

Stance and Delivery*

Good bowling all comes down to the delivery – just as in golf, it comes down to the golf swing.

Delivering the jack

Because jacks are unbiased, deliver them directly towards the intended stopping point, which is usually indicated by the skip. A jack should travel parallel to the rink centre line. To accomplish this, stand with the delivery arm following the centre line of the mat. (See Figure 1 for foot position for jack delivery.) The line of delivery of a jack is not as critical as that of a bowl. Provided the jack comes to rest within the rink boundaries, the skip (or marker in a singles game) repositions it on the rink centre line before play proceeds. (See Figure 4 for foot position for centring jack.) Practice jack delivery so that the jack is either on or close to the centre line. This reduces the amount of time spent centring the jack and keeps the game moving along, which can be very important during timed games.

Delivering a bowl

Biased bowls follow a curved path, so deliver them at an angle to the alignment of the intended stopping point. The secret to aligning on the “grassline” is visualization. **Look only briefly at the jack or target to get the distance in mind, then move the eye over to the point of aim, then mentally draw a line from that point toward the delivery mat.** If feet are aligned with this line, and a smooth delivery made, then an accurate shot is more likely.

A delivery towards the same side of the rink as the delivery arm is a forehand. A delivery towards the opposite side of the rink is a backhand. **The only differences between forehands and backhands** are (1) the direction of the **bias of the bowl in the hand** and (2) simply pivot to the new line of aim. Otherwise, there is no difference in the physical delivery. (See Figures 3 and 4 for forehand and back hand foot position.)



Figure 1 Backhand delivery of a bowl

The Stance

The ‘stance’ is the posture before beginning the delivery action. Prepare for delivery by aligning the shoulders at right angles to the point of aim. This give sensory and visual feedback to help maintain an accurate delivery line. All the while taking care to align the feet in that direction. The critical posture is the one at the time of bowl release. It is preferred that the stance be a “moving stance”; however, where there are physical limitations for some bowlers a modified version or fixed stance can be developed to accommodate.

The preferred stance is referred to as 'upright', 'athletic' or 'moving' stance. The lean forward should be no more than 30° to avoid neck and other injuries. Rhythmically move into the release posture during the delivery movement. It avoids leg joint stress during preparations. A more upright stance enables body momentum to augment the forces that produce bowl release speed. (Note: From the 'set' position in the fixed stance, only the arm moves to provide

* Adapted from Rob Judson’s BOWL DELIVERY – TECHNICAL BASICS 2002 by Shirley Phillips

force.) Avoid crouching in advance of delivery as it puts stress on both knee joints and neck. (Note: A free step from a fixed crouch is virtually impossible and will restrict follow through.)

Foot Positioning

Foot positioning begins with feet parallel **with the leading foot slightly ahead of the anchor foot for stability/comfort**. During the delivery, the lead foot steps forward from the slight lead position to a regular stride position. The diagram overleaf shows the feet pointing toward line of aim whether delivering a jack or a bowl. For a fixed stance, bowlers advance the leading foot a normal pace and complete their delivery preparation with feet in that position. The anchor foot remains on or over the mat during delivery and is normally the foot on the delivery arm side. It commonly remains in contact with the mat and thereby helps in sustaining a bowler's mental imprint of intended aiming line.

Weight Distribution

Slightly flex the knees and position body weight over the balls of the feet. Be poised ready for forward movement. The 'delivery' arm is the one holding the bowl. With shoulders squared, align the delivery arm over the aiming line. To avoid shoulder strain and discomfort, the upper arm should be vertical with the elbow near the waist and the forearm at right angles on the line of delivery. To keep delivery arm parallel with body and to prevent the arm crossing the body after delivery, use the tips of the fingers from the other hand to touch the wrist as a form of brace until the backswing begins.

The bowling hand should have enough initial elevation so that an unforced yet unrestrained pendulum back-swing results. Direct the focus of attention forward towards the aiming point.

Delivery Movement Limb and Body Movements

The principal action in any method of delivery is the pendulum-like back swing and forward swing of the bowling arm along the required delivery line. Use the same action to deliver jacks as bowls. At the point of release of the bowl, the stance should position the:

- knee of the trailing leg near the heel of the leading foot
- weight of the body over the sole of the leading foot
- front knee ahead of the toe
- chin ahead of the knee, and the
- back of the non-delivery hand used to stabilize the stance against the leading leg.

Unless a physical disability necessitates otherwise, advance the foot opposite the delivery arm from the slight forward position to a regular stride position. The hips and shoulders pivot in similar directions, which minimizes twisting of the spine. The outward swing of the hips provides good clearance for the delivery arm.

Rhythm and Timing

The plane of the arm backswing should coincide with the aiming line. The forward step of the leading foot should begin as the arm passes the hip on the back swing. (A short step delivers a shorter bowl, a long step delivers a longer bowl; however, overstepping will cause loss of balance.)

Be aware of the transfer of body weight to the back foot when the bowl reaches its rear-most position, and then passing it back through to the front foot during the forward swing and step forward. This transfer of weight transmits directly to the speed, and thereby distance, of the bowl. At the point of release, the opposite arm should move against the thigh of the leading leg just above the knee with the back of the hand to steady posture or resting on thigh if preferred.

Arm Movement

The plane of the delivery-arm swing also should coincide with the aiming line. The bowling arm should **accelerate smoothly**, so avoiding any need for pushing of the delivery late in the forward swing. It should brush close to the side during its swing. Keep arm straight and avoid flexing of elbow or wrist so that the radius of the bowling hand's arc stays constant. This will avoid an extra movement. Release the bowl as the arm passes a vertical alignment. The bowl is then at its lowest point and release at this moment ensures a smooth roll of the bowl and should also have attained the required release speed. (Otherwise early or late delivery will result in pitching or loft of the bowl and cause damage to the green.) Using an upright stance advance the shoulder line during the delivery movement. This gives a 'stretched' arc to develop bowl release speed. In turn, this gives more scope for intuitive changes in delivery hand acceleration before release of the bowl. Body movement should be minimal during release, thereby avoiding interference with delivery precision. Movement, caused by instability, head dropping or premature recovery at the instant of release, causes inaccuracy and inconsistency.

Follow-Through

Smoothly follow through with the arm extended towards the aiming point. This minimizes the likelihood of any hand deceleration before the moment of bowl release. The palm of the delivery hand should be uppermost, avoiding any misdirection of the bowl due to turning of the wrist before release. In the follow-through posture, stay down to confirm that the bowl is following the intended line. Watch the bowl come to rest to assess any correction required, all the while recovering from the delivery by taking a pace forward with the trailing foot and clearing the mat for the next player.



Position of feet for jack delivery

(This is so the arm is swinging over the centre of the mat at point of delivery)

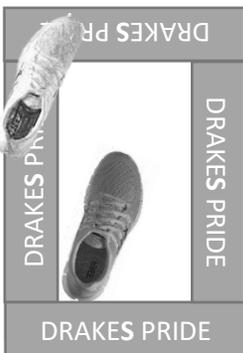
DRAKES PRIDE

Figure 1



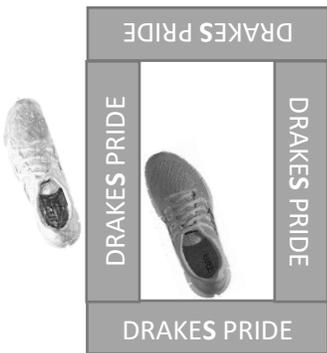
Position on mat for **centring jack**
 (This is so the **eyes** are centred over the mat to centre the jack accurately)

Figure 2



Position on mat for **forehand delivery of bowl**
 (Both feet point along line of aim and the arm is delivering from **centre** of the mat)

Figure 3



Position on mat for **backhand delivery of bowl**. Simply turn bowl over in the hand and **PIVOT** feet!
 (Both feet point along line of aim and the arm is delivering from **centre** of the mat)

Figure 4