

For the Guidance of Markers

*The purpose of writing this booklet is to give guidance on the principles of marking at **club** level.*

*The Laws of the Sport of Bowls devotes a chapter on 'the markers duties' in the Section headed '**Officials and spectators**' and in following these principles, this booklet explains the reasoning for them.*

Good Markers are noted for their ability of taking players through their game without holding up the flow of play and that the players have confidence and trust in the directions given when asked.

Guidance of Markers

Before the game starts ask which rink the players will use, then ensure the following equipment is at that rink ready for use:

One **Jack**; if used, two 2 metre **Measuring sticks**; **Markers** at each end (used to identify positions of jack or touchers in the ditch) and if used, a **Scoreboard**.

You should know where the Club's measuring equipment is kept - in particular the long tape you will need to measure the length of the delivered jack if you think it has not reached the correct distance.

Have a '**comfort stop**' before the game; you could be on the Green marking for over three hours.

Make sure you know what **game is being played**. It could be the first to 21 shots; a handicap; play to 21 ends or a game of sets. Enter the players names and all other details listed on the scorecard.

Make sure you clearly identify the players on the scorecard to help accidentally entering a score against the wrong player.

Ensure personal equipment is not left on the bank as it could be intentionally used as an illegal mark. Remove such equipment away from the Green.

Carry a **coin** to use in case the players ask you to determine who will have the mat on the first end.

Carry **chalk**; a **Measure** and **Wedges** - non slip.

Have on you a **spare scorecard** when marking games of undetermined ends, e.g. first to 21 shots or handicap games may exceed the entries allowed for on the card.

Mobile phones should never be carried on the Green. **(they are not permitted)**, Switch it off and lock it away. Do not carry wallets or loose change - you need your pockets to carry your measuring equipment.

Before the game introduce yourself to the players. Advise them you **will chalk a 'toucher'** when the bowl stops and **before the next bowl is delivered**.

Request their permission to remove any 'dead' bowls that fall into the ditch or finish outside the rink.

When a player places the mat at the start of an end stand in front of the centre rink marker and ensure the **mat is centred** but use common sense, **do not** alter small discrepancies; I suggest allowing up to a quarter of the mat being offline

The Marker responsible to ensure the jack is delivered to a **minimum length of 23 metres**. If you consider the jack falls short of this length you should insist it is measured - **it is not a matter for the players to decide**.

If the jack is incorrectly delivered return it. The opposing player can reset the mat before delivering the jack a second time. If the jack is incorrectly delivered the second time, **do not return it to the players but place it two metres from the ditch, or on the 'T'**. The original player may move and centre the mat up to **the 25 metre mark** prior to bowling

Never position the jack with your foot - be professional and position the jack by hand.

During an end **stand about one metre to the rear of and about one metre to the side of the head**. This allows you to move a pace forward after the delivery of a bowl to 'read' the head in preparation to answer if asked, the next player's questions with-out unnecessarily delaying the players. This position will also ensure you are not obscuring any legal mark on the bank that a player may be using as a sighting line.

To ensure you do not disturb a player **keep still when they are on the mat and preparing to bowl**.

Mark/chalk any bowl that touches the jack on its **delivery by a player immediately it comes to rest**. Preferably chalk both sides of the bowl so it does not have to be picked up to be checked if moved from its original position.

If the jack or a live bowl (this being a toucher) is sent into the ditch then mark their positions on the bank so the players know where they are.

Never stand on the bank or off the Green during play (this is the action of a sloppy and inattentive Marker) and there is no excuse for this even if the jack is in the ditch.

Be aware of adjoining rinks. A bowl from another disturbing the head could be a disaster in a critical game. You have the right **to stop any bowl or neutral object from another rink likely to disturb the head of your rink**

Anticipate if a player is going to use a 'firing' shot and warn players or Markers on adjoining rinks. When the bowl has been delivered move to the front of the head, turning to face it so you can observe if the bowl hits the jack, it will then be a 'toucher'.

To reduce delaying play complete the scorecard after you have walked to the other end and placed the mat onto the bank; or whilst waiting for the jack to be delivered; or whilst the first bowl is travelling down the Green.

If you are using a scoreboard ask the players to help you, they will normally be quite willing to do so. **Do not** turn over the ends played if these are not required by the type of game being played i.e., first to 21 shots or handicap games.

Players may ask your advice on the position of bowls and distance in relation to the jack. Be accurate with your distances, if a bowl is 18 inches/46cms short do not call it 2 feet/61cms, players will lose confidence in you.

Remember to only reply to questions from the **player who has possession of the rink**. Possession of the rink passes to the player **once the opponent's bowl has come to rest**

Be informative and precise and if you are uncertain who is holding shot say so. State how many a player is holding but do not give additional or unnecessary information that could make it appear you are biased to one player.

If a player asks to visit the head then agree unless the competition or tournament rules forbid or place a control on the practice.

During the game keep the players informed of the score, particularly towards the end of play.

If you are asked to measure **never remove any bowl, but indicate the bowl (s) you consider as shot(s)**. Players can dispute your decision and measure themselves or call on a neutral person to measure whose decision shall be final.

Do remember the 30 second rule that applies to wedging bowls in danger of falling over after the final bowl of the end has been played. On arriving at the head a player may request 30 seconds to elapse before any bowl is secured by a wedge. However, the 30 seconds **started from the time the last bowl came to rest; as the Marker you must have anticipated** this possibility and started your countdown from that point of time.

At the end of the game ensure you have completed the scorecard correctly and the players sign it in agreement. Ensure the scorecard is placed where required by the Club

Congratulate the players, then ensure mats are not left on the Green and the equipment is replaced ready for further use; or is stored away.

Be aware younger players may have only learnt metric measurements so calling out inches and feet may be counterproductive. In this event you could agree to make a visual distance with your hands if you are not competent in metric measurements

At a higher level of marking, and in the absence of an umpire, other requirements are expected of a Marker such as checking the legality of bowls; use of stickers; entering the completion time on scorecard.

The Laws of the Sport of Bowls list the requirements expected from a Marker and I recommend you read these - a copy of the Laws are kept at the Club.

However, do not get bogged down by the laws or annoy others by becoming a 'barrack room lawyer'.

If you have any doubts on points of marking do seek advice.

Have confidence and here's to success in your marking.

Finally:

Dress appropriately for the game as is required by the Club or by other authorities.

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.*

Michael Steele - National umpire

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