

Laws of the Game of Crown Green Bowls 2025

(as adopted January 2025)

D. Definitions

- D.1.a** The '**LEADER**' is the player who has the first attempt to set a mark and shall deliver the first bowl after any attempt to set a mark.
- D.1.b** In pairs there shall be no changing in the order of play until the end is complete.
- D.2.** A '**PRECEDING BOWL or JACK**' is a bowl or jack delivered immediately before the bowl in question.
- D.3.** A '**FORFEITED BOWL**' is a bowl taken off the green as a penalty for an offence under the Laws.
- D.4.** A '**DEAD BOWL**' is a bowl that cannot be counted and if on the green shall be taken off the green so as not to interfere with play.
- D.5.** An '**END**':
- Commences when the leader delivers the jack,
 - Is concluded when the last bowl finishes running and
 - Is completed when the score is agreed.
- D.6.** A '**VOID END**' is an end to be replayed with the footer remaining or placed as near as possible to where it originally lay during the void end.
- D.7.** A '**DEAD END**' is an end which is deemed to have been completed with no score. The new end should be started from where the jack lay.
- D.8.** '**LAND**': is the term used for the route taken by a jack and is then extended to cover the route that may be taken by any of the bowls at that end. It is also the expression used to indicate to any other player that they are causing a physical or visual blockage.
- D.9.** '**JACK-UP**': is called by either player when a jack other than their own ceases running on, or adjacent to, the land which they will, or may, use to send their bowl/s.
- D.10.** '**MEASUREMENTS**': are taken between the nearest points of the jack and a bowl with nothing to lie between. The adjustable end of an approved measure must be taken to the jack. In the case of the footer, the adjustable end of the certified tape is taken to the centre of the footer.
- D.11.** A '**STRIKE**' is a bowl delivered at such a speed as to attempt to negate the bias.
- D.12.** A '**MARK**' is set by the leader sending the jack, to rest on the green, a distance of at least 19 metres.
- D.13.** A '**MEDICAL DISPENSATION**' can only be provided by the referee's society on the evidence of a medical practitioner. The Dispensation letter should be available for the Referee if requested prior to the commencement of a game.
- D.14.a** A '**GAME**' is a single contest between two/four players.
- D.14.b** A '**MATCH**' is an amalgamation of individual games.

1. Equipment

- 1.1.** The '**GREEN**' shall be a playing area of grass, or an artificial surface as approved by the BCGBA.

- 1.2. The '**ENTRANCE**', which must be near the centre of any one side of the playing area, shall be plainly marked.
- 1.3. The '**FOOTER**', which shall be round, shall have a diameter of not less than 125mm and not more than 155mm. The footer is not part of the green and any bowl or jack travelling over, or touching the footer, must be returned to be played again.
- 1.4. '**STANDARD JACKS**' as defined in Appendix. A shall be used in all competitions. A jack must only be used for the purpose of setting a mark.
- 1.5. A '**BOWL**' shall weigh not less than 907gms. (2lb), except that a player with medical evidence of a wasting disease of bone or muscle may be allowed a dispensation. The maximum weight of a bowl shall be 1.37kg (3lb). Where age is a consideration, a player may use a bowl under the 907gms limit if the bowl has a minimum profile of 100 mm. A bowl must not have any device for altering or adjusting the bias.
- 1.6. BCGBA approved measuring devices, mechanical devices and artificial surfaces are listed in the Appendices.

2. The Game

- 2.1. The game shall be played on a green by two players each having two bowls, normally playing alternately until each shall have delivered both bowls, the object being to play the bowls as near as possible to the jack.
- 2.2. Where more than two players take part in a game, these Laws shall operate when applicable.
- 2.3. Before commencing play the number of points to be scored to win the game shall be fixed.
- 2.4. The leader at the first end shall be as determined by the organising body of the match.
- 2.5. At the commencement of a game the footer must be placed by the leader, within three metres of the entrance to the green, on either the left or right side and one metre from the edge but no more than two metres from the edge.
- 2.6. If during the course of play any player is found to have substituted a non-standard jack for a standard jack or has altered the bias of the jack or bowl(s) by any means, or is playing with a bowl having a device for adjusting the bias, that player shall forfeit the game. The offender(s) to receive the minimum score and the opponent(s) to receive the maximum score.
- 2.7. If during the course of a match, any jacks are found to be not in accordance with Appendix. A, the affected games shall be declared void and restarted with standard jacks.
- 2.8. No player shall be allowed to change the jack or bowls during the progress of a game except with the consent of the Referee and then only if, in the Referee's opinion, the jack or bowls are so damaged as to be unplayable.

3. Scoring

- 3.1. A bowl must be played at least three metres from the footer and rest on the green to count, except when all the bowls of the opponent(s) are out of play.
- 3.2. The winner of an end is the player whose bowl is nearest the jack or, if all the bowls of the opponent(s) are out of play, still has at least one bowl in play. The winner shall be the leader and

have the first attempt to set a mark at the succeeding end. In pairs, either of the winning pair may be the leader at the next end.

- 3.3. The winner of each end will count one point for each bowl nearer to the jack than the nearest bowl of the opponent(s) or, if all the bowls of the opponent(s) are out of play, one point for each bowl still in play.
- 3.4. The result of the end shall be clearly indicated, by the winner, to the two markers, except at competitions at which an official marker for each game has been appointed, and official scoreboards are in use. Where there are two markers they must sit together and agree each other's score cards every third end and at the end of the game. Where the score cannot be agreed upon by the markers or players, it shall revert to the end where both score cards show the score to be in agreement.

4. Setting a Mark

- 4.1. In an attempt to set a mark, a player bowling the jack must allow the opponent(s) the opportunity of seeing with what bias it is delivered, and of watching its course from a point near the footer.
- 4.2. A mark is set when the jack having been bowled, does not go off the green, is not prevented from going off by resting against anything at the edge or in the channel or, after lawful objection, is proved by measurement, with a certified measure, to be at least 19 metres from the footer, with the footer at least 1 metre from the edge.
- 4.3. If the jack in its course is impeded in any way, or stops on the land of other players, it must under all circumstances be returned. If two jacks are bowled near the same place, the one that is last stationary must be returned. The same player to have another attempt at setting a mark.
- 4.4.a Objection to a mark set by the leader can only be made by the leader's opponent after the first bowl has come to rest. If the opponent objects before the leader's first bowl has come to rest, the leader may have the jack, and the bowl if played, returned to have another attempt at setting a mark. Only the opponent can object to the mark. An opponent objecting to a mark must make a clear indication that an objection has been made.
- 4.4.b If, after an objection to a mark has been made, it is proved by measurement to be a mark, the jack and bowl shall remain.
- 4.5. If the leader fails to set a mark, the leader's opponent is then entitled to an attempt at setting a mark. In pairs, this will be the player waiting to follow the leader.
- 4.6. If the leader fails to set a mark, objection to an attempt by the opponent must be made by the leader before delivering the first bowl.
- 4.7. If the opponent then fails to set a mark, the leader shall have another attempt and so on, alternately, until a mark has been set by one of them. The original leader to play the first bowl.
- 4.8. When the leader, having had an attempt to set a mark, is prevented from delivering the first bowl through a tape on the green during the measure of a mark from another end, or if the first bowl is impeded, the jack may be returned for the leader to have another attempt at setting a mark.
- 4.9. The first attempt to set a new mark, after a dead end, shall be made by the same player who set the mark in the dead end. Any dead bowls are reinstated for the new end. Any forfeited bowls are not reinstated for the replayed end.
- 4.10. The first attempt to set a new mark, after a void end, shall be made by the same player who set the mark in the void end. Any dead bowls are reinstated for the new end. Any forfeited bowls are not reinstated for the replayed end.

5. Method of Play

- 5.1.** At no time may the footer be used with the centre less than one metre from the edge of the green.
- 5.2.** Objection to the placement of the footer must be made by the leader's opponent only after the first bowl has come to rest or, if in the leader's first attempt at setting a mark, the jack goes off the green. If the footer is then found, by measurement, to be incorrectly placed the end shall be re started, with the footer correctly placed, the opponent attempting to set the mark, otherwise play shall continue.
- 5.3.** A player's foot must be placed on the footer when delivering either the jack or a bowl. A player placing the right foot on the footer must play the jack and bowls with the right hand, and a player placing the left foot on the footer must play the jack and bowls with the left hand. Nothing in this Law shall apply to any player who suffers a permanent disability of a limb. The player must have a medical dispensation.
- 5.4.** A player must bowl with the same hand throughout the game. Where disability prevents a player from delivering jacks or bowls directly from hand then a mechanical aid, of a type approved by the Association, may be used to provide assistance.
- 5.5.** Any bowl not played in accordance with Laws 5.3 and 5.4 may be stopped by the Referee and returned to be played again. If a player offends again during the course of the game, the bowl wrongly played shall be forfeited.
- 5.6.** Players are required to give a verbal warning to their opponent and to take every precaution before striking, to eliminate the possibility of causing injury to other players, Referee, Measurers or spectators by being struck with a jack or bowls. A player shall receive a caution for the first transgression of this Law. For a second offence, the game shall be awarded to the opponent(s). The offender(s) to receive no further score and the opponent(s) to receive the maximum score.
- 5.7.** A player may retain possession of the footer until that player's bowl has ceased running. If a player has taken up the footer after playing a bowl, which for any reason has to be replayed, or if the footer is accidentally displaced during an end, it shall be replaced as nearly as possible in its former position.
- 5.8.** If the leader's first bowl has been forfeited, the leader's remaining bowl shall be played, followed by the opponent playing two bowls consecutively.
- 5.9.** If the first bowl of the leader's opponent has been forfeited, the leader's remaining bowl shall be played, followed by the opponent playing the last bowl.
- 5.10.** A player may play a bowl so as to block an opponent's course, but a bowl must not be placed, or played a distance less than three metres from the footer, otherwise it shall be a forfeited bowl.
- 5.11.** If a player has taken up position on the footer and a bowl falls from that player's hand, even by accident, and travels more than 3 metres, from the centre of the footer, in a forward direction, it shall be deemed to have been played.
- 5.12.** If a player delivers any bowl out of turn it must be returned to be played in its proper turn.
- 5.13.** If a player, in turn, delivers a bowl of another player, it shall be returned to the proper owner to be played, the offender forfeiting a bowl.
- 5.14.** A player, when at the end where the jack lies, must not stand directly behind the jack or obstruct the view of an opponent.

- 5.15.** After each end is concluded, the footer shall be placed at the jack by the last player. The footer may only be repositioned by the leader of the next end and before the first attempt to set a mark, anywhere within a space of one metre from where the jack lay at the conclusion of the last end but at least one metre in from the edge of the green. The footer must not be moved after the first attempt to set a mark by either the leader or the opponent until the end is concluded.

6. Running Jack or Bowl

- 6.1.** A bowl played while the jack or preceding bowl is in motion shall be forfeited.
- 6.2.** If a running jack or bowl appears to be in danger of striking a still bowl or jack belonging to another end, such running jack or bowl should be stopped and returned to be replayed
- 6.3.** If a running bowl is impeded in any way, except by either player, it must be played again. If a running bowl is impeded by either player, all the offender(s) bowls shall be forfeited at that end.
- 6.4.** A player must not attempt to affect the running of any bowl, nor follow it up in such a manner as to obstruct the view of the opponent.

For a first offence, involving the player's own bowl, that bowl shall be forfeited. In the case of a further offence, the game shall be awarded to the opponent(s). The offender(s) to receive no further score and the opponent(s) to receive the maximum score.

- 6.5.** Should a player attempt to influence the running of an opponent's bowl, all the offender(s) bowls shall be forfeited at that end.
- 6.6.** A bowl played or struck off the green, or prevented from going off by resting against anything at the edge or in the channel, is a dead bowl.

7. Still Jack or Bowl

- 7.1.a** If, as a result of a lawfully played bowl, the jack is disturbed and goes off the green, or is prevented from going off by resting against anything at the edge or in the channel, that end shall be dead. If, after a legitimate mark has been set, the jack goes off the green, the footer should be placed one metre in from the point where the jack left the green, the same player setting the mark. Any dead bowls are reinstated for the new end. Any forfeited bowls are not reinstated for the replayed end.
- 7.1.b** If the disturbed jack or bowl comes into contact with a bowl or jack not belonging to that end, or if it comes into contact with any person on the green the end becomes void.
- 7.2.** If, as a result of a lawfully played bowl, the jack or any bowls are disturbed and come into contact with other bowls belonging to that end, the jack and any bowls so disturbed must remain where they stop.
- 7.3.** If, as a result of a bowl wrongly played, the jack or any lawful bowl already played is disturbed, such jack or bowls shall be replaced as near as possible in their original positions.
- 7.4.** If the jack or any bowl is displaced by the jack or a bowl of any other players, or by any exterior cause, and the players agree as to the spot of replacement, the end must be continued, otherwise the end is void.
- 7.5.a** When an end is concluded neither the jack nor a bowl claimed to count may be moved without the consent of the opponent until the points are counted and all players are satisfied, otherwise all bowls of the offender(s) shall be forfeited at the end concerned.

- 7.5.b** When an end is concluded i.e., all the bowls have come to rest, a player may remove their own non-counting bowl without incurring a penalty.
- 7.6.** Should any player of an end touch or displace a still jack or bowl before the end is complete, all the bowls of the offender(s) shall be forfeited at the end concerned.

8. Measuring

- 8.1.** No measurement of an end is permitted until the end is concluded.
- 8.2.** When an end is being measured, all players must stand away and not interfere with the actions of either the Referee or Measurer(s).
- 8.3.** The Referee or Measurers are not permitted to place either their thumb or finger(s) on either the jack or a bowl when measuring an end.
- 8.4.** In the event of the displacement of the jack or a bowl being measured any points already given shall stand. If no points have been given when all measurements are finished, the end is complete. If either the jack or a bowl being measured is displaced by a player, that player shall lose the point in question.
- 8.5.** When a bowl is touching either the jack or another bowl, and has to be removed so that nothing lies between the jack and the bowl to be measured, it must be removed by the Referee and the measurement made after such removal.

9. Referee, Measures and Players

- 9.1.** Referees are instructed to insist that games are carried out strictly in accordance with the Laws of the Game.
- 9.2.** No person, other than the players and the Referee, is allowed on the green (except Measurers when their services are required). Nothing in this Law will apply to a severely disabled person who needs assistance on the green.
- 9.3.** If, after commencing a game, any player shall refuse or is unable to continue, the Referee shall decide on the point at issue.
- 9.4.** Should a player further refuse to continue the game, that player shall forfeit the game. The offender(s) to receive no further score and the opponent(s) to receive the maximum score.
- 9.5.** Should a player leave sight of the green without informing the opponent and obtaining the permission of the Referee, that player shall forfeit the game. The offender(s) to receive no further score and the opponent(s) to receive the maximum score.
- 9.6.** If a player has to stop play or leave the green due to any incident, and is unable to resume play before the finish of the match, (or that round in a competition), the opponent(s) shall be awarded the game. The score of the player who left the green to remain as it stood and the opponent(s) to receive the maximum score.
- 9.7.** In the case of any wilful breach of the Laws of the Game or any unfair play or unsporting conduct, the Referee may caution the offending player(s) or spectator(s), or order them to retire from the game or the surrounding area of the green. In the case of players, no substitutes shall be allowed, and the game shall be awarded to the opponent(s). The offender(s) to receive the minimum score and the opponents to receive the maximum score.

- 9.8. A player receiving a second verbal caution shall forfeit the game. The offender(s) to receive no further score and the opponent(s) to receive the maximum score.
- 9.9. If, during the course of a game, it becomes so dark that the jack cannot be seen distinctly from the footer, the player may request to have a light exhibited at the jack, or may appeal to the Referee, whose decision shall be final, for the game to be suspended.
- 9.10. In the event of a suspension under Law 9.9 or any other unforeseen circumstances, the points scored by each player shall stand and the position of the jack shall be marked. Ends should be completed if possible. Games shall be restarted from an agreed point as near as possible to where the jack lay at the last end played.

10. Electronic Devices, Smoking and Footwear

- 10.1. Electronic devices e.g., mobile phones, pagers, smart watches etc, in active mode are not allowed on the green. Should a player fail to comply, that player shall forfeit the game. The offender(s) to receive no further score and the opponent(s) to receive the maximum score. Where a player has an electrical device in active mode for health reasons, they should inform their opponent and the referee of this, and if they mitigate the level of sound emitting from the device, then no sanction should apply.
- 10.2. Smoking: Smoking, vaping, the use of an electronic cigarette and/or a nicotine inhaler is not allowed whilst participating in the game of Crown Green Bowls. The offending player(s) shall receive no further score and the opponent(s) shall receive the maximum score.
- 10.3. Footwear: Hard block-heeled or open-toed footwear must not be worn on the green in any game played under the Association's jurisdiction. The offending player(s) shall receive no further score and the opponent(s) shall receive the maximum score.

No interpretation of this Law allows a player to play in only socks/stockings or in bare feet.

11. Dispute not provided for in the Laws

- 11.1. Any dispute arising which is not provided for in the foregoing Laws shall be decided by the Referee whose decision shall be final.

12. Alteration of Laws

- 12.1. The Laws of the Game and interpretation thereof are the copywrite of the British Crown Green Bowling Association, and from its decisions there shall be no appeal either at Law or otherwise.
- 12.2. None of these Laws shall be altered except as provided by the Association's Bye-Laws numbered 16 and 17 for the alteration of Rules and Bye-Laws.
- 12.3. Amendments to the Laws of the Game can only be proposed every third year except at a Special General Meeting.

Appendix A - A Standard Jack

- A.1. The game shall be played with standard Jacks of 2 full bias as approved by the British Crown Green Bowling Association. Jacks manufactured after 1st March 2004 shall be black or yellow in colour. They shall weigh 666grams plus or minus 10grams. The width shall be 90.5mm plus or minus 0.5mm. The height shall be 98mm plus or minus 0.5mm.

There shall be on both sides an engraved circle, the outer edge of which shall be 20mm in diameter plus or minus 1mm. There shall be three solid inserted spots on the non bias side which shall be

white in black jacks and black in yellow jacks. These spots shall be 6mm in diameter and shall be spaced equidistant from each other at a radius of 19mm plus or minus 1mm from the centre of the engraved circle to the centre of the inserted spots. The engraved circles shall be coloured in unison with the inserted spots.

All new standard jacks shall bear the manufacturer's name on the bias side. They shall be branded BCGBA and the code letter of the official tester will be inserted within the recognised kidney shaped stamp. Standard jacks shall not be numbered or lettered. Evidence of ownership shall be made on the non-bias side. Manufacturers shall be allowed to use their own distinctive configuration of grip marks, the pattern of which shall be registered with the BCGBA.

- A.2.** All jacks submitted for testing must conform to the 1st March 2004 requirements. If black in colour white mounts and spots, if white or Yellow in colour black mounts and spots. In place of mounts, composition jacks may have engraved circles of approximately the diameter of the mounts or spots and filled in the appropriate colour.
- A.3.** New and renovated jacks shall be stamped consecutively with the year of expiry and for this purpose the year shall be reckoned from 1st January to 31st December. All jacks shall be re-tested at not more than seven yearly intervals. Jacks manufactured before 2004 must comply with the 2004 requirements.
- A.4.** Jacks are not to be stamped on more than four occasions. The first three, in date order, to be made on the bias side with the fourth and final one being made on the non-bias side. The expiry date on that stamp will indicate the year after which the jack is no longer legal.

Addendum

All jacks submitted for renovation must be re-tested and re stamped at the completion of the work.

Manufacturers and Testers

Code

Thomas Taylor (Bowls) Ltd., Glasgow	Letter A
E.A.Clare & Son Ltd., Liverpool	Letter X
Metrolux of Warrington (Bowls)	Letter H
Premier Bowls, Stockport	Letter C

Testers Only

Pershore Bowls Centre	Letter D
Stevens Bowls, Stafford	Letter S

Appendix B – Approved Measures

The following are approved by the BCGBA as measuring devices to be used in accordance with the Laws of the Game.

- B.1.** A tape or other certified metric measure at least 19 metres long
- B.2.** Any Crown Green metal measure
- B.3.** Any form of string measure.
- B.4.** Any telescopic measure
- B.5.** Callipers
- B.6.** Feeler gauges
- B.7.** BOWLSLINE String Measure
- B.8.** BOWLSLINE Laser Measure

Appendix C - Approved Mechanical Devices

The following are approved by the BCGBA as mechanical devices to be used in accordance with the Laws of the Game.

- C.1.** The Bowling Arm
- C.2.** UBI Bowls Launcher
- C.3.** Bradshaw's Bowls Buggy (With the approval of greenkeeper/home official)
- C.4.** Ordinary wheelchair (If used on an artificial surface and with the approval of greenkeeper/home official)
- C.5.** Whitehead Chariot Bowls Wheelchair (With the approval of greenkeeper/home official)

Appendix D - Approved Artificial Surfaces