

ETIQUETTE

Introduction

The laws of the game are defined in full in the 'World Bowls: Laws of the Sport of Bowls'¹. All bowlers should familiarise themselves with these and any relevant national/county/club laws. In addition to the laws, a certain amount of etiquette is expected to be followed. The etiquette guidelines offered below are all based on common courtesy, which should make them easy to remember.

For bowlers and spectators

- The use of E-Cigarettes (vaping) is forbidden in the club.
- Mobile phones are not to be used at green level.
- 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.
- Avoid interrupting 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 badly on 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).
- Change into bowling shoes at the club.
- Be early enough to be able to welcome visitors.
- Introduce yourself and if appropriate shake hands with your opponent(s) both before play commences and after the game is complete.
- For competitive matches, the challenger calls the toss and their score goes on the top of the scoreboard.

During the game

- Mobile phones should be turned off/be silent.
- Enter and leave the green by your rink number - do not walk across other players' rinks.
- Do not drop your bowls on the green.
- Do not sit on the bank – it causes unwanted wear on the edge of the carpet.
- When you walk to the other end, move in the centre of the rink and do it quickly enough to maintain the continuity of the game. Remember that others have yet to bowl.
- Never complain about any green, including yours.
- Before you bowl check if bowlers on adjacent rinks are about to bowl. If they are (particularly indoors) let them bowl first.

'Possession of the rink' must always be respected

- Possession of the rink shall belong to the team whose bowl is being played. Players in possession of the rink should not be interfered with, annoyed, or have their attention distracted in any way by their opponents. (See Laws 12 and 13)¹.
- Stand well behind the mat or the head, keeping still and quiet while others are delivering their bowls.

¹ Can be downloaded from: <http://www.worldbowls.com/laws-umpiring/laws-of-the-sport/>

- Questions, information or instructions should only be exchanged 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.
- Avoid standing where your shadow is cast over the jack, making it difficult to see from the mat.
- Similarly, standing directly behind a white 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 one metre behind the mat.
- After you have delivered a bowl and before it has come to rest you have two options. If you want to track your bowl's progress, you must be behind the head as it stops, i.e. you must beat it to the head. If you don't go to the head, you must be behind the mat when your bowl stops. However, in most matches, apart from singles, players normally only go to the head when it is time for the skips to bowl.

Responsibilities

- Look for and then follow the direction given by the skip, whether or not you agree. (Skips should, however, encourage communication within and by the team before, during and after the match).
- Remember that advice/information for the skip is only given by the number three in fours (rinks) matches, or the number two in triples. Other players should not normally 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 interfere, unless asked, but if they feel a mistake is being made, they should have a quiet word with their three or two.
- Do not disturb the head until the result of the end has been agreed. (It may be appropriate to start collecting bowls that are not in the count).

General

- Encourage, rather than criticise – no one delivers a bad bowl intentionally.
- As a skip/ three (rinks) or two (triples), avoid stating the obvious, e.g. "take more green", but provide help by indicating how far a bowl is in front of or behind the jack.
- '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.

After the game

- Shake hands (if appropriate) and congratulate the opposing team. For inter-club/competitive matches 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.

Following good etiquette will make you a well-respected bowler and will contribute to the enjoyment of the game for everyone involved, both on and off the green.