

Bowls Etiquette

Because we all forget some of the things we learnt when we started playing bowls, etiquette can appear to be somewhat lacking at times. Perhaps the following may serve as a useful reminder as etiquette is central to the sport of bowls and should always be observed.

1. Dress correctly for all games and arrive in good time.
2. Mobile phones should be switched off during play and used with discretion while in the vicinity of the green.
3. Greet team members and opponents at the start of the game and congratulate/compliment them at the end of play.
4. Remember to thank the marker at the end of a singles game for sparing his/her time and offer a drink to your marker as well as to your opponent.
5. Concentrate fully on the game and on all bowls as they are being delivered. In a competitive match save socialising until after the match.
6. Be ready to bowl when it is your turn.
7. Do not cause a distraction at the head end by talking loudly (chattering) or moving about when it is not your turn to bowl.
8. Remain at least 1 metre behind the mat or well away from the head when it is not your turn to play, but always show an interest in the game. Remember that only the player on the mat can ask for instructions from their skips.
9. Always remember that as soon as your bowl has come to rest possession of the rink passes to your opponent (at both ends).
10. Avoid obscuring the rink number, rink markers or jack.
11. On sunny days be aware of your shadow. Don't let it fall across the jack, the head or in front of the mat when a player is about to bowl.
12. Keep to your own rink, walk down the centre of the rink when changing ends. Don't walk through the head.
13. Be aware of the players on the next rink.
14. Don't walk past the end of a rink when a player is about to bowl.
15. Don't waste time if there is any doubt in agreeing which wood is shot, suggest to the person asking for the shot that they measure - or offer to do it yourself.
16. Once the score has been agreed everyone should help clear the bowls. 2's put up the score, leads push the bowls back and skips keep the scorecards.
17. If you follow a bowl after delivery try not to obscure your opponents view of the bowl.
18. If a skip decides on a firing shot ensure other players are aware, including those on adjacent rinks, so they can avoid any bowls that 'fly about' at the head.
19. Encourage and praise the the rest of the team, including the skip. Bowls is a team game and everyone should be working together.
20. Don't applaud a team member who has outrageous luck. Admit a fluke with grace.
21. Compliment your opponent on a good shot.
22. Never criticise your opponent, the green or your own team. If you can't say something positive then don't say anything at all.
23. Always appear to be enjoying the game and be gracious whether you win or lose.
24. Learn the laws of the sport of bowls and abide by them.

Just remember, no matter how good a player might be (or thinks they are), defeat is always a possibility. A good loser is the one who appears on the surface to have accepted defeat with the best possible grace - whilst inwardly seething!