

## Lawn Bowls Etiquette

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Lawn bowling happens to be one of the games with several rules of etiquette. These rules, especially once learned and appreciated, create a pleasant game for all involved.

Are you a beginner in lawn bowling? These rules present critical lawn bowls practices worth considering the next time you are on the rink.

### **WHAT IS LAWN BOWLS ETIQUETTE?**

Lawn bowls etiquette refers to guidelines which control the way responsible players behave when bowling. They ensure an enjoyable experience for everyone playing, and watching. They are simple, common-sense rules which can be followed easily.

### **BE ON TIME**

Timekeeping is perhaps one of the oldest rules on courtesy. The greatest way to start lawn bowling is by showing up on time for a game. Arriving on time will also give you adequate time to change before the game. Being early will also give you a chance to help organize the equipment and familiarise yourself with the game. Ensure all equipment, jacks and mats are in position before the game begins.

### **DRESS APPROPRIATELY**

Ensure that you know the dress code for the game to avoid looking confused. Stay informed and pack your gear in good time to avoid forgetting the essentials. Remember not to arrive in your bowling shoes in case you carry harmful fungus to the greens.

### **STAND STILL WHEN SOMEONE IS ABOUT TO BOWL**

Lawn bowling is a game of concentration. Distractions are of least importance when playing, and for this reason, you should avoid moving around when someone else is playing. If you are at the head, wait until the person playing is done bowling, then move.

If you are at the same end as the player delivering the bowl, stay away from the mat and the player's line of vision. You are expected to stand at least one

meter behind the mat. On sunny days, ensure that your shadow is not cast upon the jack. Likewise, if you are in white shoes, avoid standing behind a white jack because your shoes will interfere with the player's vision.

If you are standing at the head, stay inside the rink markers but avoid obscuring the central rink number. Also, stay silent during the game. Being loud is equally distracting and unnecessary when you can communicate with signals.

### **BE ALERT AS YOU WALK AROUND ADJACENT RINKS**

Usually, bowl clubs will organize their rinks in parallel, which means the people next to you could be involved in a completely different game. When walking to a game, to the clubhouse or anywhere around the lawns, stay alert.

It would be quite unfortunate if you walked into a game and tripped over a bowl because you were not looking. Restrict all walking to the steps provided to avoid walking across other people's rinks.

Also, avoid standing or sitting on the banks while waiting to play. People tend to place their feet on the greens while sitting on the banks, which is damaging to the edges of the greens.

### **OBSERVE THE RULES OF POSSESSION**

According to the rules, after you have delivered a bowl, you have two choices. If you desire to track your bowl, you must be at the head when it stops. If you choose to stay at the mat, you must be there when the bowl stops. By observing this rule, you ensure that the next player gets to play immediately when your turn is over. Avoid frustrating other players by following the rules.

The rules also state that the rink shall belong to the team whose bowl is being played. While playing, players in possession of the rink shall not be disturbed or interfered with. If you have business to conduct at the clubhouse, wait till after the game and start a conversation over drinks.

### **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ARE IN ORDER**

Competition is a critical ingredient in enjoying a game, but so is acknowledgment. Good bowling is the appreciation of skill to keep the congenial spirit alive. Congratulating an opponent, or tapping a player on the back for making an exceptional move is always in order. Also, take note of lucky shots and acknowledge them whenever necessary.

## **DO NOT DROP THAT BOWL**

Dropping or throwing bowls on the green for no particular reason is considered impolite. Bowling greens are delicate and dropping bowls on them could damage the greens. You should not kick bowls or drop them. Pick them up gently and place them on the ground if you do not need them.

## **ENTER AND LEAVE THE MAT ON THE RIGHT SIDE**

The rules are simple. Once it is your time to bowl, come into the mat from the left side and once you are done bowling, step off from the right side of the mat. It is customary to observe this rule to avoid bumping into other players as you exit the mat.

## **SEND SIGNALS FROM THE HEAD END**

If you have visited a bowling green; you have probably realised that it is difficult to see the results without walking on the green. However, if you are standing at the head end, it is easier for you to observe the game. Signal your team player as necessary. Tap your knee to signal that the struck bowl belongs to the adversary team or tap your shoulder if the struck bowl is yours.

## **SHAKE HANDS**

It is good sportsmanship to shake hands before and after a game, and introduce yourself when necessary. After a game, it is tempting to leave immediately, especially after losing. Ensure that you shake hands. It is also customary to offer to buy drinks after you win a game.

## **KEEP THE COMPLAINTS TO YOURSELF**

Perhaps your green was not as smooth as you expected, or you are at loggerheads with one of your team players. It would be wise not to complain about any green, including yours, or about other people, especially at the bowl club. As earlier stated, bowling is a game of propriety, and pointless complaining is impolite.

## **HOW TO HANDLE WRONG-DOING**

Unfortunately, even with several rules of propriety, behavior contrary to the rules will arise once in a while. Whether deliberate or as a result of a mistake, a breach can be dealt with using the following framework.

Politely ask the player to stop breaking the rules. If necessary, explain which laws they are breaking through their behavior. If the person is an opponent, be careful not to use insulting or vulgar language as it is contrary to lawn bowling custom.

If your attempt to inform them fails, seek the help of a knowledgeable club member. A third party may be in a better position to resolve the dispute before it escalates to the Board of Management. The third party's opinion should be respected, and if necessary, he should be allowed to watch the game and note the relevant behavior carefully.

If all efforts should fail and the resolution is unsatisfactory, parties in dispute should report the matter to the Board of Management. The Board will do its best to gather evidence and deal with the issue appropriately. The consequences of a breach could lead to disqualification or the suspension of a member.

Above all, it is imperative to remember that disputes are bound to arise and can be resolved without extending the matter beyond the game or the clubhouse. Always strive to maintain good relationships with all players at the clubhouse and be mindful of your words.

## **CONCLUSION**

Observing the rules above is a great place to start if you are learning how to play lawn bowls. By following common etiquette, lawn bowling can be a pleasant game for you and those around you.

*Information courtesy of Jack High Bowls  
<https://www.jackhighbowls.com/help/lawn-bowls-rules-and-etiquette>*