



Don't touch that bowl!

I guess one positive that has come from discussions over the past 12 months is that players and officials are now more aware of the existence of laws that deal with displacement. Having said that, the awareness has really only extended to the two new laws introduced last year and recently rescinded by World Bowls. During the heat of the debate, it seemed that every possible scenario of bowls being displaced or stopped was met with calls for disqualification

So this month, I thought I would provide a guide to the various laws relating to displacement. The possible scenarios are endless and some of the emails and social media posts on the subject are sometimes hard to visualise. I'm sure there are many made up just to test us. Let's not beat about the bush here – the laws relating to displacement of bowls and jacks are difficult to learn. They must cover a whole range of possible things that can go wrong on the rink.

I defy anyone without detailed familiarity of the Laws of the Sport to be able to remember the various combinations in Laws 37 and 38. It is for this reason that various methods have been devised for assisting with the instant decision making required with some of these situations.

It is very commendable if you are able to learn the laws of displacement parrot fashion. But this is unlikely to help you in the heat of the moment when faced with a catastrophic destruction of a game lying head by a clumsy lead. Nine times out of 10

when a bowl is moved accidentally by a player the consequences are sorted out amicably and with agreement with all concerned. Often, not in accordance with the laws – does it really matter?

“Getting it right the first time and walking off the rink with complete confidence is what the players like to see”

Consider the most common bowl displacement situation. Mavis has played her bowls and is standing at the head admiring her skips ability to draw the shot – she steps back and kicks a bowl that she forgot was behind her. What does she do? She reaches back precariously so as not to move her offending foot and simply puts the bowl back from where she kicked it. Go on admit it, we have all done it. Is it the correct action? Well no it's not, but do we need to get the grumpy old umpire involved just to be told that it should have been Mavis's

opponent that puts the bowl back. As I said, nine times out of 10, it will all be resolved amicably and the umpire probably wouldn't even notice.

It will be the more complicated situations where tensions are high and a displacement of a jack or some bowls turns into the end of the world for those concerned. This is where the umpire is called and uses all their charm and calm authority to impart the right information and come up with the correct solution in line with the laws. Fumbling their way through pages of the law book to find the right clauses to deal with the situation probably won't instil a huge amount of confidence. Getting it right the first time and walking off the rink with complete confidence is what the players like to see.

Before we even begin to consider the various options to deal with displacement, it is worth going right back to basic definitions.

Many wrong decisions being made is due to the lack of understanding of the following:

Jack or bowl in its original course – a jack or bowl from the time it leaves the hand to the time it comes to rest.

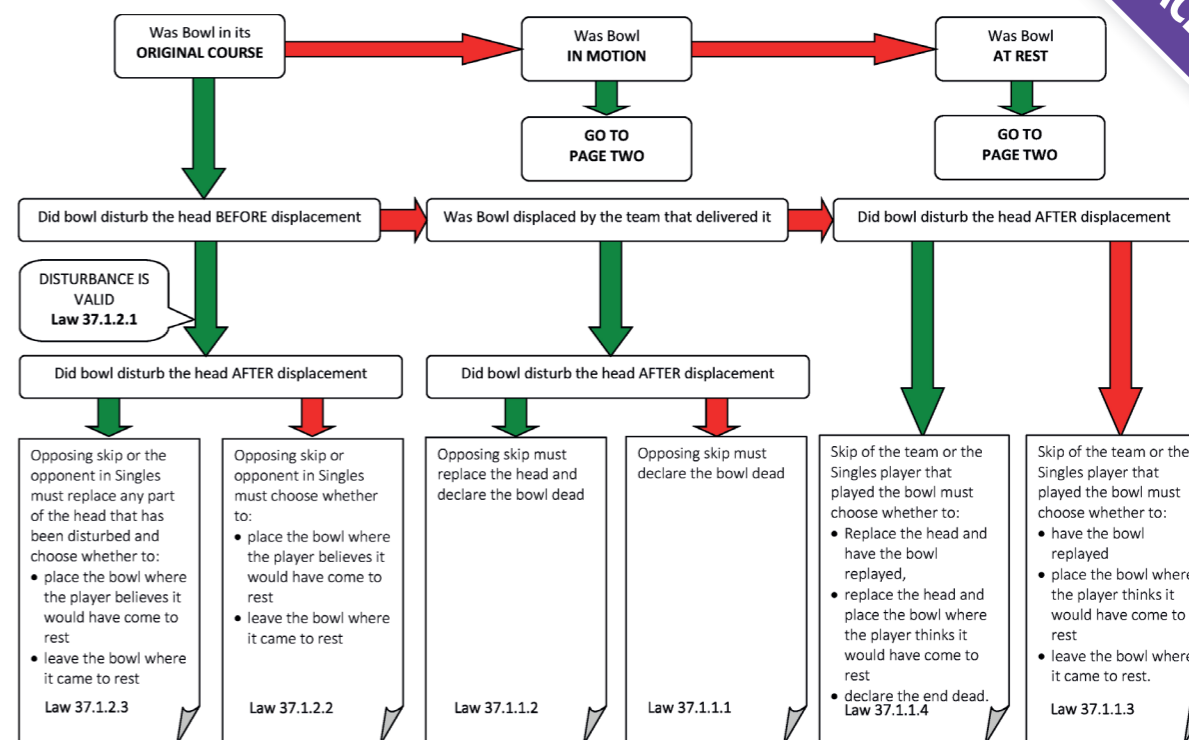
Jack or bowl at rest – a jack or bowl that is quite simply in the head not moving

Below: Nine times out of 10 when a bowl is moved accidentally by a player the consequences are sorted out amicably and with agreement with all concerned
Credit: Allen Simms

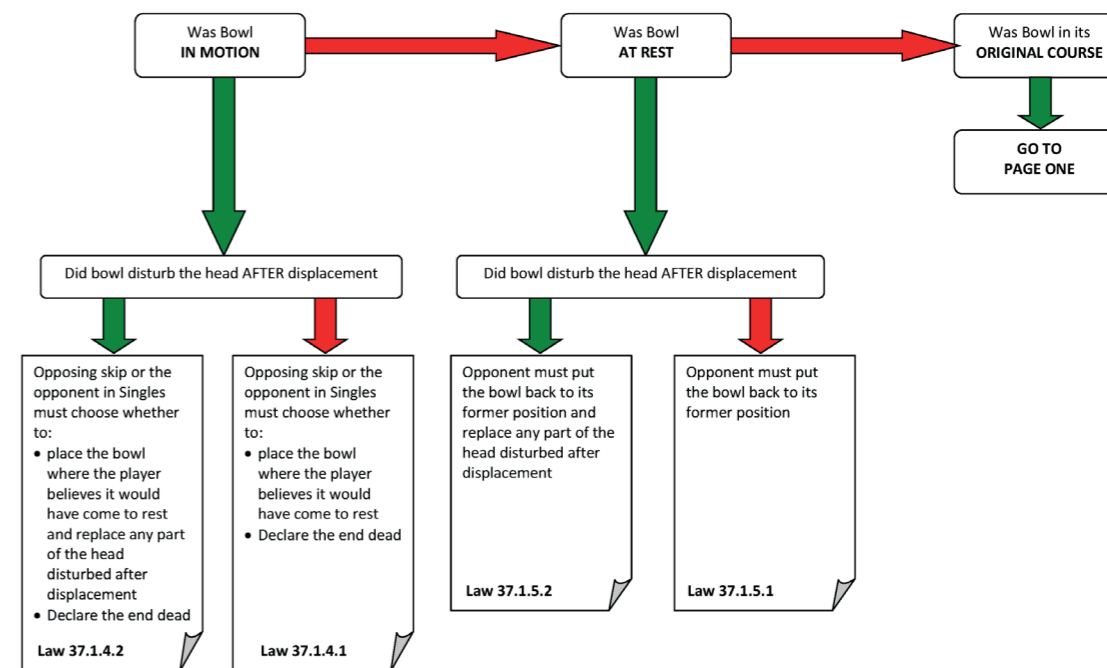


YOUR FOUR PAGE GUIDE TO DISPLACEMENT LAWS

BOWL DISPLACEMENT BY A PLAYER - PAGE 1



BOWL DISPLACEMENT BY A PLAYER - PAGE 2



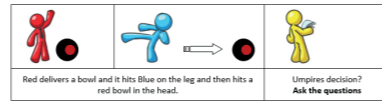
Jack or bowl in motion – a bowl that has been at rest in the head but is now moving as a result of play, so being hit by bowl for example.

Quite often in questions posed to us, we hear bowl in motion being used instead of original course and it makes a huge difference to the advice that we give.

There are a few basic principles that are applied to all displacement situations and if these can be remembered then you will go a long way to making the right decisions:

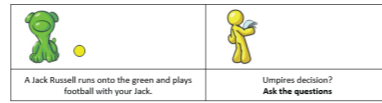
- If anything at rest in the head is displaced by a player on the rink, ONLY the opposing player (skip) has the option to replace it.

- If a bowl or jack was in motion and is displaced by a player, then only the opposing player (skip) has the option to put it where they think it would have stopped or declare the end dead.
- If a delivered bowl is displaced the only the opposing player (skip) has the option to put it where their



a player. Ask the questions and follow the correct arrows.
 “Was the bowl on its original course?”
 Yes – follow the green arrow.
 “Did the bowl displace anything before it hit your foot?”
 No – follow the red arrow.
 “Was the bowl displaced by the team that delivered it i.e. Red?”
 No – follow the red arrow.
 “Did the bowl disturb anything after it hit your foot?”
 Yes – follow the green arrow.
 You should now have arrived at the options available in Law 37.1.1.4
 Red skip must choose to:

- replace the head and have the bowl replayed
 - replace the head and place the bowl where he thinks it would have come to rest; or
 - declare the end dead
- Let’s look at another.



This time the jack is moved by a Jack Russell (sorry I couldn’t resist it). The dog is neutral according to the definitions and so we need to use the chart that says displacement of the jack by a neutral object or person. Answer the questions and follow the arrows, did you arrive at Law 38.3.3?

There are of course many other scenarios that can occur during a game so why not think of a few situations you have found yourself in and then use the charts to find the decision that may or may not have been made at the time.

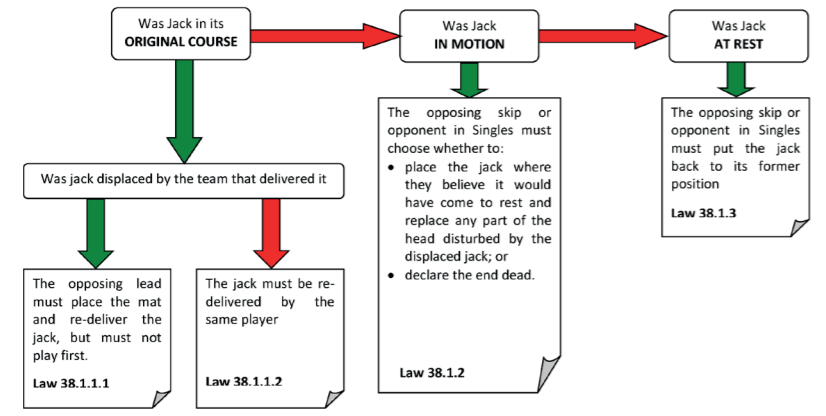
If you would like to download a copy of these charts to keep in your bowls bag, then please feel free to download a copy from the English Bowls Umpires Association website www.ebua.co.uk.

There is one simple message that I can pass on to you – there should be no reason or scenario where players have to touch, lift, stop or otherwise interfere with bowls from their own team or their opponents during the game.

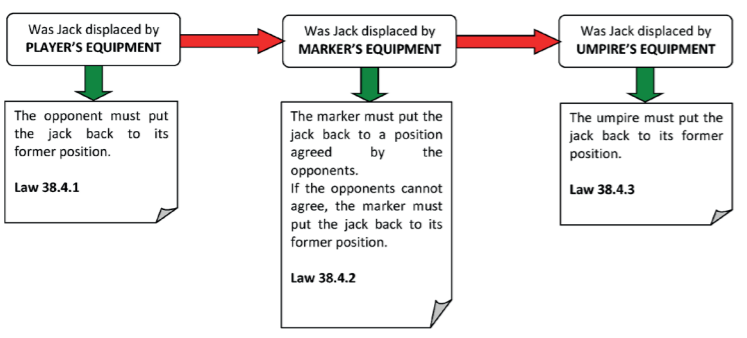
If you avoid this, then you avoid any displacement penalty in the laws that may ultimately affect the final positioning of your valuable shots.

JACK DISPLACEMENT BY A PLAYER

Including displacement by a disabled player’s equipment or assistant



JACK DISPLACEMENT DURING MEASURING OR BY NON-TOUCHER



think it would have stopped or leave it where it came to rest.
 • If anything, or anybody, is neutral to the rink of play and displaces a bowl or a jack then the opponents need to come to an agreement on their replacement and if they cannot agree then the end is declared dead.

Earlier I mentioned various methods that have been devised to aid with learning and decision making. An example of one of these is a simple flowchart method as shown. Another is available in the back of the law book as a summary table. These are designed for quick reference to help make the correct decision. The flowchart is designed to ask several

questions of the players at the time of the displacement, each of which will generate a yes /no answer leading to the law decision which can be explained to the players.

Let me introduce my little helpers and with the help of the charts we can explain some common scenarios

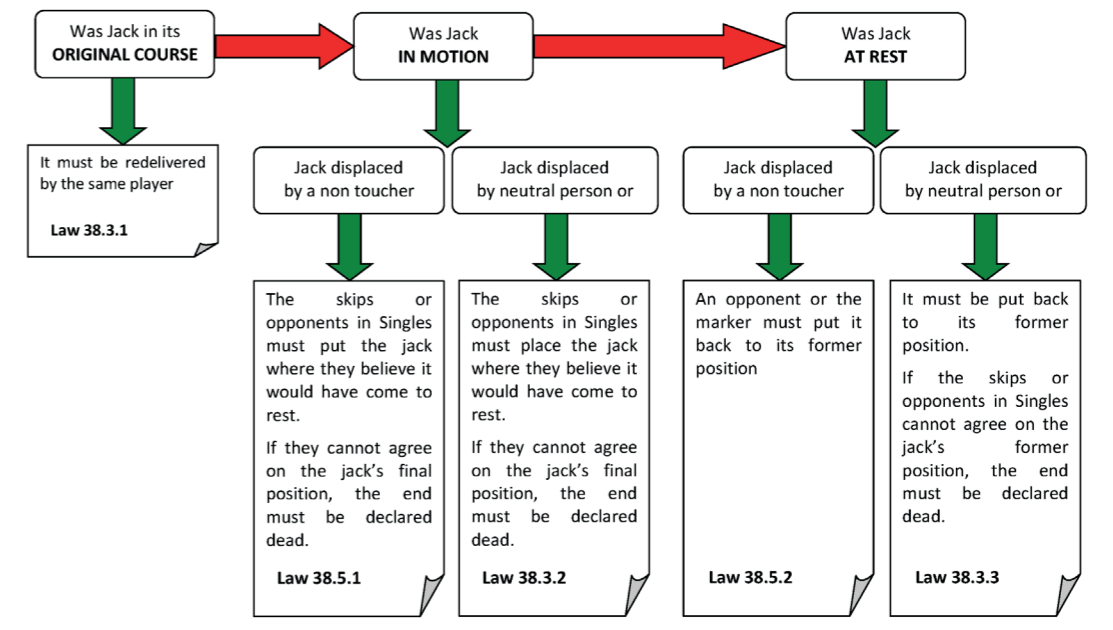


You are called on to the rink as the umpire to advise the players on the following occurrence:

This scenario involves a player displacing a bowl so we need to use the chart titled Bowl displacement by

“There should be no reason or scenario where players have to touch, lift, stop or otherwise interfere with bowls from their own team or their opponents during the game”

JACK DISPLACEMENT BY A NEUTRAL PERSON OR NEUTRAL OBJECT OR A REBOUNTING NON TOUCHER



BOWL DISPLACEMENT BY A NEUTRAL PERSON OR NEUTRAL OBJECT

