



# Your questions answered

**Above:**  
Allan Thornhill  
(right) with ITO  
colleagues at  
Bristol Huw Jones,  
Angie Thompson,  
and John Phillips

**A**s I write this month's article, I have just returned, and recovering, from the inaugural World Bowls Indoor Championships held in the superb Bristol Indoor Bowls Club.

I say recovering as they were long days for all concerned. With coaches leaving the hotels at 7.30 am and not returning until 9 pm and in one case 10.30 pm, there was not much time to get out in the fresh air.

I feel for the players, especially those reaching the knockout stages with the mixed pairs and singles intermingled in the schedule. We calculated that a few of those brave souls played around ten hours of continuous bowls.

Along with my ITO colleagues, Angie Thompson, John Phillips and Huw Jones, we made the decision to rotate our officiating shifts every 90 minutes regardless of scheduled session times and this seemed to work well for us.

A huge thank you to all the markers and volunteers from the Bristol club for working so hard to make the event the success it was. For many, this was the first time they had worked with international players and the markers certainly did themselves proud. A fantastic event and superb bowls being played throughout in a friendly atmosphere.

Thank you for submitting your questions on the *Bowls International* social media channels.

A very interesting question from Rich Coulter: *"Do you find people get confused between laws and conventions/etiquette? A recent debate was about leads and seconds basically saying nothing during games in matters of tactics etc. Some people essentially said: 'It's the rules, while others said they would welcome whole team input.'"*

I think you have hit the nail on the head Rich. All too often we hear players quote the law book when actually good etiquette is just common courtesy and evolves from a good understanding of the rules and laws of any sport.

In the example of the front end of a fours not being involved in the game, while there is nothing specific in the laws about what a lead and second can or cannot say as part of the team, it is clear that their involvement is crucial to a good team.

I hope the days of hearing 'leads should bowl up and shut up' are long gone, I suspect maybe not. I would hope that all four players would have equal say in the progress of the game and the shot selection.

In some cases, there is a clear link between a law and good etiquette and I would suggest the most common example of that being the position of players which ultimately can lead to a breach in rink possession.

Good etiquette would be to avoid blocking your opponent's view of their bowl if walking up the rink. Is this a breach of rink possession? Well, if it annoys the opponent who is in possession of the rink then yes. Apart from that, it is poor manners in my opinion.

It would seem the other common question on Facebook was where my tie was from! Well, that was the Commonwealth Games Glasgow 2014 formal uniform. At each Games, the technical officials are issued a formal and informal uniform. For the past five games, we have worked in the informal, more comfortable attire, with the formal wear being used only for attending the opening ceremony and for the inevitable group photos.

## INTERNATIONAL SERIES

I have read with interest the debacle over the British Isles International Series and while I never had the ability to represent my country playing in the series, I have officiated at several of the events over the years. The atmosphere experienced at such events cannot be beaten in my opinion especially where large crowds were attracted.

The International Series, from an umpire's point of view, were generally considered to be the pinnacle of events and those fortunate enough to be selected were, like the players, proud to represent their country.

Speaking from my own personal development, it was the Junior International Series back in 1999 that was my first international turnout. I have enjoyed each International Series I have been fortunate enough to attend since. To me it is a great loss.

I leave you this month with a little question about the terminology used in the sport. It came from a Facebook post from Ray Henning. 'Why is a game of two teams of four players called rinks, yet a game with teams of three is called triples? Very confusing when we play on rinks on the green.'

An excellent question. From a laws point of view, a team of four players is defined as 'fours', so where did the term 'rinks' come from for this format. What are your thoughts? I would love to hear from you.

As always, please submit your questions either online on the *Bowls International* social media pages or by email to the editor at large ([ceris.hewlings@keypublishing.com](mailto:ceris.hewlings@keypublishing.com)) and I will be happy to answer them in future issues.