

Pony Night Handbook

March 2023

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Introduction

Lawn Bowling is fun and anyone - we promise - can pick up the basics in a few hours. What Pony Night does for you as a new bowler is give you the opportunity to learn and practice those skills in a supportive, social, peer environment designed to build skill, confidence and further your love of this sport. Consider Pony Night your first stop in a lifelong love for lawn bowling.

No other club in the Lower Mainland offers a program like this to its new bowlers. Why do we do this? We do it for our love and respect of this game. We do it to continue to build community and further a passion for what is a lifelong sport. NVLBC has a long history in this community and Pony Night helps us build on that relationship. The evening draw is run by seasoned, competitive bowlers and coaches, many ranked and at the top of their game. By the end of your time in Pony League you decide what your interest is and which path to take: bowling socially, or training to compete. Either way your time in Pony League sets you up nicely.

For anyone who hasn't been involved with sport before, it might be difficult to understand how much an individual may dedicate their time and effort to this club, simply from their love of lawn bowling. Imagine the commitment of someone waking up early almost every spring/summer weekend for 20 or more years to be at the club by 9am, spending the day rolling bowls, competing and building relationships with 50+ other bowlers. Well, there are a few members of NVLBC who can claim that achievement, and many others who envy those few. Being prepared, being on time, and being aware of your imprint on others are the greatest gifts of respect you can show your fellow bowlers. This handbook will help you learn the game, honor your peers, emphasize sportsmanship, teach the ideals of our club and help you have fun during your time at NVLBC.

Pony Night History

In 1984, former member, Vera Bunting, with the assistance of Jack, her husband, started Pony League. Vera chose the name Pony League and was dedicated to organizing and running the event for many years. Even as she battled cancer, she watched her Ponies from the benches every Tuesday. Pony League has been convened by numerous volunteers and coaches over the past 25 years including: Eleanor Bolton with husband Jim, Pat Aarvold, Deb Larman, Judy Jackson, Lynne Owen, John Speers, Bev Cutler, Anne Jackson, Jim Fitzsimmons and Pat McKenzie. Also, over the last 15 years three volunteers have come every Tuesday just to prepare the tea and coffee for the Ponies: Helen Galen, Willie Gillis, and Isobelle Houston. Our club is so fortunate to have such dedicated volunteers who make it one of the best in the country.

NVLBC Code of Ethics

LAWN BOWLER'S CODE OF ETHICS

- I will play the game with a spirit of good sportsmanship.
- I will conduct myself in an honorable manner both on and off the green.
- I will never knowingly break a rule, but if I do I will divulge the breach.
- I will take no action that could be interpreted as an attempt to intimidate or demean my opponents, teammates or officials.
- I will interpret the rules in an impartial manner, always keeping in mind that the purpose of the rules is to ensure that the game is played in an orderly and fair manner.
- I will humbly accept any penalty with the governing body at any level of lawn bowling deems appropriate, if I am found in violation of the Code of Ethics or the rules of the game.

COACH'S CODE OF ETHICS

- I will act in a manner that shows respectful of the dignity of all participants in our sport. Fundamental to this principle is the basic assumption that each person has value and is worthy of respect.
- I will strive to be well prepared and current in order that all my duties are fulfilled with competence.
- I will accept both the letter and the spirit of the rule that define and govern our sport.
- I will conduct myself with courtesy, good faith and respect when dealing with other coaches, officials participants and members of the public.
- I will maintain the highest standards of personal conduct and the principals of Fair Play.

NVLBC ETIQUETTE ON THE GREENS

- Arrive at least 15 minutes before the game time, prepared to play.
- Dress correctly for all games wearing white or club colours or team colours when required.
- Follow all conditions of play as stated by convenors.
- Greet and shake hands of team and opponents.
- Be ready to bowl when it is your turn so as not to slow the game.
- Stand still and quiet when a player is on the mat.
- Remain behind the mat or on the bank if it is not your turn. Don't block sight lines.
- Remember when your bowl stops, possession of the head passes to your opponent.
- Pay attention to the game, giving your full concentration and effort.
- Stand back when Thirds measure and score.
- Walk down the centre of the ring when changing ends
- If you can't speak positively about your team, opponents or green, don't say anything at all.
- Be a gracious winner or loser.
- Above all, treat your teammates and opponents in a respectful and courteous manner.

Foreword

This handbook is a compilation of online resources and personal experiences. It was created to fill in some missing components to Pony Night we encountered during the 2020 season amid the Covid 19 pandemic.

Since all bowling was scheduled online, the draw was done before the bowlers arrived at the club. Bowlers knew their rink locations and as they practiced social distancing, stayed only to their rinks. Due to this lack of interaction we lost the conversation the conveners and coaches would have had with the Pony group. Pre-Covid, conveners would bring up talking points, coaches discussed lessons, explained rules, terms and answered a multitude of questions.

Another issue surfaced with social distancing guidelines, as group conversation was siloed, information was not as easily passed on as previous seasons and the group could not learn as a whole. This Handbook is intended to bridge the knowledge gap, to give new bowlers a base of information and reference material, as well as talking points to discuss with their peers and coaches each week. Equally, bowlers can dive ahead and read the more advanced instructions.

The Handbook is divided into 16 sections. Each section offers lessons in 4 different categories.

1. Bowling Basics: Discusses details on the game every bowler should know.
2. Etiquette: Presents some “unwritten rules” bowlers will want to learn for bowling with peers.
3. Tips: An extension of Coaching lessons you will already have taken with the head coach.
4. Best Practices: An offering of practices and suggestions to help improve your game.

Pony Night bowlers will be asked to read up on the latest section prior to each pony session. The “section per week” instructions are meant not to overload new bowlers, more envisioned as a reference and point of conversation at the rink, with other players and coaches.

If you miss a Pony Night or join the season late, don't worry. The handbook is an instructional guide to teach the basics, with no one left behind. For those with more bowling experience, feel free to read ahead. Your feedback and adjustments are welcome.

Enjoy.

Mike Kelly
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Glossary

2 Metre mark: Often referred to as the “T” - The furthestmost position that the jack can be placed following the lead bowler rolling the jack at the start of an end. If the jack is rolled past this point, and remains within the rink boundaries, the jack is spotted on the designated mark, positioned 2 metres back from the ditch.

Artificial: Rink surface made of man made materials, as compared to grass greens.

Back bowl: A bowl placed behind the head, positioned so that if the opposition trails the jack from its current position towards the back of the rink, the back bowl may become shot or reduce the number of shots that the opposition may have if moved to this part of the rink.

Bias: The curved path along which a bowl travels from delivery until it comes to rest. (the shape of the bowl gives it its bias).

Bias side of a bowl: The side of the bowl that is the more rounded of the two sides, which is identified by the small grooved rings surrounding its centre (Little to the middle). (the non-bias side is identified by the large grooved rings surrounding its centre)

Bowls Organizations: When you join NVLBC your membership fees pay for your inclusion to other bowling organizations who coordinate games beyond what our club offers in a season. Locally you belong to your Club, [North Vancouver Lawn Bowling Club](#). Regionally you are a member of the [Vancouver & District Lawn Bowling Association](#) (V&D) Provincially you belong to [Bowls BC](#) which is a member of the federal organization [Bowls Canada Boulingrin](#)

Burnt End: A burnt or burned end is one where the Jack has been moved outside the boundaries of the rink by a bowl in play. Conditions of Play determine if burnt ends must be replayed or the jack is respotted on the 2 Metre mark.

Centering the jack: Placing the jack on the center line of the rink, at the same distance from the mat line as it was when it came to rest.

Chalk: Used to indicate a toucher; a bowl that has touched the jack as part of its initial delivery during an end. A player in charge of the head will use a piece of chalk, or chalk spray, to place a mark, which must be done before the next bowl comes to a rest, and must be removed before the bowl is delivered in the next end.

Conditions of Play: Rules used by controlling bodies to govern competitions. Club competitions that lead to winners being awarded a club title, qualify for district, national or international title, or receiving financial rewards, must make sure their Conditions of Play align with the requirements described in the *Laws Of the Sport of Bowls*: Appendix A.

Count: The number of shots received by a player or team at the conclusion of an end.

Counter(s): (Scoring) Bowls in the head closest to the jack that would be shots/points for a team during the count.

Dead bowl: After a bowl has been delivered and comes to rest, if it finishes in the ditch, or outside the rink boundary, it is considered a dead bowl, and is removed from play. However, if the bowl has touched the jack, it remains a live bowl even if in the ditch, as long as it is within the boundary of the rink.

Declare the head: An expression advising that the last player on the mat is not going to deliver their last bowl. It is called for if the player or team is holding shot, or that there is significant danger of changing the head to the detriment of the player/team if the last bowl were to change the current situation.

Delivery: Deliberately releasing a jack or a bowl from the hand or an artificial device using an underarm movement. If the jack or bowl accidentally slips from a player's hand or artificial device during delivery, the player can pick it up and start the delivery again.

Ditch Marker: When a bowl knocks the jack and follows it into the ditch it is considered to remain alive for counting purposes. It is difficult for bowlers to see the bowl and jack from the mat. A white marker is placed behind the jack on the bank and a coloured marker is used to show the position of the live bowl(s) in the ditch.

Draw: 1) (bowl) a bowl delivered to finishes closest to the jack, without the need to move or touch other bowls in the head.

2) (competition) a schedule of matches showing the teams or players and their opponents in each round of the competition.

3) (competition) a match or a schedule of matches where the teams are formed randomly in a "blind draw".

Drive: A bowl delivered with the maximum force that a player can exert, the aim being to kill the end, disturb the head, or hit opposition bowls out of the head.

Dumping: A bowl delivered from above the green so that it bounces on the turf when it first leaves the hand. Dumping a bowl is an indication of poor technique, or may indicate the player has an injury or disability that does not enable the bowl to be let go of parallel to the ground.

Either hand: When a bowler delivers a bowl, they can choose to play either a forehand or backhand shot. During play the person in charge of the head may advise the player on the mat that he can play "either hand" rather than directing a particular hand to play.

End: A defined segment of the game which includes: delivery of the jack, delivery of all the bowls required to be played by all of the opponents in the same direction on a rink, and deciding the number of shots scored

Front Ditch: The ditch at the end of green which is directly in front of a player when they stand on the mat.

Give away the mat: At the start of a game a toss of a coin or bowl is rolled and called by the competition. The winner of the toss has the option to play the first bowl, called "keeping the mat", or letting the opposition have the first bowl, to "give away the mat", thus reserving the last bowl of the end for themselves. After the first end, the winner of the end automatically gets the mat and the first bowl of the next end. Having the last bowl of an end is seen as an advantage, particularly at the highest levels of competition.

Grass: (point of aim) 1) refers to the width of the bowl required to enable it to stop at a designated point within the rink. To take more grass is to bowl wider than your previous delivery. (rink) 2) a grass green refers to the type of playing surface that the green has manufactured from, as opposed to a synthetic or artificial green.

Green: (delivery) 1) alternative description to grass to describe the width of the bowl required to enable it to stop at a designated point within the rink. To take more green is to bowl wider than your previous delivery

(rink) 2) the area of the playing surface containing one or more rinks, the perimeter of which is usually defined by a surrounding ditch.

Groundsheet: A rectangular piece of canvas or other suitable fabric placed temporarily on the surface of the green to protect it from any damage caused as a result of a player delivering the jack or bowl.

Head: The jack and any bowls which have come to rest within the boundaries of the rink of play and are not dead.

Heavy: 1) (weight) a bowl delivered with more force than required to deliver it to a desired position on the rink.

2) (bowl) a relative description of the physical weight of the bowl, compared with a standard weight bowl, or an extra heavy weight bowl.

3) (green) a description of the relatively slow pace of the green, compared with a "quick" or "fast" green.

Hog line: The Hog line is an imaginary line 21 metres in front of the mat line. 21 metres is the minimum distance a jack must be delivered in order to start an end. Clubs may have unique displays for their hog lines with different coloured markers or white sticks and/or colourful pigs atop. Hog lines are found on



the sides of the bowling green 23 metres away from the 2 metre mark, . Moving the mat forward from the 2 metre mark before jack delivery will result in a new hog line 21 metres from the front of the mat.

Holding: 1) (bowl) indicates that your bowl is the closest to the jack - "we are holding shot"
2) (green) a relative description of the line a bowl is taking on the rink at a moment in time. A bowl that is holding its line is an indication that it is traveling a different line to that normally expected, due to either the condition of the green, the pace of the green, or the delivery action of the bowler.

Jack: The small white or yellow unbiased ball which is the target for the game.

Jack high or jack level: The nearest part of a bowl is in line with and at the same distance from the mat line as the nearest part of the jack.

Jack or bowl in course: A jack or a bowl from its delivery until it comes to rest, no matter how many times (for a bowl) it comes into contact with the jack or other bowls before it comes to rest or becomes dead.

Jack or bowl in motion: A jack or bowl which is moving during play after it has been at rest as part of the head.

Mat Line: The edge of the mat nearest to the front ditch. All measurements involving the mat and a jack or a bowl will be taken from the centre of the mat line.

Pace of the green: The number of seconds taken by a bowl from its delivery to the moment it comes to a rest at approximately 27 metres from the mat line. The higher the number of seconds taken, the faster the pace of the green.

Play style: The type of bowling one prefers to play. Some leads like a narrow bowl with an average bias because they like to take the narrow path to the jack. Some skips like a wider bias on their bowls so they can get around bowls in the head. Play style is developed as a bowler builds experience, confidence, and individuality,

Positional: This term refers to any draw shot that is not directed at the jack. That is, to a particular position on the green, invariably for tactical considerations.

Rear Ditch: The ditch at the end of the green which is directly behind a player when they stand on a mat.

Run: A term to describe a path indented into the green that may redirect the natural draw of the bowl. Runs occur most often on grass greens, formed from bowling on soft ground leaving indents, then the dirt layer underneath the grass drying out and hardening forming a ridge. Artificial greens can develop runs with wear and tear or if the carpet has not been laid properly.

Running Shot: Any shot played with greater than draw weight is a 'running shot'. 'Running shots have almost everything in common with a draw and little in common with the full blooded 'drive' or firing shot'. Running shots can be grouped under three headings 1) the 'yard-on shot' and all its close relations that require just a little added weight 2) 'firm woods' which require stepping up a gear, (c) 'driving shots' which may vary in weight but are unmistakably aggressive in intent.

Set of bowls: Four bowls, all of which are; 1) of a matched set, 2) of the same make and model, 3) of the same size, weight, colour, bias, serial number and engraving.

Shot: The bowl nearest the jack.

Shoulder: On its course to the head a bowl will gradually start to curve towards the middle of the rink as the bias takes effect. The point where the bowl starts to break its straight path is known as the Shoulder of the green or Shoulder High

Skip: The player who is in charge of the team.

Spot Bowling: Using a point of reference, (such as a leaf or section of coloured grass) on the green to find your Line of Aim. It is discouraged for new bowlers to Spot Bowl, as the mat is often moved.

Spot the Jack: When the jack is delivered, if the jack comes to rest beyond the 2 metre mark, but within the boundary of the rink, then it is moved to that mark, such that the front of the jack is aligned with the back of the mark. Also occurs if the Conditions of Play determine the jack is spotted (behind) the 2 metre mark, when it leaves the green (burned).

Team: A Pair, a Triple or a Four.

Touch: The feeling (or sense) a bowler develops for accurately finding the line and length of a green. Touch allows bowlers to make minor adjustments to their delivery for increased accuracy.

Toucher: A bowl that makes contact with the jack during its initial delivery.

Trailing the Jack: This involves bowling to the jack with enough added weight to pick the jack up and trail it to some other location, either further back in the head or all the way to the ditch.

Trial Ends: A warm up end, without scoring, to enable players to test their bowls in the conditions before a game starts. Depending on the Conditions of Play, competitions allow for all competitors to deliver practice bowls before play commences.

True Side: The side of a green that has the most natural and easiest line to the center. Both Grass and Artificial greens will likely have a wide side and a narrow side, one will feel like a more noticeable “true” side in both directions for your bowls.

Wedge: (or Chock) a piece of material placed under a bowl to hold it in place on the green. When a measure is called for, and a bowl is leaning on another bowl, it is sometimes necessary to chock the bowl so that one bowl can be removed without changing the position of the other. Materials used include rubber and foam wedges, or even corks cut in half.

Weight: 1)(delivery) the relative effort required to ensure a bowl, when delivered, reaches its intended target.

2)(bowl) the physical weight of the bowl.

Wick: If your bowl touches another bowl, changes direction, and continues to move, it is described as having ‘wicked off’ that bowl. A wick shot is often used if the jack cannot be approached directly and if there is a realistic chance of wicking onto. Highly skilled players make this shot deliberately to have their bowl reach the target.

Wing bowl: A bowl which comes to rest in a lateral position to the right or left of the jack.

Wresting Shot: The aim of the shot is to tap the object bowl out of the way, delicately enough to lie in the position vacated. Its alternative name is the ‘wrest shot’ because the object is to ‘wrest’ possession of the object bowl’s position.

Yard on: Delivery of the bowl with sufficient weight to finish 1 yard past the objective (usually the jack, or another bowl within the rink).

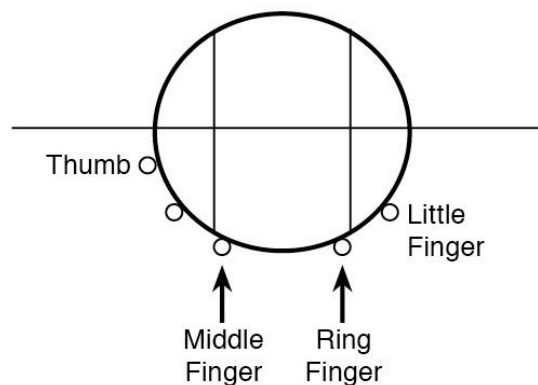
Section One - Get a Grip

Bowling Basics

The Bowls Grip

The bowls grip taught at NVLBC allows the bowl to release smoothly from the hand for all shots. Fingers should be spread in a relaxed position while remaining close together with the Ring and Middle fingers on the centre of the running surface and the thumb near the outer rings.

THE BOWL GRIP



The image above depicts a right hand holding a bowl palm up

Comfort and Control are top priority. If you are uncomfortable with your grip or you don't have much accuracy or control when you roll, talk to a Coach and/or practice the following exercise:

- a. Relax your bowling hand by shaking your arm at your side.
- b. Fling your hand forward, palm up, allowing your fingers to spread naturally. This natural spread of your fingers is the right spread into which you position the bowl.
- c. Place the bowl in your hand with your middle and ring fingers on the bowl's running surface.
Your baby finger and index finger are placed at their natural spread on the bowl.
- d. Move your thumb up the side of the bowl so that it rests on a comfortable spot somewhere near the grip area.
- e. There is no contact with the web of the hand between the thumb and index finger and the bowl. This helps the bowler develop a sense of touch. Learning touch is important as it helps with accuracy and consistency.

If the bowl doesn't leave your hand smoothly, the grip may be modified or the size of the bowl may need review. Talk to a Coach to help with any adjustments.

Etiquette

Lawn bowling is a game for everyone. All kinds of people, from different walks of life, bowl. Bowlers everywhere are expected to show respect for the game and the people with whom they play. Etiquette is a list of unspoken expectations that other bowlers have of you. If you learn and practice etiquette, you will be someone with whom others will want to bowl. Knowing the bowls etiquette well also gives you awareness of when others are not so socially gracious.

Be at the Club at Least 15 Minutes Before the Game Starts.

As a new bowler, don't be just 15mins early, be 30mins early to all the events you attend.

It's important to be punctual. If you can't make it on time, you must call ahead to inform the convenor (or your team Skip for a tournament) that you will be late.

If you're running late and can't be at the club by 6:45 when the Pony draw starts, it's your responsibility to call a friend or the convenor to get your tag in the draw, if you want to bowl with the group.

For Pony Night bowlers who show up after 6:45 will not be placed in the draw (unless the draw is uneven and there is a position to fill). Instead they will be taken for a lesson by a coach or given a green to practice solo.

If Pony Night is important to you, set aside your Tuesday evenings and manage your time appropriately. Respect the group and their time by being punctual.

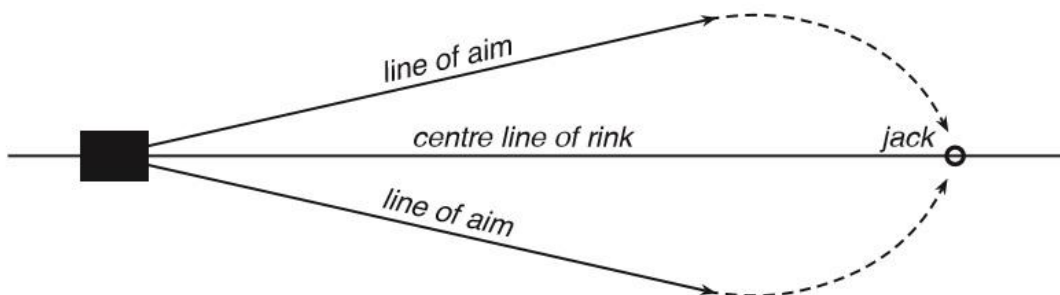
Tips

1. Line of Aim for a Draw Shot to the Jack

The diagram below illustrates both the forehand and backhand paths of the delivered bowl. The solid lines radiating from the mat indicate the Line of Aim, or normal grass line for a draw shot to the jack. At the point of transition from solid to dotted lines is the "Shoulder" of the green. The dotted lines show the curve (bias) of the bowl. After delivery the bowl will travel in a straight line for about three quarters of the distance to

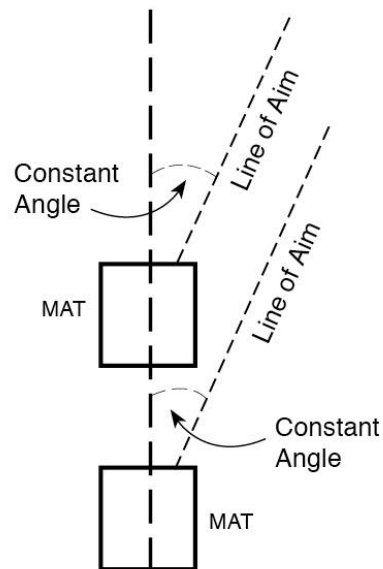
the jack, until it begins to slow down. Then the bias of the bowl will begin to take effect, drawing it towards the center of the green.

LINE OF AIM FOR A DRAW SHOT TO THE JACK



Pitfalls to avoid when establishing your line of aim.

- [Spot bowling](#) to a shadow or patch on the green. The shadow will move as time progresses thus altering the line of aim. A patch will be constant, but the position of the mat changes during the game, rendering the patch useless as shown in the image (right)
- Beware of using an object on the bank such as a bowl case. The object may be moved by another player.
- Following the green taken by a left handed bowler (if you are right handed) or vice versa, could cause you to misread the green for your own delivery.
- Following the green taken by a bowler with a different bias than your bowls will cause you to misread the green.



Try to visualize the point where the bowl should start to turn, and bowl to that spot. The spot is referred to as the [shoulder](#) of the green.

Although the green (or grass) refers to the playing surface the word is also used to describe the width of the arc the bowl takes during delivery. When asked to use less green a player must visualize the line of aim closer to the centre line of the rink. When

taking more green, the visualized line of aim would be farther from the centre line of the rink.

Best Practices

Build a Delivery Routine

Give yourself the best opportunity to succeed by developing a bowl delivery routine. Speak to a coach to confirm your delivery is okay and/or work out any issues you may have.

PRACTICE:

If at home, find a place you can stretch out and place a mat down (in front of a full length mirror would be ideal). Empty Handed, practice your delivery and repeat the routine checklist below many times.

Delivery Routine

- a. Stand behind the mat, with the bowl in a neutral position until the skip signals what they want you to do.
- b. Put your bowl in your hand with the correct [bias](#).
- c. Visualize in your head, the shot you want to take.
- d. Step on the mat.
- e. Find your [Line of Aim](#).
- f. Align your feet and body parallel to your Line of Aim.
- g. Check your bowl grip and bias, confirm bias with a visual check.
- h. Solidify in your mind that you are going to make your shot. Take a breath.
- i. Deliver the bowl. Stand on the mat, watching your bowl until it stops.
- j. Exit the mat to the left.

NOTE: If you're distracted or there is a change in instructions (i.e. making a change in bias), step off the mat, restart your routine.

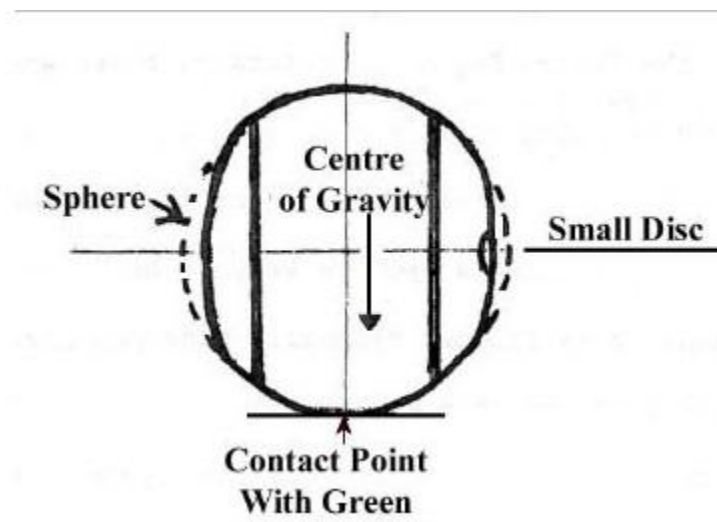
There is actually a slightly longer list of things a bowler should be aware of during their delivery sequence, but as a new bowler if you learn these (10) things listed above in your Delivery Routine and do that routine every time you deliver a bowl, you will have a successful start to your bowling career.

Section Two

Bowling Basics

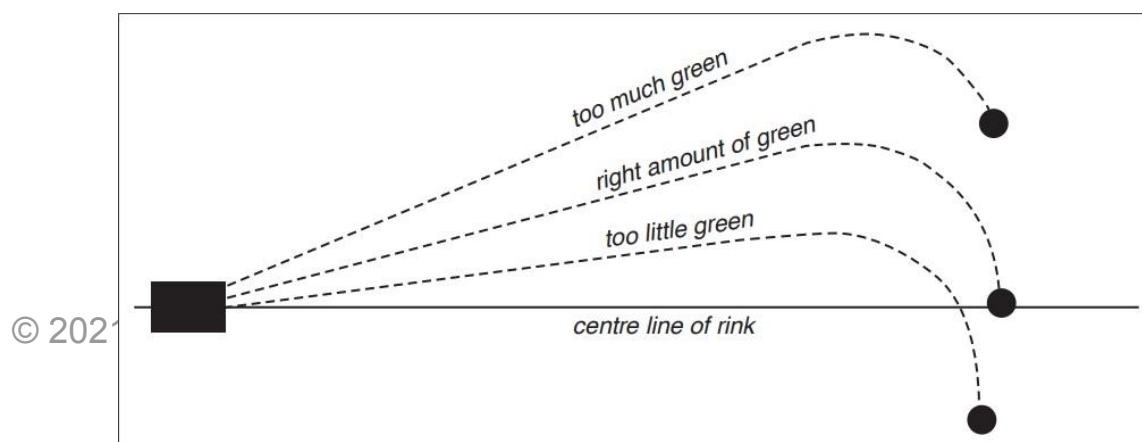
Bowls Bias and Delivery of Bowl.

“Little to the middle” - Please remember this phrase. It will save a lot of embarrassment to master this step in your [Delivery Routine](#). As you know, bowls curl as they slow down and you need to make a judgement call of both your Line and the Length in your delivery. “Little to the middle” reminds us to place the bowl in our hands with the bias swinging inward.



The mat measures 14 inches in width by 24 inches in length. It ensures that everyone bowling starts at approximately the same place to deliver their bowl during each end. It also protects the green from excessive wear. ALWAYS use a mat to deliver a bowl.

When you bowl, you first figure out your [Line of Aim](#). Take your stance with one foot on the mat, aligning the feet and hips/shoulders square to the line of aim, to deliver the bowl down that line.



- a. Once your grip is established, the proper stance on the mat is taken and line of aim is determined, prepare to release the bowl down the line of aim at the target. Take a comfortable step forward off the mat along the line of aim and, bending forward, release the bowl at ground level close to the toe of the forward foot.
- b. Getting the [length](#) correct is one of the hardest parts of the game to master. Consistency is based on the control the bowler has over delivery. Practice is the only way to get good at determining length.
- c. YOU ARE A NEW BOWLER - you won't get every shot right. Just try your best, that's all that any team mate can ask. If you find you are getting frustrated from lack of accuracy or consistency, ask a coach for help.

Please utilize your coaches. Ask for their assistance. A veteran bowler who volunteers to help new bowlers is a **rare** commodity.

Etiquette

Pay Attention to the Game.

Nothing can be more frustrating than a teammate who is not giving their full attention and best efforts to the game, due to lack of concentration. Save your socializing only for before and after the game. Your friends will understand, they are at the club to bowl too.

PONY Note : Pony night atmosphere is about having fun. It's much more relaxed and social than what you will find during a tournament or even club aggregates. We encourage socializing, but hope it can be done without slowing the game down. Be aware of your imprint on others, try not to be the last person on the green each game. Be efficient, learn what your jobs are and be ready to do them so you don't hold up the bowlers you're playing with.

Tips

Leads Strategy

- e. New bowlers start as leads in a team. This gives you plenty of opportunity to practice the [draw](#) shot. There can be no better experience.
- f. At the start of a game, the first thing a Lead determines is which side of the green is the [truer](#) side of the rink. On outdoor grass greens, one side is usually more true than the other (a side can be less desirable due to wear, debris, [runs](#) etc...). Also to consider, there is always a wide side and a narrow side to a green, choose the one you feel is easiest, the best suited to your [play style](#).
- g. Once that choice has been made, stick to that side, bowling forehand one way and backhand the other (or vice versa). Occasionally a rink will play [truer](#) down

one side than up the other, in which case you will want to stick to the appropriate hand, but that is very much the exception to the rule.

- h. After bowling the rink in both directions, deliver the occasional bowl on the other side to learn the line. Consider these “research and development” rolls only if you have control of the head (meaning you have [shot](#) bowl, and lots of [counters](#)) and can sacrifice a bowl. This helps you learn the green on the side you don’t know, before you are “forced” to deliver to that side because your path is blocked, or your skip asks you to.

NOTE: A good bowler will learn the Line of Aim on all FOUR corners of the rink as soon as possible. The quicker you learn your Line of Aim to each corner, the more confidence you have to bowl and the more options you have to choose your next shot. ([See: Making Adjustments](#))

Best Practices

Preparing a Practice Session: How to get the most out of your practice sessions.

Any practice is better than no practice if you want to improve. Read these suggestions and figure out a system that works best for you.

- 1) Make sure to include a warm up exercise at the start; stretch out your arms, legs, back, neck and shoulders. Stretching involves flexing or extending each major muscle group in turn and holding it at the limit of its normal range of movement for about six seconds before allowing it to relax.
- 2) Once you get the blood flowing, roll a few bowls out into the green and check the grass conditions; adjust your practice to the conditions as necessary.
- 3) Start with at least one or two draw exercises and then switch to something you want to be more skilled at. It’s always good to come to practice with a plan. Perhaps there was a shot you missed in your last game or you were struggling on a particular green? Now is the time to challenge yourself and work on your areas of weakness.
- 4) Once you feel you are consistent or comfortable with your results on a drill, move on to another drill. Try to vary your practice routines in a session and not stay on one drill for too long. Mixing up your practice by adding on challenges brings fun and diversity to your practice time. When you enjoy what you are doing you will come out more often.

Where to Start

- a. First year bowlers are encouraged to focus on exercises that help develop your [Draw](#) game. Learn to get good at putting a bowl on the jack, starting with all different lengths of a centered jack, then a jack anywhere on the green

(off-centered). For a challenge, try drawing around bowls placed as obstacles. Learning your [line of aim](#) and length should be the top priority for new bowlers.

- b. 2nd year bowlers may be asked to skip at Pony Night. Skips should develop more skills beyond a Draw shot: The [Wresting](#) shot is a good one to start, it helps understand [touch](#). A “[Yard-On](#)” is useful to learn. The objective of this shot is either to “[trail](#)” the jack away from the opponent’s bowls towards your own, to push a bowl out of the ‘head’ and take its place, or to displace an opponent’s bowl from its position of advantage and replace it with one of your own.
- c. 3rd year bowlers, who will be skipping a majority of the time would benefit from learning how to build a ‘head’. Practice [Positional](#) shots, draws through holes (or lanes), [Wick](#) shots on [wing](#) bowls and learning the different weights of [Running](#) shots.

Section Three

Bowling Basics

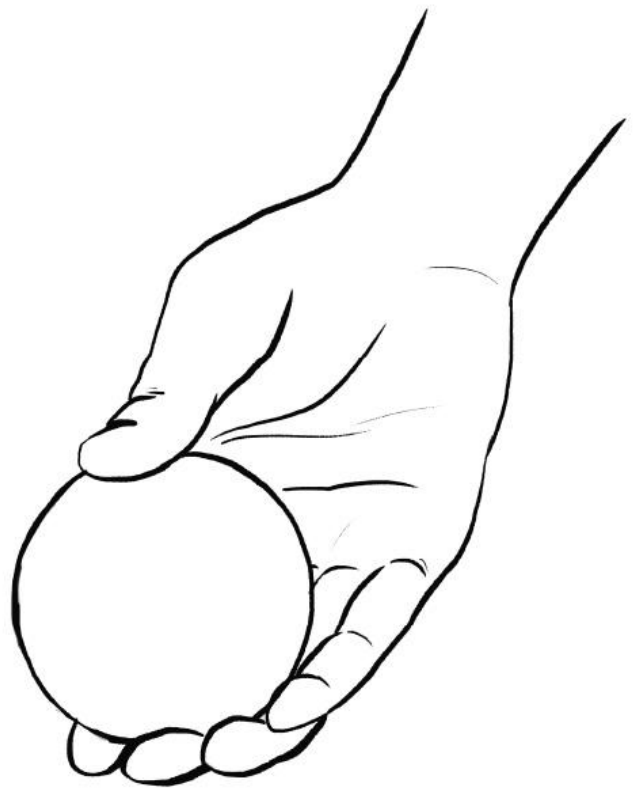
Jack Delivery; Grip and bowling to the center line

A jack grip with a straight toss keeps jacks in the centre of the green. To learn line and length, new (and experienced) bowlers are encouraged to practice delivering jacks. [See Chase the jack practice](#)

The jack grip is completely different from a bowl.

The suggested method is as follows:

- i. With your palm up, hold the jack comfortably resting on your middle finger set at the bottom centre of the jack and your index and ring fingers adjacent.
- ii. Thumb grips on top. The little finger can offer support, but should be placed no more than halfway up the jack.
- iii. The jack delivery mechanics including the step and arm movement are similar to delivering a bowl. Keep your arm inline with your shoulder and perpendicular to the ground. It's recommended to keep your wrist stiff when releasing a jack.



Etiquette

Rink Possession: Stay out of the head when it's not your turn

ALWAYS remember that as soon as your team's bowl has come to rest, possession of the rink passes to your opponent.

- a. At the mat end of the rink, when it's not your turn, remain behind the mat.

- b. At the head, you will have a chance to inspect the head when it is your turn. When it is not your head - Stay still and Stay OUT!

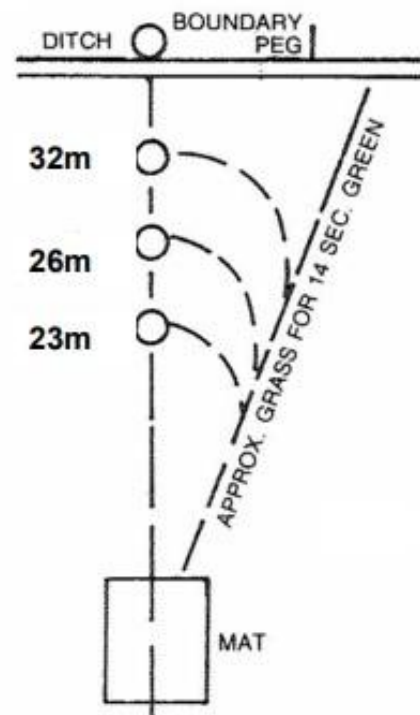
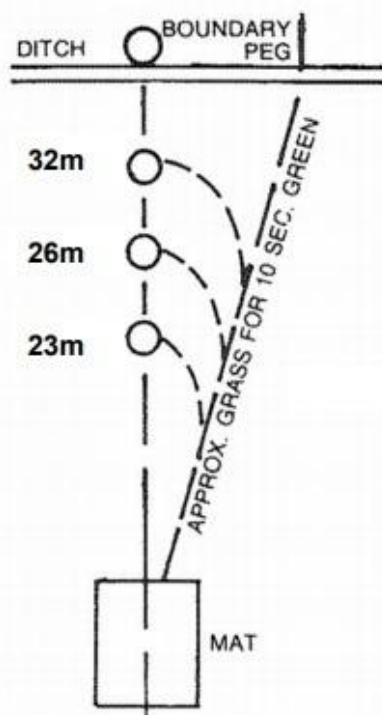
NOTE: If it's not your job to measure the head, stay away, you have other responsibilities like getting the rake or setting the mat.

- c. It's against the rules to walk down the green before the final bowl has come to a stop. Wait for your cue from the final bowler. Once they begin to walk down the green, you may join them.

Tips

Long Jacks and Short Jacks

- The line of aim to a centered short jack should be the same as delivering to a centered longer jack. The only adjustment needed is [weight](#). It's something for new bowlers to be aware of; to think about when they are determining their Line of Aim.
- When travelling at speed, bowls hold straight; as the bowl slows down, the bowl falls into the bias and bends into the centre of the rink. If the bowl is delivered at a different speed (or [weight](#)), but along the same line of aim, it will come to rest at the same distance from center.
- When delivering to a short jack, less speed is required as the bowl is travelling a shorter distance. The opposite is true when delivering to a long jack, more speed is required - but the line of aim is the same.
- If the mat has been moved forward significantly, the line and weight will need to be adjusted. The further the [mat is moved](#) forward, the narrower the line of aim should be.



Best Practices

Long Jacks

- a. As a competitive bowler, you should be able to bowl the entire length of the green at any point in the season. The most difficult times to bowl the length of a grass green are at the start and end of the season.
- b. At the start of the season natural grass greens are wet and soft, you may find the greens keeper keeps the grass a little longer to preserve it, but mostly bowlers are out of practice and don't have their "bowling strength" as yet.
- c. Practicing long jacks at the start of the season will help you find your distance to start, then you dial back the power/strength/length as the ground warms up, dries off and hardens. A hard green, with short grass is faster and bowls need less effort to get to the ditch.

NOTE: This won't have as much relevance on the new artificial greens at NVLBC, but is a good reminder when visiting other clubs.

PRACTICE:

- i. Place two mats on the [2 metre mark](#) (T) at both ends of the green.
- ii. Bowl draw shots to the mat at the opposite end of the green.
- iii. Drawing onto the mat is a Gold star. Within 2 feet behind is Silver, 2 feet in front or to the side is Bronze.
- iv. The purpose of this practice should be to get used to delivering long distances more than being accurate. Once you have the correct bowl length, work on accuracy.
- v. Do not overexert yourself. This exercise is intended to challenge you, not to push your limits. If you feel pain or soreness, evaluate if this is the right practice for today.

How to increase bowling distance

Bowling to a longer distance should not cause you to change your delivery mechanics. Controlled coordination of your movements and maintaining a solid base are beneficial for bowling long distances. You want to keep the same posture, parallel arm movement, fluidity and release; all you are doing is adding more effort. Here are some tips to gain a few extra yards on your delivery:

- a. Increase your backswing - Increasing (the height of) your backswing, if you maintain the same delivery, will naturally cause your body to compensate and balance; you will take a longer step, increase your effort, and in turn, roll the bowl a slightly longer distance.

- b. Take a slightly longer step - Stepping beyond your natural pace length causes your body to balance yourself and naturally draws your delivery arm forward slightly faster.

NOTE: A wobbly bowl will not go as far as a bowl rolling smoothly after being delivered correctly. If you are delivering wobbly bowls, ask a coach for help.

Section Four

Bowling Basics

The draw shot

An [end](#) can be won with just one bowl, the closest to the jack. You will see great bowlers win ends and games with their last bowl and the confidence in their draw.

- a. The draw shot is the term applied to a bowl that is delivered along the correct line of aim with just enough weight to reach (draw close to) the jack or an opponent's bowl.
- b. It is the most important shot in bowling and the hardest to master. As a new bowler, the draw shot is what you will be asked to deliver as a new bowler MOST of the time, it should be the only shot you focus practicing on.
- c. Don't be discouraged if you aren't drawing close to the jack when you start. Everyone you bowl with has had the same learning curve. Understanding the line and the weight comes with practice, focus, adjustment and experience. You are new to bowling so take it easy on yourself and allow your skills to improve over time.
- d. Learning [touch](#) helps you [make adjustments](#) to get closer to the jack. Watch the path your bowl takes and [assess your delivery](#) every time. Did you deliver down the right line of aim with the correct weight? Compare that to where the bowl ended up and try again, did the bowl go to the same spot? If so and the resting place is not where you wanted, your estimates are wrong, and need adjustment.

NOTE: As a new bowler it's easy to put pressure on yourself. Understandably, you want to do well and not let your team down. You think it looks easy, but there are so many deceptive factors to consider. Good skips will understand you are still learning, the great ones will encourage you and help you improve. Try to remember this is a game, we all come out to bowl to have fun, regardless of the outcome.

Etiquette

Try to avoid obscuring boundary pegs, rink plates or rink markers.

- a. Many veteran bowlers use the plinth (backboard), or surrounding area near the rink markers to find their line of aim.
- b. As a lead, the best place to stand is 8 to 10 feet behind the head, a few feet left or right of the jack.

Tips

Where should I stand?

As a new bowler the Rules and Etiquette may seem confusing and daunting to learn at first, but after a few games repeating the processes over and over, you will soon grasp the basics, especially if you are observant. As a general rule, get involved, be in the action:

- a. When it's your turn to bowl, be near or on the mat. After bowling, step LEFT walking around the back of the mat, giving space to the next bowler, return to behind where your next bowl is waiting for you.
- b. When you are next in line to bowl, wait behind the mat, just behind the cluster your bowls are in and be ready to bowl when your opponent steps off the mat after completing their turn. Be ready to bowl!
- c. Learning where to stand so you can clearly see the head while remaining out of the way is easy enough in Pairs, but what happens when you are playing Triples or Fours?
- d. If there are more than two people on a team, follow these guidelines: The thirds own the head when the skip is bowling. They stand 8 to 10 feet behind the head, off to one side.
- e. The 2nds stand behind them, peering around/over their shoulder to the head. leads stand behind the 2nds, also peering around/over their shoulder with a good line of sight.
- f. Why is this important? When there are many people (4 or 6) surrounding the head it is difficult for a skip to see and use landmarks to determine their Line of Aim, not just our green but our neighbours as well.
- g. We want individuals to not be spread out, rather in a line behind each other. If you are tall, it's best to stand right behind someone to look over them. If you are short, stand behind but slightly to the right or left, with good line of sight. Remember, when standing at the head be still and silent.

Best Practices

Draw shot

The draw shot is the most important skill to practice and the hardest to master. To start practicing draw shots it's best to target centered jacks.

NOTE: If you have access to two greens beside each other, set up a circuit. That means set up going in one direction, then set up the other green in the same fashion, going in the opposite direction. When you finish bowling on one, you can simply push the bowls over to the other mat and deliver back to where you started.

PRACTICE:

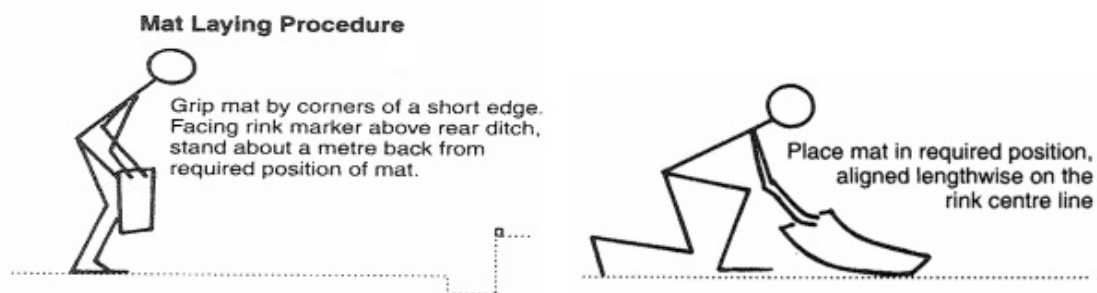
- i. Use two jacks
- ii. If by yourself, place the mat at any distance, in the center of the green, mark the center of the green near the mat with chalk.
- iii. Walk down to the other end of the green and place a jack.
- iv. Walk back to the centered mat and take note of how far off the jack is, then walk back to the jack and center it (this is much easier to do with two people),
- v. When you are confident the jack is centered, mark the center of the green with chalk to make it easier to reset the jack when necessary.
- vi. Walk back to the mat and bowl to the jack all 4 bowls with either forehand or backhand.
- vii. Pick up the mat and place the second jack in the center of the green where the mat was (and where you left the chalk mark),
- viii. Walk down the green to your bowls and place the mat where the jack was centered.
- ix. Gather your bowls to your mat and bowl all 4 bowls in the opposite hand (if you bowled the first set forehand, bowl the second set backhand.
- x. It's important to watch the bowls travel their path, make adjustments to your line of aim and weight to draw closer to the jack.
- xi. Once you are confident with your results, switch up and bowl with the opposite hand (forehand or backhand) to learn the other side of the green.

Section Five

Bowling Basics

Mat Placement

Mat placement is an important aspect of bowls that new bowlers should be aware of. As a first year bowler it is important to learn how to set a mat, communicate and get approval for the mat placement from the skip and learn some strategy around [moving the mat](#).



- a. The front of the mat is where all measuring takes place.
- b. The mat must be placed ahead of the 2 metre mark, but behind the [first hog](#) line, (indicating 23 meters from the front ditch) and anywhere in between, in the center of the rink. [See Rink on a Green](#)
- c. As a lead, strategically it's your advantage to control the end by putting the mat and the jack where you want to bowl. Copying the places where your opponent sets their mat may work to their favor. It's a good practice to be mindful of your opponent's preferences, and determine strategy to counter their comfort zone.
- d. As a new bowler, learning to bowl from different lengths will give you the experience and green knowledge if/when your opponent moves the mat. It's good practice to never put the mat down on the same spot.
- e. Veteran skips (usually when behind in the score) will often try to throw off their opponents or change the dynamic of the game by bringing the mat up close to the first [hog line](#) (23 meters from the front ditch) and keeping the head clustered near the ditch. This is an important tactic one must practice for experience.

Etiquette

When standing in the head, be still when a player is on the mat.

- a. Common courtesy is to remain quiet and still when someone is about to bowl. Be conscious of your movement.
- b. When you are in the head, your skip and your opponent skip will be facing you and see everything.
- c. If you move around often enough your skip may request that you stand still - that's poor, but it's worse if they have to ask because the opposing skip requests it.

Do not talk or make a noise behind the mat when a player is on the mat about to deliver a bowl.

- a. Again, common courtesy is to remain quiet and still when someone is about to bowl.
- b. If your opponent or a spectator is making noise when you are on the mat, don't bowl. Step off the mat, turn around and politely ask them to stop before you continue.
- c. Most bowlers and spectators aren't aware of their volume and will stop once you mention it.
- d. If they continue to make noise and you aren't confident to deal with it yourself - tell your skip.
- e. Your skip should be made aware of the problem you are facing and speak to their opponent requesting the distraction be dealt with.

Tips

Mat Placement (moving the mat)

- a. Mat placement is more than just for starting an end. It can be a way to avoid a bad patch of grass, or a strategy utilized by a team to change momentum or control a game with preferred play distance, it can be done to confuse a team that doesn't know their line of aim, often a mat is moved to suss out or take advantage of an opponent's weakness.

- b. Strategy: Practice bowling from all distances, you should get familiar with mat movement and be experienced at drawing to the jack from anywhere. A mat must be placed on the center of the green anywhere in front of the 2 metre mark and behind the nearest hog line, which is 21 meters away from the far 2 metre mark.
[See Rink on a Green](#)
- c. The delivered jack must be at least 21 meters from the front edge of the mat (Mat Line) to be legal, so any mat movement forward will cut down on long distance jacks.
- d. Your aim lines angles generally will not be affected by mat movement as much as your weight should be, Shorter jacks are similar, no matter if they are at the front or the back of the green.
- e. Remember 21 meters is specific to Canada, when you start your international career you'll need to know it's 23 meters elsewhere.

Best Practices

Long and Short Jacks

- a. Learning to bowl at different distances or “Length” takes time. It comes from developing “touch” or feeling when delivering your bowl. Practice can speed up that learning curve and setting up different Length targets to aim at will help.

PRACTICE:

- i. Set up a mat at one end of the greens with two jacks at the other end of the green, centered but at least 6 to 10 feet apart from each other.
- ii. Bowl 4 different shots, a short target with forehand, a short target with backhand, a long target with forehand and a long target with backhand.
- iii. Keep note of which hand is doing better and which distance seems easier. Practice more on the shots you may be struggling with.

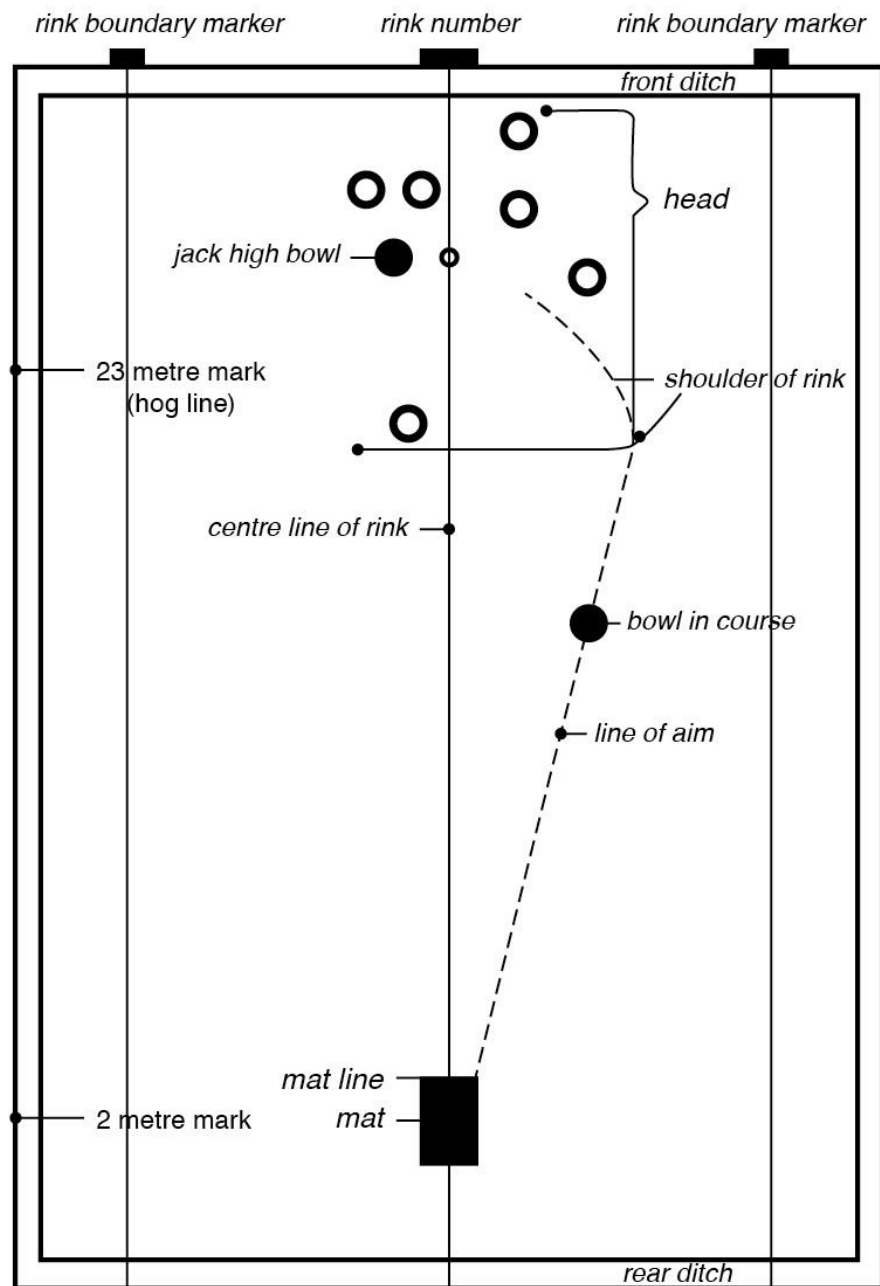
NOTE: This is a good practice for setting up a circuit.

Section Six

Bowling Basics

1. The Rink on a green

TERMINOLOGY ILLUSTRATED



Etiquette

Keep to your own rink. Do not become a wanderer and distract other bowlers.
Walk down the centre of your rink when you are changing ends

Staying to your green has always been a standard in lawn bowling. In fact it's expected for you to tell your skip when you need to leave the green. Remaining focused on your game with the group you are bowling with is expected. It's fine to take a minute and look around, appreciate the evening, watch your friends and acquaintances enjoying themselves or look over when a loud cheer erupts from somewhere on the green. However; it's important to not wander off, dilly dally with setting up the mat or raking the bowls, or spend too much time chatting to neighbours. Try to be respectful to your group and keep your attention where it's requested.

PONY Note : Pony night atmosphere is about having fun, it's a place to meet new people and make friends, play a game of skill with a skill equivalent peer group, and learn about the nuances of the game. Try to be aware of your imprint on others, maintain a balance of being social without being a distraction.

Tips

What is the T?

- a. The 2 metre mark, commonly known as the "T" (Tee) is a point on the rink, directly on the center line 2 meters away from the ditch.
- b. Depending on the Conditions of Play, the T is used to reposition the jack when; the jack is not correctly put into play by the leads at the start of an end, or the jack has been knocked out of play along the green boundary lines.
- c. When the jack is put on the T it's considered live and the bowl(s) closest to the Tee are now scoring.
- d. This is the reason skips love "back bowls". If a good skip is down in the count, especially with a short jack, they may have a go at knocking the jack back further down the green or out of bounds to essentially "reset" the end and/or try to steal it with a draw shot on their next bowl.

Best Practices

The Lead Or Third in the Head

We mostly bowl games of Triples at Pony Night, in the beginning of the season. For more experience we often switch to pairs once we are confident everyone knows their jobs. Triples game gives the lead an opportunity to watch and learn how to manage

the head from their third. Playing pairs will give the lead experience managing the head on their own when their skip is bowling. What does a third or a lead do in the head? Not much, to be honest. It's up to your skip to bowl their bowls and not lose the point to the opponent. However, there are many things to know, for when the skip asks for information. It's best to remain quiet and still until that happens, see [Communication](#).

When playing Triples, the third is in charge of the head when the skip is bowling. The leads need to stay 3 meters away from the thirds, but it's important to pay attention and observe how the third and skip interact.

A Third/Lead should be able to read the head, that means at a glance they know;

- 1) Which bowl is [shot](#)
- 2) Which bowl is 2nd shot
- 3) Where the opponents bowls are positioned
- 4) Where the team bowls are positioned.
- 5) Ergo - what the score is in the head.

NOTE: The list above are the most common questions the skip will ask.

A skip with lots of experience will know the basic composition of the head already. Before they moved down the rink to bowl they will have studied and (hopefully) memorized the configuration of the head. They will know where they want to bowl before they step on the mat. The lead should be quiet, still, and watch how the head changes.

If nothing changes in the head, do nothing. If a skip sees their bowl or their opponents miss the mark and no bowls are disturbed in the head - Remain still, they should not need any info.

If the count changes, meaning if the score switches to the other team, or increases or decreases, use [hand signals](#) to indicate the change, during your turn.

If the skip asks your advice and you don't know how to answer, tell them to come to the head. Wave them over to you and ask them to explain when they are closer. If the skip decides not to come down, don't fret. The skip is the leader of the team and has the final decision, right or wrong.

Only signal your skip when your team has control of the head.

- 1) If you make any motion you are a distraction to the other team.
- 2) You could give important information away to your opponent, who may not be as observant as you are.

Section Seven

Bowling Basics

What do I do?

Lead - As a lead you have the most jobs to do, which is good for a new bowler, repetition helps you remember the jobs and paying attention will help you do these jobs efficiently.

- a. Set the mat - When you have control of the jack.
- b. Confirm the mat is centered by the skip
- c. Deliver the jack.
- d. Set the jack - Standing on the centered mat.
- e. Look for instruction from your skip before bowling.
- f. Bowl the best game you can.
- g. Pairs Games: While in the head remain focused and observant, give your skip information when requested. ([Hand signals](#))
- h. Pairs Games: Give your skip information when NOT requested. [This can be Delicate: see Communication.](#)
- i. Pairs Games: Count the head, signal the count to the skip
- j. Rake/Sweep the bowls and reset for the next end.

Second - The Second is a position only played in a Four Player game or "Fours". Some people argue that it is the most important position since the second has the next best opportunity to get close to the jack if the Lead does not do well. The Second has no jobs to do, but they must be aware of their team and support them when possible.

Third - The third will be on opposite ends of the green from the skips most of the game. The thirds organize their end of the green on behalf of the skip.

- a. Direct the lead to set the mat and the jack when necessary.
- b. Help the lead with their bowling when requested.
- c. Follow the direction of the Skip
- d. Bowl the best game you can.
- e. Manage the head when the skip is bowling.
- f. Count the head and relay the score to the skip
- g. Update the scoreboard when the end is lost.
- h. Secure the pusher from the lead (This is a safety measure so the leads don't have to step up off the green).

Skip - You are the leader of the team, you have the burden of being responsible for everything, including;

- a. Fill out a scorecard

- b. Connect with your partner(s) - make sure they are ready and have their equipment, ask if they are feeling ok, give them your game plan if you have one, work out hand signals, make them feel comfortable bowling with you.
- c. Connect with your opponent skip. Make sure they are ready to play.
- d. Assess the green - Look for bad patches and conditions, communicate with your partner if you want them to avoid areas.
- e. Read the green - Pass on what you see to your team, especially when conditions change.
- f. Build the head - Give your team instructions on where to bowl when warranted.
- g. Keep the flow of the game going.
- h. Bowl perfectly so you impress your team and yourself.
- i. Stay positive, remain upbeat even when faced with disaster, your lead is counting on you.
- j. At the end of the game, thank your partner and your opponents for playing.
- k. Return a completed scorecard to the convenors
- l. Make sure your green is clear of equipment and debris before leaving it.

Etiquette

Always appear to be enjoying the game.

- a. We all come to the club to have fun - so enjoy yourself. A little known fact, bowling is easier when you are relaxed and having a good time.
- b. Try to be aware of your imprint on others. Bowling with determination and intensity may be mistaken for frustration and disappointment - the look on your face may be seen by your partner who takes it personally, only because they are upset with their play (but think you may be doing just fine).

There are loads of unspoken social cues which can cause mistaken conflict. When you appear to be having a good time or smiling, no one will question or be concerned about your disposition, you'll also bowl better.

Tips

What is a Toucher?

The reason Touchers are treated specially is because they remain a live bowl even if in the ditch, as long as they lie within the boundary of the rink.

- a. If the delivered bowl touches the jack at any time while on its course, it is considered a toucher, no matter how many other bowls it contacts before and/or after touching the jack.
- b. Also, if a bowl is close to the jack but is not touching yet, (maybe it's leaning over the jack), if it falls and touches the jack before the next bowl is delivered, it is a toucher.
- c. The Rules: A toucher should be marked by a member of the team that delivered the bowl as soon as it comes to rest.
 - i. If, in the opinion of either skip or opponent or the marker, a toucher comes to rest in a position in which marking it would be likely to move the bowl or alter the head, the bowl should not be marked but nominated as a toucher instead.
 - ii. If, before the next delivered bowl comes to rest or, in the case of the last bowl of an end, before a period of 30 seconds that applies under law 40.1, a bowl is neither marked nor nominated, it is no longer a toucher.

Best Practices

Chase the Jack

- a. Once you have become comfortable with drawing to a jack in the center of the green here is a simple practice to try when you are on your own (or with an opponent)

PRACTICE:

- i. Stand on a centered mat with a jack in hand.
- ii. Deliver the jack out into the green.
- iii. Leave the jack where it lies, do not recenter it.
- iv. Draw to the jack. This practice will help you learn how to read your green and choose your line of aim.
- v. Practice delivering to the jack with both forehand and backhand draws.
- vi. Once all your bowls are rolled, pick up your mat and carry it down to the head, set the mat in the center of the green and repeat.

Section Eight

Bowling Basics

Basic tactics

Lawn bowling is a highly tactical game. This is one of its attractions. Players must constantly anticipate which shot their opponents may consider playing next. Every game offers new challenges and learning experiences. Here are a few basic tactics that may help you:

- a. The draw shot is the most consistent shot to score - Every bowler practices draw shots more often than any other shot, a draw will always have a higher rate of success. Don't know what to do? Draw to the jack. The person closest to the jack wins the point, be that person.
- b. For a new bowler, [Back Bowls](#) are preferred by most skips rather than bowls in front. Very rarely will a jack ever move back to the mat the bowlers are delivering from, generally the jack moves forward toward the end of the green, away from the bowlers. Back bowls provide support and defense for when a jack is displaced. That said, bowls in the front of the head can be useful as blockers to the opposition or targets for your skip to promote into a scoring position.
- c. Be aware of all bowls in play - Yes this is obvious, but is often the cause for mistakes. It's important for whomever has control of the head to know whose bowls belong to which team to give information to the skip, or for counting the head correctly. Not always easy when bowls look alike, are old and worn, or it's dark. A good skip should be taking a long look at the head to memorize the bowls and their position in relation to all other bowls before moving away from the head.
- d. Ideally, the lead wants to draw "two on the jack, one in the back". Leads may want to remember this phrase. Try to put your first two bowls as close as possible to the jack and on the 3rd bowl, evaluate the head. Are you winning? Think about a bowl in the back. Are you losing? Think about drawing another one on the jack. Skips want a good head distribution, 3 or 4 bowls right next to the jack become a big target for an opponent to aim at. This is an objective situation and it's best to take direction from your skip.
- e. Match your opponents' bowls. If you see a big pocket of your opponents' bowls in a likely area the jack could move to, it's a good bet your opponent sees that too. When this occurs, put a bowl of your own in the pile, if the jack does move at least you will have it covered and will cut the numbers down.

Etiquette

On sunny days and at night under lights, be aware of your shadow.

Often we will bowl with and against people who have sight disabilities. For some, seeing in the dark or making out details under shadow is difficult. Be aware of this and try to keep in mind when you notice you are casting a shadow.

- a. Do not let your shadow mask the jack, nor permit it to fall in front of the mat when a player is about to bowl.
- b. It's a small thing, but it can be problematic for someone trying to line up a shot and not something we think about unless it becomes a problem for us.

Tips

What happens when the bowl goes in the ditch?

- a. When a bowl is a toucher:
 - i. Leave the bowl where it is.
 - ii. Use a coloured [Ditch Marker](#), found on the scoreboards, placed on top of the plinth (wood board) to indicate where the bowl is to the remaining bowlers.
- b. When the bowl is NOT a toucher
 - i. When a bowl goes into the ditch and hasn't directly touched the jack during its "bowl in course" (from the time of delivery until it comes to a rest) the bowl is not declared a "toucher" and is removed from the green (ditch). Removed bowls are generally placed on the plinth above the rink number.

Best Practices

After the release:

Do you watch all bowls delivered down the rink? If not, you are missing a big part of the game. Watch the bowl travel its course until it comes to a complete stop. Do this for your deliveries especially, but also watch your opponent's rolls.

- a. Every time you or your opponent or teammate deliver a bowl, you gain knowledge from watching it travel. "Every bowl tells a tale"

- b. Studying every bowl has many advantages:
 - i. It keeps your head in the game.
 - ii. You learn where all bowls are in the head as it happens.
 - iii. You gain information about the green, speed and line specifically, but also areas to avoid.

- c. Veteran bowlers will tell you there is a lot of knowledge to be gained by watching each bowl as it travels its path and will appreciate your focus when seeing you're paying attention. ([See: Believe the Green](#))

Section Nine

Bowling Basics

Hand Signals

Often you will be bowling with someone who has a hearing impairment, or you bowl on a noisy green near a busy street. Learning to use hand signals for communication between distances is helpful to speed up the game, connect with your partner and have an easier/better experience. Do you know basic hand signals? Here is a list to learn. Ask a friend, mentor, or a coach if you aren't sure of what the hand signal looks like:

- a. Alignment of the mat
- b. Centering of the jack
- c. Jack alignment
- d. Jack high bowl
- e. Short bowl
- f. Long bowl
- g. Bowl or jack on rink boundary line marker
- h. Bowl or jack in or out of rink boundary
- i. Counting the end, up or down
- j. A measure too close to call
- k. Bowling forehand or backhand
- l. Position bowl

Etiquette

Admit a fluke with grace.

- a. Sometimes a bowl is delivered close to target and misses the mark, or perhaps a bowl is way off, but miraculously manages to bounce its way into a scoring position. Either way, whether you benefit or the result goes against you, it's best to keep your reaction neutral.
- b. On some days, luck is as much of a deciding factor as skill. Luck for both you and your opponents tends to even out over the course of a game and if not, there is always the next time you face them.

Tips

What do you do when the jack goes out of play?

The Conditions of Play dictate what happens when the jack leaves the green (also called “burning the jack”). A lead delivering the jack out of play has different rules than when a jack is knocked out of play by a bowl. Most often the jack is returned to the green placed on the 2 Meter mark, the lead will need to learn how to do this as some skips will attempt to burn the jack.

- a. Resetting on the T when the jack is knocked out by a bowl:
 - i. At NVLBC we mostly will set the jack on the 2 metre mark aka “the T”. It’s okay to ask your skip for help to set where the jack goes when you are unsure.
 - ii. When placing the jack on the T, the easiest method is to stand in the center of the rink at the ditch, then take two paces (two metres) onto the green, then place the jack in the center of the rink.

- b. Placing the jack on the T when both leads fail to deliver the jack into play.
 - i. If the lead fails to put the jack in play (jack goes into the ditch or out of bounds) the opposition lead gets to deliver the jack.
 - ii. The opposition lead should move the mat (they have control of the mat as well as delivering the jack) during their turn. If they also deliver the jack out of play, the jack is then set on the T.
 - iii. In this situation, when the jack is placed on the T, the first lead delivers the first bowl. Before they do, they have control of the mat, and can move it to any location the team wants (discuss with your skip), between the 2 metre mark and the nearest hog line (which is the opposite hog line), the mat must be 21 metres away from the jack measured from the front of the mat. ([See: What are hog lines for?](#))

- c. Placing the jack on the T when the jack has been delivered beyond the 2 metre mark.
 - i. When the lead delivers the jack beyond the 2 metre mark (the T) and the jack remains on the rink, the jack is placed on the “T” by the skip before the first bowl is delivered.

Often skips will want the mat strategically placed, to their advantage. Have a discussion with the skip to see where they prefer the mat to be placed before delivering the jack.

NOTE: Not all Clubs or Tournaments reset the jack. Some other rules when the jack leaves the green include replaying the end, or declaring the jack burnt or a burned end (the End is over and no points are awarded to either team). Know the Conditions of Play.

Best Practices

Believe the Green

Sometimes bowlers think they know what the correct Line of Aim or Weight is, but their bowls consistently finish, narrow, wide, short, or long. “Believe the Green” means change your mindset and adjust your delivery to fix the result. What you think is correct in your head may be different than what is actually happening in real life. Believe the outcome over your prediction.

Section Ten

Bowling Basics

Communication

As a Lead:

Everyone is different, everyone communicates differently, but we need to be able to communicate effectively with our partners. Doing so builds experiences, trust and respect. As a new bowler, you will interact with veteran skips who prefer their leads to stay out of the head and only discuss when the skip requests info. For a rule of thumb, do this as you learn the nuances of the game. It is better to be aware, to observe, to remain quiet and stand still when your skip is bowling and ask questions after the fact if/when you don't understand something. HOWEVER there are two instances (when your input is NOT requested) when it's highly recommended you stop your skip and make them aware of the situation in the head:

- a. When the score of the Head changes. This means, if your opponent is suddenly winning the point or it is too close to tell without a measure. It can happen from a good shot of the opponent, or an unfortunate one from your skip. Regardless, your skip needs to know a.s.a.p.
- b. The opponents have many points in the head. If your skip only has one or two bowls left and you are way down in the count.

WHAT TO DO?: If you notice one of the two examples above and want to inform your skip.

1. Raise your hand before they step on the mat (or at least well before they start their delivery) to get their attention.
2. Keep your hand up as you step into the head and inspect the count (if you don't need to inspect just go to the next step),
3. Hand Signal the count to the skip and wait to see if they give you a nod, or a confused look. The confused look means you did good.

As a Skip:

- a. Actively Listen.
- b. Be respectful to your partners, establish your game plan and expectations before the match. (Hint: Tell them to have fun and try their best.)
- c. Get to know your lead, if you don't know them, find out how new they are to bowling, perhaps ask them what they think their strengths and weaknesses are. Definitely ask them what length they like to bowl.

- d. Be clear and concise, be honest and apparent. Remember you may be bowling with someone who doesn't understand what you are saying or what to do.
- e. Check your irritation. When you speak to your lead; be positive, be encouraging, be supportive, be genuine - be the leader and represent yourself.

Etiquette

Never criticize your opponent, the greens, or your own team members.

- a. If you cannot say something positive, don't say anything at all.
- b. We are very lucky to have the large numbers of volunteers at our club who maintain the grounds, greens, clubhouse, kitchen duties and administration. We get the best experiences because of the efforts of others. You will appreciate this when you travel to bowl elsewhere.

Tips

What do I do when the jack gets knocked into the ditch from a (legal) bowl?

Occasionally you will experience the jack getting hit into the ditch. Don't panic, it's part of the game.

- a. The jack remains in the ditch, a white [ditch marker](#) is placed on the plinth (NVLBC orange backboard, often they are wood) to show where the jack is to the remaining bowlers. Ditch markers can be found velcroed in the ditch at NVLBC. Use coloured markers to indicate any bowls in the ditch.
- b. The remaining bowlers have two options to score now: draw closest to the jack without going in the ditch, or advance a bowl in play closer to the jack.
- c. A previously marked "toucher" bowl already in play can be advanced into the ditch closer to the jack.
- d. Measuring a jack in the ditch is slightly different than normal. Instead of the end of the measure starting at the jack with the string touching the Bowl, it is reversed with the end of the measure touching the Bowl and the string touching the jack.

Best Practices

Cutthroat

This is a great game to play when you have 3 bowlers. It's also becoming popular for interclub leagues in Vancouver Island clubs.

PRACTICE: Points Cutthroat:

- a. Choose a player to start by delivering the jack and someone to stand at the other end to center the jack in the middle of the green.
- b. Taking turns in order, one at a time, deliver bowls to the jack.
- c. Scoring and rolling position is determined by who is closest to the jack as follows:
 - i. Closest bowl to the jack is 3 points - bowler delivers the jack next end.
 - ii. 2nd closest bowl to the jack is 2 points
 - iii. 3rd closest to the jack is 1 point.
- d. Whoever is furthest (or if someone doesn't score) has to walk down to the other end and center the jack.

PONY Note: Bowl position determines points, it doesn't matter whose bowl it is. A player can get 6 points on delivering 3 best bowls, or 0 points if they aren't close.

Section Eleven

Bowling Basics

Physical preparation

Some people who haven't played the sport don't know how grueling it can be. During a 3 or 4 game tournament we can easily walk 7 kilometers and bend down to lift a 2lb bowl well over 100 times. The legs and back will be sore the next day if you aren't used to it. Here are some tips to think about before playing a game:

- a. Get a good night's sleep
- b. Prepare a lunch
- c. Have a water bottle handy
- d. Stretch: Arms, Legs, Back, Shoulders
- e. Rest between games

Etiquette

Compliment your opponent on a good shot.

- a. We all come to the club to have fun. Making a good shot (or multiples) is a big part of having fun for you and your teammates. However it can be discouraging when you are facing tough competition, or just someone who is having a better game than you.
- b. It is good sportsmanship to compliment your opponent when appropriate. It's also an easy way for you to stay positive.
- c. There is no shame in being beaten by a better opponent. There is also no shame in telling them that they are pretty good.
- d. Stay positive. It keeps your head in the game. Negativity will be noticed by teammates and opponents and positivity will help you keep friends after the game is over.

Tips

As a Lead how do I centre the jack?

- a. After conferring with the skip, standing on the mat, deliver the jack out to the middle of the green.
- b. Stand in the middle of the centered mat.
- c. Hold your hands up, vertical, parallel in front of you, displaying the distance the jack needs to move to be in the center.
- d. Keep intact the distance of your hands, move them together (right or left) in the direction the jack needs to be moved.
- e. After the skip moves the jack, if it's not centered repeat steps C & D (narrowing your paralleled hands as the distance decreases) until the jack is centered.

NOTE: This is the jack setting method that is taught at NVLBC, if you encounter a skip who doesn't like this method, ask them to teach you what they prefer and use that for the game. Communication and teamwork is important.

Best Practices

Bowling with other club members.

Pony night is a great place to bowl amongst your peers and have fun as you learn and improve your game. We encourage you to branch out as early as you can, to enter club competitions and club aggregate leagues. Not Sure? Speak to a coach and ask them if you are ready for club competitions. We hope that some of you want to be competitive and seek experiences bowling at other clubs in tournaments. For now, you will face plenty of good bowlers here at NVLBC, and you will be bowling with skips who have different skills, experience and knowledge.

You are new at lawn bowling so have courage. It's okay to lose, it's okay to lose by a large margin, everyone has had those games. Lawn bowling can be a humbling sport, but as long as you try your best every game you can keep your chin up. There are many different levels of competition. For [Draw](#) events such as at Pony night and some club competition levels, a reasonable teammate should never be too disappointed after a loss. Bowlers with experience and who display good sportsmanship will understand that you are learning and should be supportive and encouraging.

When we first start at the club, we are taught the basics of bowling and the mechanics of how to bowl without personality. As bowlers develop their skills, they insert their style into their delivery. You may watch two wonderfully accurate bowlers consistently draw their bowls on the jack, but they won't necessarily look the same when they deliver. They have developed their own unique style over many years of practice and competition.

The analogy above can be used for describing the personalities of the skips you will bowl with and against. As a skip gains confidence, experience and hopefully success, their character will be in full display. Each club member is unique, you will find partners who you enjoy bowling with, and others with whom you may have difficulty. Learn proper [Etiquette](#). If you know the game and you know your roles and responsibilities, you will find it easier to navigate a game with someone whose personality clashes with your own.

Try to not be nervous around a new skip, they may seem intimidating, but they are just regular folk who have affection for bowls, same as you. Lawn bowling has a language and set of rules that unite players on a level playing field.

Section Twelve

Bowling Basics

Club equipment

All Lawn bowling clubs will provide at least 3 basic pieces of equipment for members and visitors. Please treat this equipment with respect and care, sometimes things are hard to replace or fix and clubs are limited to a budget provided by membership fees. Be patient with others when taking out or returning equipment and help those who need it.

- a. Jacks - The little white round ball that we chase with our bowls, also known as the “kitty” There are 3 boxes of 6 jacks (18 in total) available in the clubhouse. Return jacks to their boxes after play.
- b. Pushers - Lawn bowling leads job: The lead of the team who loses the end uses the pusher to sweep the bowls off the green. Meanwhile the other lead sets the mat for the next end.
Etiquette expectations - For speeding up the game, the lead who is losing before the last bowls are delivered by the skips, should have the Pusher ready to move to the head as the last bowl of the end comes to a stop. The thirds or leads count the head, they relay the scores to the skips and the head is swept, with the bowls returned to the RIGHT SIDE well behind the mat.
- c. Mats - Lawn bowling leads job: The lead of the team who wins the end, takes the jack after the head is counted and sets up the mat for the next end.
Etiquette expectations - for speeding up the game, the lead who wins the end should be collecting the jack and mat immediately after counting the head and relaying the points to the skip. The lead sets the Mat in the middle of the green ahead of the 2 metre mark, getting placement centered with the skip’s help ([See Mat Placement](#)). After delivering your bowl, stand on the mat and watch the bowl until it comes to a complete stop, then exit left off the mat. The next bowler (hopefully ready to go) will be either directly behind you, or selecting their bowl behind the mat on your right.
- d. Groundsheets - Are used to help protect the green when prone to damage. This occurs often at the start and end of the season when the turf is soggy and anytime during the season when a bowler is [dumping](#) the bowl, producing divots. NVLBC will not be using these groundsheets on the new artificial green, but it’s something to be aware of when visiting other clubs with grass.

Etiquette

Greet your own team members and opponents at the start of the game and congratulate or compliment them at the end of play.

Shaking hands before a match and at its conclusion is part of the fine tradition of the game. We are bowling to have fun regardless of the outcome. Competition is nothing without civility and sportsmanship. NOTE: due to social distancing, you will find that handshakes may not be well received. Elbow bumps or fist bumps have been more accepted when starting or ending a game.

Tips

What are the hog lines for?

At NVLBC you may notice (orange) markers on the sides of the rink. Some clubs have pegs with cutouts of pigs on these markers, they are commonly known as the [hog lines](#).

- a. Think of the hogline as a moveable line which is a set distance from the mat. The front of the mat must be set past the minimum of 2 metre mark (generally two full strides) from the ditch. The “far” hogline is the minimum legal distance for a jack 21 meters away or 23 metres from the ditch. ([see The Rink on a green](#))
- b. The “near” hogline is the furthest you can legally place the mat, because it is 23 meters away from the 2 metre mark at the opposite end of the green.
- c. The mat can be placed anywhere between the 2 meter mark and the first hogline. The jack must be delivered 21 metres from the front of the mat (mat line). ([See Mat Placement](#))

Best Practices

Draw to the T from 21 Metres away

PRACTICE:

- a. Place a jack on the T ([2 metre mark](#))
- b. Using the [hog line](#), Center a mat 21 meters away from the jack (the minimum distance away)
- c. Draw to the jack without going into the ditch.
- d. After gaining confidence bowling from this position, move the mat 2 yards further away and continue drawing to the jack without going in the ditch. Repeat.

Section Thirteen

Bowling Basics

Counting the Head

For a new bowler, counting the head may seem like a daunting task. Experience doing this correctly builds confidence. When at the head watching your skip bowl, some good tips are; pay attention at all times, always know the count before the next bowl is delivered and if the head is disturbed, take a moment to assess the situation when you control the head. ([See: The Lead in the Head](#))

- a. Know which bowls belong to which players before counting the head.
- b. When removing [counters](#) (bowls) use a cloth, laid out flat on the green and move the counting bowls on to the cloth, keeping them separate and safe. Don't move a bowl until your opponent agrees, ask every time.
- c. If you know you are closest to the jack and are winning the end, let your opponent "give away" points. Meaning, the team that is down in the count does the counting. Let them decide which bowls are scoring and if multiples, let them take them out of the head (placed together on a cloth or towel) with your permission only as both players/teams must agree before moving a bowl from the head. After they are finished counting, if you think there are more bowls in the count, ask them to measure.
- d. If "the count is close" and you need to measure between two or more bowls, take the measurement of the closest bowl to the jack, then measure the ones farther away. If the end of the tape doesn't touch a bowl it can be removed from the head as "not scoring". If a bowl is too close to tell, leave it, move on to score or eliminate the other bowls, then come back to the bowls "too close to tell" and re-evaluate, spend time being sure. ([See: Using a Measure in the Head](#))
- e. It's best to be accurate and confirm with your opponent, but you don't need to measure every single bowl. Learn to judge bowls' distances and come to an agreement before counting whenever possible. Taking too much time counting the head slows the game down.
- f. Shadows on sunny days can be deceiving. Whenever you aren't sure, ask for a measure. It's your right and your job to make sure the count is done correctly.

Etiquette

Etiquette when measuring bowls

- a. It's important not to confuse your opponent in any way, or try to cheat them. Your job as the measurer is to get a fair result, not to try and gain an advantage.
- b. Always agree what is going to be measured before you start. This makes things clear on exactly how you will be measuring, making it easy for you.
- c. It can be good to confirm exactly what the current situation is, and what the possible outcomes of measuring will be e.g. "I am holding 2 shots, shall we measure these two (identifying the two bowls) to see if I have a 3rd?"
- d. Always allow your opponent to see what you are doing, and how you are measuring. Again, this is to prevent any issues with accusations of cheating.
- e. During a competitive game, you may ask your opponent if they are happy for you to measure, or if they want a marker/umpire to do it (if one is present). This can work both ways. If a game is coming to a tight finish, you may not feel comfortable doing the measuring. Umpires and markers are there to handle these disputes, so make the most of them if they're there.

Tips

Using a Measure in the Head

Measuring is an important skill that any player must learn. The only way to get better at it is to practice, and to keep communicating with your teammates and opposition to check what you are doing. We can all accept mistakes made in good faith, so get out there and try it out.

Measuring a bowl

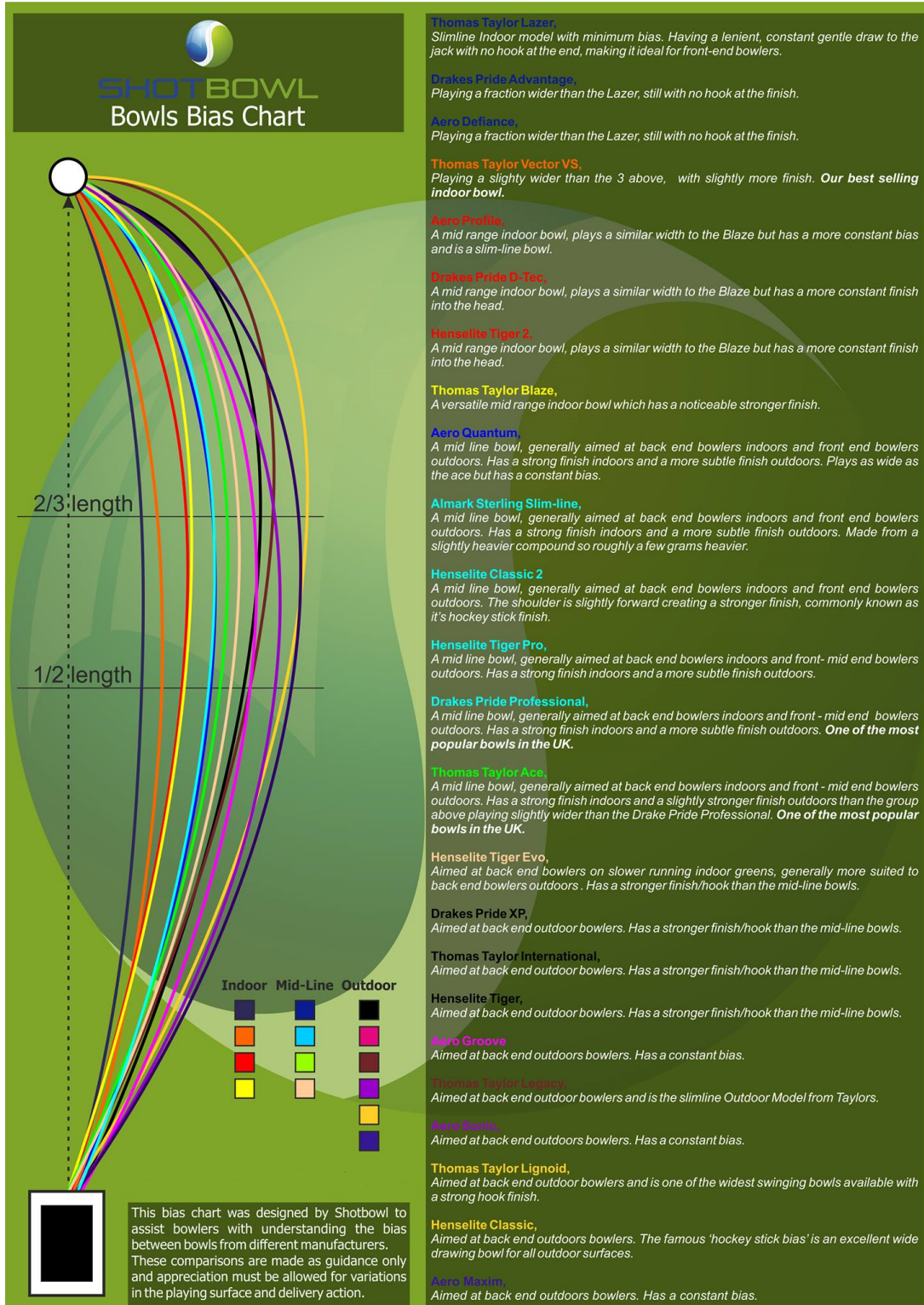
- a. Find a comfortable position to make the first measure, try kneeling on both knees, be low to the ground as possible.
- b. Always work from the more open side and at right angles to the bowl and jack being measured. If possible, avoid working in a shadow.
- c. Firstly work out which bowls to measure. This can vary depending on the situation, but usually consists of measuring one bowl against another.

- d. To do this you would measure the distance between the jack and one of the bowls. Once you have this done accurately you “lock” the string in place and use that to see if the other shot is closer to the jack. If the string doesn't reach the second bowl, then the first bowl is closer.
- e. Be careful to not move the jack or a bowl, use [wedges](#) when available, especially if a bowl is on its axis and may easily fall from movement tremors.
- f. Place the hard plastic end of the bowls measure against the jack. The end with the string should be pointing towards the bowl you want to measure.
- g. Once the measure is against the jack, press the release button on top of the measure to allow the string to be pulled out.
- h. Pull the string directly out towards the bowl. Once it reaches the bowl you should place the string against the point closest to the jack. This will usually be the centre of the running surface of the bowl, if it's on its side.
- i. You can tell when a string measure is lined up correctly, if you look at the hole the string is coming out of, the string is not in contact with the sides of the hole.
- j. Once you are happy you are touching the bowl, and the string is taut, release the button on top of the measure to lock the string length.
- k. With your measure now set to the distance on the first bowl, simply repeat the first step of placing the measure against the jack with the string pointing directly towards the second bowl.
- l. Pull the string towards the bowl. If it doesn't reach, the first bowl is closer. If the string reaches over the bowl - even by the tiniest amount, the second bowl is closer.

Best Practices

Different Bias

Not all bowls roll the same, bowls can be different size, weight and bias. Review the image below, it displays a majority of the bowls on the market and their differing biases.



Section Fourteen

Bowling Basics

Lawn Bowlers' gear

At NVLBC you aren't expected to pay for all your personal equipment in your first year. However, if you like lawn bowling and think you will continue, bowling equipment makes for great birthday and holiday gifts. Many of these items can be bought secondhand from other club members, otherwise, these items can be ordered online. When starting in your first year, you will need to own an approved, dedicated set of footwear. For your second year, you are expected to acquire a set of bowls, a measure, a carrying case and anything else you need to play. Speak to a coach or an experienced bowler to inquire about how to purchase gear.

- a. Bowling shoes - NVLBC will be bowling on new artificial greens in 2021 and require all members to wear proper footwear when bowling.
 - i. Footwear is to be dedicated to bowling activity, not worn for street use. Bowling shoes are to be changed into at the Green, not worn to travel to the Club or changed in the parking lot.
 - ii. Shoes must be flat soled with no separation or height differentiation between heel and front sole
 - iii. Footwear must be clean and free of all dirt and debris.

NOTE: Check out the [NVLBC footwear policy](#).

- a. Measures - There are generally two types of measures available these days: String measures and Metal measures (like a mini tape measure). Both are acceptable to use, both are easy to order online. Ask a coach if they know anyone who may be selling a measure at the club. For a new bowler, It's okay to ask your skip to borrow one.
- b. Clothing - Prepare for weather: Always have a hat, at least one layer top or bottom you can remove or put on, dedicated shoes with a flat sole (no heel), comfortable/loose fitting, lots of pocket space.
 - i. Club activities like Pony Night, Yard Stick night, Bowling for Bucks Monday Spider, or practice session don't have a dress code.
 - ii. Club competitions require you to wear white, or club colors, Tops must have a collar and sleeves. Teams should try to have similar colours.

- iii. Club competitions are more relaxed than [V&D or Provincial competition](#), where each team is required to wear the same uniform.
 - iv. Some festive club competitions will diverge from these norms and have their own dress code for the theme. Event convenors will communicate appropriate attire.
- c. Bowls bags - Bowls bags come in all different shapes and styles. Have a look at what others use for toting their bowls around. Bags are occasionally donated to the club by past bowlers or sold on NVLBC website Buy & Sell page. Some bowlers convert luggage to carry bowls. Bowls bags with wheels are most helpful for carting the heavy bowls after a long day of bowls. Pockets for storing equipment like chalk, measures, pens, and rags are necessary and a compartment for storing shoes may be an option.
 - d. Rules Book - All new bowlers should consider purchasing a rule book from the Head Coach. A new 2023 version of [Laws of the Sport of Lawn Bowling](#) will be available this year, talk to the head coach to get a copy. Knowing the rules correctly will give you confidence, make you a good teammate and it will improve the efficiency of your game.

Etiquette

Dress correctly for all games, (and practices) be prepared for weather and have appropriate shoes.

- a. Besides arriving on time, dressing correctly is the first sign of trust you give your partners. It is your first impression to others that you are ready to bowl.
- b. A good skip should be aware of you and your well-being. If they think that you are too hot, cold, or wet, it will take focus away from their own game to ensure you are okay. Take care of yourself so others don't worry.
- c. For any Club Competitions, the minimum dress is a collared white top with sleeves and white bottoms. Skips contact their team to confirm "team colour" for the event. The skip may also suggest alternate color combinations, (e.g. white top- black bottoms) to be different from the other teams.
[\(See: Lawn bowlers Gear\)](#)

Tips

Conditions of Play

[Conditions of Play](#) are the agreed upon rules by the governing body. Always know the Conditions of Play as defined by the convening group before playing in any Tournament or event.

Conditions of Play rule changes may include;

- i. number of ends
- ii. [Trial ends](#)
- iii. time restraints
- iv. a maximum points tally
- v. team composition
- vi. Number of ends
- vii. Jack positioning when burned.

Best Practices

References for Bowling gear

There are many shops that sell proper lawn bowls gear online which may charge a minimal fee to ship to Canada.

Bowlsworld UK - <https://www.bowlsworld.co.uk/>

Potters Bowls shop UK - <https://www.pottersbowls.com/>

Bowlswear Direct UK - <https://www.bowlsdirect.com/>

Section Fifteen

Bowling Basics

Pace of the Green

Pace (or speed) is the terminology used to describe how fast a bowl will travel on a given green. Pace is measured by timing a bowl from its delivery until it comes to rest approximately 27 metres from the mat line. Effects vary when bowling on fast or slow greens.

- a. On a fast green the surface offers little resistance to the bowl. Consequently the bowl can be delivered with little effort. It will take a wider draw, travel a longer distance and take longer timewise to reach its objective. Fast greens demand a great deal of skill from the bowler so control of weight and sensitivity of [touch](#) becomes essential. Touch is developed by practice and playing the game often.
- b. On a slow green, conversely, the surface offers more resistance. Therefore more effort to propel the bowl is required as it will take a narrower draw, travel a shorter distance and take a shorter time to reach its goal. Slow greens are not conducive to good bowling. The path of the bowl is much straighter and the additional weight that is required results in less finesse and accuracy.
- c. Contrary to what you might expect, a 9 second green is considered “Slow” (heavy) while a 15 second green is described as “Fast”. This contradiction is caused by the wider draw needed to be taken by a bowl on a “fast” green which results in a longer distance covered at a slower pace.
- d. The pace of the green can vary depending on conditions and composition of the playing surface, the time of day and the weather.
 - a. Green surface - hard/soft, wet/dry
 - b. Grass condition - long/short, coarse/fine
 - c. Carpet type
 - d. Time of day - am/pm
 - e. Weather conditions - hot and humid, hot and dry, cold and wet, cold and dry, windy/still.

Etiquette

Stand well back from the head when drive shots are being played and warn others on adjacent rinks.

- a. When a bowler raises their bowl in the air, it is to indicate they intend to deliver a bowl with speed - a [drive](#) shot.
- b. Stand well back, pay attention and warn the bowlers in the rinks next to you to “Protect their head”. The speedy bowl has a high chance of not going where intended and hitting other bowls in your head and sending them anywhere on or off the green.
- c. Be ready to collect bowls knocked out of the playing area, or set up markers in the ditch.

Tips

Filling out a scorecard

- a. The skip is responsible for filling out the scorecard.
- b. A scorecard will not be accepted by the Umpire if it isn't filled out correctly in a tournament.
- c. Your team always goes on the left hand side of the card so that the two teams cards together are a mirror image of each other.
- d. Write legibly, if a mistake is made, cleanly scratch the mistake and add in the correct number.
- e. Conveners need to be able to read all portions of a scorecard to update the tables and determine the winners. Even if you are on the losing end of a match your scorecard needs to agree with your opponents. The final score and the ends won may determine a tie-breaker.
- f. When filling in a 0 use the number. Do not use a dot or a line.
- g. Write down your opponent skip's full name, first and last. At least write the first initial and last name. If they aren't wearing a name tag ask them to spell it for you.
- h. Make sure to tally the total at the end and circle it for both scores.
- i. It's important to get into the habit of including the green number and date whenever filling out a scorecard.

Best Practices

NVLBC Footwear Policy for Artificial Greens March 2021

Footwear worn on the Club's artificial greens must meet the following criteria:

1. Footwear is to be dedicated to bowling activity, not worn for street use. Bowling shoes are to be changed into at the Green, not worn to travel to the Club or changed in the parking lot.
2. Footwear must be clean and free of all dirt and debris.
3. Footwear is to be compatible with recognized bowling shoe standards as outlined below:
 - a. Shoes must be flat soled with no separation or height differentiation between heel and front sole. (ie flat from toe to back of heel).
 - b. The sole may possess a shallow tread pattern or indented grooves to improve traction, without damaging the green. A channel in the centre of the sole is acceptable; protuberances that extend out from the sole are not acceptable. Edges around the sole, and around any channel, need to be rounded.
 - c. Sandals with a heel strap are acceptable, as long as the back strap is firmly fitted when worn. Flat-soled wedge shoes (shoes that increase in height from toe to heel) are not acceptable.

Section Sixteen

Bowling Basics

Trying to keep your cool

Sports are emotional, often there are points of pressure that can cause anxiety and erode confidence. Lawn bowling is no different. As with other sports, there is a considerable time gap between shots and this is when unhelpful thoughts and emotions can impact performance. Many club bowlers experience anxiety before and during matches with symptoms ranging from feelings of nervousness, experiencing jitters, to feelings of panic or chest pains and difficulty breathing. The **AWARE** method is one approach used to overcome the symptoms your body is experiencing.

Acknowledge & Accept

- i. Acknowledge and accept the presence of your nerves, anxiety and fear, but remind yourself that this is only a game you love to play and have fun doing so.

Wait & Watch

- ii. Just wait and breathe. Deep breaths can decrease nausea and feelings of panic. Rather than jumping into another action, wait. Your nervousness, your anxiety is temporary and will pass.

Actions

- iii. Deep breathing
- iv. Think about the specifics of the anxiety attack, such as what caused it.

Repeat

- v. While anxiety attacks always end, they can occur again at any time. If one immediately happens after you complete these steps, repeat them. Anxiety attacks sometimes happen mere seconds after one has just ended.

End

- vi. Every anxiety attack ends. Remind yourself of that fact during the attack. Remembering that the panic is temporary can be soothing during a time of perceived crisis.

It's tempting for most people to try and push the anxiety away, by using self-talk such as "I can't be anxious" or "I have to settle down", or simply denying it's there. Using the **AWARE** method, the first step is to **A**cept the anxiety, "yeah okay. I'm very nervous today" breathe deeply and let it pass with time.

Even the best bowlers have bad days, sometimes it has nothing to do with bowling. When you are having a bad game, try to remember why you love bowling. The next game is a new game.

If you feel comfortable doing so, tell your skip about your nervousness or anxiety so they understand you are dealing with an internal factor. Good skips will be calming and encourage you to take your time.

Etiquette

Be a gracious winner and a good loser.

- a. Lawn bowling is a humbling sport. Sometimes it's not your day and you can't hit a shot, sometimes you bowl exceptionally well and can't miss. Sometimes you will play your best and lose because of a bad bounce, or because your opponent was just better than you.
- b. Whatever may come, remember the bowling community is small and our club is even smaller. How you conduct yourself in times of conflict and stress will be noticed by your team and opponents. You will see them again, and they will remember your actions.
- c. No matter the outcome of your match, thank your opponents for playing. Thank your partners for playing. Thank your convenors for organizing and hosting the event. These people should be shown respect and gratitude for sharing their time with you.

Tips

Learn the Laws of the Game and abide by them.

- a. It is recommended for new bowlers to buy a Rules book to have for reference when a rule dispute arises. A new 2023 version of Laws of the Sport of Lawn Bowling will be available this year, talk to the head coach to get a copy
- b. It is recommended to read that book from start to finish; albeit a very dry read.
- c. Understanding the basic rules and having a general understanding of uncommon events is so important not just for skips and singles bowlers, but for leads especially.
- d. Leads need to know the rules almost as much as a skip, as they are responsible for counting the head, dealing with touchers and bowls in the ditch and/or out of play and setting the mat and jack. Learning the rules around these responsibilities is essential.

Best Practices

Making adjustments for learning the green.

There are four greens to learn every time you bowl on a rink. They are Forehand North, Backhand North, Forehand South, Backhand South. The quicker you are at learning how to bowl to all “four corners”, the more confidence gained and the more options for shots will open up to you. Take a minute to think about that and visualize it in your mind. What do you need to learn? First determine the Line of Aim which is dependent on the [Pace of the Green](#).

Every time you deliver a bowl, you gain information on the green. Watch the bowl travel down the line of aim taken, when the bowl comes to rest how close to center does it end up? Make your adjustments to line of aim.

Once you have the Line of Aim figured out on a green, the next step is delivering consistently to the right length. Length is determined by the velocity ([weight](#)) with which you deliver the bowl. Again when your bowl comes to rest, how far in front of or behind the jack is it? Make changes to the weight of your delivery without changing your line of aim.

Paying attention to the path of your bowl and where it comes to rest, will give you information to make adjustments. ([See Believe the Green](#)) That’s why it is imperative to remain on the mat after delivering and watching your bowl until it comes to rest. Valuable information can be gained even on a badly rolled bowl. Understanding what adjustments to make is an important step for new bowlers to improve their bowling accuracy.

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