



# Your questions answered

There goes another year with the blink of an eye. It hardly seems like a year ago we were preparing for the World Indoor Championships and then on to the Commonwealth Games on the fabulous Gold Coast of Queensland. The speed at which the months fly by must be a reflection of our busy lives. May I wish all our readers a very happy 2019.

**S**o we start a new year with a new World Championships at the stadium of indoor bowls in Potters Leisure Resort. This will be my 20th World Indoor Championship at this venue and that in itself is an insane thought as I can clearly remember the first time I stepped onto the famous portable rink all those years ago.

Social Media is becoming a major force in communicating our great sport around the world.

Live streaming and instant live results are keeping us all up to date with tournaments on the opposite side of the globe – we certainly didn't have that 20 years ago! This medium is also great for encouraging debate and discussion, although not all of it friendly and tasteful unfortunately.

So at the end of last year we thought it would be good to stimulate some questions for this article on social media. Some great questions - let's see what our "FaceTweeters" came up with.

I will start with a typically challenging teaser from my friend, ITO and World Bowls colleague Dan Bluett. His question was, "Player A casts the jack and it is measured short (less than 23m).

The jack is returned for player B to deliver who repositions the mat and casts the jack. Player A challenges the mat position which turns out to be less than two metres from the back ditch. What happens next?"

To be honest, I expected him to know the answer but I suspect he is just testing me!

Not a common occurrence but one

that can cause some confusion. I am sure you are all aware that if a jack is incorrectly delivered by each player then it is repositioned on the two metre mark and the first to play places the mat where they wish within the distances specified in the laws.

However, in Dan's scenario the jack has only been delivered incorrectly by Player A. Player B has actually infringed a separate Law by placing the mat in the incorrect position.

When this occurs the jack is returned and the opposing player redelivers it after placing the mat in the correct position. Confusing? It sure can be when trying to explain it to players. If you want a full explanation then check out Law 6.1.3 for the mat position and Law 10.2 for the incorrectly delivered jack.



## REMEMBER WHEN...

On to some questions about my experiences now. Joshua Phillips asked, "What's the longest match you've ever been involved in?"

There have been many long hauls but the one that really sticks in my mind was one of the first Indoor National Championships I worked at Melton Mowbray. One of the Fours semi-finals clocked up a ridiculous 5 hours 20 minutes. Of course that was in the days before time limits and yes, sometimes we do end up watching paint dry.

Joshua goes on to ask, "What's the most unusual thing you've seen happen during a match?" This one was easy, bizarre and memorable.

During the evening matches at the 2010 Commonwealth Games in Delhi, the greens were invaded by bugs and beasties. These included pretty chunky black beetles that had no sense of direction. There were a number of occasions when they bumped into the jack and even walked off with it.

Joshua had clearly been saving up some questions during the year and finished with, "Why did you choose umpiring over playing, and due to your responsibilities as an umpire, do you get to play as often as you'd like?" Well as anyone that has seen me play will testify – I'm no great player.

As I was progressing with my officiating standard I was finding myself committing more time and a higher level of play than I could ever dream of playing.

I still played competitively until my son was born and then something had to give. Playing competitively took a back seat and now I very rarely get a serious game. I will still fill in if any of my club mates are very desperate for a sub.

Charlie Lomax asked "Does any particular umpiring decision stick out as the most memorable and why?" An interesting question and one I have struggled to answer as I tend not to remember many decisions after they have happened, just move on to the next one.

However, one that was quite interesting occurred in a Europe versus Malaysia match played in North London in the early days of the European Bowls Union.

In a Scotland versus Malaysia women's pairs match the most incredible head developed which I was watching with interest as it potentially involved a feeler gauge measure.

It resulted in about six bowls surrounding the jack and all leaning on each other and needing to be removed before I could get to the jack.

It was a great atmosphere and friendly banter between the players and officials. As I was called I went to walk away from it as it was far too complex and we had a good laugh about how was going to tackle it.

The players all stood over me and helped with wedging and advising as I carefully removed bowl after bowl. The feeler gauge measure was close as well.

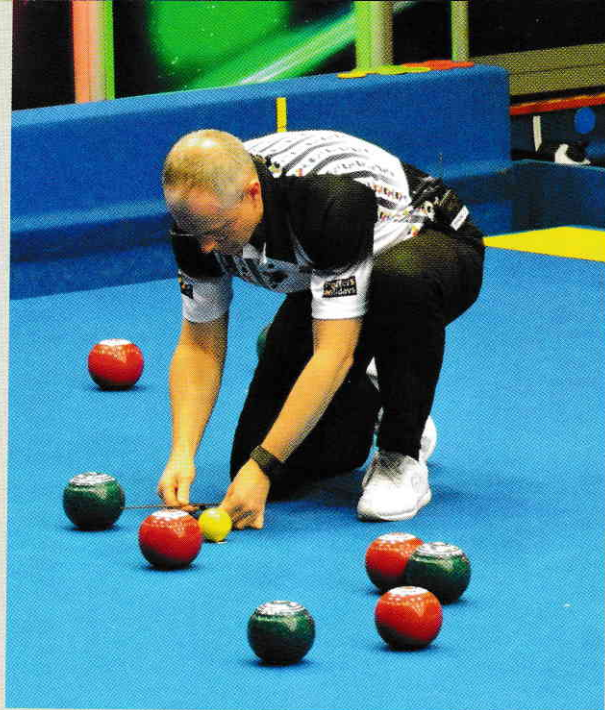
## LAWS OF THE SPORT

Back to the Laws and George Struthers queried, "What would happen if a jack rebounds off a bowl back over halfway towards the players?"

The jack would simply be measured from the front edge of the mat in a direct line to the jack and if it is less than 20 metres it would be declared dead and the end replayed. A reasonably common occurrence, especially on indoor carpets or fast rinks.

Gerard Rutledge posted a very interesting question which many players wouldn't realise actually results in a penalty. He asks, "What is the ruling on a player playing his bowl before his opposition's bowl has come to rest?" He witnessed it in an Australia singles match and the marker did not intervene.

This relates to possession of the rink and players should not play until the previous bowl has come to rest as that is when possession passes to them. The penalty is very similar to the Rink Possession penalties in that if it occurs after the umpire has given an initial



warning the bowl would be stopped and declared dead.

It's not a law that is penalised very often as generally players are just getting on with their game and it does not affect anyone. I am therefore not overly surprised that the marker did not react.

Whilst on the subject of Rink Possession, Iain MacCallum asks, "What's your view on lead and second walking to the head as opposition second waits on mat to play bowl?"

My view follows the laws on position of players and rink possession (Laws 12 and 13). The lead and second should not walk to the head if they are not in possession of the rink and if they do so then they may be in breach of the law. However, what many people do not realise – or forget, is that the penalty is only applied if the opponents are 'Annoyed, Interfered with or Distracted by the actions of the Lead and Second.'

If the opponent on the mat has no issue with them walking to the head then we would leave well alone.

The final question comes from Brian Thomson but is also related to another separate incident that was posted on Facebook together with a very interesting photograph, see below.

## Brian asks

**"What happens to the jack if it is in the ditch and a previous toucher is pushed into the ditch and moves the jack?"**

This scenario is very clearly laid out in Law 18.3 which says: The position of a jack in the ditch will be validly altered if the jack is moved by either a toucher in play; or a non-toucher while it is partly on the rink and partly overhanging the ditch, as long as part of the non-toucher is still on the rink when it comes to rest after it has moved the jack.

The second part of this is very similar to the scenario where



a toucher is moved by a non-toucher which is partly overhanging the ditch and partly on the rink. This great photo demonstrates that very well.

Thank you to everyone who contributed and posted these great questions. As always we will welcome any of your questions via social media or email to the magazine. I am sure some interesting scenarios will come out of this months' World Indoor Championships so I will be covering these in a later issue.

As always WBT and the BBC will be taking to Twitter and Facebook for live interaction and live streaming so please feel free to send us your questions. We will try and answer as many as we can when not officiating of course.