more than half a boule by standing towards the edge of a circle, may give a much easier line.

After determining its siting, the circle size is the first of several opportunities to apply your tactical skills.