

TEAM WORK IN FOURS COMPETITIONS

The Front End

The **FRONT END** are the Lead and Second in a Four's rink. Rather than considering the Lead and Second as separate players and positions, consider them a sub-team partnership that provides the team with the start and position it needs to win the end.

The **FRONT END** is the engine and foundation of a winning team. Working together means the Lead's and Second's bowls are both important. They should be asking themselves after they have both played:

- Have we got 3 or 4 bowls behind jack high?;
- Do we hold shot?;
- Do we have a great 2nd shot?;
- Have we corrected on our 2nd bowl if the first is poor?

It is often heard that the Lead can win the game but of course that is not true as there are many bowls after the Lead's two bowls. However, a winning Lead puts the team on the front foot and the opposition under pressure from the first bowls. A study of bowls showed that if your lead held shot after the first four bowls then your team had a 75% chance of winning the end. Good odds for sure.

However, I believe the Second is the key person in the four that you want dominating. A Second playing really well will back up the Lead if they have a poor end, will not drop bowls short in the way whether holding or not, will play the occasional conversion at draw weight, will play to position if the Lead is holding a good shot, and is a great team player not trying to get the shot but always improving the head for the team and skip.

Complimentary Play

The key to the **FRONT END** is good complimentary play. If the Lead is short then the Second is behind; if the Lead is on the jack then the Second is behind in position to draw 2nd shot; if the Lead is 2 down then the Second must draw 2nd shot. The Second's shot selection is determined by the Leads effort and head position.

Lead and Second's Basics

- Combine together to create a winning FRONT END
- Not trying to get the shot with every bowl
- Select the good hand to play with their skipper's input.
- Draw behind the head into position.
- Not worry that their bowls are hit out of the head
- Support the others in the team
- Be immaculate with their line to avoid jack high bowls.
- Respond to great bowls by the opposition.

- Be willing to draw a great second shot.
- Draw to create a target if down
- Lead to roll the jack well and within 1 meter of the skipper's direction

The Back End

The 3rd and the Skip team up as the “**BACK END**”. A sub-team within the team. Skill and experience with plenty of confidence can enable a great back end to get a good result, even in the most difficult situations.

The Key to a Good BACK END is Problem Solving

The **BACK END** needs creativity and be super confident of their ability to achieve. They need to agree to work together all the game. There is nothing worse than a Third and Skip clearly in conflict with the directions given or the decision-making process. Complimentary play is also important for the **BACK END**.

Third and Skip Combo Basics

- Work together to create a winning **BACK END**
- Verbally show your support of each other and the Team.
- Be able to play all the shots.
- Be able to Draw to save.
- Play with care when holding or in danger.
- Give clear directions.
- Use good body language and positive talk.
- Don't be lazy. Walk to the head to discuss and look.
- Remain calm and be clear what the objective of the End is after their 4 bowls:
- Convert 1 down to 1 up;
- Play to get out of trouble and not lose more than 1 shot;
- and so on.