



Reacting to umpiring qu

For grass roots players everywhere, some great news emanated from the golden shores of Queensland following the Commonwealth Games in April. News that will now mean that more young players and those that find it difficult to grip bowls will be able to play the sport competitively. I refer of course to the unanimously approved change to the minimum size of Bowls. Whilst the change in diameter may seem small; just 4mm, it represents two additional sizes that may be manufactured and given the World Bowls Stamp.

Whilst on the subject of changes to the laws, you will be aware of the historical decision of the World Indoor Bowls Council to become an affiliate member of World Bowls and their rebranding as the International Indoor Bowls Council (IIBC).

The great news for players and umpires is that we now have just one set of Laws worldwide for the Sport of Bowls played indoors and outdoors. I will cover more of the detail next month in preparation for the start of the UK indoor season.

Of late I have enjoyed officiating in and around my home county. I was umpiring at one of my local clubs on a very warm evening. It was singles and two bowl singles later stage competition.

During the introduction to the players I overheard the county official announcing that "Umpires are becoming

very hot on this, three strikes and you are disqualified".

It was one of those times when I wished I was listening to the whole conversation and not just the tail end of it.

I was puzzled but was unable to make enquiries as the county official was also playing and I did not want to disturb him before his game.

So, with the confidence that I knew there were no instances in the Laws where a player can be disqualified during a game for something happening three times, I chose to ignore it.

During the games I noticed a marker send a delivered jack back to a player. I am normally pretty on the ball and I certainly did notice it being delivered

short. The same player then delivered the jack again.

Odd, I thought, but as the game proceeded without question I chose to wait until the end of the games to ask the question.

It transpired that word on the street from some newly qualified umpires was that if the jack is delivered before the mat has been centred by the marker then it should be returned to be redelivered. If they did this three times then the

player would be disqualified. I wasn't sure whether to laugh, cry, hang up my callipers or offer some correction. So I offered my views to the county official.

In relation to the Laws the following cover the scenario of the mat not being centred before the jack is delivered:

"I wasn't sure whether to laugh, cry, hang up my callipers or offer some correction."

Below: Law 6.1 deals with mat placement



NEW SMALLER SIZE BOWLS WILL SOON BE WIDELY AVAILABLE...

Taylor Bowls are already making two smaller sizes, 000 and 0000.

The minimum size was 116mm, a 00, but it has been recognised by World Bowls that some older and younger players had difficulty even with the minimum size.

Now manufacturers have been approached to design new smaller sizes of bowls with a new minimum size of 112 mm (size quadruple zero) and 114mm (size triple zero).

Law 52.1.6.1 has been changed to allow these smaller sized bowls of approved models to be used.



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Law 9.1 Before the jack is delivered, the mat must be placed as described in Law 6.1.1. The player to play first must deliver the jack and make sure it is centred.

Law 6.1.1 Before the start of play in each end, the player to play first must place the centre line of the mat length wise along the centre line of the rink, with the mat line at least two metres from the rear ditch and at least 25 metres from the front ditch

Law 6.1.3 If, after the jack has been delivered but before the first bowl is delivered, a player or the marker finds that the mat line has not been positioned within the distances described in law 6.1.1, the opposing player must place the mat as described in law 6.1.1 and re-deliver the jack, making sure that it is centred, but the opposing player must not play first.

So, from what I witnessed, if the mat was not in fact on the centre line and the jack was returned then the opposing player should have redelivered it and there is no mention of three strikes and you're out.

I do wonder how these little things creep into our game.



Answering Questions

In the July issue of Bowls International a very interesting letter from Malcolm Bailey was published and our thanks for taking the time to put pen to paper. Malcolm raised some very interesting points which I would like to take a moment to address. I cannot comment about the specific content of any training that he has received but hopefully I can answer some of his queries.

His first point relates to marking the position of the jack or touchers in the ditch specifically Laws 14.4 for touchers and 18.2 for the Jack. The wording of both is very similar and reads as follows:

Law 14.4 The position of a toucher in the ditch must be marked by a brightly coloured indicator not more than 50 millimetres wide and not more than 100 millimetres high, and which is fixed vertically either against the face of the bank or on top of the bank, immediately in line with the toucher. As well as the indicator, if the surface of the ditch is sand, lines can be drawn in the sand around the toucher. If the surface of the ditch is vegetation or synthetic, the lines can be drawn with chalk

Malcolm suggested that the sentences shown in bold appear to be little known and I would agree with him with regards to the UK. However, these methods are commonly used in the Southern Hemisphere where sand filled ditches are the norm. The law certainly does exist.

Moving on to the second point raised relating to the "30 second rule". I have written in the past about this Law and how it is

applied so will not go into huge detail about that.

The key to Malcolm's question is to appreciate that most of the skip's duties can be delegated, especially when it comes to decisions at the head.

It is also important to understand that the Laws are formulated to show consistency with Fours, Triples and Pairs and the Skip is the player in sole charge of the team.

Most of the laws will specify that the skip must make decisions on behalf of his team but Law 40.1 allows for some of those decisions to be delegated. This is the case with applying the 30 seconds.

In my opinion there would be no reason for an umpire to interject if another player requested a 30 second time period as the laws allow it and are "fit for purpose".

Finally, Malcolm raises a question of "sportsmanship" in relation to displacement of a head by a bowl that was dropped by a player when carrying it to the head. I agree with him that, in singles, the marker would be in a position to advise on the positioning of the bowls but the final decision rests with the opponent only.

That does not mean to say that he can just place his bowls closer to the jack, they should be placed as accurately as possible. The displacement laws state "must put the bowl back to its former position".

It is hoped that this can be done very amicably without taking a huge advantage of a situation.

I hope that answers some of your points Malcolm.

Above: Law 14.4 covers touchers in the ditch

