

Coaching – Rules & Etiquette

Some of the most frequently asked questions

What size are greens?

The green must be between 31 & 40 metres in the direction of play.

Are all rinks the same width?

No, they can vary between 4.3 & 5.8 metres for outdoor play and 4.6 & 5.8 metres for indoor greens.

Are jacks and mats always the same everywhere?

Mats yes, they must be 600 millimetres long and 360 millimetres wide. Jacks must be white or yellow. For outdoors on grass they must be 63-64 millimetres across the diameter and weigh between 225 grams and 285 grams. For outdoor synthetic greens and indoor greens they must be 63-67 millimetres across the diameter and weigh between 382 and 453 grams.

Does it matter which colour bowling shoes I buy?

Not really, grey, white and brown are mostly used.

Can I use my bowls to play in a team I have just joined?

Yes, but they must be from a matched set. The same make/colour/size/weight/serial number and each with a legal date stamp.

What happens if a bowl is damaged during a game?

It may be replaced from the same set, but if using four bowls you need to replace the whole set.

If I win the toss to start a game must I play first?

No, you have the choice to do so or ask your opponent to do so.

How many trial ends are allowed and where must the mat and jack be placed?

If agreed to be played, not more than one in each direction (they are not mandatory). The mat and jack can be placed anywhere within normal limitations and must remain where originally placed.

Are you allowed to change or try out different bowls during trial ends?

Yes, you can also start the game with a different set providing they have been checked and passed beforehand.

I deliver the jack and it strikes someone on the rink in play?

1. If it was an opponent, a neutral person, or object that was struck you re-deliver the jack.
2. If it was one of your own team, your opponent re-delivers the jack and can position the mat where they wish, but must not play first.

How often can the leads in turn deliver illegal jacks to start an end and what then?

Only once each. The jack is then placed 2 metres from the front ditch and the first to play positions the mat where they wish as long as within laws.

Must I have two feet on the mat to deliver the jack or bowls?

No, but the player must have all or part of one foot on or above the mat.

Is there a time limit for a bowl to become a “toucher” i.e. comes to rest and then falls over to touch the jack?

Yes, it must make contact before the next bowl to be played leaves the player's hand. If it

is the last bowl to be played this must be within 30 seconds of coming to rest.

Is there a time limit for marking a toucher?

A toucher must be marked with chalk by a member of the team that delivered the bowl or the marker as soon as it comes to rest. It can be nominated as a toucher if marking it may cause it to move. If not marked or nominated before the next delivered bowl comes to rest it is no longer a toucher.

What if the jack is in the ditch and is touched by or stops a newly delivered bowl?

The bowl becomes dead. A bowl can never become a toucher after the jack is in the ditch.

What does rink possession actually mean?

The rink is possessed by the player or team whose bowl is being played. As soon as that bowl comes to rest, rink possession passes to the opposition and except for marking a toucher your team must be behind the mat or have passed and be clear of the head.

Questions can only be asked by the team or player in possession of the rink.

What if I play another players bowl by mistake?

The bowl is replaced exactly with your bowl. If the wrongly played bowl was a toucher your bowl is marked as a toucher.

What if I play out of turn?

The opposing skip or marker can stop the bowl and return it to the player to play in the proper order. If it has come to rest and not disturbed the head the opposing skip can return the bowl, or leave the head as it is and have their team play two bowls to get back to the proper order. If the bowl has disturbed the head the opposing skip must choose to leave the disturbed head and have their team play two bowls to return to proper order, or replace the head in its former position and return the bowl to play in the proper order or declare the end dead.

What if a bowl or jack rebounds from the bank back onto the rink in play?

If a non-toucher, the bowl becomes a dead bowl and if any bowls or the jack has been disturbed after the bowl rebounds, they must be replaced as near as possible to their original position. A toucher or the jack rebounding remain in play and are allowed to disturb the head.

The above questions & answers have been taken from LAWS OF THE SPORT OF BOWLS – CRYSTAL MARK THIRD EDITION 2015