

Bowls Etiquette

(It's Just Good Manners)

Bowling etiquette is about good sportsmanship, common sense and good manners, and, although some items are, most are not specifically covered in the 'Laws of the Sport'. This guidance may be very useful for newcomers to the sport, but not exclusively to this category for many bowlers of long experience sometimes fall into 'bad habits', perhaps not being aware of doing so, and therefore these notes would be useful for them too.

We play the sport for enjoyment, for the pleasure of pitting our skills against others, in friendly competition, and our sport has a long tradition for its common courtesy and etiquette. Here follows a few points for your consideration:

1. Be punctual for your game. Being late could be considered disrespectful to your opponents and if in a team game, to your own colleagues too, and being rushed before an important game puts you at a disadvantage. Ensure you are dressed appropriately for the game you are about to play.
2. Introduce yourselves to your opponents by your first names, and exchange handshakes before the game, with perhaps a friendly comment such as 'Enjoy your game', or even 'Have a good game'.
3. During the game, whilst at the 'mat end' do not move about and make disturbing noises whilst an opponent is on the mat, nor stand in a position where you might be in your opponent's line of vision, or in sunny conditions allow your shadow to cause distraction to the bowler. (The Laws of the Sport say a player should stand at least 1 metre behind the mat.)
4. During the game, whilst at the 'head end' when an opponent is on the mat and ready to deliver a bowl:
 - a. Do not move about in or near the 'head' as it can be a distraction to the person about to bowl.
 - b. Stand well behind the 'head' when your opponent is on the mat, and, if the jack is in the ditch, stand on the bank behind the "Head" (Law 36 says quite a lot about this subject)
 - c. In sunny conditions avoid allowing your shadow to cover the jack.
 - d. Avoid obscuring rink centre or boundary markers.
 - e. Possession of the rink will belong to the player or team whose bowl is being played. Once your bowl has stopped, you must relinquish the mat to the opposition and no further discussion can take place with your skip until you are back on the mat.
 - f. After delivering your bowl, and it coming to rest, there are only two places you should be, behind the mat or behind the head. Not

anywhere in between or stepping off onto an adjacent rink (unused or not). As soon as your bowl has come to rest your opponent is entitled to deliver a bowl immediately - not wait for you to get out of the way.

5. At the conclusion of each end, unless you are the player responsible for measuring and agreeing shots scored, keep well away from the 'head' and do not under any circumstances 'kick away' or otherwise move any bowls in the head until the score has been clearly declared.
6. When walking between ends please ensure that you stay within your own rink and preferably in the middle of the rink. If you need to discuss the situation of the head with your playing partners, please do so at the head and not half way up the green as this can cause a distraction to the adjacent rinks.
7. Compliment your opponents, as well as your own colleagues, for a well delivered bowl. In the event of your opponent having a 'lucky' result, do not make any derogatory comments, although you might think them. Better to say nothing in this situation. If one of your own players has a 'lucky' shot, please do not say 'Well bowled' because it was not well bowled, it was a fluke. Do not use offensive language or gestures.
8. Do not openly criticise the green, your own players, and more importantly your opponents. If you cannot say something positive it is better to say nothing. If there is need for some critical comment make it in private, not openly in front of other players or spectators.
9. Pay attention to the game on your rink. It is very frustrating to your teammates if they feel that you are not giving your full attention to the game by, for example, frequently leaving the green or chatting to players on another rink, or in these modern times, using a mobile telephone on the green during play. If one must carry a mobile phone whilst on the green make sure it is turned to silent so as not to disturb other players.
10. Do not walk behind the rinks, either during or at the end of your game, when players on another rink are about to bowl from the far end.
11. Treat the green you are playing on with respect. It is costly to maintain, and everyone should try to deliver their bowls without 'digging them' into the turf.
12. Be a gracious winner and a good loser. Shake your opponent's and team mate's hands afterwards and thank them for the game. It is customary to go back into the club after a game and offer a drink to your opposite number.