

Prestwick Bowling Club
Lawn Bowling Etiquette i.e., Good Manners
(For bowlers and spectators)

(Please note that some of these rules are as locally applied to **Prestwick Bowling Club**. Other clubs may have different views on this.)

Many of our older players will say that twenty or thirty years ago much more attention was paid to bowling green etiquette, but lawn bowls remains one of the few sports where common courtesy and etiquette are still prevalent. We should be proud of this, and in order to make the game as enjoyable as possible, bowling green etiquette should be promoted to members old and new. Much of this is common sense but here are some of the main rules of etiquette.

Dress appropriately and ensure that you know the dress code for each game or match in which you are participating. Do not show disrespect to your opponent(s) by arriving late, ensure that you leave sufficient time to change before the game. If you are representing the club on another green, you should remember that you are an ambassador for Prestwick Bowling Club. Behave appropriately.

Enter and leave the bowling green by the steps provided. Do not walk across rinks that other people are using and do not stand or sit on the banks while waiting to play. It is not the banks that are the problem as they are artificial but people sitting on them tend to place their feet on the edge of the green causing damage.

Introduce yourself and shake hands with your opponent (s) both before and after the game is complete. (No handshakes during Covid restrictions).

During the game do not move around the head when your opponent is about to deliver their bowl. Stand well back from the head, keep quiet and do not do anything that would distract your opponent. Wait until the bowl has been delivered before moving.

If you are at the same end as the player delivering a bowl, you must stand still behind the mat thus staying out of the player's line of vision. Here is what the Bowls Scotland rule says about this. *"Players of each team not in the act of playing or controlling play shall stand behind the jack and away from the head or 1m behind the mat".*

Bear in mind that some people like to see the rink boundary markers (strings) and the centre pin while playing so make sure that you are not obscuring them. On sunny days you must also ensure that your shadow does not cover the jack.

Spectators who are in the player's line of vision should also keep still while bowls are being delivered and should not distract the players on the green. For example, if you need to arrange a tie with another member, do not try to do this while they are playing!

At Prestwick Bowling Club we are privileged to have two of the best greens in the area. Look after them! Do not drop your bowls onto the green and ensure that your delivery is not causing scuff marks or damage to the green.

Observe the rules for possession of the rink! Here is the rule on this.

“Possession of the rink shall belong to the team whose bowl is being played. The players in possession of the rink for the time being shall not be interfered with, annoyed or have their attention distracted in any way by their opponents.

As soon as each bowl has come to rest, possession of the rink shall be transferred to the other team. Time being allowed to mark a Toucher.”

After you have delivered a bowl and before it has come to rest you have two options. If you want to track your bowls progress you must be behind the head as it stops. In other words, you must beat it to the head. If you don't go to the head, you must be behind the mat as the bowl comes to rest. This ruling is quite clear but unfortunately many players, including many of those who should know better, show disrespect for their opponents by failing to observe it.

How many times have you been on the mat, ready to play your bowl, when you have had to wait for your opponent to finish his stroll up the green or back to the mat? If your opponent is guilty of this, you should ask him to stop. Remember it is he who is in the wrong.

The rules for etiquette by Bowls Scotland are as follows.

- 1 Players should use the steps provided when going on and off the green.
- 2 Bowls should not be dropped on the green.
- 3 Do not stand on the verges.
- 4 Bowls should not be kicked in until the shot has been decided.
- 5 After delivering a bowl, a player should either go behind the mat or advance to the head. He should not take up a position in between.
- 6 Do not delay the game.
- 7 Do not wander around or move about the head when a player is about to deliver a bowl.
- 8 In a Fours game, the second keeps the score. In a Pairs game the Skip keeps the score.
- 9 Bowling is a friendly game, and all players should show courtesy and good sportsmanship.
- 10 All bowlers should know the rules as laid down by the World Bowls Board.
- 11 Mobile phones should not be used on or around the green.

After the game you should once again shake hands with your opponent(s) and congratulate or commiserate with them appropriately.

It is also customary to offer to buy your opponent (s) a drink if you have won the game. Where a marker has been involved in a singles game, you should also offer them a drink.

Knowledge of the above will make you a more respected bowler, keep things friendly and contribute towards the enjoyment of the game for everyone involved. Both on and off the green.

The Players Roles In Team Games

In all games it is the Skip's job to direct the play. Other players should play the shot directed by the Skip even if they don't agree with it. In Rinks (Fours) games the "Third" should direct the Skip when required to do so. In Triples or Pairs the Second or Lead may do this. Other players should not interfere unless asked to do so.

Here is what rule 51 says in the rule book.

51(a) The Skip

The Skip shall have sole charge of his team and his instructions shall be observed by his players. With the opposing Skip, he shall decide all disputed points and when both agree their decision shall be final.

If both Skips cannot agree, the point in dispute shall be referred to, and considered by an Umpire whose decision shall be final.

A Skip may at anytime delegate his powers and his duties to other members of his team, provided that such delegation is notified to the opposing Skip.

51(b) The Third

The third player may have the duty of measuring all disputed shots.

51(c) The Second

The second player shall keep a record of all shots scored for and against their team and shall always retain possession of the scorecard whilst play is in progress. They shall see that the names of all the players are entered on the scorecard, shall compare their record of the game with that of the opposing second player as each end is declared. At close of play the second shall hand their scorecard to the Skip.

51(d) The Lead

The Lead shall place the mat and shall deliver the jack, ensuring that the jack is properly centred before delivering their first bowl.

51(e)

In addition to the duties specified in the preceding clauses, any player may undertake such duties as may be assigned to him by the Skip in clause **51(a)** hereof.

It is also worth emphasising that the head must not be disturbed by any player until the shots have been finally agreed. When the Thirds or Skips are deciding the shots the other players should stand well back from the head and give him space to do so.

During the game, encourage your teammates, do not criticize them. Commend good shots and learn to accept that flukes are a part of the game. Sometimes they go for you , sometimes against.

Etiquette For Markers Of Bowling Matches.

During the season, when we are heavily involved in singles ties, markers are required most evenings. Consider making yourself available as a marker whenever you can. We all know that there is nothing worse than playing an important tie without a marker. Traditionally Prestwick Bowling Club has been one of the clubs where markers were always available but in recent years ties without markers seem to be becoming more common. It is not good etiquette to watch games from the side-lines or from the clubhouse while there are people playing without markers. If you have the time, get out there and mark.

A marker is serving two people, if we all marked one tie for every two we played, there would not be a problem. We are fortunate at Prestwick Bowling Club to have a few people who happen to like marking ties and they are seen on the green often. They are to be commended.

If you are marking a tie, the following rules should be observed. (These are not official rules related to markers. These are rules expected of a marker on Prestwick Bowling Club's green in domestic tournaments).

When a player has delivered the jack, the marker should centre it then stand back and to one side, ensuring that all rink markings are visible to the players.

They should answer any specific question from the player in possession of the rink about the state of the head. They should not offer any additional information that has not been requested. When asked, they should tell or show the player in possession of the rink which bowls the marker considers to be shot.

If you are unsure of the situation, for example you cannot decide who is lying, don't guess. You can offer an opinion but make sure that the player who is asking the question is made aware of this.

The marker should mark all touchers immediately they come to rest and remove chalk marks from non-touchers. He should also remove any dead bowls from the rink with the players agreement. He should also mark the position of touchers and or the jack which are in the ditch.

The marker should not move bowls until the end is complete and the players have agreed the number of shots.

He shall measure disputed shots when required but once again should not move the bowls until the players agree. If an umpire is available, then he may be called on for a decision.

Where no umpire is available, the marker may select one. Both players may also agree that the marker should make the decision. This is acceptable at local level.

If you would like to add anything to this list, feel free to let us know.