

# Sun Bowls Etiquette

## Introduction

Bowling etiquette centres around good sportsmanship, common sense, and displaying good manners at all times. The following guidance outlines key points to ensure a respectful and enjoyable experience for all participants.

## Dress Code and Punctuality

Each club maintains its own dress code, specifying what players may and may not wear. If you are uncertain, consult the club's rules prior to arrival. Arrive at least 15 minutes before your scheduled game to allow adequate time for preparation.

## Pre-Match Protocol

Before the match begins, introduce yourself to your opponents—especially if you have not met them previously—using your first name. Exchange handshakes and consider offering a friendly comment such as “Have a good game.”

To determine who takes the mat first, either toss a coin or roll a bowl. Most matches commence with trial ends, which serve as practice ends. During these, stand firmly on your mat and observe the trajectory of your bowl, allowing you to adjust both line and weight for the actual game. If your bowl finishes far from the jack, do not turn your back; instead, note its position to help with future adjustments.

## Singles Etiquette

If your name appears at the top of the draw sheet, it is your responsibility to find a marker. You may ask your marker any number of questions, but only when it is your turn to bowl—known as “your mat.” Once your bowl comes to rest, further questions are not permitted. Markers should provide direct answers only.

If you lose the toss and your opponent is sending up the jack and centring it, place their bowl to their left-hand side. When you lose an end, hand the jack to your opponent and collect the bowls. During your opponent's jack delivery, position the remaining bowls behind the mat on the left-hand side.

At the end of each end, determine whose bowl is closest to the jack. The conceding player should lay a cloth on the ground for placing the shot bowl. Assess which bowl is next closest, continuing this process. If you are unsure, ask the marker to measure for you. The marker may point to the shot bowl but should not remove it, as only an umpire has that authority.

## Strategy in Singles

If, during a Singles match, your opponent consistently succeeds by playing a certain jack length (either long or short), and you manage to win an end, change the mat length. Try playing the opposite length to disrupt their advantage, or move the mat position.

## Roles of Team Players

### Pairs

- The skip marks the scorecard and directs the lead on how to play.
- The lead places the mat and delivers the jack.
- At the end of the round, leads determine which bowl is the shot; if unsure, they measure.
- The losing team's lead collects the bowls and adjusts the scoreboard, while their opponent places the mat and delivers the jack.

### Triples

- The skip marks the scorecard and guides the lead's play.
- The 'twos' decide who wins each end, measure if unclear, and update the scoreboard.
- The losing team's lead collects the bowls as the opponents place the mat and deliver the jack.

### Fours

- The skip marks the scorecard and directs the lead's play.
- The 'threes' determine the winner of the end and measure if necessary.
- The 'twos' update the scoreboard.
- The losing team's lead collects the bowls while the opponents place the mat and deliver the jack.

After the end has finished, keep clear of the head (the group of bowls around the jack). Only the designated players are responsible for measuring and determining the winner of the head.

### General Etiquette During Play

When at the mat end, avoid moving around or making noises that could distract your opponent. Do not stand in their line of vision or allow your shadow to interfere, especially in sunny conditions. Remain at least one metre behind the bowler.

At the head end, where the jack is located, do not move about when an opponent is preparing to bowl. Stand well behind the head, and if the jack is in the ditch, position yourself on the bank behind the head. Also, ensure you do not block rink centre or boundary markers.

Possession of the rink belongs to the player or team whose bowl is in play. After your bowl comes to rest, relinquish the mat to your opponent. Further discussion with your skip should only occur when you are back on the mat.

Once your bowl has stopped, you should be positioned either behind the mat or behind the head, never in between or on an adjacent rink. Your opponent may immediately deliver their bowl once yours is at rest; do not impede their play.

### Conclusion of Each End

At the conclusion of each end, unless you are responsible for measuring and confirming shots scored, stay well away from the head. Never move or kick any bowls in the head until the score is clearly declared. You may collect bowls that are outside the boundary of the head.

Players should step onto the mat from the left and exit from the right. Never deliver your bowl before the previous bowl has come to rest.

When moving between ends, stay within your own rink, preferably in the centre, and walk briskly. If discussion about the head is needed, do so at the head—not halfway up the green—unless it is your mat. This helps prevent distracting players on adjacent rinks.

## Sportsmanship and Behaviour

Compliment both opponents and teammates for well-delivered bowls. If an opponent benefits from a fortunate result, refrain from making derogatory remarks. It is better to say nothing. If your own team benefits from a lucky shot, avoid saying “Well bowled” or celebrating excessively, as this may not reflect true skill. Never use offensive language or gestures.

Do not openly criticise the green, your teammates, or your opponents. If criticism is necessary, express it privately, not in front of others. Remain attentive to the game on your rink, as distraction can frustrate teammates and your skip. Do not leave the green frequently or engage in conversation with players on other rinks. Avoid using your mobile phone during play; if you must carry one, ensure it is set to silent.

Do not sit on the end ditches, as this shows lack of interest. Never walk across behind the rinks when players are about to bowl from the far end. Respect the green at all times. Maintenance is costly, and care should be taken to deliver bowls without damaging the turf.

## Conclusion

Whether you win or lose, display grace and respect. Shake hands with your opponents and teammates after the match and thank them for the game. It is customary for the winner to invite their opposite number and the marker (in singles) for a drink in the club after the game.