

## **Short Mat Bowls Etiquette**

"Etiquette of the Game" means to act within the guidelines and laws of the game of bowls, have consideration for your fellow players and to act in a way that is appropriate. The game of bowls is a friendly game, renowned for its high standard of behaviour, sportsmanship and common courtesy. Many unwritten laws have evolved, mainly carried forward from the outdoor game, and these may be summarised as follows :-

- 1) Mobile phones should be switched off during play and used with discretion while in the vicinity.
- 2) Good sportsmanship and fair play should be practised at all times.
- 3) Always shake hands with your opponent(s) before the game and introduce yourself if your skip has not done so.
- 4) It is the job of the first player to position the delivery mat.
- 5) When a player is about to bowl : Remain behind the fender, stand still, keep quiet and do not distract him/her in any way. In addition when changing ends, try not to disturb or distract the attention of those about to bowl on adjacent mats.
- 6) Keep track of play on your mat and be ready to bowl when it is your turn.
- 7) If your opponent foot faults, have a quiet word with them once they have delivered their bowl or ask your No. 3 to do so. Only call a foot fault if they persistently continue to transgress once you have pointed it out.
- 8) Move well back from the head end and take a defensive position when a player drives or fires and warn others on adjacent mats.
- 9) During the game encourage your team mates.
- 10) Gratuitous advice by anyone should be avoided since no one wants to deliver a bad bowl. Remember, you may be the next one to do so.
- 11) Acknowledge good shots from both sides. It is appropriate to applaud but any applause should be directed at the good shots of both teams or players, not just the home side or an individual.
- 12) It is not appropriate to clap or cheer a shot which has rested well if it was the result of a "lucky" wick. Learn to accept that flukes are part of the game. Sometimes they go for you and sometimes against.
- 13) Never criticise your opponents or your own team mates. If you cannot say something positive, do not say anything at all.
- 14) Do not walk through the head when changing ends.
- 15) When the skip asks a question from the delivery end, it is the job of the third to respond. All other team members should remain quiet.
- 16) Please remember that it is the role of the two No. 3's to decide if a measure is required and to determine the number of shots won or lost. It is not a decision made by consensus. When shots are being determined only the No. 3's should be on the mat, all other players should be behind the fender.

- 17) When measuring for shot – there is no rule about who should measure but usually the team asking for shot(s) should let their opponent measure. It does not help to have too many people interfering at this time, although if you really feel that your player has not taken into account a bowl quietly point this out.
- 18) If an umpire has been called, all players should move clear of the mat and stand behind the fender until he/she has given the decision.
- 19) Once the shot outcome has been determined the third communicates the result to the skip.
- 20) Traditionally, it is the job of the home team's second to keep the scoreboard. Whoever keeps the scorecard is at the discretion of the skip. Usually it is either the team's No. 2 or the skip him/herself.
- 21) All players at the head end should assist in moving bowls to the ditch when the end is completed.
- 22) Do not revel or gloat in misfortune or loss experienced by your opponents.
- 23) Never blame the carpet, floor or the conditions if you lose.
- 24) Win with humility and lose with good grace.
- 25) Always appear to be enjoying the game.
- 26) Win or lose, always shake hands with your opponents and thank them for the game.

### **Rules that Should NOT be Overlooked**

- 1) Flat soled footwear (preferably made by a recognised bowls manufacturer) MUST be worn whilst playing on the rink mat and MUST be changed into at the venue i.e., do not use footwear that has been used to travel to the venue (ESMBA Law H2 refers).
- 2) Warn the players at the other end both visually and verbally if you are about to play a drive or "fire" (ESMBA Law E6 refers).
- 3) Do not remove any bowls from the head until the shots have been agreed (ESMBA Law G1(c) refers).
- 4) Unlike outdoor bowls, you cannot follow your own bowl up the carpet. Wait until the last bowl of the last player has come to rest before walking to the other end (ESMBA Law F1 refers).
- 5) Possession of the rink mat shall belong to the side whose bowl is being played. Opposing players must not stand on the rink mat (to view the head for example) during this time. As soon as a bowl has come to rest, possession of the rink mat is transferred to the other side, time being allowed for marking a toucher, removing dead bowls or making line decisions (ESMBA Law D10 refers).