

Caerleon Bowling Club (Est 1951)

Part 3 - Club and Match Etiquette - (It's Just Good Manners)

Lawn Bowling etiquette is about good sportsmanship, common sense, and good manners, and, although most things are covered in the 'Laws of the Sport' some are not. This guidance may be very useful for newcomers to the sport, but not exclusively, for many bowlers of long experience sometimes fall into 'bad habits', perhaps not being aware of doing so, and therefore these notes would be useful for them too.

We play the sport for enjoyment, for the pleasure of pitting our skills against others, in friendly competition, and our sport has a long tradition for its common courtesy and etiquette.

Here follows a few points for your understanding:

- ◆ Be punctual for your game, being late could be considered disrespectful to your opponents, and if in a team game, to your own colleagues, also being rushed before an important game puts you at a disadvantage.
- ◆ Ensure you are dressed appropriately for the game you are about to play.
- ◆ Introduce yourselves to your opponents by your first name, and exchange handshakes before the game, with perhaps a friendly comment such as 'Enjoy your game', or even 'Have a good game'

During the game, whilst at the 'mat end' and your opponent is on the mat ready to deliver a bowl:

- ✓ Do not move about
- ✓ Do not make any disturbing noises
- ✓ Do not stand in your opponent's line of vision,
- ✓ In sunny conditions, do not allow your shadow to cause a distraction to the person bowling.

(The Laws of the Sport say a player should stand at least 1 metre behind the mat. 36.1.1)

- ◆ During the game, whilst at the 'head end' when an opponent is on the mat ready to deliver a bowl:
 - ✓ Do not move about in or near the 'head' as it can be a distraction to the bowler.
 - ✓ Stand well behind the 'head' when your opponent is on the mat if the jack is in the ditch, stand on the bank behind the "Head"

(Law 36 says quite a lot about this subject)

- ✓ In sunny conditions avoid allowing your shadow to cover the jack.
- ✓ Avoid obscuring rink centre or boundary markers
- ◆ Possession of the rink will belong to the player or team whose bowl is being played. You must wait for your skip to tell you which shot to play and always keep up with play.
- ◆ Once your bowl has stopped, you must relinquish the mat to the opposition and no further discussion can take place with your Skip until you are next on the mat.
- ◆ Between a bowl being delivered, and it coming to rest, the only places you should stand are ***behind the mat or behind the head.***
Not anywhere in between or stepping off onto an adjacent rink, unused or not.
- ◆ It is useful to get into the habit when it is your turn to bowl of approaching the mat from the rear left and after bowling stepping off the mat to the right. This is not essential, but it is a useful habit of convenience to avoid collisions!
- ◆ As soon as the bowl has come to rest your opponent is entitled to deliver a bowl immediately not wait for you to get out of the way.
- ◆ It is important to note that there should be no trespassing into neighboring rinks, this includes going to or from the clubhouse, moving to better see the jack, and particularly when walking from one end of your green to the other. Please be aware of others playing. If you are helping your teammate aim, do not infringe upon neighboring rinks.
- ◆ Walk up the centre of the rink with minimum delay, if it is not your team's turn to bowl **DO NOT STOP TO CHAT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE RINK, IT'S NOT YOUR MAT OR HEAD.**
- ◆ At the conclusion of each end, unless you are the player responsible for measuring and agreeing shots scored, keep well away from the 'head' and do not under any circumstances 'kick away' or otherwise move any bowls in the head until the score has been clearly declared.
- ◆ Compliment your opponents, as well as your own colleagues, for a well delivered bowl. In the event of your opponent having a 'lucky' result, do not make any derogatory comments, although you might think them.
Better to say nothing in this situation. If one of your own players has a 'lucky' shot, please do not say 'Well bowled' because it was not well bowled, it was a fluke. Do not use offensive language or gestures.
- ◆ Do not openly criticise the green, your own players, and more importantly your opponents. If you cannot say something positive, it is better to say nothing. If there is need for some critical comment make it in private, not openly in front of other players or spectators.

- ◆ Pay attention to the game on your rink, it is very frustrating to your team if they feel that you are not giving your full attention to the game by, for example: -
 - ✓ Frequently leaving the green
 - ✓ Chatting to players on another rink,
 - ✓ Using a mobile telephone on the green during play.

If one must carry a mobile phone whilst on the green make sure it is turned to silent so as not to disturb other players.

- ◆ While standing at the head end waiting for the player on the mat to bowl, stand between the markers so the bowler can see and use the markers to aim.
- ◆ Generally, the third or skip at the head will signal the bowler on the mat the position of bowls in the head using hand signals denoting for and against.
- ◆ Bowlers not raking the bowls after an end should assist by kicking the bowls into an approximate line, thus making raking easier and faster.
- ◆ Players at the head end should be ready to stop deflected bowls from crossing into the adjacent rink and interfering with neighboring games; likewise, be alert to prevent bowls from adjacent rinks from messing up your own head. Pay attention!
- ◆ No rules prohibit bowlers running after their bowl (enthusiasm nor youthful fitness is discouraged) but you must try to arrive at the head before your bowl stops. Some clubs consider following your bowl up the green poor etiquette.
- ◆ One minute between the time when the opponent's bowl stops, and the next bowler delivers his/her bowl should be sufficient.
- ◆ Treat the green you are playing on with respect, it is costly to maintain, and everyone should try to deliver their bowls without 'digging them' into the turf.
- ◆ Be a gracious winner and a good loser. Acknowledge your opponent's and team mate's afterwards and thank them for the game. It is customary to go back into the club after a game and offer a drink to your opposite number. They should usually offer you one back.
- ◆ All bowlers should remember to clear the equipment from your rink after your game.

No laws governing a sport can cope with every situation. Unusual situations not covered in this document.