

Glossary of Bowls terms

2 metre mark. The furthestmost point that the jack can be placed following the lead bowler rolling the jack at the start of the end. If the jack is rolled past this point and remains within the rink boundaries, the jack is spotted on the designated mark, positioned 2 metres back from the ditch.

A

Aero. The name of an Australian bowls manufacturer.

B

Back Bowl. A bowl placed behind the head, positioned so that if the opponent trails the jack from its current position towards the back of the rink, the back bowl may become shot or reduce the number of shots that the opposition may have if moved to this part of the rink.

Back Ditch. The ditch at the end of the green which is directly behind the player when they stand on the mat.

Backhand. For a right-handed player, delivering the bowl to the left-hand side of the rink, with the bias facing the centre line of the rink. For a left-handed player, delivering a bowl to the right-hand side of the rink, with the bias facing the centre line of the rink.

Bank. The area on the outer edge of the green, beyond the ditch.

Bias. The natural curve built into a bowl, creating an arc from the point of releasing the bowl to the point it stops.

Blocker. A bowl positioned on the green such that it would stop an opponent from reaching a defined point, usually the jack, based on its regular line.

Bowl. the biased bowl used in the game of bowls. The side of the bowl that is biased can be identified by the smaller engraved concentric rings seen, compared to the outer (unbiased) side of the bowl.

Bowls. Official name of the sport, as defined by World Bowls.

Boundary Peg. A marker placed on the bank to indicate the outside boundary of the rink. If a bowl finishes completely outside the boundary it is a dead bowl. If the jack is rolled outside the boundary when first delivered, it is returned to the mat for the opposition player to roll the jack. If the jack is moved outside the boundary after being placed on the centre line, the end is declared a dead end and is replayed, unless the competition has a local rule to spot the jack in such situations.

C

Callipers. A piece of equipment used by an umpire or a player, to judge the relative distance between the jack and one or more bowls, at the end conclusion of an end, which will determine the number of shots held by a player or a team.

Centre Line. Represents the midpoint of a rink between the boundary pegs. The jack is aligned with the centre line after being rolled by a player at the start of the end.

Chalk. Used to indicate a bowl that has touched the jack as part of its initial delivery during an end. A player in charge of the head will use a piece of chalk or chalk spray

to place a mark. This must be done before the next bowl comes to rest and must be removed before the bowl is delivered in the next end.

Change of Ends. Once all bowls have been delivered by players standing at the mat end of the rink, they will move to the other end of the rink.

Chock. A piece of material placed under a bowl to hold it in place on the green. When a measure is called for and a bowl is leaning on another bowl, it is sometimes necessary to chock the bowl so that one bowl can be removed without changing the position of the other. Materials used include rubber, foam wedges or short lengths of rope.

Composite. Shorthand term describing the material used to manufacture a bowl. Most modern bowls are made of a hardened composite plastic material. Before composite plastic was used, bowls were made from a hardwood material, usually lignum vitae.

Count. The number of shots received by a player or team at the conclusion of an end.

Counter. A bowl that is closer to the jack than an opponent's nearest bowl is considered a 'counter'.

Crown Green. Describes a variation of outdoor bowls, which is played on greens that have an undulating surface, with a peak in the middle. Play also differs as there are no rink boundaries and the jack also has a bias.

Crystal Mark. Refers to the official laws of the sport of bowls.

D

Dead Bowl. After a bowl has been delivered and comes to rest, if it finishes in the ditch, or outside the rink boundary, it is considered a dead bowl and is removed from play. However, if the bowl has touched the jack, it remains live even if in the ditch, as long as it is within the boundary of the rink.

Dead Draw. A bowl that becomes the shot (closest to the jack) without touching any other bowl during its delivery.

Dead End. A partially completed end that has to be replayed, by reason of the jack going outside the rink or green boundaries, or an umpire ruling that due to an action, the head cannot be returned to its previous state.

Declare the Head. An expression advising that the last player on the mat is not going to deliver their last bowl. It is called for if the player or team is holding shot and there is significant danger of changing the head to the detriment of the player/team if the last bowl were to change the current situation.

Delivery. The action performed by a player to propel the bowl from the mat end of the rink to the head at the other end of the rink.

Discs. In team-based competitions, players on the same team will apply a unique ring-shaped decal to both sides of the bowl so that they are easily distinguishable from the opposition's bowls.

Disturb the Head. To play a bowl with sufficient weight to alter the position of bowls and/or the jack in the head. A request of the skip called for usually when the team is not holding shot, or is blocked from playing a preferred shot by bowls in the way of the objective (usually the jack).

Ditch. The area surrounding the green, usually identifiable as a shallow trench at the edges of the green. Some ditches are a natural surround formed by mounds and

trenches of soil, whilst other greens have a man-made ditch comprising wooden framework, plinth, rubber sheets and filled with sand or artificial materials.

Ditch Rink. A rink that runs parallel to the ditch along its length.

Down. An expression to confirm if your opponent has one or more bowls closest to the jack. If a marker is providing this information in a singles' game, the marker can also indicate this status by holding a hand towards the ground, fingers can give a number.

Drakes Pride. The name of an England-based bowls manufacturer.

Draw. A bowl delivered to finish closest to the jack without the need to move or touch other bowls in the head.

Drawn End. At the conclusion of an end if the closest bowl of each player is judged to be the same distance away from the jack, no score is recorded but the end counts for games that are based on playing a number of ends.

Drive. A bowl delivered with the maximum force that a player can exert, the aim being to kill the end, disturb the head or hit the opposition bowls out of the head.

Dumping. A bowl delivered from above the green so that it bounces on the turf when it leaves the hand. Dumping a bowl is an indication of poor technique, or may indicate the player has an injury or disability that does not enable the bowl to be let go of parallel to the ground.

E

Either Hand. When a bowler delivers a bowl, he can choose to play either a forehand or backhand shot. During play the person in charge of the head may advise the player on the mat that he can play 'either hand' rather than directing a particular hand to play.

End. The playing of the jack and all the bowls of all players or teams once in a single direction, resulting in either a number of shots for one of the teams, a dead end or a drawn end. Some forms of the game have a set number of ends played, others play an unlimited number of ends until a particular score is reached or exceeded.

F

Fast Green. A green is described as quick when the bowls travel at a faster pace over the surface compared to a slow green. A slow green will require comparatively more effort when delivering the bowl.

Feeler Gauge. Used by an umpire or third to judge the distance between the jack and one or more bowls, where a bowl measure is too large to use.

Firing. A bowl delivered with the maximum force that a player can exert, the aim being to kill the end, disturb the head or hit the opposition bowls out of the head.

Foot Fault. In games where a mat is used, players are required to keep at least one foot on or over the mat during the delivery. A foot fault occurs when this condition is not met. Depending on the rules of the competition and the association running the competition, players can be warned or their bowl can be declared a dead bowl.

Forehand. For a right-handed player, delivering a bowl to the right hand side of the rink, with the bias facing towards the centre line of the rink. For a left-handed player, delivering a bowl to the left-hand side of the rink with the bias facing towards the centre line of the rink.

Fours. A team game where each team consists of 4 players. A lead, second, third and skip.

Four Wood Singles. The traditional singles variation of the game. However, it can be played with a different number of woods. Resulting in two wood singles.

Front Ditch. The ditch at the end of the green which is directly in front of a player when they stand on the mat.

Full Count. Scoring the maximum number of possible shots in an end where every bowl from all players in the one team is closer to the jack than the nearest opposition bowl.

G

Give Away the Mat. At the start of a game a toss of coin is held. The winner of the toss has the option to play the first bowl, called keeping the mat or letting the opposition have the first bowl to 'give away the mat', thus reserving the last bowl of the end for themselves. After the first end, the winner of the end automatically gets the mat and the first bowl of the next end.

Green. The area of playing surface, containing one or more rinks, the perimeter of which is usually defined by a surrounding ditch.

Greenkeeper. Common term for the staff who maintain bowling greens.

H

Hand. The direction that a bowl is to be delivered in. See forehand, backhand, either hand.

Handicap. In games of singles. Some formats allow for a positive or negative handicap to be applied to players of different abilities. For example, in a game of 25 up, one player may start at +5 shots and one at -5 shots, meaning the player with a +5 handicap need only score 20 points to win, whereas the player on -5 handicap must score 30 shots to win.

Head. Refers to the area of the rink where the jack and any live bowls that have been delivered on any particular end.

Heavy. A bowl delivered with more force than required to deliver it to a desired position on the rink. Also, a relative description of the physical weight of the bowl, compared with the standard weight bowl.

Henselite. The name of an Australian-based bowls manufacturer.

Holding. Indicates that your bowl is closest to the jack 'you/we are holding'.

I

Inner Ring. On one side of a bowl, there are one or two small concentric circles, indicating that this is the bias side, or the side towards which the bowl will turn once delivered out of the hand.

J

Jack. Is the small white or yellow ball that defines the target, or mark, for all the other bowls to be played towards. In outdoor bowls jack has no bias, but in Crown Green bowls, the jack has a bias similar to the bowl.

Jack High. Is a comparison of the position of a bowl in relation to the jack. A 'jack high bowl' means a bowl whose front edge, which is closest to the bowler on the mat, is level with the front edge of the jack.

K

Keep the Mat. At the start of a game a toss of a coin is held. The winner of the toss has the option to play the first bowl, called 'keeping the mat' or letting the opposition have the first bowl to 'give the mat away', thus reserving the last bowl of the end for themselves. After the first end, the winners automatically get the mat and the first bowl of the end.

Kill. A bowl delivered in such a way that results in the jack falling outside the boundary of the rink. Once killed, an end is normally replayed, either from the same direction, or from the opposite end by agreement with the opposition.

Kiss. A bowl that glances either the jack or another bowl, resulting in a slight movement of the jack or bowl involved.

Kitty. Is the small white or yellow ball that defines the target, or mark, for all the other bowls to be played towards. In outdoor bowls the kitty has no bias but in Crown Green bowls, the kitty has a bias similar to the bowl itself.

L

Lawn Bowling. Traditionally and historically, the game of bowls was played on grass fields or greens, thus was known as lawn bowls. With advances in construction techniques and the introduction of artificial surfaces, in the evolution of the game it has become known as bowls.

Lead. In a team of 2 or more, the player who delivers his bowl first is known as the lead. The lead has specific duties, including rolling the jack when his team is the first to bowl on a particular end.

Length. Refers to the amount of force required when delivering a bowl to reach the desired target. For a draw bowl, the required force would result in the bowl stopping at a point parallel to the jack.

Lifter. A piece of equipment, usually made of metal, which enables a player to pick up a bowl from the green without the need to bend down. Often used by players with an injury or disability which prevents them from bending sufficient to reach the ground.

Lignum Vitae. Refers to a type of natural hardwood material from a tree, used to make a bowl. Prior to the introduction of composite plastic materials, the predominant material for the manufacture of bowls was lignum vitae.

Line. The directional arc that the bowl travels along from the point of the delivery to the point it stops. For a draw bowl, the player will identify an aiming point when letting go of the bowl, such that it will travel along a pathway to end up as close as possible to the target, usually the jack. The line of the bowl will vary depending on the prevailing conditions of the green (heavy, fast), the bias of the bowl and the desired finishing position.

Live Bowl. After a bowl has been delivered and comes to rest, if it stops within the confines of the rink it is considered live. If a bowl finishes in the ditch or outside the rink boundary, it is considered a dead bowl. However, if the bowl has touched the

jack, it remains a live bowl even if in the ditch, as long as it is within the boundary of the rink.

M

Marker. In a game of singles, a non-playing bowler will assist the players by aligning the jack on the centre line after it has been rolled, answer the questions asked by the players about the state of play, chalk bowls that become touchers and keep the scorecard and scoreboard up to date during the game.

Mat. A rectangular piece of material, which designates the point from which bowls must be delivered for a particular end.

Maximum Length. The maximum distance possible between the mat and the end of the rink, designated by a spot or mark usually the 2-metre mark.

Measure (Instrument). A small pocket sized, hand held tape measure used to judge the distance between the jack and one or more bowls at the conclusion of an end, which will determine the number of shots held by a player or team.

Measure (Distance). If at the conclusion of an end of bowls, the number of shots held by a player or team cannot be determined by agreement, the designated measurer will use a tape measure to determine the result – ‘call for a measure’.

Minimum Length. The minimum distance allowed between the mat and the jack, in the Crystal Mark edition of rules, the minimum length of an end is 23 metres. Some domestic regulations vary this minimum length. For example, in Australia, the minimum length is 21 metres. Most greens have a mark on the plinth of the ditch to indicate the minimum length point from the 2-metre mark.

N

Narrow (Bias). A narrow bias describes the relatively narrow line that a bowls arc takes from the point of delivery to the point at which it stops.

Narrow (Bowl). If a bowl is delivered and finishes to the inner side of the intended target, it is said to be a ‘narrow bowl’.

O

Open Hand. Refers to the side of the rink that has the clearest path for a draw shot.

Outer Ring. On one side of the bowl, there are one or two large concentric circles, indicating that this is the non-bias side, or the side away from which the bowl will turn once delivered out of the hand.

P

Pace. See speed.

Pairs. A team game where each team consists of two players, a lead and a skip.

Peg. See boundary peg.

Plinth. The vertical trim in a ditch, usually constructed of wood or concrete and often has a covering of carpet or rubber to dampen the impact of bowls when they travel off the green into the ditch.

Possession. The player or team who’s turn it is to deliver a bowl is said to be in possession of the mat. Possession passes to the opposition when the bowl comes to rest after a delivery. Possession also includes the possession of the head and

opposition players should remain away from the head when not in possession of the mat.

Practice End. A warm up end, without scoring, to enable players to test their bowls in the conditions before the game starts.

R

Re-Spot. If during play, the jack is out of bounds, some competitions have provision for placing the jack back within the confines of the rink on a predetermined place, the end then continues from that point with all other live bowls remaining in place.

Resting Toucher. A bowl that remains in direct contact with the jack after being delivered.

Rings. Bowls are manufactured with a set of rings on each side of the bowl. The smaller rings indicate the biased side of the bowl and the larger outer rings the non-biased side of the bowl.

Rink. The portion of the green, which is in play for a particular game, is usually marked with boundary pegs at either end of the green.

Rolling the Jack. At the start of an end, the player in possession of the mat first rolls the jack along the rink to a preferred length, before delivering a bowl.

S

Second. In a team of three or more, the player who delivers their bowl immediately after the lead is known as second. The second has specific duties, including updating scoreboards.

Short (Bowl). A bowl that has stopped short of its intended target.

Short (End). Describes a relative assessment of the length of the end in comparison with the maximum length possible.

Short (Jack). A jack when delivered that stops at a point less than the minimum length allowed within the rules of competition.

Shot. The bowl nearest the jack.

Slow Green. A green is described as slow when the bowl travels at a slower pace over the surface compared to a quick green relative to the amount of effort required when delivering a bowl.

Singles. A game played between two players.

Skip. In a team of 2 or more, the player who delivers the last bowl is known as skip. The skip has specific duties, including directing the head for all other players, scoring and making decisions with the opposition skip in the event of a dispute.

Spray Chalk. Used to indicate a bowl that has touched the jack as part of its initial delivery during an end. A player in charge of the head will use a pressurised can of chalk spray to place a mark, which must be done before the next bowl comes to rest and must be removed before the bowl is delivered on the next end.

Speed. A measure, in seconds, of the time it takes for a bowl to come to a rest after being delivered by a player.

Spot the Jack. When the jack is rolled in a rink based game of bowls, if the jack comes to rest beyond the 2-metre mark but within the boundary of the rink, then it is moved to that mark.

Stance. The position a player adopts in preparation for delivering the bowl. Some players adopt a fixed stance, where legs and feet are positioned and then locked and

the delivery is completed using upper body movement. Others will position their feet, then an action involving upper and lower body elements is commenced.

T

Tape. A custom-designed tape measure used to judge the distance between the jack and one or more bowls at the conclusion of an end, which will determine the number of shots held by a player or team. A tape is used when a player's measure is not long enough to reach the bowls in question. A longer tape is also used to measure if the jack has been delivered past the minimum length required.

Taylors. The name of a Scotland-based bowls manufacturer.

Third. In a team of four, the player who delivers their bowl after the lead and second have delivered their bowls is known as third. The third has specific duties, including directing the head when it is the turn of the skip to bowl.

Tie Break. At the end of a games scheduled number of ends, if the scores are level, a tie break end will be held to decide a winner.

Toss. One player will toss a coin and the opponent calls heads or tails. The winner has control of the mat.

Toucher. A bowl that makes contact with the jack during its initial delivery.

Triples. A team game where each team consists of three players, a lead, second and skip.

Trial End. A warm up end, without scoring, to enable players to test their bowls in the conditions before the start of a game.

U

Umpire. An official nominated by the competition organiser to provide adjudication of the rules of the competition and to interpret the rules of bowls in the event of a dispute. Once an umpire is called, the decision of the umpire is final and binding on all players involved in the dispute.

W

Wedge. See chock.

Weight (Bowl). The physical weight of the bowl.

Weight (Delivery). The relative effort required to ensure a bowl, when delivered, reaches its intended target.

Wick. When a bowl is deflected during its progress when delivered. In most cases, this will be from contacting a bowl or jack. After the 'wick', the direction of the bowl is altered away from its regular arc implied by the bias.

Wide. If a bowl is delivered and finishes to the outer side of the target, it is said to be a wide bowl.

Wood. Alternative name for a bowl. Derived from the fact that bowls were once made using a dense wood.

Wrong Bias. A bowl delivered where the biased side of the bowl has been placed opposite to the desired position for a given delivery. The person delivering the bowl will get some gentle ridicule from other players.

John Kershaw.

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