

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 – if in doubt ask your captain) and ensure you arrive correctly dressed, with time to spare.

Ensure that jacks, mats, scoreboards and other equipment are in place ready for the beginning of the game. Make certain your bowls have the correct club stickers on.

DURING THE GAME

Enter and leave the green by the banks and footpaths – do not walk across other players' rinks. Respect the green surface at all times.

Do not drop your bowls on the green.

Do not drop litter on the green or in the ditches – use the receptacles provided.

Don't stand on the edge of the green or sit on the bank – it causes unwanted wear on the edge of 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." Never deliver your bowl before the previous bowl has come to rest.

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.

When at the head in sunny conditions, or as the sun sets, 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 1 metre behind the mat.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Keep track of play and be ready to bowl when it is your turn.

Follow the direction given by the 'skip', whether or not you agree.

You may only ask your skip a question when you are on the mat and ready to bowl, likewise the skip should not give you information when you are off the mat and possession has therefore transferred to the next person to bowl.

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.

When 2s or 3s are measuring or counting woods with the opposition, the rest of the team members should stand well back and not interfere, or crowd around them.

Do not disturb the head until the result of the end has been agreed.

GENERAL

Do support your club and put your name on availability lists.

If, for good reason, you have to withdraw please notify your captain at the earliest moment, do not just scratch your name out.

Do play your part in assisting with the smooth running of your club and support of your club officers. Check to see if you are expected to help with any duties, i.e. getting cups etc ready, or getting equipment ready for the match.

Encourage, rather than criticize – no one delivers a bad bowl intentionally.

Remember that it is unsporting to verbally encourage failure by the opposition, e.g. encouraging a bowl to miss etc, and to verbally “celebrate” a shot by your opponent which has gone wrong and given your team an advantage.

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’.

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). Remember that your opponent is a guest of the Club.

Ensure that jacks, mats, scoreboards and other equipment are returned to the store.

Avoid making excuses for your lack of success the topic of conversation.

Ac 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.

BUT PLEASE ENJOY YOUR BOWLING!