



# IBSTOCK BOWLING CLUB

Founded 1929

'Friends on and off the green'

## Learn the Unspoken Rules

Lawn bowling happens to be one of the games with several rules of etiquette. These rules, especially once learned and appreciated, create a pleasant game for all involved. Are you a beginner in lawn bowling? This article presents critical lawn bowls practices worth considering the next time you are in the green.

### 1. Be on Time

Timekeeping is perhaps one of the oldest rules on courtesy. The greatest way to start lawn bowling is by showing up on time for a game. Arriving on time will also give you adequate time to change before the game. Being early will also give you a chance to help organize the equipment and familiarize yourself with the game. Ensure all equipment, jacks and mats are in position before the game begins.

### 2. Dress Appropriately

Ensure that you know the dress code for the game in advance (for example is it 'all whites'? Is it 'white shirts with grey trousers/skirts'? Is it casual? Remember to change into your bowling shoes at the green and not to arrive in your bowling shoes.

### 3. Stand Still When Someone is About to Bowl

Lawn bowling is a game of concentration, therefore you should avoid moving around when someone else is playing. If you are at the head, wait until the person playing is finished bowling, then move. If you are at the same end as the player delivering the bowl, stay away from the mat and the player's line of vision. You are expected to stand at least one meter behind the mat. On sunny days, ensure that your shadow is not cast upon the jack. Likewise, if you are in white shoes, avoid standing behind a white jack because your shoes will interfere with the player's vision. If you are standing at the head, stay inside the rink markers but avoid obscuring the central rink number. Also, stay silent during the game. Being loud is equally distracting and unnecessary when you can communicate with signals.

### 4. Be Alert as You Walk Around Adjacent Rinks

When walking around the end of a rink be aware as to whether a bowler is bowling towards you. You should remain stationary until that bowler has bowled so as not to distract him. Similarly be aware of play on any adjacent rink when you are walking between ends. Remember that a wood is still in



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play if it rolls onto your rink then back into their own rink, therefore you should make sure that you do not impede its progress.

## 5. Observe the Rules of Possession

According to the Rules of Possession, after you have delivered a bowl, you have two choices. If you desire to track your bowl, you must be at the head when it stops. If you choose to stay at the mat, you must be there when the bowl stops. Normally players remain on the mat until the bowl that they have delivered has come to a halt.

By observing this rule, you ensure that the next player gets to play immediately when your turn is over. The rules also state that the rink shall belong to the team whose bowl is being played. While playing, players in possession of the rink shall not be disturbed or interfered with. If you have business to conduct at the clubhouse, wait till after the game and start a conversation over drinks.

## 6. Acknowledgments are in Order

Competition is a critical ingredient in enjoying a game, but so is acknowledgment. Good bowling is the appreciation of skill to keep the congenial spirit alive. Congratulating an opponent, or tapping a player in the back for making an exceptional move is always in order. Also, take note of lucky shots and acknowledge them whenever necessary.

## 7. Do Not Drop That Bowl

Dropping or throwing bowls on lawns for no particular reason is considered impolite. Bowling lawns are delicate and dropping bowls on them could damage the greens. You should not kick bowls or drop them. Pick them up gently and place them on the ground if you do not need them.

## 8. Enter and Leave the Mat on the Right Side

The rules are simple. Once it is your time to bowl, come into the mat from the left side and once you are done bowling, step off from the right side of the mat. It is customary to observe this rule to avoid bumping into other players as you exit the mat.

## 9. Send Signals from the Head End

If you have visited a bowling green; you have probably realized that it is difficult to see the results without walking on the green. However, if you are standing at the head end, it is easier for you to observe the game. Signal your



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team player as necessary. Tap your knee to signal that the struck bowl belongs to the adversary team or tap your shoulder if the struck bowl is yours.

### 10. Shake Hands

It is good sportsmanship to shake hands before and after a game, and introduce yourself when necessary. After a game, it is tempting to leave immediately, especially after losing. Ensure that you shake hands. It is also customary to offer to buy drinks after the game, if you are the home team.

### 11. Keep the Complaints to yourself

Perhaps your green was not as smooth as you expected, or you are at loggerheads with one of your team players. It would be wise not to complain about any green, including yours, or about other people. As earlier stated, bowling is a game of propriety, and pointless complaining is impolite.

### 12. Respect the Green.

- No running on the green.
- Do not take short cuts across the green.
- Observe rink closed notices.
- Do not eat or drink on the green.
- Do not stand close to the edges of the green.
- Do not move rink markers set by the green keeper.
- If possible, change the mat position during non-competitive matches.
- No smoking within the grounds of the club, we are a non smoking club.

## How to Handle Wrong-Doing

Unfortunately, even with several rules of propriety, behaviour contrary to the rules will arise once in a while. Whether deliberate or as a result of a mistake, a breach can be dealt with using the following framework.

- Politely ask the player to stop breaking the rules. If necessary, explain which laws they are breaking through their behaviour. If the person is an opponent, be careful not to use insulting or vulgar language as it is contrary to lawn bowling custom.
- If your attempt to inform them fails, seek the help of a knowledgeable club member. A third party may be in a better position to resolve the dispute before it escalates to the Board of Management. The third party's opinion should be respected, and if necessary, he should be allowed to watch the game and note the relevant behaviour carefully.



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- If all efforts should fail and the resolution is unsatisfactory, parties in dispute should report the matter to the Board of Management. The Board will do its best to gather evidence and deal with the issue appropriately. The consequences of a breach could lead to disqualification or the suspension of a member.
- Above all, it is imperative to remember that disputes are bound to arise and can be resolved without extending the matter beyond the game or the clubhouse. Always strive to maintain good relationships with all players at the clubhouse and be mindful of your words.