

ETIQUETTE OF LAWN BOWLS

Etiquette is a code of behaviour whereby we treat one another the way we would like to be treated.

The Nuriootpa Bowling Club adheres to the Bowls Australia's Code of Conduct outlining the behaviours we expect both within the Club House and on the greens/grounds.

The Code of Conduct can be found at [Constitution and Policies - Bowls Australia](#).

INTRODUCTION:

While there are rules in our Code of Conduct and the LAWS OF THE SPORT OF BOWLS Crystal Mark 4th Edition, there is also another side known as etiquette which simply means being a "good sport". This is achieved by having a good knowledge of acceptable behaviour within the game and applying it using common sense, honesty and consideration of others.

Some of the common etiquettes for the sport of lawn bowls include:

GENERAL:

1. Smoking is not permitted on greens or surrounds – only designated areas should be used.
2. Mobile phones must be turned off unless special permission has been given by the Umpire.
3. The area of the green is fragile and should be treated with care. This includes wearing proper footwear, not dropping or tossing bowls onto the green, sitting on the banks or having your feet in the ditch.
4. Always be on time, come correctly attired and notify the Club if you are delayed. Late arrivals make it difficult for the Selectors if changes to teams are required and it can also delay the starting of games on time.
5. At the start of a game greet your opponent/s and make introductions to all players.
6. When it is your teams' turn to bowl it's your mat and head. Your opponents should be away from both and, if not, ask them politely to move. (Law 12 Position of players).

7. Always pay your Skip the respect of waiting for instructions before stepping onto the mat. Do not step onto the mat and indicate which way you intend playing – wait for the Skip's instructions.
8. Do not argue with the Skip about the shot they ask you to play. Not only is it bad etiquette but your hesitation shows a lack of confidence in the tactics, and this can also affect team harmony.
9. As stated in the laws of the game, stand at least one metre behind the mat while your opponent bowls. (Law 12.1.1)
10. Keep quiet and still when players are on the mat and refrain from having conversations with players on adjoining rinks. It is against the laws of the game if the players in possession of the rink are interfered with, annoyed or distracted in any way by their opponents. (Law 13.4)
11. Do not carry on a running commentary as each bowl makes its way to the head as this can be most irritating for other players.
12. While standing at the head end waiting for the player on the mat to bowl, stand still between the boundary pegs and not in front of the rink numbers – this allows the bowler to see and use these to aim. Movement at the head is very distracting.
13. Always acknowledge exceptional play by your team and opposition players.
14. Never applaud lucky shots, never complain about lucky shots and admit a lucky shot with good grace. Do not say “thanks” or “well played” for a bad shot that goes your way or clap if your opponent gives away the shot.
15. Do not call for lucky shots (a wick) when a bowl is in motion if it has not been declared as an intentional shot selection or wave your opponent's bowl through/past the head.
16. Team members should not coach or criticise the performance of colleagues during or after play ends – no one plays a bad bowl on purpose.
17. Concentrate on your own game for the duration of the game. Be ready with your bowl in hand when it is your turn to bowl. Failure to do this can be most disturbing to the other members of your team.
18. As soon as your bowl has come to rest, possession of the rink will transfer to the opposing player. (Law 13.2.). Step off/away from the mat to the right. As you

approach the mat to bowl, do so from the rear left. Though this is not essential, it is a useful way of avoiding collisions.

19. Do not walk in front of the last bowl played by the Third – they have a right to watch where their bowl finishes. Walk up the middle 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 is not your mat or head.

20. Take an interest in the Skip's bowls when it is their turn. Don't complain about the Skip's bowls - they have only two bowls and the rest of the team has had six.

21. There should be no trespassing into the neighbouring rinks; this includes going to or from the club house, moving to better see the jack, and particularly when walking from one end to the other.

22. Players at the head should be ready to stop deflected bowls from crossing into the adjacent rink and interfering with neighbouring games – likewise, be alerted to prevent bowls from adjacent rinks messing up your own head. Pay attention. (Law 37.8)

23. If a delivered bowl looks as if it has come to rest outside the boundary, any member of the team may bring this to the Skip's attention, but the bowl should not be removed without asking the Skip for a decision. If agreement cannot be reached by the Skips, then the Umpire should be called.

24. Wait for players who are measuring to agree on the number of shots before removing any bowls – ensure you do not interfere with the head. (Law 23). If a player measures before the process of deciding the number of shots scored starts, the defaulting team will lose the right to play any bowls remaining to be played in the end, and the non-defaulting team will deliver their remaining bowls to complete the end. (Law 23.3).

25. Once the head has been declared, the relevant Lead should get the mat ready to be placed while the remaining bowlers (the Seconds can assist once the score card/board has been updated) move the bowls carefully back so they are behind where the mat is to be placed. This will help keep the game moving and avoid wasting time.

26. If an Umpire is called, move away – you have done your job. The Umpire's decision is not to be questioned – it is final.

27. Don't delay play by leaving the rink without the knowledge of the other players. (Law 32 Leaving the green during the course of play and substitutes. 32.1 No play must delay play by leaving the rink of play or their team unless their opponent agrees, and then only for no more than 10 minutes.)
28. Avoid arguments during a game with members of your own team or with your opponents. It takes two to invoke a scene, don't be one of them.
29. Rules prohibit bowlers from running after each of their bowls. If you do, then you must arrive at the head by the time your bowl comes to rest. (Appendices A4. Restricting the movement of players during play).
30. Bowls should be carried from the green, particularly if another game is still in progress. Bowls should be carried up the green if an end is declared dead and bowls need to be transferred. Similarly, if the Skip does not play the last bowl, it should be carried up the rink, not thrown.
31. Bowlers should shake hands at the end of the game.
32. Be a gracious winner and a good loser.
33. It is customary for the winning side to buy the losing side a drink.
34. Bowlers should remember to return the jack and mats to the trolleys/storage units.

ETIQUETTE FOR LEADS/SECONDS:

35. Time can be saved if the Lead gets on with the job of laying the mat and delivering the jack while the other bowlers attend to the removal of bowls to behind the mat.
36. It is good etiquette for a Lead to place the opponent's bowl near the mat while they are rolling/centring the jack.
37. It is certainly not good etiquette on the part of a Lead or Second to offer advice to the Third or Skip. There is nothing worse than seeing the Lead or Second signalling to the Skip behind the Third's back.
38. Keep out of the way while the shot is being measured. Show interest in the result of the head without interfering.

ETIQUETTE FOR THIRDS:

39. If your Skip has first bowl, put their bowl on the mat before proceeding to the head.

40. Don't speak to your Skip or step into the head after their bowl has come to a rest – it's not your mat – unless it is the last bowl.

41. Thirds should not offer advice as the Skip leaves the head to play their first bowl. However, when the head has changed the Third may offer advice but must accept with good grace should the Skip decide not to act on their suggestion.

42. Thirds should not walk around the head unnecessarily wondering which bowls are lying closest to the jack. If in doubt – MEASURE. This saves time. If no agreement can be reached on a shot, then the Umpire should be called immediately. Once the Thirds have determined the shot/s, then take the bowls out by hand – don't kick them out – place them in a group away from the head for ease of scoring and to prevent disputes.

43. Don't tell the Lead or Second what hand or shot to play – that is the job of the Skip.

44. It is a nice gesture for the Third to pick up the jack and hand it to the winning Lead.

ETIQUETTE FOR SKIPPERS:

45. Skips should remember that the players in their team are as anxious to win as they are and that it is poor form and bad etiquette to show annoyance or disappointment should a teammate play a bad shot. No amount of waving the arms will bring a short bowl closer to the head, nor stop a heavy bowl passing the head. In other words, Skips should not by word or body language express their feelings when team members are trying their best but end up playing badly.

46. Don't complain to your opponent about your team – it may be “noticed” by your team.

47. Encourage your team – never be critical of their efforts.

48. It is courtesy to consult with the Third on crossing over.

49. As soon as a bowl is delivered by the Third the Skip must retire behind the jack. When the bowl comes to rest, they should stand aside and give possession

to their opposite number. Failure to do this is often the cause of much unpleasantness.

50. Once the bowl has come to rest no further instructions or remarks may be made. Skips may only talk to their player while their team is in possession of the rink. As soon as each bowl has come to rest, possession of the rink is transferred to the opposing team.

51. At the conclusion of an end the Skip who had not just bowled should remove the mat and place it on the bank.

52. In a game of bowls it is very thoughtless of the Skip to allow themselves to become engrossed in conversation with their opposite number as to neglect their chief duty of giving their attention to the game.

CONCLUSION:

53. All bowlers should familiarise themselves with the LAWS OF THE SPORT OF BOWLS Crystal Mark 4th Edition.

54. Remember, the absence of a reasonable degree of etiquette may be regarded as a form of gamesmanship. What is gamesmanship? It is conduct impinging on the unethical. It indicates a desire to win at all costs thereby conflicting with many of the golden rules of etiquette.

55. Leave your bad bowls on the green – tomorrow is another day!

Sources

[Laws of the sport of Bowls – Crystal Mark 4th edition - Bowls Australia](#)

[Lawn Bowls Etiquette: A Guide for New Bowlers \(cataloguesports.com.au\)](#)

[Guide-to-the-Etiquette-of-Lawn-Bowls.pdf \(sorrentobowlingclub.com.au\)](#)