



## **POLICY – Guidelines to Etiquette in the Sport of Lawn Bowls**

**Authority:** Women’s Bowls NSW  
**Applies to:** All members of Womens Bowls NSW  
**Updated:** February 2015

### **Applicable Legislation, policies & references:**

- *Laws of the sport of Bowls*, Chrystal Mark v3
- RNSWBA Etiquette guide: [www.rnswba.org.au](http://www.rnswba.org.au)
- *Tobacco Amendment Bill 2012*
- *Smoke-Free Environment Act 2000*
- Bowls NSW “Smoke-Free Greens” Policy
- Reference: [www.valebowlingclub.co.uk/Assets/Documents/etiquette.PDF](http://www.valebowlingclub.co.uk/Assets/Documents/etiquette.PDF)

### **1. Policy Statement**

Bowls is a sport that encourages social interaction and friendship. Etiquette is mainly a code of behaviour whereby individuals treat one another the way they expect to be treated themselves by applying common sense, honesty, fairness and consideration for others. This behaviour applies to persons playing, marking, umpiring and spectators at a game of bowls and also to the members of a club. The material for this guide for bowls etiquette has come from a variety of sources. There are 2 major headings, Game Etiquette and Club Etiquette and this document should be read in conjunction with the Laws of the Sport.

### **2. Game Etiquette**

1. Bowls is a sport that is played on several kinds of surfaces, grass being the most common and synthetic indoor and outdoor surfaces.
2. There are different categories of bowlers, elite bowler, competitive aspiring club bowler, the recreational or social bowler, junior and senior bowler and bowlers with disabilities. Displaying appropriate etiquette should be a part of all categories.
3. Some of the topics covered are:  
Arranging a game, what to do during and after a game, inclusive practices, playing positions, appropriate clothing, drinking, offensive language, smoking, over enthusiasm, club and pennant commitment, spectators, markers and umpires.
4. Bowling greens should also be treated with respect, you should not throw or drop your bowls onto the green and you should not sit on the bank or place your feet in the ditch.

### **3. Your Opponent**

1. Always be on time – at least 15 minutes before the calling of the cards. If a game has been arranged whether formal (club or tournament) or informal (roll up) if you are running late or you need to reschedule, call your opponent or the club and advise them of your situation. With today’s technology most people have mobile phones and are easily contactable. Before commencing a game all mobile phones, pagers and other electronic devices should be switched off for the duration of a game. Music listening

- devices such as iPods should not be used during a game as this can be viewed as anti-social behaviour.
2. Always greet your opponent with a handshake and a friendly smile before the game. In any game, whether it be Singles, Pairs, Triples or Fours, after the mat is placed, it is a nice gesture to hand your opponent the jack and her bowl (be aware that not all players like you touching their bowls). This gesture usually applies to the first bowl on the first end, and by handing the jack and/or mat can help get the next end under way promptly. During the course of the game, acknowledge good bowls and good luck (such as fluky bowls), and do not show excessive emotion when bad or fluky bowls are delivered and **you** get the result. Remember, fluky bowls even out over time and everyone will have their share of them.
  3. Show respect for every opponent you play by not moving about while they are on the mat, or talking to the team while they are about to deliver a bowl. There are specific rules regarding standing behind the mat or behind the head. (*see Laws of the Sport*) When asking a player(s) to move, be sure to be polite, courteous and show good sportsmanship at all times.
  4. During a game no player should leave the rink without informing their opponent and play should not be held up for more than 10 minutes. If an end is declared dead and you need to go back to the other end pick up the bowls and carry them, **do not roll them**. When an opponent is on the mat, they have control of the rink and opposing players should not walk up the green until the opponents' bowl has come to rest and the player has left the mat.
  5. At the completion of the game the graceful loser should congratulate the modest winner. It is good etiquette to avoid making excuses for lack of success, or gloating about how good you or your team were on the day.
  6. Bowls is a very inclusive sport and your opponent may be a person with a disability or from a culturally and linguistic diverse group or from a different generation to you. Remember to treat all opponents with the same amount of courtesy and respect that you would want to be treated. When your opponent is from one of these groups you should apply common sense in regard to being a good sport, and be as helpful as you can. For instance your opponent may not be able to bend to measure.

#### 4. Format of Each Game

Each format of the game has certain responsibilities associated with it when playing singles, pairs, triples or fours games.

##### 4.1. The Lead

1. On the first end it is good etiquette to hand your opponent the jack and their bowl after they have placed the mat to commence play, but be aware that some bowlers do not like anyone touching their bowls. The first job of the Lead whose team won the previous end is to place the mat. This helps the others to know how far to kick back the bowls. The Lead should have the mat ready to be placed as soon as the head is declared – in social bowls, to prevent a lot of kicking, the mat can be placed in front of the majority of the head.
2. If playing pairs the Lead does the measuring, if assistance is required for a longer measure than you can reach, ask for help from the opposition Lead. If playing triples or fours the Lead is only responsible for rolling the jack. Always look to your skip for any instructions regarding mat placement and jack length.

#### **4.2. The Second**

1. Each player makes their own introductions.
2. In the current Fours game, the Second fills in the Score Card and may also be requested by the Skip to update the Rink Score Board.
3. At the completion of the game, the Second does a final verification of the accuracy of both cards with the opposing player, if no anomalies found signs both and documents the time play finished.
4. Be involved in kicking back bowls at the completion of an end.

#### **4.3. The Third**

1. The responsibility of the Third is to control the head while the skip is on the mat. The Third should wait for the skip to ask for an opinion about the head, and advice about shot selection, but ultimately the final shot selection rests with the Skip.
2. Always provide precise and accurate answers when the Skip is on the mat.
3. Once all bowls have been delivered the Third has to measure any bowls that appear the same distance from the jack.
4. If playing against an opponent, or are you yourself a player, who is unable to measure due to injury or disability, inform the Skip before the game commences, the Skip will then inform the opposing Skip that another member will be doing the measuring. When the nominated person is measuring the Third should stand on the bank.
5. Consider all shots that may be in the count and confer with your opponent Third that all possibilities have been measured. Once this is done, indicate the number of shots won or lost on the end by placing fingers up or down. This should also be voiced clearly.
6. Retrieving any bowls from the ditch or wherever they finish, and that are not in play, is also good etiquette.
7. Possession of the mat (rink) passes to the other side when your bowl comes to a rest. You should then wait for your turn on the mat before exchanging information with your skip.

#### **4.4. The Skip**

1. The Skip keeps the Score Card in Triples and Pairs games, and change the rink Score Board.
2. In Fours games, the Second keeps the Score Card. The Skips have overall responsibility for the accuracy of both their Score Card and the Rink Score Board. Changing the Score Board can be delegated to another player by the Skip if necessary.
3. The skip who plays first should lift the mat and place it on the bank once the last bowl of the end has been played
4. At the completion of the game, the Skips verify the accuracy of the Score Cards and both sign each cards and includes the time play finished.
5. The skip should Lead the team with confidence by being supportive of any special needs and by providing continual encouragement before, during and after a game.
6. Everyone will play bad bowls and no bowler is likely to deliver every bowl just how they want it, the Skip's role is to play the best bowls they can.
7. Refrain from showing disappointment or enjoyment at bad bowls played by anyone. **Body language** can affect team confidence so remain focused on the game and your team.
8. Remain still at the head to avoid distracting your own team and opponents.

#### **4.5. The Team**

1. Cohesive teams often perform better and have greater success.

2. Bowls is an individual as well as a team sport. It is important to remember that individual performances should not be highlighted or degraded when playing in a team.
3. It is good etiquette for all players to kick the bowls back after the completion of an end.
4. At the completion of a game, players should assist others to **carry** their bowls down to the other end when required.
5. Usually the Lead returns the mats and jacks to the appropriate place.

## 5. Clothing

1. There is a Dress Policy to be adhered to. A copy of this is available from your Club Secretary, or can be obtained from the WBNSW website ([www.womensbowlsnsw.org](http://www.womensbowlsnsw.org) under Member Services, then Policies).
2. When playing in Club Championships, District events run on behalf of the State, and State Pennants, the Dress Policy is strictly applied.
3. Smart casual dress for social bowls is permitted by WBNSW. It is advisable that Clubs develop an appropriate Domestic policy that is not in conflict with the Club Limited's Dress policy.

## 6. Alcohol

Drinking alcohol is not allowed on the greens, but if the Club Limited allows it, over 18's can consume alcohol in moderation on the bank.

## 7. Offensive Language

1. Inappropriate, bad or offensive language is very common place in all aspects of today's society; however, it should not be used by players out of frustration, anger, disappointment or in celebration.
2. Always be mindful that certain words, phrases or gestures could be very offensive to some people and should not be used on the green or within the club environment.
3. Often as a result of excessive drinking, bad or offensive language becomes exaggerated. If this situation occurs and you are told to settle down, do not take it personally, simply accept.
4. If you are with someone who is beginning to behave in an inappropriate manner take them aside and calmly remind them of their obligation to display "good sportsmanship".

## 8. Smoking

1. Smoking is not allowed on the greens in accordance with Bowls NSW policy.
2. Smokers, including officials and spectators are to ensure they are downwind and at least four metres from other persons on the green or surrounds.

## 9. Over Enthusiasm

1. Expressing passion for the sport of bowls is increasingly becoming more animated and should be encouraged. Players are so focused on delivering the perfect bowl every time, that their actions can be seen as displaying bad etiquette.
2. **A player following the bowl to the head:** Restriction of this practice does not apply to every game and is not against the Laws of the sport, only in some formats of the game i.e. set play and where set as a Condition of Play by the Controlling Body. However the practice is not encouraged. If permitted play is not to be held up.

3. Excessive shouting and jumping around after a delivery has the potential to affect players on other rinks.
4. Be aware of the boundary pegs for your rink and be careful not to wander into an adjoining rink.

## 10. Committing to a Club or Team

If nominating to play pennants, make a commitment to your club that you will be available for the duration of the season, which includes all playoffs. Accept selectors' decisions. They do a difficult job and are working for the benefit of the club, their selection decisions should not be taken personally. Often as not, they are balancing personality types as much as bowls ability.

## 11. The Spectators

1. Spectators also need to display good sportsmanship so that those around them are not distracted or offended in anyway.
2. We all want our player or team to win and there are acceptable and unacceptable ways to show support. All good shots should be applauded and no loud remarks or laughter should be expressed at bad shots. Clapping and cheering is common place at sporting events and should be encouraged, but should never be done when a player is on the mat ready to deliver their bowl or when players are at the head doing a measure.
3. If you are walking on the bank behind a head, and are in the line of vision of a bowler, then you should remain still until after the bowl is delivered.
4. It is not advisable to attempt to interact with a bowler while they are playing a game.
5. It is polite to **switch your mobile phone to silent, or turn it off.**
6. Do not engage in overly loud or animated conversations.
7. Spectators are not allowed on the green. However in some events for persons with disabilities, carers or directors are allowed to enter the green to push wheelchairs or assist bowlers that have visual impairments.

## 12. The Marker

1. If you are inexperienced in marking, it is advisable to get advice before offering to do so. A marker can make or break a game and therefore it is important that you knows what to do.
2. The Marker maintains the Score Card after each end, keeping players informed of the score and updates the Score Board on a regular basis.
3. At the beginning of a game shake hands with the players and introduce yourself.
4. When the jack has been delivered the marker should centre it and stand back **and to the side, ensuring they are not in the line of vision of the player.**
5. Markers should answer specific questions from the **player on the mat** about the state of the head. Short precise answers are all that is required, such as, "yes you are" or "no you are not". Holding your arm up or down is a clear indication.
6. If asked "What is the position" you are able to advise the number of shots up or down. If you are unsure you may offer your opinion about who is holding but **make them aware you are unsure.**
7. All touchers should be marked immediately the bowl comes to rest, and marks should be removed from non-touchers.
8. All dead bowls should be removed from the rink **with the approval of the players.**
9. No bowl on the rink should be moved until the end is completed and the number of shots awarded.

10. The Marker must be completely impartiality during a game and no applauding or encouragement should be offered to any player.
11. At the completion of the game, players should thank and shake hands with the marker

### 13. The Umpire

1. The role of the umpire is to adjudicate on any measures or rules of the game that arise during play.
2. While the umpires are doing their job it is good etiquette to stand on the bank away from the head and let them do their job without interference.
3. Umpires are entitled to request that you retire to the bank while they perform their duties.
4. If a decision goes against you, it is good etiquette to accept the decision without argument and continue on with the game.
5. Remember that the markers and umpires have given up their time voluntarily so that you can enjoy the great game of bowls. Show them respect and always thank them with a handshake and a smile.

### 14. Club Etiquette

1. When a new member joins a club it is good etiquette to introduce yourself and other members.
2. Be polite and friendly and show them the club facilities if someone hasn't already done this.
3. Relevant information should be provided to the new member about the club, it's policies and members.
4. Introductions to the club officials and staff is advisable.
5. When the member plays their first game or first roll up, and they are by themselves it is polite to ask them if you can join them.
6. The majority of club officials are voluntarily doing a job and may overlook introducing the new member.
7. Members have a right to question the decisions or actions of officials but this should be done in a manner that is courteous, respectful and not in breach of the club by-laws.
8. Silence should be observed when officials are making important club announcements. Good behaviour reflects positively on your club.
9. Employees of the club should be respected and only club officials have authority to direct them. Members should abide by the laws governing Responsible Service of Alcohol and conform to all requests made by staff in relation to them.
10. Some clubs are struggling to survive, so it shows excellent etiquette if you support any fundraising efforts that the club is running, and if available, offer assistance when volunteers are required for work around the club or greens.
11. When membership fees are due, always pay these within the timeframe asked.

- 15. Policy Review:** This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if changes occur within this time frame.

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| Version: 2 | Date Revised:<br>Feb 2015 | Approved:<br>Feb 2015 | Implementation: | Distribution: H drive<br>Office\Policies<br>Website, Clubs |
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