

Rules, Etiquette and Good Practice

I have put together for Kensi bowlers this short summary regarding some issues which have arisen in recent times, and mentioned to me by various players. If you want more detail please ask me, or consult sources such as the rule book, Google on etiquette, and coaching books on good practice. Do have a good read of it; it might be you someone has mentioned!

Rules

Possession of the mat

One rule which seems to be often broken concerns possession of the mat or head. When it is your turn to bowl you have possession of the mat until your bowl has stopped. As soon as it has stopped you should return to a position at least a metre behind the mat. As a skipper you should not move to inspect the head; it is now your opponent's head to inspect and instruct his/her next player to bowl. As a bowler you should not be several yards in front of the mat.

A particular problem mentioned to me has concerned when skippers and members of the rink are changing ends. If your team is not next to bowl you should not stop midway to have a conversation, or linger at the head; as a skipper not in possession of the mat you should either be behind the mat, or waiting at the head end to see what your opponent does. If necessary to talk, converse with your team-mates quietly.

Jack or bowl moved by player

If a jack or bowl is moved by a player, deliberately or accidentally, during measuring or at any other time, the opponent has the right to replace that jack or bowl where they think it was. Many players have the mistaken impression that the opponent automatically gets the shot. If a Measurer or Umpire moves it, they put it back – no dispute.

Clothing

Bowls SA and the Metropolitan Bowling Association both require authorised clothing to be worn in pennant matches and State tournaments. The main breaches we have seen occurring have been with headwear and coats. All head wear needs to have the Bowls Australia logo on it, or if a hat is worn then the authorised club headband. Likewise rainwear or warm tops must have the logo to show it is an authorised garment. We have observed all sorts of caps and coats being used improperly.

Although this is an Association rule, no clear penalties are specified; indeed the rule book is generally lacking in guidance about penalties for inappropriate behaviour. It is up to us as a club to do the right thing.

Etiquette

Stay within your rink

Encroaching onto the next rink is often an issue. This occurs when a bowler chases a bowl after delivery, anxious to see what might happen, and in doing so intrudes onto the next rink. Another instance is when while changing ends players fail to keep within the confines of the rink; good practice is to walk no more than a metre from the centre line.

Players will often start walking to change ends after a No. 3 has delivered his/her last bowl. If you do this, do not impede that bowler's view of the bowl's progress; walk on the opposite side of the rink.

Don't distract other players

When your team-mate or opponent is about to bowl, keep the noise down. In particular, don't talk, whether offering encouragement or just chatting idly. If you are at the head end, avoid movement, not only on your own rink but when walking past other rinks. As a skipper, stand to one side of the centreline because some players use it for sighting, and white shoes may merge visually with a white jack.

Kicking bowls back

After the head has been declared **all** players at the head should help move bowls back behind the mat, including leaders and scorers in fours. Also, please group the bowls; we need to minimise the risk of players tripping over bowls, which is more likely if they are scattered. In singles and pairs, for example, if it is not your mat you should help kick bowls back and not go straight off for a drink of water or toilet visit.

Pick up the mat

If your opponent has had last bowl of the end, you should pick up the mat and **place** it (not throw it) on the bank.

Lucky or unlucky bowls

It is hard to avoid applauding or exclaiming when your team gets a lucky wick, or your opposition gets an unlucky wick, but it is poor form to do so. If the moment gets the better of you, you should at least apologise for applauding a lucky/unlucky result.

Buy your marker a drink

It is a courtesy for players to buy each other a drink after a singles game, and for each to buy their marker a drink also. In pennant fours it is usually the home player who offers to buy the opponent the first drink.

When to stand back

When a Measurer or Umpire is in action **all** players should stand back and await the result unless the Measurer has invited a player to watch. That might be when the Measurer has to determine a question on the rink on which he/she is playing.

Good Practice

Ready to bowl?

Although the mat is yours, you should stand behind it until your skipper has instructed you as to what shot to play. Hold the bowl in your non-dominant hand, not assuming what hand you will be asked to play. When you know what shot you are to play, transfer the bowl to your bowling hand, checking bias as you do so.

Arriving on time

There are some players who arrive on time, but only just on time. Their team-mates are apt to worry that they will be a player short, and might start making phone calls. Try to be early, or if you know you will be just on time or a few minutes late, let the side manager know.

When should a third offer advice?

When asked, or when the head has changed from when the skipper left it. Certainly not when the skipper has just left the head and will have a clear idea of what shot to play.

Prepared by Mal Hutton, KMBC President, Coordinator of Coaches, and Coordinator of Umpires.
Thankyou to those colleagues who contributed ideas and comments.