

LAWN BOWLS ETIQUETTE AND BASIC RULES

Bowls is a sport that encourages social interaction and friendship. Etiquette simply means displaying "good sportsmanship". This is achieved by having knowledge of what behaviour is acceptable in the game and applying it using common sense, honesty, fairness and consideration for others. If unsure about something relating to etiquette it is acceptable to ask questions. Etiquette applies to persons playing, marking, umpiring and spectators at a game of bowls and also to the members of a club.

Etiquette is an important part of lawn bowls and all clubs and their members should not only practice it, but inform new members what is proper and expected behaviour on the green and in the clubhouse. Thoughtfulness and common sense are the keys to etiquette.

Rules of etiquette for lawn bowling include (but are not limited to):

1. Players and spectators at the head end should stand still and keep quiet.
2. When it's your team's turn to bowl it's your mat and head, your opponents should be away from both, if they are not ask them nicely to move.
3. Wait for your skip to tell you which shot you should play, keep up with play at all times.
4. There should be no trespassing into neighbouring rinks; this includes going to or from the clubhouse, moving to better see the jack, and particularly when walking from one end of your green to the other. Please be aware of others playing. If you are helping your teammate aim, do not infringe upon neighbouring rinks.
5. Walk up the centre of the rink with minimum delay, if it is not your team's turn to bowl DO NOT STOP TO CHAT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE RINK, IT'S NOT YOUR MAT OR HEAD.
6. After bowling each bowl, step off the mat to the right. As you approach the mat to bowl, do so from the rear left. Though not essential, this is a useful habit of convenience to avoid collisions!
7. Always show good sportsmanship by acknowledging a display of good skill by another bowler.
8. Never applaud lucky shots, never complain about lucky shots, and admit a lucky shot with good grace. Do not say thanks for a bad shot that goes your way.
9. Do not criticize the playing surface.
10. Do not criticize the performance of colleagues. No one plays a bad bowl on purpose.
11. Avoid delaying play by leaving the rink without the knowledge of the other players.

12. Avoid interfering with the head until the results of the end have been agreed upon by the vices.
13. If an Umpire is called, move away, you're done, his/her decision is final.
14. Bowlers should shake hands at the end of a game.
15. Be a gracious winner and a good loser.
16. The plinth area of the green is fragile and should be treated with care. This includes, but is not limited to, wearing proper footwear, not dropping or tossing bowls on the green, and not spitting or pouring liquids (water, coffee, etc.) on the green.
17. Punctuality for all games is a courtesy to the other players.
18. While standing at the head end waiting for the player on the mat to bowl, stand between the markers so the bowler can see and use the markers to aim.
19. Generally, the vice or skip at the head will signal the bowler on the mat the position of bowls in the head using hand signals denoting for and against.
20. Bowlers not raking the bowls after an end should assist by kicking the bowls into an approximate line, thus making raking easier and faster.
21. Players at the head end should be ready to stop deflected bowls from crossing into the adjacent rink and interfering with neighbouring games; likewise, be alert to prevent bowls from adjacent rinks from messing up your own head. Pay attention!
22. No rules prohibit bowlers running after their bowl (enthusiasm nor youthful fitness is discouraged) but you must try to arrive at the head before your bowl stops. Some clubs consider following your bowl up the green poor etiquette.
23. All bowlers are urged to have chalk and a measuring tape when bowling so that bowls that touch the jack can be immediately marked and, if necessary at the finish of an end, measuring can be undertaken without delay.
25. All bowlers should remember to clear the equipment from your rink after your game.

No laws governing a sport can cope with every situation. Unusual situations not covered can arise. The Laws of the Sport of Bowls have been drawn up in the spirit of true sportsmanship. Common sense should be used when unusual situations not covered by the Laws arise.

BASIC RULES YOU SHOULD KNOW

1. **Mat Placement** : The first to play places the mat on the centre line at least 2 metres from the ditch and up to the hog line if desired.
2. **Foot Faulting** : Before delivery a player must have one foot fully on the mat and at delivery all or part of one foot on or above the mat.
3. **Jack / Bowl Length**: A jack must travel 21 metres to be legal while a bowl must travel 14 metres to be in play.
4. **Jack Delivery**: If the jack is improperly delivered the opposition may reposition the mat and deliver the jack but not play first. If the jack is delivered improperly by both leads the jack is placed at the 2 metre mark and the first to play may reposition the mat.
5. **Touchers**: Only the delivered bowl may be a toucher even if it deflects off other bowls before touching the jack.
6. **Position on Rink**: Players at the mat end who are not delivering a bowl should stand at least one metre behind the mat. Players at the head end who are not controlling play should stand behind the jack.
7. **Playing Wrong Bowl**: Replace with correct bowl
8. **Playing out of Turn**: Opposition skip has choice: a) may stop the bowl, b) leave it and have two bowls played to restore proper sequence, c) reset disturbed head and restore proper sequence, d) leave disturbed head and play two bowls or e) declare dead end.
- 9 **Bowl & Jack Displacement**: Numerous scenarios can arise. The opposition skip and skips have options as spelled out in Appendix C of the Rules . The options depend upon the cause and timing of the displacement.
10. **Rink Possession**: Possession of the rink belongs to the player or team whose bowl is being played.
11. **Determining score**: Bowls should not be moved until the number of shots has been agreed upon by the vice or skip even if the outcome appears to be obvious.
12. **Objects on the green**: No objects should be placed on the bank, the green or in the ditch to help a player.
13. **Game stoppage**: If a game has been stop for a valid reason and all bowls have not been played, the end is declared dead.

Your Opponent

If a game has been arranged whether formal (club or tournament) or informal (roll up) it is polite to be on time. If running late or you need to reschedule, call your opponent or the Club and advise them of your situation. As we are living in the age of ever evolving technology most people have mobile phones and are easily contactable. Before commencing a game all mobile phones, pagers and other electronic devices must be switched off or put in silent mode for the duration of a game. Music listening devices such as iPods should not be used during a game as this can be viewed as anti-social behaviour.

Always greet your opponent with a handshake and a friendly smile before and after the game. Bowling greens should also be treated with respect, you should not throw or drop your bowls onto the green and you should not sit on the bank or place your feet in the ditch. In any game whether it's Singles, Pairs, Triples or Fours, when the mat has been laid to commence the game it is a nice gesture to hand your opponent the jack and his bowl (be aware that not all players like you touching their bowls). Often this gesture is restricted to just the first bowls on the first end. Handing the jack and/or mat can help get the next end under way promptly. During the course of the game commend good bowls, acknowledge good luck such as fluky bowls, and do not show too much emotion when bad or fluky bowls are delivered. Remember that fluky bowls even out over time and everyone will have their share of them.

Show respect for every opponent you play by never moving about while they are on the mat, or making noise while they are about to deliver a bowl. There are specific rules regarding standing behind the mat or behind the head. Bowlers should not crowd around the head after delivering the bowls, only those that need to be there should be there. When asking a player/s to move, be sure to be polite, courteous and show good sportsmanship at all times.

During a game no player should leave the rink without their opponent and play should not be held up for more than 5 minutes. If an end is declared dead and you need to go back to the other end, pick up the bowls and carry them, do not roll them. When an opponent is on the mat they have control of the rink and opposing players should not walk on the green until the opponent's bowl has come to rest and the player has left the mat. At the completion of the game the graceful loser should congratulate the modest winner. During drinks in the Club it is good etiquette to avoid making excuses for lack of success or gloating about how good you or your team were on the day.

Bowls is a very inclusive sport and your opponent may be a person with a disability or from a culturally and linguistically diverse group or from a different generation to you. Remember to treat all people with the same amount of courtesy and respect that you would want to be treated. When your opponent is from one of these groups you should apply common sense in regard to being a good sport as your opponent may not be able to conform to the standard etiquette guidelines. If in doubt, talk to your opponent about what guidelines they would feel happy using. For example, some people just cannot bend down to measure and may require assistance with this.

Each format of the game has certain responsibilities associated with it when playing singles, pairs, triples or fours games. These will be explained but applying common sense and asking politely if you are unsure of the duties is always the best way to learn.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Lead

It is good etiquette to hand your opponent the jack and their bowl after they have laid the mat to commence play, be aware that some bowlers do not like anyone touching their bowls. Also use common sense in regard to how you do this as players with certain physical disabilities may find this difficult. The first job of the lead whose team won the previous end is to place the mat. This helps the others in know far to kick back the bowls. Throughout the course of the game you may continue to hand your opponent the mat and jack but it is not essential. If playing pairs the lead does the measuring, if assistance is required for a longer measure ask for help from the opposition lead. If playing triples or fours the lead is only responsible for rolling the jack. Always look to your skip for any instructions regarding mat placement and jack length at the start of each end.

The Second

In the modern fours game each player is responsible for initiating their own introductions. If opponents advise you of their nickname then it's commonly acceptable to use that throughout the game. Clubs usually supply a new member with a name badge, if you did not receive one you should contact the Management Secretary. Using someone's name throughout a game demonstrates good etiquette. When playing fours, it is not advisable to chase your last bowl up to the head and leave your third isolated unless you have discussed this with them and they are OK with this practice. The main role of this position is to keep an accurate scorecard by waiting for the shots to be revealed once the head has been declared. Regular checking with your opponent score keeper and the scoreboard is advisable to ensure that the score is correct. Pay attention to the development of the head by watching the lead's bowls.

The Third

The responsibility of the third is to control the head while the skip is on the mat. The third should wait for the skip to ask his opinion about the head and advice about shot selection but ultimately the final shot selection rests with the skip. Always provide precise and accurate answers when the skip is on the mat. Once all bowls have been delivered the third has to measure any bowls that appear the same distance from the jack...If playing against an opponent or are yourself a player who is unable to measure due to age, injury or disability then ask for assistance from a fellow player. Consider all shots that may be in the count and confer with your opponent third that all possibilities have been measured. Indicate using your hand the number of shots won or lost on the end by placing finger up or down, it should also be voiced clearly. Retrieving any bowls from the ditch or wherever they finish and that are not in play is also good etiquette. Possession of the mat (rink) passes to the other side when your bowl comes to a rest You should then wait for your next turn on the mat before exchanging information with your skip.

The Skip

Cohesive teams often perform better and have greater success. The skip should lead the team with confidence by being supportive of any special needs and by providing continual encouragement before, during and after a game. Everyone will play bad bowls and no bowler is likely to deliver every bowl just how they want it, the skip's role is to play the best bowls they can and refrain from showing disappointment or enjoyment at bad bowls played by anyone. Body language can affect team confidence so remain focused on the game and your team. Remain still while standing at the head to avoid distracting your own team and opponents.

The Team

Bowls is an individual and team sport. It is important to remember that individual performances should not be highlighted or degraded when playing in a team. It is good for team cohesiveness if players assist when bowls need to be kicked back after the completion of an end. At the completion of a game, players should assist others to carry their bowls down to the other end when required and mats and jacks should be returned to the appropriate place. At completion of a game, players should return inside the club and the home players may offer to buy their opposing player a drink, alcoholic or non-alcoholic. In some instances the opposing player may not want a drink or you may politely reject their offer to reciprocate. You should not feel obliged to have two drinks of anything if you do not want to.

Clothing

Clubs today have adopted more stylish and colourful uniforms that are used to play club games, pennant games, tournaments and when representing at Regional, State or National levels. In many instances these consist of polo shirts, tracksuit pants, vests, wind jackets, bucket hats or caps. Cream or white long pants or shorts can be worn with coloured shirts or as specified. If wearing shorts, white socks are worn, shoes can be any colour but need to be flat soled. Clubs may allow people to bowl barefoot but it is advisable to ask if this is acceptable,

Cream/white or club clothing is a requirement when playing in some club matches or gala days and is usually specified on the registration sheet for that event. The event registration sheet will also specify if *mufti* dress is acceptable. Mufti dress means that participants can wear normal clothing that is clean, neat and does not contain any offensive language, pictures or gestures. Each club has their own rules regarding bowling attire and what is acceptable, so be sure to find this out. There are also rules regarding having the *Bowls Australia* logo on certain pieces of clothing when playing some events, if unsure ask the bowls coordinator.

Club Uniform

Suburban Bowling Club has a specific club uniform that must be worn for all pennant games and for club championships and other club representative events. If you have any questions regarding bowls attire, speak to any bowls committee member and they should be able to assist you. For club uniform, contact the Bowls Shop.