

Lawn bowls / flat green bowls

(https://www.bowls.co.uk/flat-green#Lawn_Bowls_Rules)

Lawn Bowling – A Complete Beginners’ Guide

Whether you’re interested in indoor bowls or outdoors on the flat green, this in depth beginners’ guide will tell you everything you need to know about the game, the rules and bowls you’ll need to play!

Lawn Bowls Rules

Let’s start by taking a closer look at the nuances of the [lawn bowls](#) game including the rules of the game, equipment requirements and facilities needed to host both matches and domestic games.

The Green

The green should form a square with sides between 30 and 40 metres long. If space for a square is not available, the longer side of the rectangle must not be more than 44 yards and the shorter must not be less than 30 metres.

Table of Contents

- [Lawn Bowls Rules](#)
 - [The Green](#)
 - [The Mat](#)
 - [The Jack and the Bowls](#)
 - [Choosing Your Bowls](#)
 - [Bias](#)
 - [Point Of Aim](#)
 - [Grip](#)
 - [Claw Grip](#)
 - [Cradle Grip](#)
 - [Delivery](#)
 - [Points To Good Delivery](#)
 - [Stance](#)
 - [Backward Stance](#)
 - [Forward Swing](#)
 - [Delivery](#)
 - [Follow Through](#)
 - [Foot Faults](#)
 - [Forehand Shots](#)
 - [Backhand Shots](#)
- [How To Play Lawn Bowls](#)
 - - [Starting The Game](#)
 - [The Singles Game](#)
 - [The Pairs Game](#)
 - [The Triples Game](#)
 - [The Fours Game](#)
 - [Movement of Bowls](#)
 - [Live Bowl](#)

- [Touchers](#)
 - [Dead Bowl](#)
 - [Rebounding Bowl](#)
 - [Line Bowls](#)
 - [Displaced Bowls](#)
- [Movement of Jack](#)
 - [Live Jack In Ditch](#)
 - [Dead Jack](#)
 - [Boundary Jack](#)
 - [Damaged Jack](#)
 - [Rebounding Jack](#)
 - [Displaced Jack](#)
- [Fours Play](#)
 - [The Lead](#)
 - [The Second](#)
 - [The Third](#)
 - [The Skip](#)
 - [Position Of Players During Play](#)
 - [Playing Out Of Turn](#)
 - [Playing The Wrong Bowl](#)
 - [Changing Bowls](#)
 - [Interruptions](#)
 - [Result Of The End](#)
 - [Game Decisions](#)
- [Basic Shots For The Beginner](#)
 - [The Draw](#)
 - [The Trail](#)
 - [The Firing Shot](#)
 - [The Guard](#)
- [Building The End](#)
- [Duties Of Marker](#)
- [Duties of Umpire](#)
- [Absentee Players](#)
- [Play Interruptions](#)
- [Outside Influences](#)
 - [Spectators](#)
 - [Objects on the green](#)
 - [Unforeseen incidents](#)
 - [Betting, gambling](#)

The green is divided into rinks 4.3 metres and 5.8 metres wide for outdoor play, numbered consecutively. The four corners of the rinks shall be marked by pegs of wood, painted white and fixed to the face of the bank and flush therewith. These corner pegs shall be connected with green thread drawn tightly along the surface of the green with sufficient loose thread to reach the corresponding pegs on the face of the bank. These pegs and thread define the boundary of the rink.

The green must be level and surrounded by a ditch and bank. The bank shall be not not less than 23cm above the level of the green, preferably upright or alternatively at an angle of not more than 35 degrees from the perpendicular.

For domestic play the green may be divided into rinks not less than 4.2 metres nor more than 5.7 metres wide.

The Mat

At the beginning of the first end of the mat is placed lengthwise on the centre line of the rink, the back edge to be four feet from the ditch.

In all subsequent ends the back edge of the mat shall be placed not less than four feet from the rear ditch and the front edge not less than 25 metres from the front ditch and on the centre line of the rink.

If the mat is moved during play it shall be replaced as near as possible in its original position and if found out of alignment with the centre line of the rink it may be straightened.

The Jack and the Bowls

The jack shall be round and white with a diameter of not less than 2 15/32 inches, nor more than 2 17/32 inches and not less than 8 oz nor more than 10 oz in weight.

The bowls are of wood, rubber or composition. Each set of bowls is required to carry an individual and distinguishing mark. The sizes and weights should conform to the table on the opposite page.

Some bowls are made of a very hard wood called lignum vitae; such bowls must have a circumference not greater than 16 1/2 inches and must not weigh more than 3 1/2 lbs.

It is an advantage to use as heavy a bowl as possible without overloading the grip. The choice of bowl will therefore be influenced by the size of the player's hand and the particular grip adopted when playing. Composition bowls are heavier, size for size, than bowls of lignum vitae, so the player with a small hand can use a bowl made of composition of diameter 1/8th inch less than a lignum vitae bowl of equivalent weight.

Composition bowls are unaffected by temperature changes; lignum vitae bowls, having lost their polish, lose weight on exposure to the sun. Lignum vitae bowls are generally more responsive to bias than composition bowls, and are less affected by heavy greens.

Bowls are made, and should be bought, in sets of four – four bowls is the maximum number any one player in any one game requires.

Choosing Your Bowls

When buying your bowls remember that:

1. The bowl must not be too large for your hand
2. A composition bowl is heavier than a lignum bowl
3. You will need a set of four
4. The set should be a "matched" set – check by looking for the set number which will be stamped on each bowl
5. First quality new bowls are expensive, but a good second-hand set can be obtained at a reasonable price.

6. A full set will have been cut from the same log – they will be identical in weight and balance and any variation in weight due to natural shrinkage of the lignum will be uniform
7. Well known firms are to be preferred
8. The advice of an experienced player is invaluable

Bias

Every bowl has a bias – it is so constructed that when rolled along a level ground it traces a curving path. The amount of the curve increases as the speed of the bowl decreases. With the average speed of delivery of a bowl the effect of the bias is negligible until the bowl has travelled about three-fifths of its distance. From that moment until it comes to rest it curves more and more in response to the bias. To bring a bowl to rest touching the jack, the player must aim to the left or right of it, delivering the bowl with its biased side on the right or the left.

The bias side of the bowl will always be on the inside of the curve.

The amount of bias is strictly regulated. It must not be less than that approved by the International Bowling Board. Each bowl must have the stamp of the International Bowling Board and/or the British Isles Bowling Council to certify that its bias is not less than the allowable minimum. Further, to ensure accuracy of bias and the visibility of the stamp, all bowls are retested and re-stamped every tenth year.

Only an official bowl tester may alter the bias on a bowl – a player who changes the bias on a bowl bearing the stamp of the International Bowling Board or BIBC is liable to suspension from the game.

Point Of Aim

The effect of the bias on the bowl is negligible until the bowl has covered about three-fifths of its path. From then onwards the bowl follows a curving path, the amount of the curve increasing all the time until the bowl comes to rest. When the bowl has travelled three-fifths of its path it will be at its widest point from the straight line connecting the mat and the jack. This is known as the Point Of Aim.

The area enclosed between the curved path of the bowl and the line from the mat to the jack is known as Land.

Fixing the point of aim will vary with each bowl sent down the green. It depends on:

1. The length of the jack, i.e, distance from mat to jack.
2. The bias on the bowl.
3. Wind.
4. Heaviness of the green – on a wet, heavy green less land will be used than on a dry green.
5. Trueness of the green – one side of the green might draw better than the other side.

Never fail to test the green before beginning play – send down two or three bowls from each end to establish the drawing qualities in both directions and on both sides.

In competitive games, a trial end in each direction is permitted before the game commences.

Grip

There are two recognised grips, or methods of holding the bowl.

Claw Grip

The bowl is placed in the palm of the hand, the middle fingers being spread out under the bowl. The thumb and little finger provide additional support for the bowl, the little finger being level with the bottom of the disc, the thumb over the top, or a little above, the large disc. The bowl is not held tightly, but gripped enough to prevent it slipping at the moment it is delivered from the hand.

Cradle Grip

In the cradle grip the bowl rests in the hand. The middle fingers are placed fairly close together with the thumb much lower down the side of the bowl than in the claw grip. The wrist slightly cupped so that the bowl does not slip from the hand as the arm is swung backwards.

With both grips the middle fingers must be parallel to the running surface. A wobbly bowl is caused by the middle finger being pulled across its running surface.

Delivery

Points To Good Delivery

1. Maintain a good balance in the stance and throughout the movement.
2. Do not clutch the bowl.
3. Body movement is better than muscular movement and infinitely less tiring.
4. Concentrate on smoothness of action.
5. Develop the follow through – it eliminates jerkiness of delivery.
6. Adjust your length of step with the left foot so that the right hand is opposite it at the lowest point of the forward swing.

Stance

A player shall take his stance on the mat and at the moment of delivering his bowl shall have one foot remaining entirely within the confines of the mat. The foot may be either in contact with or over the mat. Failure to observe this law constitutes foot-faulting.

Backward Stance

Swing the right arm backward, at the same time rising on the toes. Keep the left arm raised in front of the body to maintain a perfect balance.

Forward Swing

As the right arm swings forward, advance the left foot and begin to bend the right knee. In turn begin to bend the left knee.

Delivery

Both knees continue to bend until the right hand is at the lowest point of the swing. This should occur when the right hand is opposite the left foot. Release the bowl.

Follow Through

The right hand arm should follow the forward and upward motion. Follow through with the body also – by moving forward as the bowl leaves the hand and follow the bowl for a short distance up the green. If you prefer to remain stationary after the delivery, bring the left hand down on to the left knee to preserve your balance as the right arm moves upwards.

Foot Faults

At the moment of delivering the bowl, one foot must be entirely within the confines of the mat. The foot may be in contact with the mat or over it.

Penalty for foot-faulting – after a caution the bowl is stopped and removed to the bank.

Foot within the area of the mat and in contact with it – Correct

Foot in contact with mat, but part of foot beyond the mat – Fault

Foot above the mat though not in contact with it – Correct

Foot not in contact with the mat and not directly above it – Fault

Forehand Shots

In a forehand shot this swing of the arm and the path of the wood never intersect the line from the mat to the jack. The swing of the arm should always be parallel to the body. To play a forehand shot turn to the right until the shoulders are square to the point of aim.

Backhand Shots

In the backhand shot the swing of the arm crosses the line from the mat to the jack. Turn to the left until the shoulders are square with the point of aim before delivering the bowl.

Having fixed the point of aim and turned on the mat until the shoulders are square to it, delivery and length are the only two problems to be overcome. With a natural swing parallel to the body the direction of the bowl will be correct and only length needs to be determined.

Some players always adopt a square position on the mat. By doing so they add an unnecessary handicap to their game, for, to play a forehand shot, the arm must move away from the body in the forward swing; to play a backhand shot, the arm must swing across the body.

How To Play Lawn Bowls

A game of bowls may be played on one rink or the number of players taking part may be sufficient to occupy several rinks. The game continues until either:

1. An agreed number of shots have been played; or
2. A team scores an agreed number of points; or
3. An agreed period or time has expired.

When the game is restricted to one rink only it is called a single game, though the number of players on each side may vary from one to four, when the game is called:

Single-handed or singles

With 1 player on each side

Pairs

With 2 players on each side

Triples

With 3 players on each side

Fours

With 4 players on each side

Note that (a) A single game means one game only, whereas a singles game means one player on each side.

(b) A rink is that part of the green on which the game is played.

There are, in addition, three other arrangements of play:

1. A team game which is played over several rinks by two opposing teams, each team having the same number of players.
2. A series of single games or team games arranged either as knock-out or league competitions and accommodating single-handed, pairs, triples, or fours.
3. A tournament of games in which the contestant sides or teams play each other in turn.

Starting The Game

The captains or skips in a team game shall toss to decide which side shall play first, but in all singles games the opponents shall toss, the winner having the option of decision.

In all ends subsequent to the first the winner of the preceding scoring end shall play first.

The player to play first throws the jack.

If the jack be thrown to a distance less than 2 yards from the opposite ditch it shall be moved out that distance (2 yards) and centred.

Should the jack be thrown into the ditch or outside the boundary of the rink or less than 25 yards in a straight line of play from the front of the mat, the opposing player may then move the mat in line of play, subject to Law IV, and throw the jack but shall not play first. Should the jack be improperly thrown for the second time in any end the back edge of the mat shall be placed 4 feet from the rear ditch and no further movement of the mat shall be permitted.

The Singles Game

Each player has four bowls and plays them singly and alternatively. Player X having won the toss may throw the jack and then deliver the first bowl. Player Y delivers his first bowl, Player X follows and so on until both players have delivered their four bowls.

All bowls nearer to the jack than an opponent's nearest bowl, at the conclusion of the end, count one point each. The maximum score for an end is four.

The end is completed when all the bowls have been played in one direction and the points have been mutually agreed. A fresh end is then started by playing back along the rink.

The player first reaching 21 points, or shots, wins the game.

The Pairs Game

Each player has four bowls and plays them singly and in turn.

A and B are playing X and Y. A and X alternate until they have each delivered four bowls; then B and Y alternate until they have sent down four bowls each.

All bowls of one pair nearer to the jack than any bowl of the two opponents count one shot each. The maximum score for an end is eight shots. The game is concluded when 21 ends have been played, the pair with the highest score being the winners.

The Triples Game

Each player usually has 3 bowls and plays them singly and in turn. The first players of each team deliver their bowls in alternation; the second players in each team follow; then the final players in each team deliver their bowls.

All bowls of one team nearer to the jack than any bowl of the 3 opponents count as one shot each. The maximum score for an end is 9 shots.

The triples game usually concludes when 18 ends have been played, the team with the highest score being the winners.

The Fours Game

Each side consists of 4 players, each player having 2 bowls. He plays them singly and in turn, as in the triples game.

All bowls of one team nearer to the jack than any bowl of the four opponents count one shot each. The maximum score for an end is eight shots.

The game concludes when 21 ends have been played, the team with the highest score being the winners.

Movement of Bowls

When a bowl has been properly delivered by a player and, having run its course, comes to rest, it is said to be either Live or Dead. If it touches the jack during its course on the green it becomes a Toucher. A bowl which does not touch the jack is a Non-Toucher.

Live Bowl

A bowl which travels 15 yards or more from the front of the mat and comes to rest within the boundaries of the rink is called a Live bowl. A live bowl is in play.

Touchers

A bowl which, in its original course on the green, touches the jack is called a Toucher. It remains a live bowl even though it passes into the ditch, provided it comes to rest in that part of the ditch within the boundaries of the rink.

If the jack should be driven into the ditch by a "toucher" and comes to rest there, no subsequent bowl in the end being played can become a "toucher".

A “toucher” shall be clearly marked or indicated with a chalk mark by a member of the player’s side. If a bowl is not so marked before the succeeding bowl comes to rest it ceases to be a “toucher”.

Care should be taken to remove “toucher” marks from the bowls before the playing of the succeeding end. Should a bowl be played with such marks not removed the marks shall be removed immediately when the bowl comes to rest, except if such bowl has become a “toucher” at the end of play.

If the jack has been driven into the ditch and should be displaced from its position in the ditch by a bowl delivered later in the end (i.e by a non-toucher), it is restored to its former position in the ditch. If a later bowl drives a toucher, still lying on the green, into the ditch, displacing the jack lying in the ditch, the jack is not restored to its former position. The same rule applies if the toucher driven into the ditch displaces another toucher lying there.

Dead Bowl

A dead bowl is one which:

- Travels less than 15 yards from the front of the mat.
- Finishes in the ditch not having touched the jack.
- Comes to rest so that the whole of the bowl is outside the boundaries of the rink.
- Has been driven beyond the side boundaries of the rink by another bowl.

A toucher becomes a dead bowl if:

- It comes to rest so that the whole of the bowl is outside the boundaries of the rink.
- It has been driven beyond the side boundaries of the rink by another bowl.

A bowl must be removed from the rink and placed on the bank immediately it is accounted “dead”.

Should a player carry a bowl to the jack end of the rink, that bowl does not become a dead one.

It is permissible for a bowl to travel beyond the side boundary of the rink and return again to the rink without becoming a dead, provided it comes to rest with part, if not the whole, of the bowl within the rink. Under no circumstances shall a boundary thread be lifted while the bowl is in motion.

Rebounding Bowl

Touchers which rebound from the bank to the rink remain live bowls and continue in play.

Non-touchers rebounding from the bank to the rink become dead bowls. Similarly, non-touchers rebounding from the jack lying in the ditch, or from touchers lying in the ditch, become dead bowls.

Line Bowls

A bowl is not considered to be outside a circle of line unless it is clear of it. This is decided by looking perpendicularly down upon the bowl, or by placing a square on the green with its vertical edge against the bowl.

Thus, bowl A is entirely beyond the side boundary and is dead; bowl C is entirely inside and is live; bowl B lies partly over the side boundary thread and, although most of the bowl is beyond the side boundary, it is live.

Again, the circle round the jack represents the inner edge of the bowl Z. Bowl X is entirely outside the circle, and is further from the jack than bowl Z; bowl Y lies partly over the circle and is therefore nearer the jack than bowl Z.

Displaced Bowls

If a bowl is displaced from its position by a non-toucher rebounding from the bank it should be restored as near as possible to its original position by a player of the opposing side.

Players must take great care not to disturb live bowls until the end has been completed and points awarded. Should a player taking part in the game interfere with a bowl still in motion, or displace a live bowl at rest on the green or toucher in the ditch, the captain of the opposing side can choose one of four courses of action. He may:

1. Restore the bowl as near as possible to its former position.
2. Let it remain where it rests
3. Declare the bowl dead
4. Have the end played again in the same direction.

Should a bowl be moved when it is being marked, or measured, it must be restored to its former position by an opponent. If such displacement is caused by a Marker or Umpire, the Marker or Umpire shall replace the bowl.

Bowls in motion, or live bowls at rest – including touchers in the ditch – which suffer interference or displacement by a person not playing in the rink or by a bowl played from another rink, should be placed in a position acceptable to the two captains. If the captains are unable to reach agreement the end is declared dead and is played again in the same direction. Similar action is taken if a bowl in motion, or at rest on the green, suffers interference or displacement by any object lying on the green or interfering with the game.

Movement of Jack

An end is started by the delivery of the jack along the centre line of the rink and, if necessary, its positioning, so that it rests not less than 2 yards from the ditch.

While the jack remains within the boundaries of the rink, it is said to be Live – if it is driven beyond the boundaries of the rink, it becomes Dead.

Live Jack In Ditch

If a jack be driven into the ditch within the limits of the rink it shall be accounted “live”, and shall not be moved except by a “toucher”. Its place shall be marked by an object of suitable material about 2 inches broad, and placed immediately in line with and on top of the bank, above the place where the jack rests.

Dead Jack

The jack becomes dead if it is driven by the bowl in play:

1. Over the bank
2. Over the side boundary
3. Into an opening or inequality of any kind in the bank
4. So that it rebounds to a distance less than 22 yards from the front of the mat

A jack which is driven partly over a boundary thread, but not wholly beyond it, does not become dead and remains in play.

When the jack is dead, the end is declared dead and must be played again in the same direction. The rule applies even if all the bowls have been played.

Boundary Jack

A jack driven to the side boundary, but not wholly beyond it, remains live and in play. In such a position, the jack may be played to from either side, even though the bowl passes outside the side limits of the rink.

A bowl played at a boundary jack which comes to rest within the limits of the rink remains live and in play.

If a bowl comes to rest outside the side boundary of the rink, after it has been played at a boundary jack, it becomes dead. The result is the same even if the bowl touches the jack and then comes to rest beyond the boundary, or comes to rest touching the jack but wholly beyond the side boundary.

Damaged Jack

Should the jack become damaged during play, the end is declared dead and is played again in the same direction using a new jack.

Rebounding Jack

If the jack is driven against the bank and rebounds on to the rink it remains in play. Similarly, if the jack is lying in the ditch and it is operated on by a "toucher" so that it remains on to the rink, it remains in play.

Displaced Jack

If the jack is displaced from its position by a non-toucher rebounding from the bank it should be restored, as near as possible, to its original position by a player of the opposing side.

If the jack has been played into the ditch and it is displaced from its position by a non-toucher, then the jack must be restored to its marked position by a player of the opposing side.

Should the jack be diverted from its course while it is moving on the green, i.e, after it has been struck by a bowl, the captain of the opposing side can choose one of 3 courses of action. He may:

1. Have the jack restored to its former position
2. Allow it to remain where it rests
3. Play the end again in the same direction

He has a similar choice should the jack be disturbed by an opponent when it is at rest on the green or in the ditch.

A jack in motion, or at rest on the green or in the ditch, which suffers displacement by a person not playing on the rink, or by a bowl played from another rink, should be placed in a position acceptable to the two captains. If they cannot reach agreement on its position the end is played again in the same direction. Similar action is taken if the jack is displaced by any object lying on the green or in the ditch.

Fours Play

The basis of the game of bowls is fours play. We've previously mentioned the singles, pairs and triples games, all of which enjoy their popularity, particularly when there are insufficient players immediately available to form a fours.

The fours game is, however, the most popular one, since it accommodates the maximum number of players (8) on a rink, demanding that each side of four players should combine to play as a team. Matches are invariably played as fours games.

Fours play demands a greater skill than the other games. Each player is limited to two bowls, and with only a pair of bowls to deliver in each end, no player can afford to be careless with either shot.

The four players in each side are known as lead, second, third and skip. They play in that order, alternating their shots with their opposite numbers in the other team, and continue to play in that order until the end of the game or match. Changing the order involves forfeiture of the game or match to the opponents.

Each player must be a specialist in his position. In addition each player has certain duties to contribute towards the smooth progress of the game.

The Lead

His special responsibility is to place the mat and throw the jack, ensuring that the jack is properly centred before playing his first bowl. To commence the game the mat is placed with the back edge 4ft from the rear ditch; at subsequent ends the back edge of the mat shall be not less than 4ft from the rear ditch and the front edge not less than 27 yards from the front ditch and on the centre line of the rink of play.

If his side has won the preceding end, the lead is in a position to place the mat and throw the jack to a length preferred by his four – a big advantage.

He must be a skilful player at any length. With an open jack to play at, his object must be to get both bowls nearer the jack than any bowls delivered by his opponents.

The choice of hands (back hand or forehand) rests with the lead – he should decide which hand most suits his team.

The Second

The duties undertaken by the second man consist of keeping a record of all shots scored for and against his side. He records the names of the players on the score card, and after each end he compares his record of the game with that of the opposing second player. At the close of the game he hands the score card to the skip.

As a player the second specialises in positioning. If the lead has placed a bowl nearest the jack the second should play his bowl into a protecting position. If the lead has lost the shot he must attempt to place his bowls closest to the jack. Versatility is required of him – an ability to play almost any shot in the game.

The Third

The third player may have deputed to him the duty of measuring all disputed shots.

The third man needs to be an experienced player, who must be ready for forceful play but who can, when necessary, play any shot in the game.

The Skip

The skip has sole charge of his rink and his instructions must be obeyed by his players. He decides, with the opposing skip, all disputed points and their agreed decision is final. If the two skips are unable to agree the point in dispute is referred to an umpire whose decision is final.

In the game the skip plays last. While his players are delivering their bowls he issues directions to them by hand movements. It is he who decides the tactics and strategy of his four.

Position Of Players During Play

Possession of the rink belongs to each side in turn, belonging, any any moment, to the side whose bowl is being played. As soon as each bowl comes to rest, possession of the rink is transferred to the other side unless a bowl becomes a toucher when possession is not transferred until the toucher has been marked.

Players not in possession of the rink must not interfere with their opponents, distract their attention, or in any way annoy them.

The position of players during play is important. Players standing at the head of the green, unless directing play, i.e, the skip or third man, must stand behind the jack and away from the head. The skip or third man directing play may stand in front of the jack, but must retire behind it as soon as the bowl is delivered.

All players at the mat end of the green, other than the one actually delivering a bowl, must stand behind the mat.

Playing Out Of Turn

All players must stick rigorously to their order of play in each end. If a player plays out of turn, the opposing skip may:

1. Stop the bowl while it is still running and have it played in its proper turn
2. If the bowl has displaced the jack or a bowl, accept the situation or, alternatively, have the end played afresh

Playing The Wrong Bowl

A bowl played by mistake shall be replaced by the player's own bowl.

Changing Bowls

A player shall not be allowed to change his bowls during the course of a game, or in a resumed game, unless they be objected to, as provided in LAW II 3(c) of the Laws Of The Game, or when a bowl has been so damaged in the course of play as, in the opinion on the umpire, to render the bowl (or bowls) unfit to play.

Interruptions

The umpire may stop a game, or the teams may mutually agree to cease play, on account of the weather, or because of the darkness. When the game is resumed the score will be as it was when the interruption occurred, an end that was not completed not being counted. On resumption, if one of the four original players in the rink is not available, one substitute player is allowed.

Result Of The End

The bowl or bowls nearer to the jack than any of the opponents' bowls are the scoring ones. In a game of winning ends the side with the bowl nearest the jack in each end become the winners of that end, i.e, they are awarded the shot. Otherwise all bowls nearer the jack than any of the opponents' bowls count one shot each.

To allow all the bowls to come finally to rest, up to half a minute, after the last bowl has stopped running, may be claimed by either side before counting the shots.

The jack or bowls may not be moved until the skips have agreed the number of shots. Exception is made, however, where a bowl must be moved to allow the measuring of another bowl

If the nearest bowl of each team should be touching the jack, or they are agreed to be the same distance from the jack, the end is declared "drawn" and no score is recorded. The end is counted as a played end.

Great care must be taken when measuring a bowl to ensure that the positions of other bowls are not disturbed. If the bowl to be measured is resting on another bowl which prevents the measurement, the players must use the best available means to secure it in its position before removing the other bowl. Similar action should be taken where more than two bowls are involved or where measurement is likely to cause a single bowl to fall over or change its position.

Game Decisions

In a game of winning ends – victory decision goes to the side with the majority of winning ends. Other games – victory decision goes to the side with the highest total of shots.

The above decisions apply to:

1. A single game
2. A team game played on one occasion
3. Any stage of an eliminating competition

In tournament games, or games in series, victory goes to the side with the highest number of winning ends or the highest net score of shots, according to the rules of the tournament or series of games.

If, in an eliminating competition, the score is equal when the agreed number of ends have been played, an extra end or ends are played until a decision is reached.

Basic Shots For The Beginner

The Draw

The length of a full size bowling green is 44 yards, and the jack must be delivered to a distance of 25 yards from the mat. Each bowl must traverse a distance between 25 and 40 yards. The beginner must learn to estimate the various distances over which each bowl is to be delivered.

At the same time, if he is to attain prowess at the game, he must learn to deliver each bowl to a chosen point on the green – against the jack, or to a point in front or to the side of it. This, the elementary shot in the game of bowls, is called the draw. When the beginner can “draw to a point”, in backhand as well as forehand play, in long shots and short ones, he can claim to be making progress in the game and will be an opponent to be reckoned with. Until he achieves that ability he is recommended to stick to the drawing shot and not to attempt to include other shots in his armoury.

The drawing shot which finishes resting against the jack is sometimes called the “dead draw”.

The Trail

The trail is a difficult shot to achieve. The object of the trail is to take the jack along with the bowl, the two rolling together and coming to rest while still in contact.

If they come to rest with the bowl hiding the jack from view, then the perfect shot has been made. Further, should the jack be carried into the ditch, the player is in an unbeatable position while that end is being completed.

The trail demands accurate judgement of land in that the bowl must still be running when it strikes the jack. Weight must be calculated exactly to prevent the jack running ahead of the bowl, or being knocked to one side or the other.

The trail becomes more difficult on the faster greens.

The Firing Shot

This shot is often known as the skittle or drive. The object of this shot is to remove an opponent's bowl or the jack from an unfavourable lie, or maybe to split a group of the opponents' bowls. It is a shot delivered at speed and straight, or almost straight, down the green. A destructive shot, is difficult to accomplish and it should be used only when no other shot is possible.

The Guard

The guard is a shot which can be used to defeat a possible firing shot by an opponent. The bowl is delivered to come to rest about 2 feet in front of the jack along the straight path from the mat to the jack. When accurately positioned it provides a physical guard to the jack, and has a psychological effect on the next player by disturbing his estimate of the distance from mat to jack.

It can also be used against a player expert at the trail shot. The bowl should be delivered so that it comes to rest at least 3 feet from the jack and makes an angle of about 40 degrees with the

path from the mat to the jack – perhaps more than 40 degrees on a fast green and a little less on a heavy green. So positioned, it will prevent a trail shot becoming effective, nor will it be driven on to the jack.

Building The End

The wise bowler will develop a tactical approach to his play. He will aim to be on the offensive and will play a defensive shot only when forced into it. The first bowl should find the jack – it should finish either immediately in front or immediately behind the jack, and not more than 6 inches away. In such a position the jack and the bowls offer guards for one another.

A bowl which finishes resting by the side of the jack, even though touching it, merely serves to give your opponent a longer target for his aim. The positioning of later bowls will depend upon the progress of play. If the first bowl has been placed in front of the jack, then the second bowl should be placed about a yard behind it. Subsequent bowls should be placed in strategic positions – it is obvious that against such a start your opponent will attempt a trail. Place some of your bowls so that a trail is impossible and, as a safeguard, place the remainder so that should he achieve the impossible he will drive the jack on to your bowls.

Duties Of Marker

In a fours or triples game the second player keeps the score; in a pars game either of the partners may function as scorer; in a singles game the score should be kept by a marker. During the playing of each end he remains at the jack end of the rink and, in addition to keeping the score, he performs the following duties:

1. The marker shall control the game in accordance with the World Bowls Laws. He shall, before play commences, examine all bowls for the imprint of the World Bowls Ltd stamp, or that of its National Association, such imprint to be clearly visible, and shall ascertain by measurement the width of the rink of play.
2. He shall centre the jack, and shall place a full length jack 2 yards from the ditch.
3. He shall ensure that the jack is not less than 25 yards from the front edge of the mat, after it has been centred.
4. He shall stand at one side of the rink, and to the rear of the jack.
5. He shall answer affirmatively or negatively a player's inquiry as to whether a bowl is jack high. If requested, he shall indicate the distance of any bowl from the jack, or from any other bowl, and also, if requested, indicated which bowl he thinks is shot and/or the relative position of any other bowls.
6. He shall chalk all touchers, and mark the position of the jack and touchers in the ditch (See Law VI (1)). He shall remove all "non-touchers" from the ditch, and all "dead" bowls to the bank.
7. He shall not move, or cause to be moved, either jack or bowls until each player has agreed to the number of shots.
8. He shall measure carefully all doubtful shots when requested by either player. If unable to come to a decision satisfactory to the players, he shall call in an umpire. If an official umpire has not been appointed, the marker shall select one. The decision of the umpire shall be final.

9. He shall enter the score at each end, and shall intimate to the players the state of the game. When the game is finished, he shall see that the score card, containing the names of the players, is signed by the players, and disposed of in accordance with the rules of the competition.

Duties of Umpire

An umpire shall be appointed by the controlling body of the association, club or tournament management committee. His duties shall be as follows:

1. He shall, in fours, triples and pairs games, examine all bowls for the imprint of the World Bowls Ltd stamp, or that of its national association, and ascertain by measurement the width of the rinks of play.
2. He shall measure any shot or shots in dispute, and for the purpose shall use a suitable measure. His decision is final.
3. He shall decide all questions as to distance of the mat from the ditch, and the jack from the mat.
4. He shall decide as to whether or not jack and/or bowls are in play.
5. He shall enforce the laws of the game.

Absentee Players

In a competitive single fours game where a club is represented by only one four, all the members of the four must be genuine members of the club. The failure of all four players to appear and play after a period of thirty minutes, or the introduction of an ineligible player, will cause the side at fault to forfeit the match.

In a team game where not more than one player is absent from either side after a period of thirty minutes, the game proceeds. In the defaulting side or four, the number of bowls is made up by the lead and second players each playing three bowls. One fourth of the score made by the defaulting side or four is deducted at the end of the game.

If two or more players are absent from a four or side, play takes place only on the full fours. In a single four game the defaulting side forfeits the game. In a team game the aggregate score of the defaulting side is divided by the number of fours which should have been played, whereas the aggregate score of the non-defaulting side is divided by the number of fours actually played.

Play Interruptions

Should play be interrupted due to darkness, weather, or a similar reason, it is resumed with the scores as they were when play was stopped, an uncompleted end being declared null.

If one of the four original players in any four is not available when play is resumed, one substitute is permitted but that substitute must not be transferred from another four.

A substitute is allowed to take the place of a player who has to leave the green owing to illness. The substitute must be a member of the club to which the four belongs, and he must join the four as lead, second or third man – never as skip.

Should a player in a single game have to leave the green owing to illness, the game is resumed, if possible, at a later time or date.

A player may not delay play by leaving the rink except with the consent of his opponent, and then not for more than 10 minutes.

Contravention of any of the above conditions entitles the opposing side to claim the game or match.

Outside Influences

Spectators

Persons not playing in the game must remain beyond the limits of the rink and clear of the verges. They must preserve an attitude of neutrality and are not allowed to disturb or advise the players.

Objects on the green

Except for the marking of a live jack in the ditch, no extraneous object intended to assist a player may be placed on the green or rink, or on a bowl or jack.

Unforeseen incidents

If the position of the jack or bowls be disturbed by wind or a storm, and the two skips are unable to agree the replacement positions, the end is played again in the same direction.

Betting, gambling

Betting or gambling in connection with any game or games is not permitted within the grounds of any constituent club of a National Association.