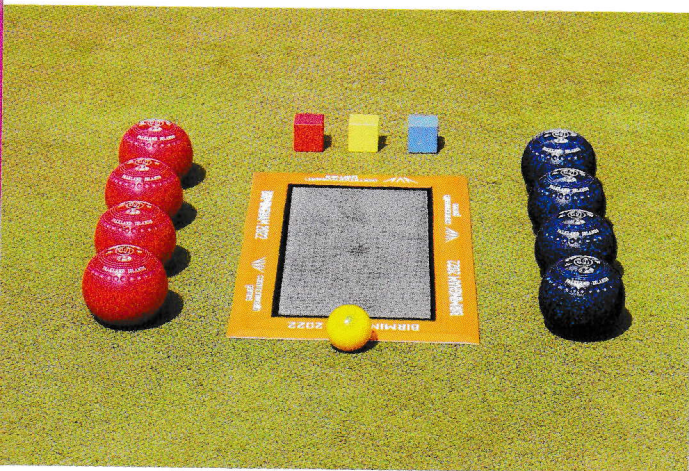




# Laws of the Sport fourth edition approved



**Above:**  
Another relocation  
of existing wording  
has created a new  
law stating that in  
all games players  
must play with  
the appropriate  
number of bowls  
from the same set

Credit Allen Simms

There have been slight adjustments to some of the definitions, in particular the definitions of a rink and rink of play. This change tidies up any confusion on what is included within the boundaries of the rink of play and now includes the end ditches and face of the banks. As a result, some further laws have been adjusted to deal with the change of wording. A new definition has been created from existing wording to define measuring. Neither of these changes really affect the playing of the game, but set the scene for the rest of the laws.

Another relocation of existing wording has created a new law stating that in all games players must play with the appropriate number of bowls from the same set. Again this is a cosmetic change to define this in the play arrangement section rather than later on in the law book where it was harder to find previously.

A couple of changes have been introduced to allow controlling bodies to use their discretion when deciding when trial ends are necessary. In particular, in the event of a game being stopped due to inclement weather and moved from an outdoor green to an indoor green. Similarly, if moving a game from a grass to a synthetic surface or vice versa, trial ends may be permitted.

Throughout the law book, there are many references to skips and decisions they must make especially when it come to displacement scenarios.

Just over 12 months ago, World Bowls started a process to review the Laws of the Sport. Aside from a couple of minor amendments, this was the first major review since 2014 during which the third edition was born. The new fourth edition was approved at a World Bowls meeting just after the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games. In the grand scheme of things, there are not that many practical changes that affect the playing of the sport. So let me guide you through the main changes here

It was clear that there were some inconsistencies and no mention of singles players in these situations. So, for clarification, several changes have been made to include singles players.

In the third edition, a new penalty was introduced to deal with players that delivered their bowls before their opponents bowl had come to rest. In essence, it was identical to a breach of rink possession. As such, this scenario has now been incorporated into the laws relating to rink possession. The

***"None of us like a cheat and cheats never prosper. It was with this in mind that a proposal was submitted to deal more robustly with those individuals that feel it necessary to cheat"***

penalty remains the same, but it has tidied up a duplication in wording.

I'm sure we have all had momentary lapses of concentration. Sometimes this may result in us playing out of turn. The laws have always dealt with the scenario where one bowl has been played out of turn but not two bowls. There is now a new law which states that if each team has played a bowl before it is discovered that one of them has played out of turn the end must continue in that order.

Talking of order, a logical approach has been taken when dealing with leaving the green and stopping a game. In the previous edition, stopping the game was followed by leaving the green and substitutions. These two laws have now been switched as game stoppages are more likely to occur after a player leaves the green and a substitution may be necessary.

There has always been quite a discussion about how the score should be worked out when a player is missing from a side game. The assumption is that one quarter of the total score for the whole game is taken, regardless of whether a substitute is introduced. A wording change now clarifies that a fourth of the shots are deducted in each of the ends where a team is playing one player short.

Amongst the list of the many duties that a marker should carry out, a new task to ensure that the mat is on the centre line has been included. Whilst on the subject of markers and umpires, the laws contain a list of equipment that may be used for measuring. As we all know, there are many gadgets and items of measuring equipment used all over the world that may not appear on that list. Indeed, there are now new technologies that are being used domestically. A new law now allows national bodies to approve types of measuring equipment for carrying out umpiring duties at a domestic level.

There are a number of additional items listed in Appendix A which



deals with conditions of play. Some competition rules can be lacking in detail and Appendix A gives guidance on what can be included in conditions of play. Guidance on the method for drawing rink numbers and opponents, dealing with players who leave the green on more than one occasion, arrangements for dealing with the scorecard and guidelines for playing in hot and cold weather conditions have all been added.

It will be for governing bodies to introduce these into their competition rules should they be necessary.

So we arrive at the change likely to be the most controversial and raise the most questions. None of us like a cheat and cheats never prosper. It was with this in mind that a proposal was submitted to deal more robustly with those individuals that feel it necessary to cheat. Let me throw a couple of scenarios your way.

A team is holding four shots and the third in the team asks their skip to draw another on the backhand. The bowl is delivered, but the third soon realises that it both narrow and heavy and heading straight for the jack. With no back bowls, hitting



the jack would be disastrous and so the third steps out in front of the head and stops the skips bowl from disturbing the head. Until now, the only resolution for this would be for the opposing skip to declare the bowl dead. Hardly a punishment when that bowl was proving to be too damaging to the head anyway and is probably better off sitting on the bank. How about the skip that moves one of their own short bowls out of the way to allow their thirds bowl to pass as it was on a good line and length. Again, the only punishment was for the opponent to replace the bowl that was moved. So a tougher stance has been taken on these blatant acts of cheating with the introduction of two laws that will deal with the above scenarios. In both the penalty being forfeiture of the game. Harsh? What do you think?

There is clearly some clarification needed here as well. Questions are already being raised about the innocence of stopping one of your bowls from going into the ditch when it has missed the head and is a little heavy. Well clearly that doesn't warrant you packing your bowls and going home early. Let's remember that other displacement laws still apply. The laws committee have pre-empted some of these queries and have published clarification on the intent of these new laws and I believe these to be very clear.

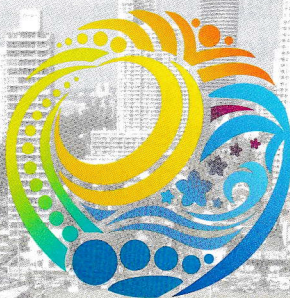
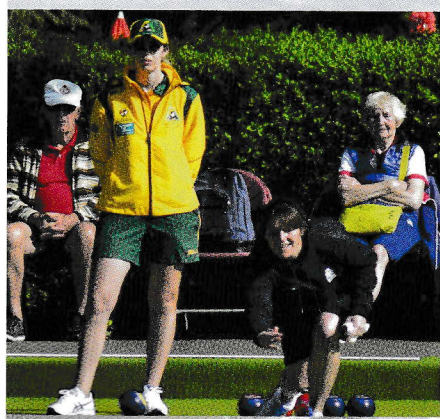
In my view, there should be no reason or scenario where you have to touch, lift, stop or otherwise interfere with bowls from your own team or your opponents during the game. If you avoid this, then you avoid any displacement penalty in the laws.

The fourth edition has to be implemented no later than April 1 next year.

Minor changes all round that are unlikely to affect the way the sport is played at any level, but with one sting in the tail to deal with cheats.

It will be interesting to see how this develops.

Left:  
The laws contain a list of equipment that may be used for measuring  
Credit Allen Simms



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