

BOWLS ETIQUETTE

In order for all players to receive the maximum enjoyment from each game, a code of behaviour that is practised consistently, incorporating common sense, thoughtfulness, good sportsmanship and mutual respect is essential. The general term for this code is ETIQUETTE and it is the responsibility of all bowlers to apply it. Richard has endeavoured to produce a comprehensive list of points for both old and new bowlers, so that breaches are minimised. Inadvertent breaches will no doubt still occur and it is important that injured parties avoid overreacting and politely remind transgressors of the correct etiquette in each case.

POINTS OF ETIQUETTE

1. Bowlers should be acquainted with and observe all the laws of the game and any local club rules.
2. Players should be ready to commence play immediately after the bell sounds, dressed correctly and wearing the appropriate footwear.
3. Respect the carpet by placing your bowls not dropping them and protect it from foreign bodies, e.g. grippo, food and drink, nail clippings, etc. If eating sweets don't unwrap them on the green as little particles of sweet can drop on the carpet and become embedded in it.
4. All players should shake hands and introduce themselves where necessary before the commencement of the game.
5. Skips are always in charge and responsible for their team, other players should await instructions on mat placement, jack length and shot to be played.
6. When about to bowl, other players should be at least 1 metre behind the mat, standing still and quiet.
7. Similarly, players at the head end should be behind the jack, stationary and quiet and careful not to obscure rink or centre markings. Remember white shoes can hide the jack when standing directly behind it.
8. When it's your team's turn to bowl, you are in "possession of the rink" which includes both the mat and head areas and your opponents should be away from both. Questions, information or instructions should only be shouted during the period of possession.
9. Possession of the rink transfers to your opposition the moment your bowl stops.
10. After delivering a bowl, the player should retire at least 1 metre behind the mat before the bowl comes to rest. In some matches it is permissible to follow your bowl down the green, but you must beat it to the head.
11. There should be no trespassing into neighbouring rinks, except to retrieve a wayward bowl.
12. If an end is killed, undelivered bowls should be carried down the green and place behind the mat. It is extremely dangerous to send bowls down haphazardly and very distracting to bowlers on adjacent rinks.
13. Never make comments about your opponent's woods as they approach the head other than to acknowledge a good bowl.
14. Encouraging your own team's woods is perfectly acceptable but never applaud or say well bowled to outrageously lucky shots, an acknowledgment of your good fortune is preferable.
15. League or competition games limited to a maximum of 2 hours must not be compromised by late starts, excessive discussion on shot selection and worst of all, blatant time wasting delivering the last jack before end bell when holding a slender lead.
16. Always walk up the centre of your rink as quickly as you are able particularly when it is not your team's turn to bowl.

17. Only one player from each team agrees the number of shots won/lost, other players should stand clear. If an umpire is called, agree and remove those bowls not involved and move away, you are done, the umpires' decision is final.
18. Players should concentrate on their game and be prepared to "field" when a weighted shot is attempted to prevent disturbance on a neighbouring rink.
19. When an end is completed, all players should help gather bowls to well behind the mat.
20. As the team that wins the toss or the previous end fetches and places the mat, it is not unreasonable to expect the opposition to remove the mat and place it flat behind the centre marking after their final bowl.
21. Do not openly criticize the playing surface, your team mates or your opponents. Refrain from using bad language at all times.
22. After the game all players should again shake hands and commiserate/congratulate your opponents.
23. When walking around the green try not to distract bowlers who are on the mat about to bowl, especially when walking down the sides of the end rinks.
24. Mobile phones should never be used on the green and if taken into the bowls hall should be switched off or on silent.
25. No running on the green and no sitting on the edge of the bank. It can be quite off-putting to bowlers on the adjacent rinks.

Many thanks to Richard Button who produced these Points of Bowls Etiquette from personal experience and extensive research on the internet. He hopes that all bowlers find this guide interesting, useful and a practical reference in this most important area of our fantastic sport.