

Lawn Bowling Etiquette i.e. Good Manners



Lawn bowling has a tradition of paying attention to etiquette and common courtesy.

We are very proud of this at Nanaimo Lawn Bowling Club as it contributes to making the game as enjoyable as possible and upholds the image of the Club. Much of this is common sense, but talking about it reminds us all that we are each personally responsible. Here are some of the main rules of etiquette.

Do not walk across rinks that other people are using; and do not stand or sit on the end banks when waiting for teams to finish their game prior to your game commencing. (Note: Spectators may sit on the side banks to the direction of play.)

Introduce yourself and shake hands with your opponents and other members of your team, both before play commences and after the game is completed.

Avoid the embarrassment of being called on a foot fault. Remember that at least part of one foot must be on or over the mat when the bowl leaves your hand.

During the game, do not move around the head when your opponent is about to deliver his or her 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. If you are at the same end as the player delivering a bowl you must stand behind the mat thus staying out of the player's line of vision. Do not be tempted to switch ends on a whim. Move as a team between ends when swapping ends with the skips. If you need to leave the green during a tournament to visit the washroom, do mention this to one of your team or opponent so that someone knows where you are if you happen to be missing when it's your turn to play.

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. Stand off the green when not actively engaged in the play, and be ready to play when your turn comes by concentrating on the play. Spectators who are in the player's line of vision should also keep still while bowls are being delivered and they should not distract payers on the green.

Look after the green! Don't drop your bowls onto the green, and ensure that you do not loft your bowl during your delivery. This can cause scuff marks, divots or otherwise damage the green. Greenkeeper "green mats" are sometimes used to protect the green e.g. when the green is soft after heavy rainfall. Always respect the request to use the green mats.

Observe the rules for possession of the rink:

Possession of the rink belongs 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 has come to rest, possession of the rink is then transferred to the other team, with time being allowed for marking a "toucher".

After you have delivered a bowl and followed through, move forward and to the left or right in a wide arc, so as to leave access to the mat clear for the next player. You might even do this prior to the bowl coming to rest, depending on the instructions from your skip. Some skips like to retain possession of the mat until the bowl actually stops. However, once the bowl stops, you are no longer in possession of the head. When getting ready for your next bowl, be careful not to distract the player on the mat with movement or conversation.

Know the duties of each position as well as your own, and carry out your duties at the appropriate time, and be willing to assist others in theirs e.g. seconds and thirds can kick the bowls into a pile ready to be scooped up by the lead. This moves things along, and shows that you are an active member of the team no matter what your position.

When playing in the third/vice position and standing at the head, only give the skips instructions when called on to do so. It is the skip's duty to build the head, have a strategy in place, and will only ask for information if there has been a change to the head. Having said that, if there has been a change not in your favour and you believe the skip needs to be aware then signal and state the change. Remember, communicating with your skip is also heard by your opponents and too much information could give away your skip's strategy.

At the head, refrain from kicking or scooping up the bowls until the score has been decided, unless you have been given permission by one of the thirds/vices to clear part of the head prior to measuring.

Bowling is a friendly game and all players should show courtesy and good sportsmanship. Keep the game moving. Stay still in the head when a player is about to deliver a bowl. All bowlers should know the rules as laid down by the Bowls Canada.

Mobile Phones should not be used on or around the green. Naturally, no food or drink is allowed on the green itself – keep this for consumption on the bank. After the Game, when you once again shake hands with your opponent(s), congratulate/commiserate with them appropriately, as well as your own team. Help to return the mats, jacks and other equipment to their storage place when a game is finished.

During a tournament, dress appropriately and ensure that you know the dress code for each game or match in which you are participating. Wear flat heel-less shoes. Show respect for your team and your opponent(s) by arriving on time. This will mean arriving early enough to ensure that you have sufficient time to get ready before the game, such as for applying sunscreen, etc. If you are representing the club on another green you should remember that you are an ambassador for the Nanaimo Lawn Bowling Club and behave appropriately. Some people like to present their corresponding position opponent (e.g. lead to lead) with a club pin as a memento when attending invitationals and competitions.

Remember, that everything you say either contributes to a great game, or contaminates it. By following the above, you will be contributing to a great day out. An example of contamination would be by giving a "running commentary" to everyone within earshot on everyone else's game by stating the obvious, such as, "That was too wide", as everyone can see the outcome clearly and the player doesn't want their mistake broadcasted, after all, he or she didn't willfully play a bad bowl and is quite capable of making an adjustment to their line or length on their next delivery. Sarcastic remarks, negative body language, or bad language are other contaminants to be avoided. Do not openly criticize the green, particularly if you are a guest of another club.

Knowledge of the above will make you a more respected bowler, keep things friendly and contribute towards the enjoyment of the game for everyone involved, both on and off the green.

*Be a gracious winner and
a good loser*

