



Bowls Etiquette

The rules of the game are defined in full in the official 'Joint Laws of the Game' booklet. All bowlers should familiarise themselves with these rules. In addition to the rules, a certain amount of 'etiquette' is normally followed, in order to make the game as enjoyable as possible for everyone. The guidelines offered here should be noted by beginners and experienced bowlers alike. There might seem to be rather a lot of points of etiquette, but they are all based on common courtesy, so they do become easy to remember.

For Bowlers and Spectators

- ❖ Do not distract bowlers who are bowling towards you, by moving or walking across the end of the rink. Wait until the bowl has been delivered, then move.
- ❖ It is not good etiquette to interrupt other players when they are on the green, particularly during competitive matches. If you need to speak to players it should be before or after their game.
- ❖ Respect and protect the green – the Club's most important asset.
- ❖ Do nothing in your actions, words or appearance that will reflect against your Club.

Before the Game

- ❖ Make sure you know the rules of the game or competition you are playing.
- ❖ Know the correct dress (it will differ for different types of games) and ensure you arrive correctly dressed, with time to spare.
- ❖ Ensure that jacks, mats, and other equipment are in place ready for the beginning of the game.

During the Game

- ❖ Enter and leave the green from your rink – do not walk across other players' rinks.
- ❖ Do not drop your bowls on the green. 'Possession of the Rink' must always be respected.
- ❖ "Possession of the rink shall belong to the team whose bowl is being played. The players in possession of the rink ... shall not be interfered with, annoyed, or have their attention distracted in any way by their opponents."
- ❖ Stand well behind the mat or the head, keeping still and quiet while others are delivering their bowls.
- ❖ Questions, information or instructions should only be shouted while you have 'possession of the rink' – as soon as your bowl comes to rest, 'possession of the rink' is transferred to the opposing player or team.

Positions

- ❖ When at the head, bear in mind that some bowlers like a clear view of the rink markers. Stand behind the head, inside the rink markers, but not obscuring the central rink number.
- ❖ Standing directly behind the jack in white shoes can make the jack difficult to see.
- ❖ Players at the mat-end of the rink who are not delivering a bowl should stand at least 1 metre behind the mat.

Responsibilities

- ❖ Follow the direction given by the 'skip', whether or not you agree.
- ❖ Remember that the directions for the 'skip' are only given by the number three in rinks, or the number two in triples. Other players should not interfere, unless asked.

Results of an end

- ❖ The result of each end (including measuring where required) is determined between the threes (or twos in triples). Other players should not normally be involved.
- ❖ Do not disturb the head until the result of the end has been agreed.

General

- ❖ Encourage, rather than criticize – no one delivers a bad bowl intentionally.
- ❖ 'Call' or shout at your own bowls by all means – but do not 'call' your opponents bowls to go through gaps, get 'wrecked', or to promote your own bowls – wishing misfortune on your opponents bowls is unsporting.
- ❖ Commend good shots.
- ❖ Learn to accept lucky shots, both for and against you – they will balance out in the long run. 'Flukes are simply revelations of unrecognised opportunities'.

After the game

- ❖ Shake hands. Congratulate the opposing team and offer to buy your opposite number a drink (after singles matches, your 'marker' should be included in the invitation).
- ❖ Avoid making excuses for your lack of success the topic of conversation. A knowledge of the above will make you a better respected bowler, and will contribute towards the enjoyment of the game for everyone involved, both on and off the green.

Above all, enjoy the game.