

Introduction to Bowls



“Creating Opportunities”

Revised Edition

Bowls NSW Development Team 2011

Welcome to the game of bowls

This booklet will give you some basic information about the great game of bowls. We hope you enjoy playing the game

Object of the game

To get your bowls closer to the jack (small white ball) than your opponent. The more bowls you have close the more shots you score

Bowls requires very little equipment, all you need is bowls (usually 4), the jack, the mat and a space on the green to play (called a rink)

Safety

Though bowls is not terribly dangerous you should always observe the following basic safety tips;

- Never stop speeding bowls with your hands or feet
- Never walk backwards to avoid stepping on bowls
- Never deliver the bowl at full speed towards a player
- Be careful not to drop bowls on your feet
- Be careful when stepping on and off the green

The grip and delivery

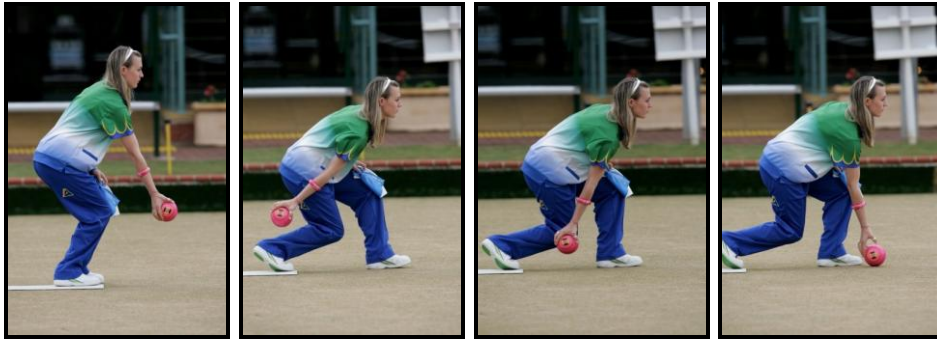
All bowls have a bias (weighted side) on one side, this means that the bowl will bend towards the bias. The bias is defined by a small ring on one side of the bowl, the other side has a large ring. The photos below show the large ring of the bowl

To grip the bowl spread your fingers evenly along the bottom of the bowl, place your thumb resting off to the side of the bowl or wherever feels comfortable so that the bowl does not fall out when you turn your hand over



To deliver a bowl is easy, both feet start on the mat, with your whole body facing the direction in which you want the bowl to go. The preferred arm is swung straight back then straight forward rolling the bowl

The bowl is not aimed at the jack (small white ball), instead to a path that will allow the bowl to arc “draw” to the jack



Types of shots you can play in bowls, the “draw” shot and “running shot” (also known as the drive). To begin with it is best to learn how to accurately “draw” to the jack. The diagram above shows a right handed bowler playing a backhand shot, or a left handed bowler playing a forehand shot. The “running” shot is used to remove an opponent’s bowl or the jack

Playing a game

A game can be played as singles, pairs, triples and fours. There are organised competitions if you are the competitive type or you can play socially with your friends and other club members



Etiquette

This is a quick guide to etiquette, for individual and team play

Etiquette simply means displaying good sportsmanship based on the traditions of the game. This applies to everyone associated with the sport of bowls. Applying common sense goes a long way to displaying good sportsmanship

- Be on time for any game that you have arranged
- Switch off your mobile phone or other electronic devices before commencing a game
- Always greet your opponent with a friendly handshake at the start of a game
- Look after the bowling green, do not drop your bowls onto the green
- Hand your opponent the mat and jack at the start of play
- Commend good bowls and acknowledge your own fluky or lucky bowls
- Show respect for every opponent by not disturbing them while they are on the mat
- Players should not walk up the green until the bowl of the player on the mat has come to rest
- At completion of the game the graceful loser should congratulate the modest winner with a handshake
- Bowls is a very inclusive sport, be sure to treat all opponents with the same amount of respect that you want to be treated
- The lead lays the mat and rolls the jack
- The second should provide positive reinforcement to all team players
- The third looks after the head while the skip is on the mat, measures and considers all bowls in the count
- The skip is the leader of the team and should provide positive comments and display positive body language to keep the team focused
- All players should assist in kicking back the bowls at completion of an end
- Do not drink excessive amounts of alcohol, or use bad or offensive language or gestures
- Be aware of the rules regarding drinking and smoking on greens
- If you are a smoker be considerate of the non-smokers
- Avoid disturbing players on other rinks by not walking onto their rink or making excessive noise
- Spectators should only clap and cheer at appropriate times
- Show respect for all markers and umpires as they are giving up their time so you can enjoy the game
- Show respect for all club officials and staff when in the club

Commonly used expressions

There are many different expressions used throughout a game of bowls and many of these expressions will mean nothing to a new bowler.

This is a guide to help you understand these expressions and make sense of the bowls talk. There are many more and they will vary from club to club

Expression and meaning

Draw on your forehand – to draw a shot down the right hand side of the green (example for a right hander)

Draw a shot on your backhand – to draw a shot down the left side of the green (example for a right hander)

Trail the jack, yard over, tickle it round the corner, rest that bowl, sit him out – these are terms used when you are asked to disturb the head of bowls with minimum amount of weight

Too wide, who do you know out there, too much grass – when you have played your bowl too wide of the intended line (be sure to use these in a positive manner)

You are, narrow, tight, skinny, under the head, not enough grass, don't cross the head – when you have played a bowl under the intended line (be sure to use in a positive manner such as, *"you were narrow with your last mate, just a bit more grass"* then a supportive clap)

Toucher – when the delivered bowl comes in contact with the jack

Mark it – a term used after a bowl has touched the jack (when a bowl touches the jack it must be marked with chalk to indicate that the bowl is a toucher, if the bowl ends up in the ditch it is still a live bowl)

Cover these bowls – you may be asked to play a bowl to a danger area on the green, this is an area where you could drop a large amount of shots if the jack moves there

Swinger, controlled weight, ditch weight – these terms are generally used when you are asked to disturb the head with slightly less weight than a full drive

Hit it, have a drive, have a run, smack it, rip him out, take it out, kill it – to have a forceful shot using maximum weight comfortable to the individual



This bowler has just been asked to 'smack it'

General information

Personal requirements

Bowls requires minimal levels of fitness or strength but there is some degree of bending required. There are devices called bowling arms to assist people with this, phone the Bowls NSW Development Team to find out more

Clothing

Clean and appropriate clothing should be worn all at times. If unsure about your appearance ask the bowls coordinator/secretary or staff member

Sun protection

As most greens are outdoors it is always advisable to wear a hat and apply sunscreen to your face, arms and back of the neck. Long sleeve shirts are also a good idea

Fluids

Regular fluid intake during sport is very important, even though bowls is not very physically demanding the body will still lose fluid and this should be replaced. Water is the best replacement however sport drinks or soft drinks are acceptable. Alcohol is often associated with bowls but in reality will dehydrate you

Bowls and other equipment

All bowling clubs will loan you a set of bowls if you don't have your own. A set consists of 4 bowls. These are usually an older style of bowl that will be very wide drawing. These are a great bowl to learn with and you will have plenty of fun with them. Take care of these bowls as if they were your own and return when finished. You should get your own set of bowls as soon as possible because nothing beats playing with your own set of bowls

Bowls manufacturers

You can locate these online or by phone

Henselite www.henselite.com.au or phone Head Office 03 9488 0488

Taylor www.comfitpro.com.au or phone 02 9700 8500

Drakes Pride www.drakespride.com.au or phone 03 5443 7133

Greenmaster www.greenmaster.com.au or phone 02 9674 7777

Edge www.edgebowls.com.au or phone 03 9488 0488

Bowls NSW: www.rnsdba.org.au or phone 02 92834555

Bowls Australia www.bowlsaustralia.com.au or phone 03 9480 7100

Club Information

Club: _____ **Phone:** _____

President: _____

Secretary: _____

Bowls Coordinator: _____ **Phone:** _____

Bowls Days: _____ **Start time:** _____

_____ **Start time:** _____

_____ **Start time:** _____

_____ **Start time:** _____

Club Coach/s: _____ **Phone:** _____

_____ **Phone:** _____

Bistro/Restaurant: _____ **Phone:** _____

Important Events: _____ **Date:** _____

_____ **Date:** _____

_____ **Date:** _____

_____ **Date:** _____

Greens closed: _____

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