

HENLEAZE BOWLING CLUB

Understanding the Etiquette and Strategy of the Game of Bowls

The objective is to raise the level of competence of all members of the club in as short a time as possible. Normally this would take years of experience, so this document is the first step in an effort to try and shorten the time scale.

There are a number of formats for the game of Bowls, ie Singles, Pairs, Triples and Fours.

We shall concentrate on Fours because most of our matches are played as fours; as the name suggests, each team is made up of four players. It is important that each member of the team understands their part within the team and be ready to bowl their wood as soon as their opponent has left the mat.

When a player steps on the mat, prepares and starts to bowl, other players should keep quiet, not move and stay well away from the mat.

NB The Skip may only answer questions or give instructions when the player is actually on the mat.

Lead (or Number 1)

First End – Positions the mat with the front edge 2 metres from the ditch.

Thereafter – the winning end, places the mat with the front edge a minimum of 2 metres from the ditch or up to the minimum length marker.

Places the 1st wood beside the mat before carefully delivering the Jack to a length dictated by the Skip, then centres it from the mat with the help of the Skip.

Delivers their 1st wood as close as possible to the Jack. It is important to stay on the mat and step off as the wood comes to rest, while the Skip signals its proximity to the Jack.

Delivers the 2nd wood as close as possible to the Jack, again staying on the mat for information from Skip; this is also helpful to the next team player.

It is important for the Lead to keep away from both the mat and the head, until the start of the next end and not distract the remaining players.

Number 2 (or second)

Delivers both woods as directed by Skip. It is important to stay on the mat and step off as the wood comes to rest, while the Skip signals its proximity to the Jack.

At this point it is important for the No.2 to keep away from both mat and head until their turn in the next end.

In some matches the No.2 will be required to complete the score card, and if playing at home to keep the scoreboard updated.

NB The overall objective of the first two positions is to hold shot, but equally important is to have a number of woods in the head. Therefore Nos. 1 & 2 should normally be asked to play drawing shots into the head, leaving conversion and running shots to Nos. 3 & 4, who should be more able to play those shots.

Number 3 (or third)

Before start of play the No.3 must ensure they have a measure and chalk.

Delivers both woods as directed by Skip; this might be a drawing, positional or running shot; once more it is important to stay on the mat and step off as the wood comes to rest while the Skip signals its proximity to the Jack.

Throughout the match – to help the Lead and No.2 to understand the Skip's directions. Give positive information to the Skip when it is their turn to bowl, drawing attention to changes to the head.

Informs the Skip of the outcome of their woods as they come to rest, marking any touching woods as required.

When all woods have been delivered, agrees the number of shots for or against with the opposite No.3, measuring as required, and decide the score for each end.

Woods should only be removed from the head by the No.3 conceding the shots without interference or comment by any other team members, all of whom should stand well away from the head. Woods removed (by hand, not kicked) as scoring shots should be easily identifiable (eg placed on a towel) until the final score is determined.

Conveys the score for each end to the Skip and also to the No.2 if they are keeping the score. One method is to indicate the hand on the upper arm for shots up and the hand on the upper leg for shots down.

Skip (or Number 4)

The Skip has overall responsibility for the rink.

Indicates the length of Jack required by the lead and centres the Jack as indicated.

Challenges any under-length Jack.

Gives clear positive information as to what shot is required to build a successful head, not just the hand but the weight as well, when each player is on the mat.

Gives clear information on each wood as it comes to rest and the player steps off the mat.

Marks any touchers before the next wood comes to rest.

Delivers their first wood based on the head they have just left, and then awaits information from the No.3 before delivering their second wood.

Settles any disputed points with the opposite Skip.

In some matches the Skip will be required to complete the score card and if playing at home to keep the score board updated.

Other Etiquette Considerations

Do not walk across rinks that other people are using.

Don't drop your woods onto the green and ensure that your delivery is not causing scuff marks or otherwise damaging the green.

During the game do not move around the head when your opponent is about to deliver his bowl. Stand well back from the head, keep quiet and do not do anything that would distract your opponent. Wait until the bowl has been delivered before moving.

On sunny days you must also ensure that your shadow does not fall on the Jack.

Spectators/players who are in the player's line of vision should also keep still while woods are being delivered and they should not distract players on the green.

Mobile phones should not be used on or around the green.

Bowling is a friendly game and all players should show courtesy and good sportsmanship.

Keep things friendly and contribute towards the enjoyment of the game for everyone involved, both on and off the green.

NB This is a basic guide and the full rules can be found in the booklet "World Bowls" issued to all members on joining the club.