



Cam Mills Bowls Club

Established 1915

Information for New Bowlers

Welcome to Cam Mills Bowling Club. Your sponsors should help you settle into club life but, to supplement their efforts, we have produced this web page which you might find helpful.

New Bowlers

For those of you who have never bowled before, your sponsor should arrange for you to have at least three coaching sessions and a session on the etiquette of the game. At these sessions you will be given a copy of "Guidance for New Bowlers" issued by Bowls England which will give you some useful tips on how to play the game. Some written advice on bowling green etiquette will also be provided. Once you have learned the basics and you and the coach are confident of your ability, you can take your first steps into bowls club life.

First Steps

As a Full Member you can practise or play social bowls on any afternoon and evening during the summer season. All you have to do is get a jack and a mat and find a spare rink. It is normal protocol to invite people playing on their own to join you (although they may not always do so if they are practising seriously).

The Next Stage (Friendly Games)

It is hoped that once you gain a little confidence you will want to play more competitively and you will put your name down for a 'Friendly'. The Club organises Friendly Matches against other clubs in the Gloucestershire and Bristol area who are also out for an enjoyable game with light refreshments or a meal afterwards. We play to win of course but it's not the end of the world if we don't. Friendly matches are often 'mixed' and are normally played on Saturday and Sunday afternoons although some, are played during the week (Wednesday or Thursday). Most of the friendly matches are arranged on a Home and Away basis so you get a chance to see other clubs and play on different greens. For all the above games the notice board will display a sheet where you can put your name if you wish to play. At the beginning of the summer season, you will be able to obtain the Club Fixture Card listing all the matches and venues for the year allowing you to plan ahead.

Competitive Games

The Cotswold Gloucestershire League (men only) and the Ladies Corinium Two Rink League and the Ladies SVT triples league are more competitive and so the teams are selected from the names on the sheet (on the notice board) with the 'allegedly' best players getting chosen. Bowlers are 'invited' to play for the Club in other County or National league or competition matches.

In-House Club Competitions

The Club hold Singles, Pairs and Triples Competitions for those who want to take part and bowlers of all levels are encouraged to participate. Playing against better players is a good way of improving your game. Competition entry forms will be made available with an entry closing date and shortly thereafter the draw will be posted on the notice board.

County Competitions and Matches

In the same way, but with the addition of Fours (also known as Rinks), you can enter County and National Competitions which are organised by the respective Associations. Details will be made available through the Lady or Gents Secretary. County matches are by invitation only from the County Officials. The club nominates members for selection although the criterion laid down by the respective County Association is different for men and lady bowlers.

Dress Code

Proper bowls shoes, (i.e. shoes with a completely flat bottom) must be worn at all times on the green. You will see that we do have a club uniform of both men's and ladies' shirts, jackets and waterproof jackets which are worn for matches. The normal dress code for social bowls, Senior Citizen matches, Afternoon leagues and Evening leagues is white top or club shirt and grey bottoms. For all other matches greys are replaced by white trousers or skirts but don't worry because the dress code will be shown at the top of the team sheet. Mufti can be worn for casual roll-ups or practise; but no jeans, t-shirts or football shirts please.

The Social Side

The Club also has a strong social element. The bar is open most evenings between 7 and 11 pm plus Saturday & Sunday lunchtimes (see the notice board for precise times) and social events are arranged throughout the year. During the winter, the Berkeley & District Skittles season runs from September to April. The holds a number of social events including bingo, quizzes, fun skittles, theme meal nights and music.

Bowling Green Etiquette I.e. Good Manners

(for bowlers and spectators)

Many of our older players will say that twenty or thirty years ago much more attention was paid to bowling green etiquette but lawn bowls remains one of the few sports where common courtesy and etiquette is still prevalent. We should be proud of this and in order to make the game as enjoyable as possible bowling green etiquette should be promoted to members old and new. Much of this is common sense but here are some of the main rules of etiquette

If you are representing the club on another bowling green you should remember that you are an ambassador for your Club. Behave appropriately



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For Spectators

- Do not distract bowlers who are bowling towards you, by moving or walking across the end of the rink. Wait until the bowl has been delivered, then move.
- It is not good etiquette to interrupt other players when they are on the green, particularly during competitive matches. If you need to speak to players it should be before or after their game.
- Do nothing in your actions, words or appearance that will reflect against your Club.

Before the Game

- Make sure you know the rules of the game or competition you are playing.
- Know the correct dress (it will differ for different types of games) and ensure you arrive correctly dressed, with time to spare.
- Ensure that jacks, mats, scoreboards and other equipment are in place ready for the beginning of the game.

During the Game

- Enter and leave the green by the banks and footpaths – do not walk across other players' rinks.
- At Cam Mills we are privileged to have two of the best bowling greens in the area. Look after them! Don't drop your bowls onto the green and ensure that your delivery is not causing scuff marks or otherwise damaging the green.
- Introduce yourself and shake hands with your opponent(s) both before play commences and after the game is complete.
- Don't sit on the bank – it can cause unwanted wear on the edge of the green.
- Place litter and cigarette ends in the bins and ashtrays provided for this and do not smoke on the green.
- During the game do not move around the head when your opponent is about to deliver his bowl. Stand well back from the head, keep quiet and do not do anything that would distract your opponent. Wait until the bowl has been delivered before moving.
- Observe the rules for possession of the rink on the Bowling Green!
- Here is the ruling on this:
"Possession of the rink shall belong to the team whose bowl is being played. The players in possession of the rink for the time being shall not be interfered with, annoyed, or have their attention distracted in any way by their opponents. As soon as each bowl shall have come to rest, possession of the rink shall be transferred to the other team, time being allowed for marking a 'toucher'."
- Players at the mat end of the rink who are not delivering a bowl should stand at least 1 metre behind the mat.
- After you have delivered a bowl and before it has come to rest you have two options. If you want to track your bowl's progress you must be behind the head as it stops. In other words, you must beat it to the head. If you don't go to the head you must be behind the mat as your bowl stops. This ruling is quite clear but unfortunately many players, including many of those who should know better, show disrespect for their opponents by failing to observe it.

- Bear in mind that some people like to see the rink boundary markers and the centre pin while playing so make sure that you are not obscuring them. On sunny days you must also ensure that your shadow does not fall on the jack.
- Similarly, standing directly behind a white jack in white shoes can make the jack difficult to see.
- Follow the direction given by the 'skip', whether or not you agree. Remember that the directions for the 'skip' are only given by the number three in rinks, or the number two in triples. Other players should not interfere, unless asked.
- The result of each end (including measuring where required) is determined between the threes (or twos in triples). Other players should not normally interfere.
- Do not disturb the head until the result of the end has been agreed.
- Encourage, rather than criticize – no one delivers a bad bowl intentionally.
- Commend good shots.
- Learn to accept lucky shots, both for and against you – they will balance out in the long run.

'Flukes are simply revelations of unrecognised opportunities'.

After the Game

- Shake hands. Congratulate the opposing team and offer to buy your opposite number a drink (after singles matches, your 'marker' should be included in the invitation). Remember that your opponent is a guest of the Club.
- Ensure that jacks, mats, scoreboards and other equipment are returned to the store.
- Avoid making excuses for your lack of success the topic of conversation. A knowledge of the above will make you a better respected bowler, and will contribute towards the enjoyment of the game for everyone involved, both on and off the green.

For Beginners: How Bowls is played

The following introduction covers the basic aspects of the game, as normally played in the UK. It is not intended to be a complete definition of the game or the rules

Like many games, the object of Bowls is essentially simple. It can be played by almost anyone, but to play consistently well demands determination, concentration and practice

The game of Bowls is played on a 34 to 40 metre square of closely cut grass called the green. The green 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 centrelines of each rink.

The object is to get one or more bowls closer to the jack than those of the opposition – one point is scored for each counting bowl. After playing all the bowls in one direction, and agreeing the score, the direction of play is reversed – the next end is played back down the rink in the opposite direction. Bowls can be played as singles, or in teams of pairs, triples, or fours (a team of four is also known as a 'rink'). In fours or rinks games, each team member has a particular role to play:

- The first, or lead, places the mat, delivers the jack and centres it before attempting to bowl as close as possible to the jack.
- The second or two keeps the scoreboard up to date (where applicable). The two will normally be required to improve or consolidate the position achieved by the lead.



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- The third or three may be called upon to play different types of shots in order to score more, or to place bowls tactically to protect an advantage. The three also advises the skip on choice of shots, and agrees the number of shots scored, measuring if required.
- The skip is in overall charge of the rink; he/she directs the other players on choice of shots, tries to build the 'head' of bowls to his or her advantage and keeps the scorecard.
- It is also worth emphasising that the head must not be disturbed by any player until the shots have been finally agreed. When the Thirds or Skips are deciding the shots, the other players should stand well back from the head and give them the space to do so.
- During the game encourage your team mates, do not criticize them. Commend good shots and learn to accept that flukes are a part of the game. Sometimes they go for you, sometimes against.

The normal game formats are as follows:

- In Singles, the two opponents deliver four bowls alternately. The first to reach 21 shots is the winner.
- For Pairs, the players deliver four bowls each. The team scoring the most shots after 18 ends is the winner.
- In the Triples game, the lead, second and skip deliver three bowls each, for 18 ends.
- In Fours or Rinks play, the lead, two, three and skip each deliver two bowls for 21 ends.

Etiquette for Markers on the Bowling Green

"So if you would a Marker be;
Then make it worth your while;
To do the job quite capably;
And do it with a smile."

During the season, when we are heavily involved in singles ties, markers are required every evening. Consider making yourself available as a marker whenever you can. We all know that there is nothing worse than playing an important tie without a marker. It is not good etiquette to watch games from the side lines or from the clubhouse while there are people playing without markers. If you have the time get out there and mark.

- When a player has delivered the jack, the marker should centre it then stand back and to one side, ensuring that all rink markers are visible to the players.
- He should answer any specific question (from the player in possession of the rink) about the state of the head. He should not offer any additional information that has not been requested. For example, if someone asks, "Which is shot?", you should just answer that question, e.g. Indicate the bowl and say whose it is. You should not say anything like, "You are lying two shots".
- If you are unsure of the situation, for example you cannot decide which is shot, don't guess. You can offer an opinion but make sure that the player who is asking the question is made aware of this.
- The marker should mark all touchers immediately they come to rest and remove chalk marks from non-touchers. He should also remove all dead bowls from the rink with the players' agreement. He should also mark the position of touchers and/or the Jack which are in the ditch.

- The marker should not move any bowls until the end is complete and the players have agreed the number of shots.
- He shall measure disputed shots when required but once again he should not move the bowls until the players agree. If an Umpire is available then he may be called upon for a decision. Where no Umpire is available the marker may select one. Both players may also agree that the marker should make the decision. This is acceptable at local level.