

Lawn Bowls: Etiquette and Basic Rules

Lawn bowls is a sport that fosters social connection and camaraderie. Etiquette, or displaying good sportsmanship, is essential. This involves understanding acceptable behaviour on the green and applying common sense, honesty, fairness, and consideration for others.

If you're unsure about etiquette, don't hesitate to ask questions. Etiquette applies to players, markers, umpires, and spectators, as well as club members. It's an integral part of lawn bowls, and all clubs should ensure that new members are informed of proper conduct on the green and in the clubhouse.

Thoughtfulness and common sense are the keys to etiquette. Some important rules of etiquette include: Players and spectators at the head end should remain still and quiet when a player is ready to bowl. When it's your team's turn, the mat and head are yours. Ask your opponents to move away politely if they are in the way. Wait until the previous bowl has come to rest before delivering your own or it could be considered an illegal bowl.

Before stepping onto the mat it is a good idea to wait for your skip to signal which hand and shot you should play. Keep up with the pace of play at all times.

Do not trespass into neighbouring rinks, whether going to or from the clubhouse, moving to get a better view of the jack, or walking from one end of your rink to the other. Be aware of others playing and avoid infringing on their rinks, even if you're helping your teammate aim.

Walk up the centre of the rink without delay, but do not stop to chat in the middle of the rink if it is not your mat or head.

When a player releases their bowl, they maintain control of the mat and rink until their bowl stops, best to not start walking down the rink while their bowl is still in progress.

Make sure you are gracious about lucky shots as hard as that may be sometimes.

Never applaud or complain about them, and accept them from the opposition with grace, knowing that your team will get their fair share at some point.

Avoid the poor sportsmanship of thanking the opponent for a bad shot that goes your way.

Do not ride bowls. - in other words if an opponents bowl is coming in heavy, do not wave it through past it's target or into the ditch, again this is just poor sportsmanship.

Do not criticize the playing surface, all players have to play on it. Instead adapt and learn.

Try not to criticize the performance of your team. No one plays a bad bowl on purpose, instead try some words of encouragement to your team mates to help lift their performance.

Avoid delaying play by leaving the rink without the knowledge of the other players.

Please do not drop bowls from the bank to the green, you are privileged to play on the clubs green, please respect it.

Likewise if you release your bowls at a height greater than 300mm then you need to use a bowling arm or a dumping mat. Respect every clubs dumping policy, it is there to protect their asset.

Never complain about your skips bowls, they only have two bowls and the rest of the team have already had six.

All of the above is important in any division but the higher you go the less tolerance will be shown towards poor sportsmanship.

Remember, you are representing your club, treat everyone with the same respect you would like shown to you.

By following these guidelines, you can ensure an enjoyable game of lawn bowls with a competitive spirit without creating animosity between your own or opposition players.