

WICKS, NICKS AND CLIPS Wicks are only lucky shots if you didn't play for them. There are lots of opportunities in short mat bowling to wick or nick the inside of a bowl to change the path of yours. This can be very useful in deflecting your bowl onto a line that was not possible with a straightforward draw. The position of the bowl you wish to wick off will influence the weight or line you need to play. If the bowl is in a spot where a draw line will get the desired contact, then draw weight is probably enough, although you may need to play it a little tight or wide to make the required contact. A gentle nick on the bowl will deflect yours onto the desired path. If the bowl is near the edge of the mat, you will need a bit more weight. Otherwise, your bowl will bend away from the target bowl before making contact. Sometimes a clip on the outside of a short bowl will be a good option. Instead of nicking the inside of a bowl you clip the outer edge. It's merely a cleverer version of the push shot. If you are going to play any of these shots, it's advisable to mention it loudly enough that your opposition hear you. That way you will avoid the "you jammy #@!*" comment.

SPLITS If 2 short bowls are approximately level with each other and less than a bowl's width apart, they offer the opportunity for a split shot. This is where your bowl strikes the gap between them, pushing them aside and follows through on a path to glory. The weight required is dictated by the gap between the bowls and how far you want your bowl to follow through. The closer the bowls are to each other, the more weight you need to apply.

IT TAKES 2, BABY Sometimes, there is no single shot option that will put you in a better position. It might take you 2 bowls to achieve your objective. Assuming you have 2 bowls left, use the first to create an opportunity for your second bowl. One example is where a short bowl is blocking you and is not in a spot that lets you employ any of the shots above. Play your first bowl to move the short bowl, opening the path for your second. Or you might want to play weight into the head knowing you can't get shot but disturbing things enough that you might have other options for your next bowl. As stated many times before, you don't need to get shot with every bowl you play. It only matters who is holding shot when the end concludes. So, if you have 2 bowls left, think about using them in partnership to achieve your goal.

NEXT TIME IN THINK ABOUT IT – PART 6 The next article in this series will be a bit of a mixed bag. There are a couple of other shots about which I want to share my thoughts with you. These are the block shot and the reverse bias. The other topic will be failing in a positive way. We don't always need to play the perfect bowl. If you are slightly off line or with the wrong weight, you might still get a result. We will be looking beyond perfection and discussing the best way to fail.

THE USUAL DISCLAIMER Short mat bowls is great fun to play and so it should be. This article is not intended to change the way you play but, if it opens up shot selection options you wouldn't normally consider, then I will have achieved my objective with my random thoughts on our glorious game. **BM**

Thank you again Brian for a very informative piece.

