



Into the winter

As you sit in your comfy armchair with a warm cuppa and the heating on reading this article, I will be in Cyprus, hopefully enjoying the last bit of sunshine and warmth before heading into the World Indoor Championships and the long winter and spring months ahead

I am in Paphos, Cyprus, as the Chief Technical Official at the Atlantic Senior Fours event which was one of those COVID-19 casualties that was due to be held in the winter of 2020.

This inaugural event is a new format sanctioned by World Bowls and features some of the games greatest stalwarts, including tournament director, Gary Smith.

The event runs from December 1-12 at the impressive Constantinou Brothers, Athena Beach Resort in Pathos. Thirteen nations are competing in the three disciplines of men's and ladies' fours and mixed fours all over the spritely age of 55.

I am joined by six International Technical Officials – Roger Black and Pat and Arthur Gammack from Scotland, Huw Jones from Wales and Dan Bluett and Angie Thompson from England. Cyprus have also fielded an impressive team of National Technical Officials under the expert management of Bowls Cyprus umpire Jane Hewitt.

The format is straight forward with two sessions each day and the games comprising 15 ends or two hours 30 minutes. The event starts with sectional play for the men's and ladies' fours followed by a straight knockout in the mixed fours. A single, central re-spot position will be used to keep the games flowing on time.

The games are being live streamed on the Atlantic Senior Fours website and on YouTube, with the familiar dulcet Lancastrian tones of Jason Parkinson heading up the commentary.

I will just about have enough time for a Christmas and New Year tippie upon my return before heading off to Potters Leisure Resort for the 2024 Imagine Cruising World Indoor Championships for my 25th event. I will again be joined by our great team of officials, Dan Bluett, Francis Fletcher, Neill Brice and Mike Davies (also attending for his 25th year), as well as our two new recruits Sue Mates and Greg Brown. I will report back on any incidents of note in future articles.



BUSY TIMES

The past few months has been a busy time revamping the training and development processes for umpires in England. We have now recommenced training after a short hiatus and have encouraging numbers of new applications coming through.

As we have mentioned previously, including Corky's November article on Volunteers and Umpires, we are in need of new interest from anyone wishing to officiate in this great sport.

The indoor season is always challenging for officials due to the vast number of competitions being played nationally every weekend and indeed during the week as well.

The PBA qualifiers this season have been an incredible success with record numbers of venues and entries around the UK. Volunteer umpires have been available at each one for long days and the PBA have relied heavily on the kindness of defeated players to go on and mark games. I can only imagine how hard it must be for a player to lose in a tight qualifying match for a place at the World Indoor Championships to then have to step back on the rink and mark a game. I know I would rather go and sit in a darkened room and drown my sorrows. Some venues, such as Bromley in Kent, are blessed with large numbers of qualified markers under the expert tutelage of Alex Duckworth and they have all gained significant experience from these qualifiers.

My dream as development officer for the English Umpires Association is to work closely with the PBA and help provide qualified markers at each of their events for each round. It may be a pipe dream, but I see it as a benefit to the PBA and also to the EBUA for recruitment of new officials.

If you are interested in becoming a marker or and umpire, then please take a look at the EBUA website www.ebua.co.uk to see what it involves.

Turning attention to some of your questions which you have kindly sent into us here at *Bowls International* and also posed on various social media pages.

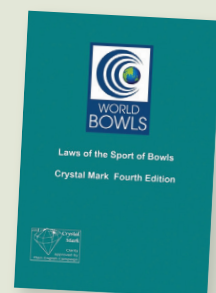
Whilst on the subject of the PBA and World Indoor Championships, I thought I would pick up a question posed on Facebook from Ann Murdoch regarding re-spotting a jack and in particular its placement on the centre line two metre 'T'.

The Laws of the Sport allow for re-spotting the jack in Law 56 – sets play, but it is becoming more common to do so in the traditional formats to keep the game to time limits. This is normally specified in the conditions of play for the competition. There is the option to have one or three re-spot positions i.e. one on either side of the centre line and the centre two-metre 'T' position or just the two metre 'T' position.

Ann's question related to the placement of the jack on the 'T' following a challenge after it was incorrectly placed. Now, this is not an unusual occurrence as we often see players place the jack on or around the two-metre mark incorrectly. Most commonly on outdoor rinks when using a two-metre stick.

In her question, Ann asked if there was a definitive answer as to where the jack should be placed. Well yes, there is and one of those appears in the law book in appendix B3. The key to this is to understand that the jack must be placed with its nearest point to the mat being two metres from the front ditch.

Look at the two diagrams here showing where the jack should and should not be placed on the 'T' for a re-spot and also after being delivered. Incorrect placement of the jack can be game changing if the result of the end is determined by a measure for example. So, it is worth taking care when placing the jack on a 'T' or re-spot.



READERS' QUESTIONS ANSWERED

This does beg the question why, when we have the two side re-spot positions, are they normally dots and not 'Ts'? The law says that if the jack passes outside the boundary on either the left or right of the rink, it must be placed with the nearest point of the jack to the mat line at a spot on the rink which is two metres from the front ditch and 1.5 metres to the right or left of the centre line. If it is a spot, then I would bet my hat on the jack being placed on top of the spot and therefore more than two metres from the front ditch. Would it therefore not make sense to mark re-spot positions with a 'T'? Food for thought.

Finally, a second question from Ann Murdoch: When playing on an indoor rink. A player delivered a wrong bias bowl which unfortunately hit the jack that had been delivered, and was on its original course, on the adjacent rink. The skip of the team that delivered the wrong bias insisted that the bowl should be re-delivered as it had hit something even though the bowl was on the wrong rink.

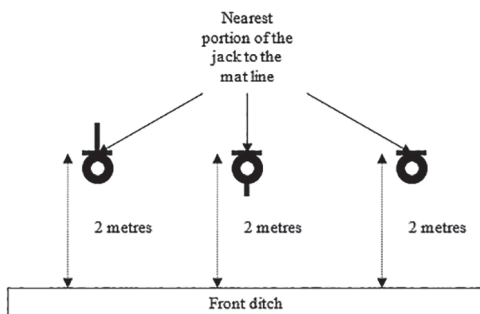
It all seems to be happening on Ann's rink!

There are a couple of things to consider here. Firstly, the bowl delivered on the wrong bias. This bowl is dead and must not be replayed as stated in Law 17.1.5: "A bowl is a dead bowl if in its original course, it passes outside a side boundary of the rink on a bias which would prevent it from re-entering the rink of play."

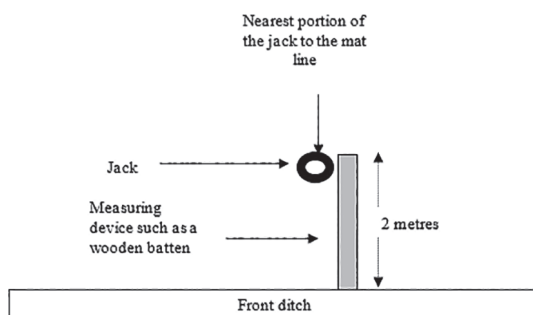
Now we move to Ann's rink where the jack was displaced by the wrong bias bowl. This bowl, by this point, had become a neutral object as defined by

B.3 Centring the jack

B.3.1 Position of the jack in relation to the marks that are 2 metres from each front ditch on the centre line of the rink (see diagram B.2.2 in appendix B.2)



B.3.2 Position of the jack alongside a 2-metre measuring device



Definition C.24.2.1: "Neutral Object: a jack, bowl or other object not belonging to any player on the rink of play."

As a neutral object displacing the delivered jack, we turn to Law 38.3.1: "If a jack in its original course is displaced by a neutral person or neutral object, it must be re-delivered by the same player."

I hope this helps Ann. Thank you for submitting those questions and if anyone else would like answers to some tricky situations you have found yourselves in then please do drop us a line at *Bowls International*.

May I take this opportunity to wish all readers of *Bowls International* a very Happy Christmas and prosperous 2024. Good bowling!

Left: Appendix B3 of the Laws of the Sport illustrates the current placement of the jack at the two-metre position

Bottom left: The correct and incorrect placement of the jack on a two-metre 'T' position or using a two-metre stick on outdoor rinks

Bottom right: Re-spotting a jack on a spot results in the front of the jack being more than two metres from the front ditch. Would it not be better to use a 'T' as a re-spot position?

