

ALSTONVILLE BOWLING CLUB ETIQUETTE



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Bowls is a sport that encourages social interaction and friendship. We should have a reasonable understanding of the basic rules of the game. Etiquette means displaying “good sportsmanship” and understanding what’s acceptable and applying common sense, honesty, fairness and consideration for others.

Lawn Bowls etiquette includes (but is not limited to):

- Be on time for the game and let others know if you leave the rink to attend to something
- Always greet/thank your opponent with a friendly handshake at start/end of the game
- Turn your phone off or silent to avoid any distractions
- Quickly get ready to play – bowls, chalk, tape measure, towel, hat, etc
- Be ready to bowl when it’s your turn – keep aware of the play – avoid conversation with adjacent rinks that may delay play on yours.
- Players at the mat end stand behind (out of sight of) the person delivering their bowl and keep quiet
- Players at the head end of the rink should stay out of the head unless Skip or Vice
- Stay in your own rink – don’t spoil play for other games by trespassing on their rink
- When Skip or Vice, stand behind and to the side of the Jack, watch your shadow doesn’t cover the Jack/head
- Walk off the mat to the right after finishing your delivery – walking backwards risks injury
- Look after the green, don’t drop your bowls onto the green, you should place them instead.
- Commend good bowls and acknowledge your own fluky or lucky bowls. Don’t celebrate lucky shots!
- Don’t walk up the green until your opponents bowl stops. They will want to see where it finishes
- Change ends with minimum delay – walk down centre of your rink (avoid the edges – other people are playing!)
- Do NOT stop to chat when passing your team – particularly if it’s not your teams turn to bowl
- Do not criticize the performance of your colleagues or opponents (no one plays a bad bowl on purpose)
- Do not criticize the playing surface, every green is different and makes the game more interesting
- If unsure of any rules, ask others rather than risking the outcome for your team’s game
- If an Umpire is called, move away, your done – their decision is final and should not be criticised
- The skip is the leader of the team and should provide positive comments and display positive body language to keep the team focused.
- Look to your skip for direction and what shot to play
- ONLY the Vices decide on the result of the head. When they’ve finished – the winning lead places the mat and all players assist kicking the bowls back
- Do not drink excessive amounts of alcohol, or use bad or offensive language
- Here at Alstonville there are designated smoking areas - please use them.
- Drinking and eating on the green is not allowed
- Spectators should only clap and cheer at appropriate times. They shouldn’t clap fluky or lucky bowls
- Show respect to the umpires and markers as they are volunteers
- Always clean up after yourself when leaving a rink after the days play
- Leads return the mat and jack after the game
- At completion of the game the winner offers the loser a drink
- Always say good effort or well done to others that may have lost a game. Never say bad luck

Additional Information for New Players (and the not so new 😊)

Basic Rules:

1. Mat Placement: The first to play places the mat on the centre line at least 2 metres from the ditch (at the T).
2. Foot Faulting: When delivering a bowl, a player must have all or part of one foot on or above the mat.
3. Jack/Bowl Length: A jack must travel at least 21 metres to be legal, a bowl must travel at least 14 metres.
4. Jack Delivery: If the jack is improperly delivered the opposition may reposition the mat and deliver the jack but not play first. If the jack is delivered improperly by both leads the jack is placed at the 2 metre mark (at the T) and the first to play may reposition the mat.
5. Touchers: Only the delivered bowl may be a toucher, even if it deflects off other bowls before touching the jack. (Touchers stay alive even if they go into the ditch)
6. Position on Rink: Players at the mat end who are not delivering a bowl should stand at least one metre behind the mat. Players at the head end should stand behind and to the side of the jack.
7. Playing Wrong Bowl: Replace with correct bowl
8. Playing out of Turn: Opposition skip has choice: a) may stop the bowl, b) leave it and have two bowls played to restore proper sequence, c) reset disturbed head and restore proper sequence, or d) declare dead end.
9. Bowl & Jack Displacement: Numerous scenarios can arise. Skips have options as spelled out in the Rules/Conditions of Play. The options depend upon the cause, timing and result of the displacement.
10. Rink Possession: Possession of the rink belongs to the player or team whose bowl is being played. Once the bowl stops, possession transfers to the opposing player/team.
11. Determining score: Bowls should not be moved until the number of shots has been agreed upon by both of the vice/skips, even if the outcome appears to be obvious. In doubt measure with approved tools (not fingers) or call an umpire.
12. Objects on the green: No objects should be placed on the bank, the green or in the ditch to help a player.
13. Game stoppage: If a game has been stopped for a valid reason and all bowls have not been played, the end is declared dead.
14. Smoking: is not allowed on any part of the green – only in approved smoking areas specific to each club.

When noticing any player who appears not to be following etiquette or rules, it pays to be polite, courteous and to display good sportsmanship. If in doubt speak with your skip (and an Umpire if unable to agree with your opponent and the skip believes a ruling needs to be made).