

Etiquette

THE ETIQUETTE OF BOWLS

As well as the Official Laws of the Game there are other unwritten Laws which refer to the conduct of bowlers on and off the Green. These unwritten laws help to cement the sociability and friendship which characterise our great game and help to ensure that everyone who participates in the sport derives the maximum enjoyment, and they make up a code referred to as the Etiquette of Bowls.

Etiquette is not a list of things to do or not to do; rather it is a **way of proceeding that recognises the importance of good sportsmanship and good fellowship.**

When playing at home, remember that you are the host and the Members of the opposing team are your guests.

Appropriate etiquette includes: The leader of the home team should pick up the jack and the opposing leader's bowl and hand them to him for the first end if the opposing team wins the mat. Accompany your opposing number to afternoon tea as your guest and be first to offer him refreshment at the end of the game. It is discourteous to retire to the change room and leave him waiting until you are ready to re-join him.

- It is a nice gesture to commend a good bowl of your opponent or of a player from your own team. Similarly it is etiquette to admit a fluke in good spirit.
- It is a serious breach of etiquette to applaud a misdirected bowl from a member of the opposing team which gives your team an unexpected advantage.
- Do not, by gesture, urge your opponent's bowl to run through the head.

These are acts of poor sportsmanship as well as serious breaches of etiquette.

AVOID BREAKING the CONCENTRATION OF the PLAYER ON the MAT or disturbing players on other rinks.

Be especially careful to:

- Remain behind the mat (the Laws of Bowls specify not less than one (1) metre behind the mat) when other players are in possession.
- Don't speak loudly when another player is on the mat. Best to remain silent.
- Don't allow your shadow to fall across the mat or on the green where another player's bowl is to be delivered.
- Don't move around behind the head whilst the skips are preparing to deliver their bowls. Stand on the bank or behind the head and stand still.
- Many players like to be able to see the rink number marker and the boundary markers when, deciding on their aiming line. Choose a position so that you do not obscure these.
- When crossing from the mat end to the head walk up the centre of your own rink and around the head. Don't stray into an adjoining rink. Similarly do not wander into the adjoining rink after you have delivered your bowl and do not follow your bowl so that you obscure your opponent's view of the run of the bowl.

CONSIDER THE GREENKEEPER AND OTHER PLAYERS who will use the green on future occasions:

- DO NOT toss your bowls on to the green at the beginning of the game. Be careful not to cause damage to the green by carelessly stepping down from the bank.

- Do not step in the ditch when you step on to or off the green. Be particularly careful when moving about near the edge of the green; the piece of turf you may dislodge from the edge will take many months to restore.
- Do not litter. Bowlers who drop litter on the banks exhibit an attitude that is detrimental to the high standards of our game.

WHEN YOU PLAY IN A TEAM YOU HAVE RESPONSIBILITIES to your team Members

There is accepted etiquette which applies within the team such as:

- If the skip asks a question of the third, when he is in charge of the head, it is not etiquette for the lead or second to respond or to volunteer their opinion.
- Other members of the team must not interfere with the third when he is measuring. It is his job and his alone. If the situation arises where the third has overlooked an obvious counter, other members of the team may draw his attention to it.
- Never criticise a member of your own team to outsiders. If you are not happy with the performance of the team of which you are a member, the best course is to make some constructive suggestion as to how the whole team might perform better. Criticism of one of the team members achieves nothing other than 'a loss of unity.
- Before going to the head, one of the team (usually the third) should put the skip's bowl on the mat ready for him to bowl, or otherwise make sure that his bowls are close at hand and not in the ditch or on the bank.
- No one plays a bad bowl intentionally. It is bad form to remark disparagingly about a poor bowl one of your team mates has played. Far better to encourage him to improve with his next bowl. Criticism of your own team members inevitably leads to a poor performance by the team. Reserve any criticisms that you may have until an appropriate occasion after the game.
- Bowls is a team game. It is not etiquette for the skip to say to one of his team members, "I am holding two shots, draw me another". The skip who says "I won by so many shots" does not endear himself to his team mates -they helped too.

ALL BOWLERS, however proficient, play poor games on occasions.

It is bad form to become a moaner when you have a bad day. It is equally bad form to make too much of a good run you may have.

Don't try to impress your opponent with your past successes. He will be more impressed by your consideration for your team members and for the game being played.

WINNING IS NOT EVERYTHING. If your opponent overlooks a shot in his favour it is important that you draw his attention to this. Similarly don't take advantage of any error in measuring by your opponent; don't claim shots that are not earned.

BE PUNCTUAL. It is poor form to keep your opponents and team mates waiting to begin a game or to resume after afternoon tea.

CONCENTRATE ON THE GAME. It is inconsiderate to listen to your pocket transistor or to hold lengthy conversations with spectators. These practices are discourteous to both your team mates and opponents. It is an unsatisfactory situation when you have to have the position of bowls in the head explained to you as a result of inattention. Watch all bowls so that you know the position when it is your turn to bowl.

RESPECT THE POSITION OF the SKIP. The selectors have entrusted him with the responsibility of making decisions which are in the best interests of the team. Etiquette requires that a player does not step on to the mat and indicate the shot he is going to play; wait for the instruction from the skip.

WISH YOUR OPPONENT GOOD BOWLING at the start of the game and do everything within your power to ensure that he enjoys the game. If you win, do so modestly; if you lose, do so with good grace.

A SUMMARY OF ETIQUETTE

J P Monro, in his well-known (but unfortunately out of print) booklet on Etiquette quotes a French source as summarising etiquette for bowlers as follows:

- Be correct on the bowling green
- Be scrupulously punctual
- Respect the Rules
- Respect the instructions given to you
- Respect the decisions of the Umpire
- Be polite to your opponents
- Be careful of your language
- Be able to "take it" when you lose
- Be a man (or woman), and behave like one
- Be convinced that you have carried off the best of victories if your opponent of today becomes your friend of tomorrow.

GOOD AND BAD LUCK. Generally the better bowler has the better luck. Don't bewail your bad luck - it will change - and improve with the improvement in your bowling skill