

Welcome to Lawn Bowling at Reading Bowling Club

*Founded in 1803
Moved to Kendrick Road in 1892*

Affiliated to: Bowls England, RCBBA and L&SCBA



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The Game



Bowls truly is the sport for all – all ages, sexes and abilities. It takes just a short time to learn – and the rest of your bowling career to master!

The bowling green is divided into playing areas called rinks. Markers indicate the edge and centre of each rink. The object of the game is very simple. Players take turns to roll (deliver) their bowls (woods) from a mat at one end of the rink towards a small white ball (the jack) at the other end. When all bowls from all players have been delivered, the score is counted and this forms one 'end' of the game. The aim is to get one or more of your bowls closer to the jack than those of your opponents on each end – one point is scored for each counting bowl.



The jack can be moved by the bowls during play. The jack is left in the new position, even if it goes into the ditch, provided it is still within the rink boundaries. A bowl which moves the jack is called a 'toucher' and is marked with chalk. It remains 'live' even if it falls into the ditch and can therefore still be part of the final count for that end.

'Rinks' are games with four people on each team and are usually 21 ends long. 'Triples' are games with three people on each team and are usually 18 ends long. 'Pairs' and 'Singles' games can also be played.

Players' Roles in Team Games:

- The Skip is in charge of the team and (with the opposing Skip) has final say in any disputed shots.
- The Third (in Rinks) and the Second (in Triples) measures any disputed shots.
- The Lead places the mat and delivers, then centres, the jack.



Getting Started

The first thing you need is a pair of flat-soled bowling shoes and preferably a few introductory sessions with a qualified coach who will advise you how to deliver the bowls smoothly and effectively. Before you buy any bowls of your own, it is advisable to try several sets of bowls to find a set that suits you. They come in different sizes, weights, makes and even colours. It is the shape of the bowl that makes it turn. This is called the bias. As it slows down, the curved path taken by the bowl is always towards the side with the smaller disc. Bowls come in sets of four and each is identical. The bias of different sets varies but every set must meet the minimum standards for bias.

Technique

Before delivering your bowl you should stand with at least one foot fully on the mat. It is recommended that you stand with your feet parallel and slightly apart, pointing along the line on which the bowl is going to travel. Your stance should be well balanced and comfortable.

The bowl should be held for both comfort and control, and on a line just outside your hip so allowing for an unimpeded backswing followed by a forward swing in a pendulum action. Bending the knees on the forward swing allows the bowl to be released as close to the ground as possible so that it can be delivered smoothly and the bowling hand should continue forward on a smooth 'follow through'. Most players also step forward at the same time.



At the moment of delivery, the player should have all or part of one foot either on or above the mat, otherwise it is a 'foot fault'. It is best to ask a qualified coach to look at your delivery and give you advice about your stance, grip and swing.

They Moved My Bowl



Illustrated by
George Booth

A Simple Guide to the Etiquette of Bowls



- Introduce yourself to your team and opponents.
- Dress appropriately and let the Captain know you have arrived at least 20 minutes before the start time of the match.

- Look after the Green! Please don't stand on the edges or run across it.
- Be aware of when others are delivering their bowl and don't move across their line of vision, especially when walking down the path.
- During your game, stand quietly, still and well back from the 'head' or the mat when others are delivering.
- While waiting for others to deliver, be aware that you are not obscuring the centre number or markers, or that on sunny days your shadow is not obscuring the jack/head of the game.
- Leave the bowls in position until all shots have been measured and agreed. Stand well back if you are not the one responsible for measuring.
- Possession of the rink belongs to the team who is 'on the mat' delivering the bowl. This is the time when advice and instructions can be given by their team players. As soon as the bowl comes to rest, possession is transferred to the other team, time being allowed for marking a 'toucher'.
- If you arrive to practise and a match is in progress on the green, please ask the Captain of the match if you may use any of the spare rinks for your 'roll-up'.
- Win or lose, encourage and compliment others and enjoy your game!



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