

BOWLING ETIQUETTE

Etiquette is a code of behaviour whereby individuals treat one another the way they would like to be treated. Codes of etiquette are usually unwritten but are taught and understood by all societies.

In addition to rules and regulations, etiquette is found in all sports and games and governs social interaction and the way a sport wishes to be perceived.

Lawns bowls is one of the few sports where common courtesy and etiquette are as important as the rules, and all clubs and members should not only practise it but help new members to understand it.

General Etiquette for Lawn Bowls

- Always be punctual for your games.
- Before the game, get to know your teammates and their bowls, and those of the opposition.
- Never toss your bowls onto the green.
- Leads/singles players – hand your opponent their first bowl of the match.
- Leads/singles players – if it is your mat, put the mat on the ground in the general area you wish to bowl from and assist in kicking bowls back behind that area. Straighten the mat after you have helped kick bowls back.
- Pay attention to the game on your rink – do not walk around talking to bowlers in other games.
- Watch for your Skips instruction before stepping onto the mat.
- When it's your team's turn to bowl it's your mat and head and your opponents at the mat-end should be at least one metre behind the mat (Law 12) and at the head-end should be behind the jack and away from the head (Law 12.1.2.2).
- Keep quiet when another person is bowling if you are at the mat-end, and keep still when another person is bowling if you are at the head-end.
- Be ready to bowl when it is your turn, pay attention to the state of play – get your bowl cleaned etc whilst your opponents are bowling.
- Always show good sportsmanship by acknowledging a display of good skill by another bowler.
- Never applaud lucky shots by your teammates, never complain about lucky shots by your opponents and admit a lucky shot with good grace – never say “thank you” for a bad shot that goes your way.
- Never “death ride” bowls (saying things such as “hit me in”, “miss it”, “go through the gap”).
- After bowling each bowl, step off the mat to the right. As you approach the mat to bowl, do so from the rear left. Though this is not a rule nor essential, it is a useful habit of convenience to avoid collisions!
- Do not walk in front of the player who has just bowled – they have control of the mat until their bowl comes to rest (Law 13.2).
- When changing ends, walk quickly up the centre of the rink with minimum of delay. If it's not your turn to bowl do not stop to chat to the Skip in the middle of the rink, it is not your mat or your head. Penalties can apply for annoying the opposition this way (Law 13.3).
- Do not criticize the playing surface.
- Do not criticize the performance of teammates – no one plays a bad bowl on purpose.
- Avoid delaying play by leaving the rink without the agreement of your opposition (Law 33.1).
- At the conclusion of an end, the player who was first to play picks up the mat and returns it to the bank.
- Do not move or remove any bowl from the head until the score has been agreed by seconds/thirds and the total has been communicated to the Skips.
- If an Umpire is called, move away from the head, you're done, his/her decision is final.
- Always shake hands at the end of the game and be a gracious winner and a good loser.