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PRESENTS THE COACHING SERIES...

“A PANE IN THE GLASS”

Stop-Start-Continue

by Bill Tschirhart

In the previous essay I mentioned that I'd provide a very effective way to avoid “the oil light”. Well, true to my word, here it is.

Throughout the curling season, a team will engage in a variety of activities to improve its performance. Some will be on the "cold side of the glass" but most will be on the "warm side". In that environment, wise is the team that takes stock of where it wants to go, where it is, and how it's going to get from here to there.

There are many ways to accomplish this task. STOP-START-CONTINUE is one of them, and perhaps the best of the lot. The process is simple!

Each member of the team (and don't forget that the coach is a member of the team) is provided with a sheet of paper with the words STOP, START and CONTINUE at the top forming three columns.

Under the "STOP" heading, list all things the team or members of the team must cease doing. Items listed might be irrelevant, negative, redundant or distracting. Below "START" list those activities that the team needs to consider implementing that up to that point, it has ignored for whatever reason. The last column is absolutely critical and an area that teams generally do not visit often enough, if at all. Under CONTINUE are listed the factors that make a team successful. Those areas the team has identified that move its yardsticks down the field of performance.

The thoughts that the team members will provide on the sheet are recorded independently in an "individual brain storming" mode. Even if a point might be considered relatively insignificant to you, others may record it as well and collectively it may be very relevant.

When each team member has "done the homework", the sheets are brought together unsigned. If possible, enlist the assistance of an unbiased party whose role it will be to read aloud by column, the items listed on the sheets without identifying the author.

When all the items are read it then is the responsibility of the team to discuss the results and embark on a course of action. The plan will be a good one as with this exercise, wheels will stop spinning, the air will be cleared and confidence will be the distillate. But best of all, it just may avoid that dreaded oil light from coming on!

Enjoy working with your athletes and I'll see you soon behind a pane in the glass!