

Duties of the Second/Third/Vice

The “Third” (Second/Third/Vice) will aim to put his or her bowls close to the jack if the Lead has not done so. Otherwise, he or she will follow the Skip's advice and provide positional bowls and/or draw to an imaginary jack. The “Third” should leave the head in good shape with bowls around the jack, back bowls and position bowls. Occasionally a “Third” may be asked to break up a head with a drive. The objective is to give the Skip every chance to complete the end successfully.

When the Skip is on the mat, the “Third” should only offer advice to the Skip when asked for, or when the head has been altered. Too often a “Third” fails to advise the Skip when there is a change in the head i.e. from being one up to one down. The Skip must be made aware of any changes as this will influence his/her choice of shot.



Once the last bowl comes to rest in an end, both of the “Thirds” will view the head and count the number of shot bowls. No bowls are to be disturbed until an agreement has been made between the two “Thirds”. If unsure of the score, a measurement is called for with a tape or callipers. (Note: it is advisable to use wedges to stabilize the jack and bowls during a “measure”, especially during a tournament.)

The photo right shows both Thirds in the “head”. They have placed the measure against the jack and ensured that the pointer is moved up and down to just touch the first opposition bowl, and then the other questionable bowls are measured as necessary. After agreement on the score, the “Thirds” use hand signals at the conclusion of an end by tapping his or her shoulder with the number of winning shots, or tapping his or her thigh with the number of shots lost. The winning “Third” picks up the jack once the score has been agreed and passes this to the winning Lead for delivery. The “Thirds” also assist with the gathering of the bowls by kicking bowls in from the sides while the losing Lead gets the scoop/pusher. (Note: in tournaments if the “measure” does not indicate a clear winner, then the Umpire may be called to measure. The Umpire’s decision is final.)



The Skip keeps the score in tournaments; however, if scoreboards are being used, and the board is located on the end just finished, the losing “Third” in that end will usually record the score and update the number of ends played, otherwise the losing Skip will change the scoreboard.

A “Third” must be good at reading the head and giving advice if necessary. Finally, a “Third” must be a good communicator and give clear signals at all times. A good “Third” is the heart of the team.



by Shirley Phillips