

LOOSE BOWLS CLUB

Bowls Etiquette for Bowlers and Spectators

Bowls remains one of the few sports where common courtesy and etiquette are displayed by the majority of those taking part or spectating. We should be proud of this and promote bowling green etiquette to both new and established bowlers. Most is common sense but here are a few rules and guidelines (both official, as laid down by the English Bowling Association EBA, and those expected of Loose Bowls Club members).

On The Green

As in any sport, hand shakes and introductions to team members precede the start of the game, along with a coin toss to determine possession of the mat for the first end.

When a bowler is about to bowl, remaining bowlers should stand well behind the mat and not distract him/her in any way. Bowlers at the head should stand well behind the jack and stand still until the bowl has been delivered. Many bowlers like to see the rink boundary marker and the centre mark when bowling, so make sure you are not obscuring them.

Having delivered your bowl, do not wander up the green or to the outer edge of the rink, which may distract bowlers on adjacent rinks. The EBA rule states, “When your bowl comes to rest, you should be behind the head or, on or behind the mat”.

Possession of the Rink – EBA states, “Possession of the rink belongs to the team whose bowl is being played. The players in possession of the rink shall not be interfered with, annoyed or distracted in any way by their opponents. As soon as each bowl comes to rest, possession of the rink passes to the other team” While this rule is meant for competition play, observing it at all times is a good habit to adopt.

Cheering, clapping or generally congratulating a team member who has gained an advantage by his/her bowl arriving at the head in a fortuitous manner, e.g. “wicking in” off an outside bowl, is considered bad manners. Many bowlers apologise to their opponent if this happens, accepting this as good fortune rather than good bowling.

When an opponent’s bowl is arriving at the head, it is bad manners to encourage or gesticulate at the bowl to miss its intended target or line.

When an end is completed, the shot score should be agreed before any of the bowls are moved to the back of the rink in preparation for the next end.

If you need to leave the rink for any reason, be aware of the adjacent rinks. Do not walk across the rink behind the head as this may distract a bowler who is on the mat. Don’t engage in conversation with bowlers behind the mat if this is likely to distract a bowler who is on the mat ready to bowl.

Around the Green

Bowls is a game to be enjoyed by both bowlers and spectators. However, spectators should observe some basic rules when moving around the green or watching the play.

Spectators should be aware of play on each rink if they are walking around the green, so as not to distract bowlers who are on the mat.

Spectators should be aware that undue amounts of noise behind the mat or the head might also cause a distraction to bowlers.

....and Finally

Laughter and light-hearted banter are all part and parcel of enjoying the game we all love. Where the type of game is conducive to this (friendly games, club competitions, roll-ups etc.) then long may it continue. However, when playing in League and County bowls competitions, adhering to the etiquette of bowling will enhance the standing of the club, and its members, as one who play hard but fair.

Loose Bowls Club