

# **Lawn Bowling Etiquette**

## **(Good Manners for bowlers and spectators)**

1. Alongside a set of formal written Laws, which cover how to play the game, Bowls, like many sports, has over the years also developed a code of 'unwritten laws', conventions and expectations, which may seem mysterious or even pointless to the newcomer. Far from being useless, they help enormously to let the game flow smoothly and make it more enjoyable for its players. We should be proud that bowls remains one of the sports, where common courtesy and etiquette is still prevalent and they should be promoted to members old and new.

2. Much of what follows is common sense. Knowledge of these guidelines and, more importantly, observing them while bowling will make you a more respected bowler, keep things friendly and contribute towards the enjoyment of the game for everyone involved, both on and off the green

### **Before the Game**

3. Dress appropriately (see para. 27) and ensure that you know the dress code for each game or match in which you are participating. Do not show disrespect for your opponent(s) by arriving late and ensure that you leave sufficient time to change before the game. If you are representing the club on another green you should remember that you are an ambassador for Cheltenham Whaddon Bowling Club and behave appropriately.

4. Make sure you know the rules of the game or competition you are playing. A working knowledge of the Laws of Bowls is always helpful (copies are available at the club to borrow – see the Secretary)

5. Enter and leave the bowling green at the designated points or from the end of your rink. Do not walk across rinks that other people are using. Do not stand or sit on the bank, as your feet will be on the edge of the green and may cause unnecessary wear.

6. Greet members of your own team and your opponent(s) at the start of the game and congratulate or commiserate with them at the end of play. Shake hands at the start and the conclusion of the game.

7. Do not use your mobile phone on the green: switch it off or set it to silent, before you begin.

8. Neither smoking nor drinking is allowed on the green itself but is permitted on the surrounds.

### **At the Mat-End**

9. If you are at the same end as the player delivering a bowl you must stand behind the mat thus staying out of the player's line of vision. The Laws of Bowls say that *"Players at the mat-end of the rink who are not delivering a bowl must stand at least 1 metre behind the mat."* (Law 12.1.1)

10. Do not move around, when other players are about to deliver a bowl. Stand well back, keep quiet and do nothing that might distract either an opponent or your own team. Wait until the bowl has been delivered before moving or starting/continuing a conversation. On sunny days (hopefully all of them!) don't allow your shadow to fall in front of the mat as a player is about to bowl.

11. Pay attention to the game and be ready to play when it is your turn. Approach the mat from the left and before delivering your bowl, watch for any signal from your skip to indicate what type of bowl is required. Always obey the skip's instructions, even if you disagree.

12. Take note of any signal from the skip indicating the result of your bowl. When your bowl has stopped, step back off the mat to the right to avoid the next player, who should be coming from the left (see para 10).

13. Try not to cause unavoidable damage to the green. Don't drop your bowls onto the green and ensure that your delivery is not causing scuff marks or otherwise damaging the green.

### **Changing Ends**

14. Keep to your own rink and try not to wander into or disturb players on adjacent rinks. Walk as close as possible to the centre of your rink but don't walk through the head. Exchanging a few words as you cross with your skip or other players is fine, but don't stop and hold a conversation in the middle of the rink.

### **At the Head**

15. Just as at the mat-end, you should stand well behind the head and jack or even on the rink surround if the jack is in the ditch. Don't move around or do anything that might distract a player, who is on the mat and about to deliver a bowl.

16. Bear in mind that some people like to see the rink boundary markers and/or the rink centre marker while playing, so make sure that you are not obscuring them. On sunny days you must also ensure that your shadow does not fall on the jack or the surrounding head.

17. **Observe the rules for possession of the rink!** The Laws of Bowls say: "*Possession of the rink shall belong to the team whose bowl is being played*" and "*As soon as each bowl shall have come to rest, possession of the rink shall be transferred to the other team, time being allowed for marking a 'toucher'.*" (Laws 13.1 & 13.2).

Questions, information or instructions should only be exchanged while your team has 'possession of the rink' i.e. between the time the opponent's last bowl stopped and when your bowl in its turn has come to rest. It is acceptable to give praise briefly for a good shot, immediately after the bowl stops (e.g. a 'thumbs up' sign or call of 'well you bowled'), but any further communication must wait until you regain possession.

18. Bowls is a team game and you should work together but it is the skip who takes responsibility for tactics and will 'call the shots': unless he/she asks for advice, the rest of the team should not interfere. The No. 3 player (or No. 2 in triples) may offer guidance, when the skip is on the mat.

### **Result of an End**

19. The result of an end is determined by the No.3's (or No. 2's in triples). While they are in the process of agreeing or measuring, the other players should stand back and offer no advice or assistance, unless asked. Nor should any bowls be moved, until the score has been agreed. It is acceptable to move obviously non-counting or distant bowls to avoid delay but check before you do so and make sure you allow plenty of space for those deciding the shots.

20. Once agreed, however, the lead of the winning team should place the mat and prepare to deliver the jack for the next end, while the remaining players clear the bowls from the

head. If pushers are in use, normally the losing lead player will clear the bowls, though it is courtesy for others to line them up to make this easier.

## **General**

21. Spectators, who are in the player's line of vision, should also keep still while bowls are being delivered. In particular, they should not walk across the end of a rink, when a player is about to deliver a bowl in their direction, nor should they distract players on the green. For example, if you need to arrange a match with another member, don't try to do this while he is playing someone else!
22. Offer encouragement and praise to the rest of your team (at the appropriate time) but avoid criticism: nobody intentionally delivers a bad bowl. Everyone has a bad day occasionally and it may be you the next time! In the same vein you should not openly criticise your opponents or the green (yours or anyone else's).
23. Applaud good shots by your opponents, as well as by your own team. Call or shout at your own bowls by all means, its good to be enthusiastic. But do not 'call' your opponents' bowls to go through gaps, to get 'wrecked', or to promote your own bowls – wishing misfortune on your opponents' bowls is unsporting.
24. Lucky shots and flukes are part of the game and you should learn to accept them without overt displays of congratulation, when they favour your team, or of exasperation when they go against you – they will balance out in the long run.
25. Try to at least appear to be enjoying the game and accept either winning or losing gracefully.
26. It is customary for the home team or the winner(s) to offer their opponents a drink after the game. If you are playing Singles, you should include your marker in this offer.

## **Dress on the Green**

27. Members, guests or visitors shall comply with the following dress code when playing on the green or acting as umpire or marker:
  - (a) Footwear: heel-less shoes with flat soles at all times;
  - (b) For Club and Competitive Matches Members shall wear club shirts or white collared shirts with grey or white trousers or skirts or tailored shorts, as advised for the match. Socks, if visible, should also be grey or white. If required, white outer or waterproof clothing may be worn.
  - (c) For Casual Play (roll-ups) or practice, members or guests may wear smart casual clothing with collared top, provided that it is not brightly coloured. Jeans and tracksuits are not permitted.