

# **BASIC LAWS OF THE SPORT OF BOWLS FOR CLUB PLAYERS**

The purpose of this booklet is to give you basic understanding of the Laws of the Sport of Bowls as they will affect you at Club level.

This booklet is based on the Laws that came into force in 2015. The Laws are reviewed by World Bowls every 4 years and may contain some amendments - (keeping the scorecard and footfaulting have been subject to change) so when a new edition is issued be aware. Also read the *Domestic Regulations for Bowls England* on the rear pages as these will override those of World Bowls.

## **BASIC LAWS AND ETIQUETTE**

**5.1 TRIAL ENDS** Only the same number of bowls to be used for the game may be played, but each player may use any combination of bowls from different sets but must then decide which set to use for the game. No player is permitted to change their mind and use a different set of bowls during the game.

**5.2 GIVING THE MAT AWAY** On the first end only the winner of the toss may give the mat to the opposing player to deliver the jack and the first bowl (the opposing player cannot refuse). When a Captain has won the toss in a team game and decides to 'give the mat away', then that decision shall apply to all rinks making up the game.

**6.1 CHALLENGING THE MAT** At the start of an end the mat must be placed at least 2 metres from the rear of the ditch and at least 25 metres from the front ditch and on the centre line of the rink. If after the jack has been delivered but before the first bowl is played, a player or marker finds the mat is not correctly placed, then the opposing player must place the mat within the correct limits and re-deliver the jack making sure it is centred.

After the first player has delivered their bowl, no one has the right to challenge the legality of the distance of the mat from the rear or from the front of the ditches.

**6.2 DISPOSAL OF MAT** After an end has been completed the mat must be placed completely beyond the face of the rear bank.

**10 DELIVERY OF JACK** If a jack is delivered improperly it shall be delivered again by the opposing player who may alter the position of the mat. If the jack is improperly delivered a second time, it shall be placed 2 metres from the front ditch and the original player may alter the position of the mat.

**11 ORDER OF PLAY** If a player delivers a bowl before the previous bowl has come to rest then the first time this happens, and if an umpire is present, the player must be warned by the umpire and on each occasion after this the umpire must declare the player's bowl dead.

The position of players must not be changed after the first end has been completed unless a substitute is agreed by both skips, or if they cannot agree, by the Controlling body or an umpire that such a change is necessary. A substitute may not take the position of Skip.

**12 POSITION OF PLAYERS** Players at the mat end and not delivering a bowl must stand at least one metre behind the mat.

Players at the head end and not controlling the game must stand behind the jack if they are members of the team in possession of the rink or; behind the jack and away from the head if they are members of the team not in possession of the rink.

Or on the surrounds of the green if the jack is in the ditch or well clear of the head if it is not possible to stand on the surrounds.

As soon as the bowl is delivered, a player who is controlling play from a position that is either level with or in front of the jack must take their position behind the head.

A player must not go into a neighbouring rink where play is in progress, nor walk along a neighbouring rink even if it is not being used, whilst an opponent is about to or is actually delivering a bowl

**13 POSSESSION OF THE RINK** Possession of the rink will belong to the player or team whose bowl is being played.

As soon as each bowl comes to rest, possession of the rink will transfer to the opposing player or team after allowing time for marking a toucher as soon as it comes to rest.

If a player who has possession of the rink is being interfered with, annoyed or distracted in any way, an umpire if present, may issue a warning and for each similar offence after this warning have the last bowl played by the offending player or team declared dead

**14 TOUCHERS** A bowl that touches the jack in its original course of delivery becomes a toucher and remains in play even if it subsequently ends in the ditch within the confines of the rink. A bowl also becomes a toucher if it falls and touches the jack before the next bowl comes to rest.

No bowl will become a toucher if it plays onto or comes into contact with a jack in the ditch.

No bowl will become a toucher if it is subsequently comes into contact with the jack during the course of the end

**15 MARKING A TOUCHER** A toucher must be marked with chalk (preferably on opposite sides of the bowl) when it comes to rest. If a toucher comes to rest where marking it could move the bowl or alter the head it may be nominated as a toucher, but should be subsequently marked if the situation alters.

If before the next delivered bowl comes to rest, a bowl is neither marked or nominated then it is no longer a toucher.

**16 MOVEMENT OF TOUCHERS** The position of a toucher in the ditch may be validly altered if it moved by a jack in play, another toucher in play or (in the case of shallow ditches) a non toucher partly on the rink and partly overhanging the ditch.

If a toucher in the ditch is moved by a non toucher entering the ditch then an opponent or the marker must restore the toucher to its original position.

**17 DEAD BOWL** A bowl is dead if it passes completely outside the boundaries of the rink (but not if any part of the bowl remains within the sides of the rink); or if it enters the ditch. A bowl will also be dead if it not delivered more than 14 metres from the front of the mat.

**19 DEAD JACK** A jack is dead if it passes completely outside the sides of the rink (but not if any part of the jack remains within the confines of the rink); or if it enters the ditch. A jack is also dead if it is forced back up the rink to a distance of less than 20 metres measured from the front of the mat.

**20 DEAD END** A dead end is not counted as a completed end even if all the bowls have been played. A dead end must be played in the same direction unless the skips or opponents in Singles agree to play it in the opposite direction

**21 REBOUNDING JACK** The end will continue if the jack is driven against the face of the bank and rebounds back onto the rink in play.

**22 RESULT OF AN END** No bowl must be moved until the opponents decide whether it is a shot or not, except where a bowl has to be moved so another bowl can be measured. (It is recommended shot bowls are placed aside in a group where they will not interfere with measuring).

**23 30 SECOND RULE** No measuring must start until the last bowl played has come to rest; or after 30 seconds if the skip or an opponent in Singles asks for a 30 second period. If invoked, the 30 second period starts after the last bowl of the end has been delivered and comes to rest; no bowl may be wedged until this period has lapsed.

No measuring using equipment is allowed prior to deciding the number of shots scored. If this occurs the defaulting team will lose the right to play their bowls and the non-defaulting team will deliver their remaining bowls to complete the end

**24 TIED END** If the nearest bowl of each team is touching the jack or the nearest bowl of each team is the same distance from the jack, or no live bowls are left in the boundaries of the rink in play then a tied end will be declared. The end must be recorded as a completed end on the score card.

**25 DELIVERY OF THE FINAL BOWL** it is not compulsory for the last player to deliver the final bowl of an end. However, the player must tell the opposing skip or opponent in a Singles game of their intention not to deliver the final bowl before any measuring for shots is started. This decision is final.

**29 PLAYING OUT OF TURN** If a player plays out of turn the opposing skip can stop the bowl and return it to the player to play it in the proper order. However, if the bowl has disturbed the head then the opposing skip must either decide to leave the disturbed head as it is, replace the head in its former position or declare the end dead.

**29.4 FAILING TO PLAY** If the result of an end has been agreed or measuring for shot is taking place, a player who has failed to play a bowl will lose the right to play that bowl. If a bowl has been played by each team before the players find one of them has failed to play a bowl in the proper order, that player will lose the right to play that bowl.

**33 LEAVING THE GREEN** No player may delay play by leaving the rink unless their opponent agrees, and then not for more than 10 minutes.

If a player has to leave the green due to illness or some other reasonable cause and they cannot return within 10 minutes then the skips or the Controlling body may decide a substitute can be introduced, but that person may not take the position as skip.

Other members of the team may rearrange their positions as necessary.

**34 OBJECTS ON THE GREEN** Under no circumstances, other than those authorised within the laws may any personal or other object be placed on the bank, the green, in the ditch, on the jack, on a bowl or anywhere else to help a player.

**40 DUTIES OF THE SKIP** The skip has sole charge of the team and all players in the team must follow the skip's instructions.

**40.1 SCORECARD** The skip may transfer the duties of marking the scorecard to other members of the team. However, they must make sure the duties are transferred to players whose positions, in order of play, are the same in each team. If agreement cannot be reached on who should keep the scorecard then the skips in both teams must keep the scorecard.

Finally:

The following introduction contained within the **Forward** of the Laws of the Sport of Bowls is integral to the ethos of the sport:

*'No laws governing a sport can cope with every situation, and the laws governing the sport of bowls are no exception. Unusual situations not covered within the laws can often arise. The Laws of the Sport of Bowls ('the laws') have been drawn up in the spirit of true sportsmanship. So if a situation arises that is not covered by these laws, players, markers and umpires should use their common sense and spirit of fair play to decide on the appropriate course of action.'*