

## Basic Rules of Lawn Bowls

This Section is strictly a ready reference for in-house lawn bowling covering the rules of every-day play. References to umpires and markers have been omitted as they are not applicable to every-day play. It should be remembered that this is simply a quick reference and does not negate the need for an official rule book. (BCB – Laws of the Sport of Bowls – Crystal Mark 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, 2015).

(Prepared by Bill Fisher in 2000. Revised by Ross Bulley in 2011. Edited by Mark Trueman in 2015 and 2018.)

### Opening play

A skip tosses a coin to determine who goes first. The winner of the toss has the option of being the team to throw the jack and deliver the first bowl or having his or her opponent deliver the jack and throw the first bowl.

In subsequent ends, the winner of the previous end must take the mat and deliver the first bowl.

If an end was tied (no score), the team that played first in the previous end will play first in the next end. (If shot bowls were measured and were exactly the same distance from the jack, the end is tied and no score is recorded).

If an end is burnt (i.e., the jack was knocked out of bounds), the jack is placed on the centre line, two metres from the front ditch and play continues.

### Placing the mat

The first player to play should place the centre line of the mat on the centre line of the rink with the front edge of the mat somewhere between 2 metres from the rear ditch and the closest hog line. For normal club play, a ground sheet is to be set immediately ahead of the mat with a slight overlap.

### Replacement of the mat

After play has commenced in any end, the mat should not be moved from its original position except in the following circumstances:

- (i) If the mat is displaced during the progress of an end it should be replaced as near as practicable to its original position.
- (ii) If the mat gets out of alignment with the centre line it should be straightened.

After the end is complete, the mat should be lifted and placed on the bank wholly beyond the face of the rear bank.

**Note:** Should the mat be picked up erroneously by a player before the end has been completed, the opposing player shall have the right to replace the mat in its original position.

## Stance on the mat

Before delivery a player should be standing on the mat with one foot *fully or partially* on the mat. At the moment of delivery, the player should have all or part of one foot on or above the mat. If a player does not follow this procedure, the player is foot-faulting.

## Delivering the jack

The player to play first delivers the jack and ensures that it is properly centered. (The jack should be centred *prior* to determining if it is a proper distance from the mat line.)

If the jack comes to rest at a distance of less than 2 metres from the front (far) ditch, it should be placed on the centre line at a distance of two metres from the ditch.

If the jack goes out of bounds or is too short or goes into the front ditch, it is returned and then delivered by the lead of the opposing team. (The minimum distance the jack must travel to be in play is 21 metres.) The mat may be repositioned by the opposing lead before throwing the jack.

Should the jack be improperly delivered once by each lead then the jack is placed on the centre line at a distance of two metres from the front ditch. The mat may be replaced at the option of the first bowler to play.

Although the jack is returned if improperly delivered, the lead who first delivered the jack delivers the first bowl.

If the jack during its original course should be obstructed or deflected by a neutral person or an opponent, it shall be redelivered by the same player.

If it is obstructed or deflected by a teammate, the jack will be redelivered by the opposing lead.

No one may challenge the legality of the original length of the jack once the first bowl has been played.

## Toucher

A *toucher* is any bowl which touches the jack in its *original course* on the green. No bowl is classified as a *toucher* if it comes in contact with the jack while the jack is in the ditch.

A *toucher* is marked with chalk by a member of the player's team.

If a *toucher* is knocked into the ditch it is still a live bowl.

## Dead Bowl

A bowl is dead if it:

- (i) Is not a *toucher* and come to rest in the ditch or rebounds onto the playing surface after contact with the bank or with the jack or *toucher* while they are both in the ditch.
- (ii) Comes to rest wholly outside the boundaries of the playing surface of the rink. (If it is on the boundary line it is still in play.)

- (iii) Comes to rest less than 14 metres from the front of the mat.
- (iv) Passes beyond the side boundary of the rink on a bias that would prevent it from re-entering the rink.

**Note:** A dead bowl is removed from the rink and placed on the bank so it will not interfere with play.

### **Bowl Rebounding**

Only *touchers* rebounding from the face of the bank to the ditch or the rink shall remain in play.

### **Bowl Displacement**

Sometimes a bowl which is at rest in the head or is in motion may be accidentally interfered with by a member of your team, your opponent's team or a neutral person or object. The possibilities are many. For example, (1) the interference may come while the bowl is on its original path and after being disrupted does not hit any other bowl, or (2) after the bowl is interfered with it may then hit another bowl in the head, or (3) the bowl on its original course may hit a bowl or bowls in the head and then be disrupted by someone and so on. Examples of rulings on these problems are (a) the non-offending team has the right to restore the bowl or bowls to their original positions, or (b) let the bowl remain where it came to rest, or (c) declare the bowl dead, or (d) declare the end dead. The only way to understand the rules governing these incidents is to read the Laws of the Sport of Bowls Crystal Mark 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition 2015. There is a detailed summary in Appendix C of the rule book. Unfortunately, the summary appears in very small print.

### **Live Jack**

A jack moved by a live bowl into the front ditch within the boundaries of the rink is deemed to be *live* (in play). Once the jack is in the ditch it may be moved by a *toucher* or by the impact of a *non-toucher* providing the *non-toucher* remains in play and does not enter the ditch. If the *non-toucher* enters the ditch, the *non-toucher* is declared dead and the jack is reset to the position it was before being displaced by the *non-toucher*.

### **Dead Jack**

A jack is considered *dead* if it is driven by a bowl in play so that the jack passes beyond the face of the bank (e.g., hops over the bank) or comes to rest outside of the boundaries of the rink.

NOTE: At CLBC, the jack should be placed on the centre line at a distance of 2 metres from the ditch and play continued (i.e., there are no burnt ends).

### **Playing to a boundary Jack**

If the jack is driven close to the side boundary but not beyond the boundary, it is in play. A bowl may pass outside the side boundary, but providing it comes to rest inside the

boundaries of the rink it is a live bowl. If the bowl comes to rest outside the boundary even if it has touched the jack it is a dead bowl and is removed.

### **Rebounding Jack**

If a jack is driven against the face of the bank and rebounds onto the rink it is played as if it did not leave the rink. This is also the case when a jack that was in the ditch is driven back onto the rink by a *toucher*.

### **Jack Displacement**

If a *jack is in motion* after being hit by a bowl and is displaced by a player, the opposing skip may place the jack where he or she believes it would have come to rest and replace any part of the head displaced by the jack or allow it to remain where it rests and continue on with the end or declare the end dead

If a jack is at rest within the rink and is displaced by a player, the opposing skip shall put the jack back to its former position

### **Last Bowl**

The last player in any end is not required to deliver his last bowl if he does not wish to do so. However he or she must declare this to the opponent prior to determining the score.

### **Tied End**

If both opponents' shot bowls are at equal distance from the jack, the end is considered tied and no score is recorded, however the end counts. In the following end, the jack is delivered by the lead who delivered the jack in the tied end.

### **Playing Out Of Turn**

If a player plays out of turn, the opposing skip can stop the bowl and return it to the player to play in the proper order. If the bowl comes to rest and has not disturbed the head, the opposing skip should choose whether to leave the head as it is and have their team play two bowls one after the other to get back to the proper order; or return the bowl and get back to the proper order of play.

If the bowl has disturbed the head, the opposing skip should choose whether to leave the disturbed head as it is and have the team play two bowls one after the other to get back to the proper order or replace the head in its former position, return the bowl and go back to the proper order of play or declare the end dead.

### **Playing Another Player's Bowl**

If a player delivers another player's bowl instead of his or her own, the other player's bowl should be replaced with the player's own bowl.

**Failure to Play**

If a bowl has been played by each team before the players discover that one of them has failed to play a bowl in the proper order, that player will lose the right to play the bowl.