

Etiquette in the Sport of Bowls



Editors' note: this document is considered gender neutral

- Basically this means being courteous and considerate of your fellow bowlers
- Watching major bowls tournaments/events as spectator is a good way to get an understanding of the balance between being competitive and sporting.
- Respect for the laws of the game and the prepared bowling surface.
- Dumping: a bowler who consistently dumps a bowl can cause much damage to a grass green. If the individual cannot see their fault, it is the responsibility of the skip to refer them to a club coach for remedial work.
- Punctuality: game times are clearly scheduled. Arriving late is disrespectful and unsettling for your team as well as the opponents. Be on time and ensure your travel time allows for minor delays along the way. Games can be lost due to shots being deducted for adjustments to teams/number of bowls used.
- Footwear/attire: all players in pennant/formal competition must conform to the dress code. The club president is responsible for ensuring this. If members do not conform, the club is liable for a fine, loss of points, or forfeiture of a game!
- It is totally inappropriate for team members to “offer advice” to a fellow bowler about their bowling. We all know when we put down a bad bowl; we don’t need to be told. If it is not positive feedback, don’t say it! **Praise** is the best incentive to lift performance.
- It is ok to acknowledge an opponent’s good/skilful bowl. However it is **NOT** appropriate to clap a bad bowl that gives you a good result. Take it as good fortune and don’t whinge when a similar situation goes against you.
- If you are bowling badly, remember to go back to basics. Think about how well you have bowled in the past. Keep on trying to do your best for yourself and your team. If things do not improve, **TALK TO A COACH_!!!!!!**
- Barracking and supporting your team is to be encouraged. It must not become disruptive or upset your concentration though (or those of your teammates).
- **Whilst luck can play a part in your success, it is minor when you work on planning, preparation, positive thinking and practice.**
- Umpire/markers: do not dispute a decision given by the designated umpire/marker.

SAFETY ISSUES

- Step carefully onto/off the green. Remain aware of the height of the step and the whereabouts of jack/bowls as you step.
- **Do NOT** stand/step on the edge of the bank or plinth! Players should avoid sitting on the edge of the bank.
- **Do NOT** step/stand in the ditch. When a bowl goes into the ditch, please wipe bowl and remove any sand before placing it back on the green or bank.
- Keep your eye on where the bowls are. It can be easy to injure yourself by standing on / tripping over a bowl.
- Keep hands/feet clear of moving bowls to avoid “crush” injuries
- Watch out for fast shots or drives. The bowl/jack can become dangerous at speed so keep an eye on what is happening.
- We use suitable footwear for bowls to protect our precious playing surface. However, off the green they can become a problem especially on wet surfaces. Walk carefully.
- Check your bowls bag is closed before lifting/moving it. It can damage the bowls AND you!
- Bowls bags are **NOT** to go on seats.
- It is not wise to step backwards off the mat.
- Bowls is mainly a summer sport so it is vital to stay well hydrated. Drinking lots of non-alcoholic fluids prevents heat stress and helps you maintain concentration. Wearing a hat is encouraged. Where/when possible, stand in shade on days of high temperatures and keep an eye on all your fellow players.
- Wear sunscreen
- Do gentle stretching before the trial/practice ends so your muscles are ready for the bowling action.

MAT

- **ALL** bowlers at the mat end should kick the bowls back at the completion of an end. Use the soles of your feet.
- Placing the mat. Hold mat by front corners. Turn your back to the skip & face the number on the bank. Place the mat along the centre line at the position/length indicated by the skip. Ensure it is straight along the line, not twisted to the side.
- At least one foot must be placed on the mat as you take up stance to deliver jack/bowl. At the point of release, one foot must be on or above the mat as you deliver jack/bowl.
- Make sure all bowls are 2 metres behind and to the side of the mat. This reduces the likelihood of a player stepping backwards onto the bowls.
- When a player is on the mat, other players should stand at least 2 metres behind the mat. Stand still and make sure your shadow is not in their way and you are out of their line of vision.
- Talking as a bowler is about to deliver the bowl is discouraged as it can be distracting.
- When not actually bowling, other players should normally stand on the bank (to protect green).
- **LISTEN** to and comply with the skip's instructions. They are trying to build the head so it gives your team the best possible advantage. If you not sure of what they are telling you, ask!
- After all bowls have been delivered from the mat, change ends. Always walk up the middle of the rink as you are not going to mess with the running surface where the bowls are going to go. Also you will be out of the way of your neighbouring rinks and will not cause any visual disruption to their play.

AT THE HEAD

- Apart from the third, players should stand off the green while the skips complete the end.
- • Stand still on the bank and on the green. Do not move about.
- • Stand to the side of where the jack is so bowlers at the other end can clearly see the jack.
- • Do not obscure the rink or number markers as other bowlers may use these to find their aiming line.

- It is the job of the thirds to determine which bowl is shot and/or measure. Other players must not get involved.
- Because the skip has seen the head before going off to bowl, advice from the third at the head is not necessary unless the head has been changed by a subsequent bowl. Tell the skip things have changed but do not offer advice unless it is asked for. Other bowlers do **NOT** call out **advice!**

TERMINOLOGY

You are too narrow: means your bowl will cross the head and run away from the jack.

You are too wide: means your bowl will not draw back to the point that you were aiming for.

Change your hand: means to turn your bowl over and deliver on the other side of the centre line.

Wrong bias: a bowl played with the bias side away from the centre line which causes the bowl to curve away from the objective that you were aiming for.

Dead bowl: This is a bowl which is out of bounds including being a non-toucher in the ditch or a bowl not being delivered beyond the minimum distance from the mat. These bowls are removed from the green/play.

End: This means the playing of the jack and all the bowls of all the opponents in the same direction on a rink. After the score has been agreed to, the next end is then played in the other direction.

Head: These means when the jack and such bowls as have come to rest within the boundary of the rink and are not dead. It is **NOT** just those bowls that are reasonably close to the jack!

Jack High: This means when the front of the bowl (the surface nearest to the mat) and the front of the jack are level.

Toucher: This is a bowl that touches the jack when delivered. To identify it, it is marked with a chalk mark so if it should be moved into the ditch (within the boundary lines) it remains in play.

Control of the mat: this means you control the mat from the time you pick up your bowl until your delivered bowl comes to rest at the head end of the green. Once your bowl comes to rest, you must leave the mat to the opposition. Also the head end, you lose control of the head once your teams bowl comes to rest. (i.e. you cannot walk around the head trying to decide who has shot!).

TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES

Leads:

- Place the mat as required by the laws and as directed by the skip.
- Assist the skip align the jack on the centre line of the rink.
- Help return bowls to a safe position behind the mat at the conclusion of each end.
- (For home games) pour tea/coffee for players on your rink.
- (For home games) collect rink equipment and return to storage area at the end of the game.

Seconds:

- The home team second should introduce all players to each other.
- Keeps the scoreboard up to date being careful to check with their skips at each end.
- Help return bowls to a safe position behind the mat at the conclusion of each end.
- Collect green fees and return these to the team manager before play starts.

Thirds:

- Be in charge of the head when the skip is bowling or absent from the green.
- If delegated to measure for the shot, decide with the opponent the number of shots and signal this to the skip.
- Help return bowls to a safe position behind the mat at the conclusion of each end.
- Must know and recognise the team's bowls.
- Answer skips queries correctly and concisely.

Skips:

- To be in charge of the team and delegate duties.
- Instruct the players which shot to play.
- Make decisions with opponent which comply with the laws of the game.
- Return scorecard to manager at the end of the game.

Extract by Robin Southern - 2016

