

Basic Guidelines for new bowlers

Bowls truly is the 'Sport for All' - all ages, all sexes and all abilities. Some bowlers come from other sports, others do not have any sporting background, but excel at the game.

You can learn to play bowls in a day, but you may not master it in a lifetime! However you will definitely have great fun trying. To play well requires concentration, determination and practice and it is proven to be good for your general health.

Bowls is not just a sport, you can also have a varied and active social life at the club. It is the ideal sport for meeting new people. What's more, bowls is a relatively cheap game compared to other sports so that membership fees are not out of reach for most people.

Interested - What next?

All you need to try the game are a flat soled pair of shoes. Then with a good eye and arm, you are off! We have spare bowls to start you off and will give tuition to new players.

Bowls Basics

The game is played on a square of closely cut grass called 'the green', which is divided into playing areas called rinks. The green is surrounded by a small ditch to catch bowls which leave the green, and a bank upon which markers indicate the corners and centrelines of each rink.

Players take turns to deliver their bowls from a mat at one end of the rink towards a small white ball called the jack at the other end. The bowls are shaped so that they take a curved path towards the jack. To be successful the bowl must be delivered with the correct weight, along the correct line.

The object is to get one or more of your bowls closer to the jack than those of your opponents on each end - one point is scored for each counting bowl.

There are many different formats to the game, but the most common in England are singles or in teams of pairs, triples or fours. In singles, the winner is the first to score 21 points. In the other three formats, the winner is the team that scores the most points over a set number of ends.

Dress Code for new members

- White tops – any kind could be blouses or Polo shirts but should be plain
- Grey trousers – any which are comfortable – for League. Mid-week Friendly, in- house club fixtures

White trousers – for Saturday friendlies and other matches as indicated

- Club shirts – can be ordered via Mike Perks –
- Shoes – must be smooth soled – no ridges or
- Waterproofs– must be predominantly white
- Shorts in white or grey must be Bowls England branded Shorts

A lot of clothing can be bought from online websites just type in lawn bowls trousers, tops or shoes. Good quality second hand clothing and equipment can sometimes be found from other club members or eBay.

Bowls –As there are lots of different bowls on the market it is advisable to anyone who has never played bowls before not to rush into buying but to try different makes and types by borrowing from other bowlers. It is also advised that 2nd hand bowls should be the first buy.

Brand of bowls: Almark, Aero, Drakes Pride, Henselite, Taylor. Sizes 00 upwards. H = Heavy, M = Medium. Once a make and size has been decided upon, local suppliers can be found via the internet.

Matches

Singles (4 bowls each) winner is first to score 21

Singles -Two Wood (2 players with 2 bowls) winner has highest score after 21 ends

Pairs (2 players with 4 bowls) winner has highest score after 21 ends

Triples (3 players on each side – 3 bowls) 18 ends

- **Lead** - First to play. Places the mat, delivers the jack and centres it then bowls as close as possible to the jack. Each lead bowls their 3 bowls taking it in turn. The lead on the losing side of the last end gathers all the bowls
- **2nd** – Usually keeps the score card and records players names and agrees numbers of shots with opposite number each end and measuring as required. Also advises skip as to positions at head when skip bowls
- **Skip** –In charge of rink, directs development of the head and settling any disputed points with opposite skip

Rinks (4 players on each side – 2 bowls) 21 ends

- **Lead (First to bowl)** Places the mat, rolls the jack (skip may indicate length). Jack should be in line with number of rink. Players from each team delivers their bowls alternatively from the mat. The side which lost the previous end gathers all the bowls
- **2nd** – usually keeps the scorecard – records players name and records all shots for both sides – compares score with opponent No 2
- **3rd** – measures all disputed shots and informs skip of situation at head when skip bowls
- **Skip (last to bowl)** – in charge of head. Decides with opposing skip all disputed points and their decision is final.

After everyone has bowled, the bowls nearest to the jack are counted by the No 3 (or No 2 in triples) and the score indicated to the skip. The winning side then leads the next end.

Placing of mat – the mat is placed by the lead player and the front of the mat must be at least 2 metres from ditch and square on to end – skip may indicate that mat is not square or can be placed further up the rink.

Jacks – The jack can be rolled so that it ends up either near the opposite end or anywhere between the end and the middle white line (if mat has not been moved up the rink). Minimum jack 23 metres from front of mat.

If the jack ends up outside the rink then the opposite Lead rolls the jack but the first Lead still plays first.

If during the game the jack is pushed off the rink by a wood, its position in the ditch is indicated by a White marker placed on the side of the rink. Any wood which has hit the jack previously, marked with chalk and ends up in the ditch is still classed as 'live' and is in the count if the jack has ended up in the ditch. The position of any wood which is still 'live' and in the ditch is also indicated by a Red marker on the edge.