

HANDBOOK FOR VICES AND SKIPS

Sun City Center Lawn Bowling Club



Revised April 2014

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SECTION 1 - NEW (AND EXPERIENCED) VICES

Congratulations! Whether you have been a Vice for years, or have just been selected, you have taken on a position requiring more than the skills needed to play Lead. Now is the time to start learning the strategy, tactics and laws of the game, if you haven't already begun to do so.

World Bowls - Laws of the Sport Of Bowls

World Bowls is the governing body of Lawn Bowls worldwide. They have prepared and continue to update the laws of the game, which are followed in every Lawn Bowls country in the world.

The game of Lawn Bowls is much more enjoyable when everyone plays by the same laws (rules). So learn the 'Laws of the Sport of Bowls' .

(Available on-line at [http://worldbowlsLtd.co.uk/laws/Crystal Mark Second Edition.pdf](http://worldbowlsLtd.co.uk/laws/Crystal_Mark_Second_Edition.pdf))

Don't try to learn them all at once; there are too many of them. Do try to learn them as unfamiliar situations arise during the course of play. Do not accept the statements of other players at their face-value, they may not truly know the rules either; always check. If in doubt, check with your Skip and accept his or her decision but remember they are not infallible either. Check later.

Do not become a Lawn Bowling lawyer. Application of the laws makes for a better game but over-application can make you unpopular. Apply the laws sensibly, and if you are sure of your facts, firmly.

Primary Duties of the Vice

The Vice's primary function is to advise the Skip of any changes in the head when it is the Skip's turn to bowl. As well, you should be prepared to suggest strategy when needed. However, keep in mind the Skip is in charge of the game at all times. As a Vice, you will measure any or all disputed shots and also determine the count after the end has been completed.

Skills Required

When delivering your bowls, you should be prepared to play or deliver any shot requested by the Skip:

- the draw shot
- pushing a bowl into, or out of, the head (yard-on shot)
- moving the jack
- a wick shot
- a drive shot
- a position bowl, etc.

As a Vice

Additional Equipment Required :Tape Measure, Towel and Chalk

Support and Encouragement

Always display positive body language and give encouraging words to your team. A player who is always complaining detracts from the enjoyment of the game for all involved.

Know your Bowls

Before the game, make sure you know your team's bowls and those of the opposition. This is essential for counting the number of shots in the head and for relaying information to your Skip during play.

Stay Alert!

Watch the Lead's mat position and jack delivery. Does the jack appear short in relation to the mat location?

Be prepared to call a bowl or jack on the boundary line in or out.

Touchers

A toucher is a bowl which, in its original course, touches the jack. It may touch other bowls before touching the jack. A resting bowl driven onto the jack is **not** a toucher. Touchers should be identified since they remain alive if they end up in the ditch. A non-toucher in the ditch is a dead bowl and must be removed immediately. You will need to identify touchers by using chalk or a spray marker. Mark a toucher, on the running surface, at two opposite locations; in the event that the toucher is driven into the ditch, one of the marks is always visible. A toucher should be marked with chalk immediately or before the next bowl comes to rest.

Do not touch a toucher with anything other than the chalk when marking. If you cannot mark a toucher without disturbing its location or the location of other bowls or the jack, you may designate (nominate) the bowl as a toucher without marking it, but you must do so before the next bowl comes to rest. If you do not, the bowl is no longer a toucher.

You and the opposing Vice must remember that the bowl has been designated as a toucher (the bowl may be marked later if the situation changes so that marking becomes possible). Many bowlers will steady a bowl with their other hand while they mark a toucher, avoid doing this as much as possible.

Playing to the Head

As a Lead you were mainly concerned with drawing; usually to the jack. As a Vice, your Skip will ask you to make other types of shots. All these shots require variations in weight and direction (line) and need to be practiced. **Always** wait before stepping on the mat for directions from the Skip before playing your bowl. Do not assume that the required shot will be the same as the one before.

Sending Information

The amount of information you send back to your Skip during the building of the head depends entirely on your Skip. Some like lots of information, others not so much. Ask your skip their preference. If there is a change in the head, let your Skip know and always let your Skip know of any impending disaster, for example, the possibility of losing five shots if the jack is moved. If you are asked to show the location of the jack or a bowl, you may point to it (without physically touching it). Remember that you may signal back information **ONLY** when it is your team's turn to bowl (possession of the rink). If you send information during the opponent's turn, you may distract their player on the mat. This is not only illegal, but may be interpreted as gamesmanship.

Proper hand signals are an excellent way to convey information especially if the surroundings are noisy.

Counting the End

After the last bowl of the end has been delivered (with time being allowed for the bowl to fall), the end is counted.

Who moves the bowls? A good way to remember is you GIVE points you don't take them. As you remove bowls which count from the head (never move a bowl without agreement of the opposing Vice), place them in a distinct location remote from the jack (on your towel is the best place) so that there can be no argument as to how many bowls have been removed from the head. There is also the possibility, if bowls are not clearly identified, and not moved far enough from the jack, that they could be counted twice. Keep your eyes open for possible measures. Whether you trust your eyes for measuring the distance between bowls and the jack, or whether you use a measure is up to you. If there is any doubt, measure.

Measuring

There are many errors made in measuring; some people who have bowled for years have never learned how to measure properly. Learn how to do it properly; consult your Club Coach or an Umpire. As a Vice you will be expected to do the measuring of any bowls which may be in doubt as the head is being counted.

You should have a good quality measure, at least 10 feet long. Most measures will be inside 10 feet, but a long measure is worth having. You may also like to have a string measure for measuring two bowls or the jack in the ditch. Measuring is usually done by the Vice of the team which does not hold shot. If the opposing Vice is measuring and you do not agree with the result, you can ask for a re-measure or measure yourself. **Remember no bowls can be moved until both Vices are in agreement.** If you are not in agreement with the opposing Vice, call your Skip. If the Skips cannot decide, then they will call the Umpire. At this point everyone must step away from the head. An Umpire's decision is FINAL.

Signaling the Score

When signaling the score to the Skip, make sure that she or he is watching, then make a clear signal. Slowly touch your shoulder, or head, once for each shot you are up or your thigh for each shot you are down.

Strategy

Strategy is itself a large topic that is not easily covered. Some basic strategy for the new Vice is to keep your eyes and ears open. Always look at how many bowls you have in the head. If your nearest bowl is removed, how many shots will you lose? Always look for clusters of opponent's bowls, and alert your Skip to the potential loss if the jack is moved there. Remember if you can keep your opponent from scoring more than one on any end they cannot get too far.

Finally, listen and learn. If you're not sure why your Skip has called a particular shot, ask them after the end or game has been completed. Talk to other Skips and find out why they did certain things or what tips they may have.

In Conclusion

We hope this section has been helpful in identifying what is expected of you as a Vice. Whether you are playing in club jitneys or major tournaments, the basics are the same.

This section has touched on a number of issues where Vices need some knowledge. As a Vice, you may find that you are interested in learning more about the rules and wish to become an Umpire. It is also possible that you would like to share what you have learned as a player with new bowlers, and wish to become a coach.

Good Bowling!

SECTION 2 - SKIP'S

The Next Step – The Skip

Once you have played as a Vice for some time, it is only a very small step to becoming a Skip. The Vice's section has touched on the World Bowls Laws of the Game, the Duties of a Vice and Strategy. All of these items also apply to the Skip, with some additional duties and responsibilities.

Duties and Responsibilities

According to the rules of the game, the Skip shall have sole charge of the team and all players on the team should follow the skip's instructions.

The Skip is responsible for the scorecard. He or she will record, on the score card, all shots scored for and against as each end is completed and compare the score card with that of the opposing skip as each end is completed.

Dispute Resolution

The Skips shall attempt to resolve any dispute making sure that any decision reached is in line with the Laws of the Sport of Bowls. If the skips need to check any part of the Laws of Bowls before reaching a decision, they should ask an umpire for an explanation.

If the umpire considers that a decision reached by the skips is not in line with the Laws of the Sport of Bowls, the umpire should overrule that decision so that it is in line with Laws of the Sport of Bowls.

If the Skips cannot reach an agreement on any dispute, they should ask the Umpire to make a decision. The Umpire's decision is final.

Tips and Hints for Skips

1. As stated in the Vice's Section , strategy is a large topic which is not easily covered. There are many good books and videos (on-line and YouTube) on the subject and it is recommended that you read and view as many as possible. However, the best place to learn is on the green. Learn from experience and other Skips.
2. Know your players as well as the opposition; adapt your strategy to take advantage of you players' strengths.
3. Do not be afraid to make mistakes. All Skips do.
4. Remember, you will be expected to make all the shots in the book. If you have any weaknesses, practice.

5. Do not approach the head while the Vices are measuring unless requested. If you have any problems with the way the opposing Vice is measuring, then speak to the opposing Skip.
6. You decide what shots your team members are going to make; impress on them they must not deliver a bowl until you have indicated the shot which you want. Every head looks different to the player on the mat. Make your instructions and signals clear.
7. If one of your players fails to make a shot, do not lose your temper, do not turn your back, and do not glower. It does not help your cause and no one deliberately makes a bad shot. There is no such thing as a perfect team, and there is no such thing as a perfect Skip.
8. Learn how to build a head. Do you need back bowls? Blockers? Has the opposing team generated a cluster of bowls which could give them a high score if the jack is moved? Could you move the jack yourself with advantage? Have your opponents any weaknesses?
9. Learn how to concentrate when delivering your bowls. Exclude all distractions. You will be bowling under much more pressure than you have in the past. Concentration will help you to overcome the pressure.
10. During your time as a Vice you should have become familiar with 'Laws of the Sport of Bowls'. As a Skip you should ensure that you know the more common laws and where to find the other more intricate laws. Apply all laws with common sense, but firmly.
11. Give the game your full attention. There is nothing more annoying for your team than a Skip who directs the game from the bench or spends his or her time chatting to other players or spectators.
12. Enjoy yourself. Skipping is fun!

Appendix A: Code of Bowling Etiquette

Bowls' Etiquette, proudly observed and honored by lawn bowlers over time as the unwritten laws of the sport, is foundational to the game's legendary sociability. The canons of etiquette are a combination of good sportsmanship and good manners. They are not optional.

1. Be conversant with the Laws of the Sport of Bowls and observe them at all times.
2. When bowls need to be measured, the team or singles player that will probably or certainly concede a shot(s) should do the measuring and place identified counters together.
3. Be punctual and come to each game properly attired.
4. The player whose turn it is should step onto the mat from its left side and exit to the right.
5. Keep quiet and refrain from moving when players are on the mat.
6. Stand behind the mat while your opponent is delivering a bowl.
7. The team or singles player that rakes the bowls should mark the scoreboard if one is being used.
8. Always stand still at the head when a player is about to bowl. Movement, talking or gesturing at the head is very distracting and is considered gamesmanship. Do not use gamesmanship to beat your opponent. Win your matches on the green.
9. Always pay your skip the respect of waiting for his/her instructions.
10. Keep track of play and be ready with bowl in hand to step on the mat when it is your turn.
11. Be sure that complete access to the head is accorded to the team with possession of the rink.
12. Neither applaud nor complain about lucky results. Accept them graciously, knowing that they equal out over time.
13. Never say "thanks" for a bad shot that goes your way.
14. Never shout instructions for your opponent's bowl to miss its target or fail in its intended task.
15. Admit a "fluke" in good spirit.
16. Learn to be a good marker. Markers can make or break a game. Obtain a current copy of the Laws of the Sport of Bowls to learn the duties of a marker.
17. Compliment a team member or an opponent for a good shot.
18. When an umpire is called, retire away from the head as you no longer are part of the decision making. Respect the decision made.

19. Players should assist in collecting bowls when the end is complete. The lead who will roll the jack should hasten to gather and place the mat in preparation for the next end.
20. Walk close to the center of the rink with minimum delay when changing ends as you could distract play on adjacent rinks.
21. Respect the green at all times. Do not drop or loft bowls. Walk on greens only when playing.
22. Always inform your opponent if you wish to leave the green.
23. If you lose, be a good loser. Don't blame your loss on other people, the green, weather conditions, etc.
24. After each game, congratulate the winners and shake hands with all. Don't be too impressed with your win today as positions could reverse tomorrow.
25. Be a bowler who is renowned for always helping put the equipment away.
26. When playing singles, whether you have won or lost, be sure to thank the marker. Remember that markers are volunteers and have given their time to assist you in your game. Your courtesy is their only payment.
27. It is always gracious and appropriate to thank event administrators and the umpire(s) before leaving the green.
28. Skips should always remember that the players on their team are doing their best.
29. Above all, enjoy the game of bowls for the fun, fitness, pleasure and the lasting friendships it provides.

Appendix B: Frequently Used Laws

19.1.1 Before the start of play in each end, the player to play first should place the centre line of the mat lengthwise along the centre line of the rink, with the mat line (the edge of the mat nearest to the front ditch) at least 2 meters from the rear ditch and at least 21 meters from the front ditch.

23.2 If a player improperly delivers the jack, the opposing player should place the mat as described in law 19.1.1 and re-deliver the jack, making sure that it is centered but the opposing player should not play first.

23.3 If the jack is improperly delivered once by each player in any end, it should not be delivered again in that end. Instead, it should be centered with the nearest point of the jack to the mat line being 2 meters from the front ditch, and the mat should be placed as described in law 19.1.1 by the first player to play.

25.2 If, in the opinion of either skip or opponent or the marker, a toucher comes to rest in a position in which marking it would be likely to move the bowl or alter the head, the bowl should not be marked but nominated as a toucher instead.

27.1.3 A bowl is a dead bowl if: after completing its original course or after being moved as a result of play, it comes to rest at a distance of less than 14 meters, as measured in a straight line, from the center of the mat line to the nearest point of the bowl.

28.4.1 If a bowl is displaced by a player when marking it as a toucher, or by the equipment being used by a player during measuring, an opponent should put it back to its former position.

28.6 Bowl displacement by a bowl from a neighbouring rink;

28.6.1 If a bowl at rest on the rink is in danger of being moved by a bowl from a neighbouring rink, any player at the head can choose whether to:

28.6.1.1 lift the bowl at rest to allow the other bowl to pass and then replace it, as long as this action would not influence the outcome of the head; or

28.6.1.2 stop the bowl from the neighbouring rink.

28.6.3 If a bowl that has been stopped was in its original course and was delivered on a bias that would have taken it back into its own rink, it should be replayed.

28.7 Bowl displacement by a dead bowl : If a toucher in the ditch is displaced by a dead bowl from the rink of play, an opponent or the marker should put it back to its former position.

33.4.1 If the jack is displaced by the equipment being used by a player during measuring, an opponent should put it back to its former position.

35.1 Possession of the rink will belong to the player or team whose bowl is being played.

35.2 As soon as each bowl comes to rest, possession of the rink will transfer to the opposing player or team after allowing time for marking a toucher as soon as it comes to rest.

36.1 In relation to the rink of play;

36.1.1 Players at the mat-end of the rink who are not delivering a bowl should stand at least 1 metre behind the mat.

36.1.2 Players at the head-end of the rink and who are not controlling play should stand:

36.1.2.1 behind the jack if they are members of the team which is in possession of the rink;

36.1.2.2 behind the jack and away from the head if they are members of the team which is not in possession of the rink;

36.1.2.3 on the surrounds of the green if the jack is in the ditch; or

36.1.2.4 well clear of the head if it is not possible to stand on the surrounds

39.2 No bowl should be moved until the opponents have agreed whether it is a shot or not, except where a bowl has to be moved so that another bowl can be measured.

39.3 As the shots are agreed, each shot bowl can be removed from the head.

39.4 Shot bowls can be placed in a group where they will not interfere with measuring.

39.5 If shot bowls have been placed in a group, the number of bowls in the group should be agreed by the opponents.

40.6 At any time during the process of deciding the number of shots scored:

40.6.1 if a bowl is likely to fall, either opponent can use the best available means to secure it in its position;

40.6.2 if a bowl needs to be measured and it is currently resting on another bowl which is interfering with the measurement in any way, any player should use the best available means to secure the resting bowl in its position and then remove the other bowl;

40.6.3 if a bowl falls of its own accord, it should be left in its new position while deciding the number of shots scored continues, and all the shots agreed before the bowl fell will count;

40.6.4 if a bowl is displaced by the equipment being used during measuring, law 28.4 will apply; and

40.6.5 if the jack is displaced by the equipment being used during measuring, law 33.4 will apply

47.1 Playing out of turn;

47.1.1 If a player plays out of turn, the opposing skip can stop the bowl and return it to the player to play it in the proper order.

47.1.2 If the bowl has come to rest and has not disturbed the head, the opposing skip should choose whether to:

47.1.2.1 leave the head as it is and have their team play two bowls one after the other to get back to the proper order of play; or

47.1.2.2 return the bowl and get back to the proper order of play.

47.1.3 If the bowl has disturbed the head, the opposing skip should choose whether to:

47.1.3.1 leave the disturbed head as it is and have their team play two bowls one after the other to get back to the proper order of play;

47.1.3.2 replace the head in its former position, return the bowl and go back to the proper order of play; or

47.1.3.3 declare the end dead

Appendix C: Resources on the Web

Bowls USA <http://www.bowlsusa.us>

Bowls Canada <http://www.bowlsCanada.com>

World Bowls <http://worldbowlsLtd.co.uk>