



LAWN BOWLS ETIQUETTE: A GUIDE FOR NEW BOWLERS

Lawn Bowls has a set of concrete rules, but like cricket, it also has a softer set of guidelines. These unspoken rules of etiquette make the game flow pleasantly for all involved. In essence, lawn bowls etiquette is the code of behaviour that, if followed, ensures that bowlers generally treat each other with respect. There's no place in bowls for argument or vulgarity and players are expected to consistently uphold good behaviour. Here's a guide to some of the finer points of lawn bowls etiquette to help you make sure you stay in both your teammate's and opponent's good books.

STAND STILL AT THE HEAD END WHEN SOMEONE IS ABOUT TO BOWL:

The bowling player needs to concentrate and there's nothing more distracting than somebody moving around in the head. Show courtesy by remaining still while they play their shot.

AVOID WALKING ON TO ADJACENT RINKS:

Bowls clubs usually arrange their rinks in parallel, which means there may well be people playing an entirely separate game next to you. Be aware of where the neighbouring rinks are and avoid walking on them when you make your way to the jack, the clubhouse, or when walking from one side of the green to the other.

ACKNOWLEDGE SKILFUL BOWLING:

Closely-fought bowls matches can be a consuming engagement, but it's bad form to get so involved that you don't acknowledge good bowling. Make a point of congratulating opposing players on exceptional shots or game-winners, even if it was hardly what you were hoping for. A respectful clap or friendly pat on the back goes a long way to maintaining the congenial spirit of the game.

BOWL – DON'T DROP:

Bowling greens are delicate and it's easy to cause damage by throwing or dropping a bowl. Different players have different delivery styles, but it's polite to make sure your technique isn't damaging the green or causing scuff marks. If it is, attempt to try and bowl more gently. Also, bowls should never be picked up and dropped out of laziness - pick up and put down, or kick them along with your feet.

ENTER AND LEAVE THE MAT ON THE CORRECT SIDE:

When you're ready to bowl, step onto the mat from the left, and when you've played your bowl, step off the right side of the mat. It's standard protocol and is intended to stop you colliding with the next player.

SIGNAL TO YOUR TEAMMATES FROM THE HEAD END:

It's difficult to see the results of your bowl without walking down the green to take a closer look. So, if you're at the head watching your teammate bowl, then you need to remember to let them know whether their bowl hits an opponent's or their own.

AND LASTLY - SHAKE HANDS:

Sometimes after a bitter defeat there's a strong urge to exit the green as soon as possible. Do remember to shake hands with your opponent(s) – you'll be glad you held yourself to that benchmark of sportsmanship when you look back.

Follow these tips and you'll help to ensure a pleasant bowling experience for you, your teammates and your opponents. Bowls is a sport that attracts co-operative, considerate people – you'll find that when you follow proper bowling etiquette, others will too, and your games will be that much richer as a result.