

Duties of Team Members

Playing Your Part as the LEAD

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The purpose of this subject is to introduce the lead to those integral subjects in lawn bowls that may not have been covered in their previous coaching sessions with whoever gave them their start in the sport. It is by no means complete but it will at least give a good base to understanding the basic fundamentals of playing your part in the team.

The official duties of the lead are described in the Laws of the Sport of Bowls, Crystal Mark Fourth Edition (approved August 2022).

Responsibility:

40.3 The Lead

The lead of the team to play first in an end must:

40.3.1 place the mat as described in law 6.1.1; and

40.3.2 deliver the jack and make sure that it is centred before delivering the first bowl of the end.

In addition to the Laws:

- The Lead should help to return lawn bowls to a safe position behind the mat at the conclusion of each end; and
- Be aware of Law 40.4 - Other duties:
Along with the duties mentioned in the previous paragraphs of law 40, players can carry out any other duties assigned to them by their skip as described in law 40.1.10.

Objective:

Leads are required to draw their bowls as close to the jack as possible. The operative words here are “as close to the jack as possible”. However, ***the overall importance of the lead is to put pressure on the opposition!***

Gamesmanship:

This is the art or practice of achieving the lead’s objective without engaging in a competitive game with the opposing lead. In other words, ignore what the opposing lead is doing and achieve your objective. Remember the objective “as close to the jack as possible”.

Control:

Most experienced skips will acknowledge the importance of good leads, however good leads must not act independently, but remember it is imperative that they understand the tactical reasons they are **under the control of the skip** throughout the game.

Game Plan:

The progress of any lawn bowls game begins with a game plan. It is an overall strategy which in most cases is devised prior to the game or event.

Mat & Jack Tactics:

Tactics begin in trial ends; from the toss of the coin, the first placement position of the mat and playing length of the jack. It is therefore vital the lead watches the skip for instructions for the placement and delivery length. It is not the prerogative of the lead to move the mat around at will or vary the length of ends.

Trial ends:

During trial ends lawn bowls are played on the forehand and backhand to determine the best side to play. After consultation with the skip, the best side (usually the narrow hand) is chosen and played. This hand is not changed unless instructed by the skip.

Wisdom:

Wisdom suggests that the lead should always bowls on the same side of the rink as this obviates the necessity of having to cope with the varying width and pace of the green.

Forehand and Backhand:

Do not play "around the clock", meaning backhand or forehand both ways, the variation does not allow the greatest consistency and the **team will be disadvantaged** and head-building will be adversely affected.

Self-Control:

The requirement of leads is to deliver their bowls as close to the jack as possible. Unless specifically instructed by their skip; they should strictly avoid niggling at close opposition bowls, keep their mind clear and focused on their objective. Remember in a team effort, a good close second bowl (preferably behind the Jack) is just as important as the shot bowl.

Disposition of the Head:

The disposition of the leads bowls at the head plays an important part in the building of the head. This involves both teams to consider the employment of the tactical skills of defence, attack and recovery. The following descriptions are a guide to what may occur when certain head formations take place:

- If the bowls come to rest 6 inches or 15 centimetres directly in front and rear of the jack? Its advantages are; it presents a very small target to the opposition and may force them to go into a minor attacking on-shot mode.
- If the bowls come to rest 6ins or 15cm obliquely right front and left rear of the jack this presents a target on the left side of the head or when vice versa, on the other side.
- If the bowls come to rest 6ins or 15cm right and left of the jack it presents a target on both sides of the head for the opposition to draw or wrest your bowls out of the head.