

How to Mark a Game of Bowls

Many people contribute to our enjoyment of the game of bowls but none more so than a good marker in a singles match. To be a good Marker requires a thorough understanding and working knowledge of the laws of the game as they apply to singles play.

Marking is an art which can be acquired by any player who has the will to learn, practice and become proficient. The ability to concentrate on the player on the mat must be developed by those who wish to be "top" Markers.

Markers should be well informed and experienced players - not necessarily 'A' grade or champion players but rather players experienced in the practice of marking.

Markers should always be appointed by the Controlling Body.

However, sometimes at Club level the players may appoint their marker. It is here at club level that the new Marker gains experience and expertise and to this end our State Umpire Committees have produced this booklet.

It provides the foundation for a Marker to build on. Whether you are a player about to mark your first singles match or a seasoned Marker about to mark an Association final, you will find something of interest within its cover.

A word of caution!!! - a Marker is not an Umpire and for this reason there is nothing in this booklet dealing with matters properly the province of the Umpire. Queries about displacement of the head or bowls played out of turn must be referred to the Umpire. It must be remembered that a Marker is a neutral person in relation to the game being marked and must not influence the game in any way.

THE MARKER'S DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Dependent on the circumstances, most laws can have some effect on a singles match but in practice the following are regarded as of immediate concern to the Marker.

Law 64A Duties of marker

The marker shall:

- (i) centre the jack, and place a full length jack 2m from the front ditch in compliance with Law 19.
- (ii) ensure that the jack is a minimum of 21m from the mat line after it has been centred.
- (iii) stand at one side of the rink, and at least 2 metres to the rear of the jack.
- (iv) answer any specific question relating to the existing state of the head while the player is in possession of the rink and when requested clearly indicate the shot if possible
- (v) mark all touchers immediately they come to rest, and remove marks from non-touchers. With the agreement of both opponents the marker shall remove all dead bowls

from the green and the ditch. The marker shall mark the positions which are in the ditch. (See Laws 23 and 29).

- (vi) protect the head from any disturbance by outside objects.
- (vii) not move, or cause to be moved, either jack or bowls until each player has agreed to the number of shots.
- (viii) measure carefully all doubtful shots when requested by either player. If unable to come to a decision satisfactory to the players, the marker shall call the umpire whose decision shall be final.
- (ix) enter the score at each end, and intimate to the players the state of the game. When the game is finished, the marker shall see that the score card, containing the names of the players, is signed by the players. and disposed of in accordance with the rules of the competition.

While there is no requirement in the laws, the Marker shall post the score on the score board every second end or if there is a score board attendant the Marker shall ensure the board is correct at all times.

Other Laws

Law 15A Singles game

A singles game shall be played between two players, each playing and alternately, the number of bowls being determined by the Con

Law 9C Engraving of bowls

Each bowl of a set shall bear the member's individual engraving as smallest diameter grooved rings on each side, such marks to be proper shape and colour and clearly visible from a distance of 1.5 metres. name, a sponsor's name and/or a personal name may also be engraved on the bowl. If other grooved rings and/or dimples are coloured, each bowl shall be the same.

Law 28F Displacement by a bowl from an adjoining rink

The marker shall stop any bowl from an adjoining rink which is like on the rink on which such marker is officiating.

GENERAL ADVICE

The following hints and advice are offered for the benefit of all Markers.

- Take time to study your Law Book especially those parts applying to singles play.
- Always be correctly attired and have your Pen (that works), Law Book, measure and chalk handy.
- Introduce yourself to both players and if necessary introduce them to one another. Make it a friendly few minutes before the match commences. Make sure you know each player's bowls and arrange with players for the removal of dead bowls from the ditch. Advise them you are required to mark touchers immediately they come to rest and to allow a short time for you to do that.
- Remind the players that it is up to them to decide whether bowls

or the jack near or on the boundary line are in or out of play. If they cannot agree then they call the Umpire. They cannot ask the Marker to make such a decision.

- Be strictly neutral. Do not comment on or declare the result of an end. The players will declare the result at the end.
- "Jack High" means that from the mat line the nearest portion of a bowl is level with the nearest portion of the jack. Otherwise the position is referred to as 'past jack high' or 'short of jack high'.
- Practice measuring with the measures you would normally use. Use non-flexible measures wherever possible.

TAKE THE RIGHT APPROACH

To the players, the match you are marking, is at that time, of major importance. Having been asked to mark that match, you too should regard it in the same way. The players deserve and expect a dignified approach on your part and correct dress, correct equipment and the right attitude will show everyone you take your position seriously.

Arrive at the club in plenty of time. If it is not your own club, walk round the green and familiarise yourself with the score boards, the rink markers, boundary pegs and markers for indicating ditched jacks and touchers.

Have in your possession - pen (which works), a hard support for the card, a telescopic measure, callipers, a long flexible measure, a wedge or a piece of soft rope or some other device for supporting a leaning bowl if required to measure, a piece of damp chalk and your Law Book.

If two score boards are to be used, see that the players names are on the same side at each end and clearly written so that all concerned can read them from either end of the green.

Numbered or individually coloured bats are now commonly used to indicate the number of shots scored in the end. If you are marking an important match, particularly if it is being televised the use of the bats is essential. Organise yourself so that the bats are easily reached when you are walking back up the green.

Ascertain who is the official in charge and collect the score card.

Check the names of the players and the number of the rink and the green upon which you will be marking.

Ascertain who is the Umpire and introduce yourself. Find out under what circumstances you may be needed to assist in measuring.

If score board attendants are to be used find those appointed to operate on your rink and have a friendly word with them before the match commences.

DISCUSS WITH THE PLAYERS

- Answers which will be given to questions relating to 'jack high bowls'.

- Answers which will be given to questions such as 'am I two down' when the player is in some other situation.
- When touchers will be marked.
- When dead bowls will be removed from the ditch.
- If players elect to play their trial ends before the start of the match you can assist:
 - By aligning the jack.
 - Indicate to each player, if requested, how far the bowl finished from the jack.
 - As each bowl comes to rest, move it back behind the 2 metre mark so that succeeding bowls may finish their run unobstructed.

DURING THE GAME

- If the jack is rolled away from the centre line the Marker must move the jack in a straight line parallel with the mat line to the centre line of the rink.
- The jack must always be aligned with the hand and NOT WITH THE FOOT
- Some Markers give unsolicited information to players by indicating that the jack is being placed on the 2 metre mark. Such action is NOT PERMITTED.
- Players should observe the movement of the jack and if they wish to know the exact position of the jack they must ask the appropriate question.
- The Marker never gives voluntary information.
- Touchers should be marked with one chalk line across the smooth surface of the bowl. The bowl should be steadied with the other hand when marking a toucher.
- Be careful when chalking or removing chalk. It is not good marking if a Marker moves a bowl and has to replace it.
- Exercise great care when removing chalk marks, if the mark is on the under side, roll the bowl over, remove the chalk mark and then roll the bowl back to its original position.
- MARKERS NEVER LIFT A BOWL IN PLAY.
- If asked to measure do not move any bowl or disturb the head. You may be required to call the Umpire if a player is not satisfied with your decision. If your measure is disputed then YOU call the Umpire.
- When the players have agreed on the result of an end - repeat their decision back to them, enter the score on the card and advise the players of the progressive score - winner of the last end first.
- Be clear and concise in your replies to questions. If in doubt, say so. If uncertain as to the meaning of a question then ask that it be repeated.
- When measuring, measure between the nearest points of the jack

and bowl. Be accurate and if necessary, remeasure to avoid an error. If you cannot decide between two or more bowls, YOU call the Umpire.

- If a bowl to be measured is leaning on another bowl, call the Umpire who will secure the leaning bowl and measure for shot.
- If a bowl to be measured is leaning it should be secured before you attempt to measure.
- Replace any bowl or the jack if they are displaced by a rebounding non-toucher.
- Do not show interest in or talk to spectators.
- Do not move about when a player is on the mat.
- If in doubt about which bowl is shot - say so - the player in possession of the rink may inspect the head - never invite the player to inspect the head.
- Get both players to sign the official score card at the end of the match or when a match is stopped and not resumed on the same day. Sign the card yourself and hand it to the official in control immediately. Once the official card is signed it cannot be altered.
- On request a Marker can:
 - 1 Indicate a bowl not visible from the mat.
 - 2 Indicate a hidden jack.
 - 3 Indicate the distance between the jack and a bowl and between bowls.
 - 4 Advise how far short of or how far past a bowl is to jack high.
- The Marker SHALL stop any bowl from adjoining rinks which is likely to displace the jack or a bowl on the Marker's rink. The Marker cannot lift a bowl under any circumstances.

COMMON QUESTIONS AND THEIR ANSWERS

A crucial component of the Marker's duties is answering questions posed by the player in possession of the rink. When answering questions it must be borne in mind that the player is seeking information peculiar to their situation only. Consequently you must be at all times even handed in your responses, brief and to the point. Answer the question asked and ONLY THE QUESTION ASKED. Do not give any extra information because what you tell the player on the mat you also tell the opponent and that could mean that you as Marker have influenced the game. Be attentive and courteous, accurate in your answers and always be aware that you are there to assist the players as and when they require.

Not all players ask clear questions. Do not hesitate to ask a player to rephrase or clarify a question. If asked to say who has shot and you cannot decide then state that it is a measure but do not say that you favour one bowl over another. If you can do that then perhaps it is not a measure. Do not invite or suggest that a player

inspect the head, that is the player's prerogative.

Q1 What is the [my] position?

A1 Answer briefly the number of shots up or down as the case may be.

Q2 How many shots am I?

A2 Answer the actual number.

Q3 Am I shot? or Do I hold shot?

A3 Answer 'yes' or 'no'.

Q4 How many shots up or down am I?

A4 Answer the actual number.

Q5 How far in front of the jack is that bowl?

A5 Give the distance in metres or parts thereof or indicate with your hands if this is more accurate.

Q6 How far off the ditch is that bowl [or the jack]?

Q6 How far past jack high is that bowl?

A6 These and similar questions should be answered as in Q5 above.

Q7 Which is shot bowl [or second or third shot]?

A7 Indicate with your index finger held 150 mm above the bowl. Do not touch the bowl.

Q8 Can I draw round that bowl? or Is that bowl in the draw?

A8 I can't answer that question.

Q9 Is that bowl jack high?

A9 If it is, answer 'yes'. If the bowl is slightly [up to 50 mm] in front of or past jack high answer 'just short of jack high' or 'just past jack high' as the case may be. If the players require a more accurate answer they must ask a further question. If the bowl is further away from jack high than 50 mm then the proper answer is 'no' and the player must then ask a further question.

Q10 Do I hold two shots?

A 10 If yes, answer 'yes'. When questioners hold some other number then you may ask them to rephrase or clarify their question. If they persist with their original question then you have to answer 'no' and they must then ask a further question.

Q11 Who holds shot?

A 11 Either - 'you do' or 'your opponent' [named] does.

Q12 Am I up or down?

A12 Hold your clenched fist up or down as the case may be but do

not indicate by how many shots.

Q13 Is that bowl on or off the rink?

A13 That is not my decision to make, you and your opponent must decide.

SOME GENERAL QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q1 When can a question be asked?

A1 When the player is in possession of the rink?

Q2 When is a player in possession of the rink?

A2 As soon as the previously played bowl has come to rest and until their own bowl has come to a rest. If the bowl becomes a toucher and is marked immediately then they retain possession of the rink until the bowl has been marked.

Q3 When is the correct time to mark a toucher?

A3 As soon as it comes to rest.

Q4 If a marker displaces a toucher bowl while marking it, what should be done?

A4 The marker shall replace it in its original position.

Q5 Does a marker have to measure if requested to by the players?

A5 NO. If Markers do not feel confident they may decline to measure and may call the Umpire.

Q6 If Markers displace the jack or a bowl while measuring, what should be done?

A6 They replace the jack or bowl in its original position.

Q7 If a player offends and the opponent appeals, what action should a Marker take?

A7 They should refer the player to the Umpire. They would also refrain from passing any comment unless queried by the Umpire.

Q8 If a player challenges the length of the roll of the jack, what does the Marker do?

A8 Nothing. The players will call the Umpire.

Q9 If the jack is moved to near the boundary of the rink and its position is queried, what are the Markers duties?

A9 None, the players either determine its position by agreement or they call the Umpire.

Q10 May Markers challenge the length of the roll of the jack.

A10 YES. They may do this before the first bowl of the end is delivered. The Umpire must then be called to measure the distance.

Q11 If a bowl from the Markers rink collides with another bowl in course on another rink, what should be done?

A11 Each bowl may be replayed, provided they were on their correct bias at the time they collided.

Q12 If a bowl in course on the markers rink collides with a stationary bowl in the adjoining rink, is that bowl replayable.

A 12 YES. Provided the bowl was on its correct bias and has not touched the head to which it was played it is replayable.

AFTER THE MATCH

When The Match Is Concluded

- Allow the loser time to congratulate the winner then offer your congratulations to the winner and then offer some friendly remarks to the loser.
- Obtain the signatures of both players on score card/s, in a long game there may be two, sign yourself and hand the card/s to the controlling official.
- Return any equipment, numbered bats, measures etc. you may have borrowed.

Miscellany

A player may ask a question and the Marker gives a reply. However, before the player delivers the next bowl a bowl in the head falls over and effects the answer the marker has given. The Marker should then walk to the front of the head so as to get the player's attention and should then advise the player of the altered situation. If a player personally inspects the head and whilst is on the way back to the mat a bowl falls over and effects the position, the Marker will NOT advise the player. While inspecting the head the player should have anticipated that a bowl could fall and either watched it on the way back to the mat or should ask if the head has changed before delivering the next bowl.

Except in the case of a Marker moving to observe whether a bowl becomes a toucher, Markers should remain stationary. They should not move body or limb as this may give valuable information to either player.

When asked a question by a player, do not wander around the head and keep the player on the mat waiting, but rather move around the head in a positive manner while making your assessment of the situation and make up your mind quickly. Always move around the head and avoid walking between the bowls and the jack.

Practise with a ruler and tape measure until you can estimate distances accurately. It is important that you be able to give reasonably accurate measurements.

When a bowl is in front of the jack, be aware of the difference between the questions:

How far is that bowl -

1 away from the jack?

2 in front of 'jack high'?

The difference in the distance is equal to the diameter of the bowl.

A QUICK CHECK LIST

Always

- Be correctly attired.
- Carry the essential equipment.
- Introduce yourself to the players.
- Discuss with the players how questions will be dealt with.
- Be aware of the ownership of the bowls in play.
- Ensure your head is not displaced by a bowl from the next rink.
- Ensure that the mat is laid on the centre line before the first bowl is delivered.
- Align the jack by hand after it has come to rest and ensure that it has been rolled at least 21 metres from the mat line. Stand 2.0 metres behind the jack and midway between the centre line and the boundary so as not to cast a shadow on the jack or bowls.
- Remain motionless and concentrate on the player on the mat.
- Observe if a bowl becomes a toucher and if so, mark it immediately.
- Answer all questions briefly, quickly and accurately.
- Call the score at each end, naming first the score of the player that won that end.
- Signal the score for all to see.
- Walk briskly from end to end, midway between the centre line and the boundary.
- With the consent of the players, remove dead bowls.
- Allow the players to decide if a bowl near the boundary is dead or not.
- Wait for the players to determine the result of an end.
- Ensure the score is placed on the score board at least every second end.
- Sign the score card/s after each player has done so.
- Hand the card/s to the controlling official at the completion of the match.

Never

- Lift a bowl to allow another to pass from an adjoining rink.
- Move to see who has shot unless requested
- Say it is 'up and down' if it is not really so.
- Invite a player to inspect the head.
- Give additional information to the question asked.
- Watch the game in the next rink.
- Talk to spectators during a match.
- Tell the players who has shot or how many, when they arrive at the head.
- Use your foot to indicate a shot bowl.

And Finally

Wish each player "GOOD BOWLING" and then enjoy the satisfaction that comes from being a "TOP" Marker in a game of singles.