

The Game of Bowls:

Bowls truly is the 'Sport for All' - all ages and all abilities. Some bowlers come from other sports, others do not have any sporting background, but excel at the game.

You can learn to play bowls in a day, but you may not master it in a lifetime! However, you will definitely have great fun trying. To play well requires concentration, determination and practice and is proven to be good for your general health.

Basic Bowls

The game is played on a square of closely cut grass called 'the green', which is divided into playing areas called rinks. The green is surrounded by a small ditch to catch bowls which leave the green, and a bank upon which markers indicate the corners and the centrelines of each rink.

Players take turns to deliver their bowls from a mat at one end of the rink towards a small white ball called the jack, at the other. The bowls are shaped so that they take a curved path towards the jack. To be successful the bowl must be delivered with the correct weight, along the correct line.

The object is to get one or more of your bowls closer to the jack than those of your opponents on each end - one point is scored for each counting bowl.

There are many different formats to the game, but the most common in England are singles or in teams of pairs, triples or fours. In singles, the winner is the first to score 21 points. In the other three formats, the winner team is the one that scores the most points over a set number of ends.

Before playing any game

All players shake hands before and after the game. Usually for friendly matches the visiting team play the first jack, for League games a coin is tossed and if it is an intra-club game a coin is also tossed to determine who starts with the first jack..

Placing of the mat

The mat is placed by the lead player and the front of the mat must be a least 2m from the ditch and square to the end - skip may indicate that the mat is not square or can be placed further up the rink.

Jacks

The jack is rolled so that it ends up either near the opposite end or anywhere between the end and the middle white line. The jack should be a minimum 22m from the front of the mat and is placed centrally within the rink.

Holding bowls in the hand

There are several ways to hold the bowl in the palm of the hand and it will very much depend on individual comfort.

Each bowl has a bias. The shape of the bowl means that it can lean either to the right or the left. The side of the bias is indicated on the bowl by the smaller emblem.