



Your questions answered

In my February article, I discussed the importance of skilled markers and their vital role in singles matches. Not long after that article was published, a discussion appeared on social media which, for me, highlighted how important good marker training is

Above: I want to see markers being involved in the game, being trusted by the players and helping the game run smoothly.

Credit all pictures: My Sports Photography/Bowls England

The question was as follows: During training, a marker has been told not to be afraid to call a measure if it is one and stop there. However, some say that after calling a measure, the marker can follow up by telling the shot they favour. Which is more appropriate?

My simple answer to this is, absolutely give an opinion. That's what you are there for. "It's a measure but I favour red" is a perfectly acceptable response. If you are correct in that judgement after the measure, then you feel good, and the players will trust you further. If you lose it, get over it and move on, it was just an opinion.

Many agreed with this approach, but some didn't, which is absolutely fine.

One reply simply said: "The marker should not favour anything." I guess it depends if, as a marker you want to stand at the back of the rink, mark touchers, do the scorecard and centre the jack. Personally, I want to see markers being involved in the game, being trusted by the players and helping the game run smoothly. Responses to players questions are important, just as I discussed in my February article.

Another response offered a situation they had encountered:

"Was witness to a knockout type tournament. Player A was one shot up in a tight final end and had the last bowl. He asked the marker: "Who is holding?" The answer was: "I fancy your bowl." Player A declares his last bowl as disturbing the head could be a disaster. They walk down to the

head and player B asks for a measure. Result? Player B ends up holding two shots measured by the umpire. No, a marker should never give an opinion."

The thing that shouts at me on this one is the marker gave an opinion at a crucial stage of the game, they favoured a particular shot. The marker could have simply said: "It's a measure." Shouldn't the player have gone to have a look? If it was the last bowl of the end, how come the player had not studied the head previously. The question should not have been asked of the marker really. Not the marker's fault.

Sometimes in games, all sorts of things can go wrong, and you end up with a perfect storm of displacement and disagreement. In 99% of cases where displacement occurs, things get dealt with quickly and amicably. Whilst the resolution may not be in line with the Laws of the Sport, it's dealt with, and everyone is happy.

One of the most common occurrences of a bowl being displaced is when a player at the head accidentally steps back and without noticing the bowl behind them, catches it with their heel. What happens? Well, they simply put it back, being careful not to fall over whilst reaching for the rogue bowl and not moving their wayward foot. Is that in line with the laws? No, but we just get on with it.

READER QUESTION

A question was received by Bowls International HQ which, on the face it, sounded like a perfect storm of everything going wrong. Sometimes with such questions it is hard to see



Right: Markers are there to give an opinion

the wood for the trees but the way to resolve it is to slowly unpick each fact.

Thank you to Jeanette Brown for this gem:

“I have a question for you regarding measuring. Two teams. Two players. Lead and skip. End of game and the score is red 10 points yellow 6 points.

Yellow declare five, but red take out three. Yellow ask for a measure. The red skip says no, you've only got three and do not allow yellow team a measure. Red skip kicks out one of the yellow team's bowls that could have been a point and said no, that's not in.

But the leads had not agreed this, and they were the scoring pair not the skip.

Can the Yellow team win by default as the skip?

1. Failed to allow a measure.
2. Kicked out one of the shot woods.
3. Shouldn't have been at the head.”

This is actually not an uncommon scenario, and we often receive questions similar to this.

So, let's break this down. It is a pairs competition one pair playing in red the other in yellow. We have a lead and a skip in each team. In relation to resolving the dispute, the score is irrelevant.

Yellow asks for five shots, red removes three and so we have a measure to decide the other shots. Presumably, the leads had made these decisions up until now. Then the red skip gets involved, not only by incorrectly saying that yellow cannot have a measure but then proceeding to displace a bowl.

The question from Jeanette is, can the yellow team claim the five shots and the win by default because of the actions of the red skip. The straight answer is no – that is not an option.

Here are some laws that will help resolve this.

Let's firstly look at the roles of the two players, skip and lead.

Law 40.1 and 40.2 are relevant here. In the absence of a second and third the lead assumes the duties of the third in pairs.

40.2.1 The third can measure any and all disputed shots.

40.2.2 The third can tell the skip the number of shots scored for or against their team as each end is completed.

40.1.2 The skip must decide all disputed points with the opposing skip, making sure that any decision is in line with the Laws of the Sport.

40.1.5 If the skips cannot reach agreement on any disputed point, they must as the umpire to make a decision. The umpire's decision is final.



So, the role of the players is clear. Leads in pairs would be agreeing the shots scored.

Now we move to deciding the number of shots scored in Law 22.

22.2 No bowl must be moved until the opponents have agreed whether it is shot or not.

22.3 As the shots are agreed, each shot bowl can be removed from the head.

22.4 Shot bowls can be placed in a group where they will not interfere with measuring.

22.5 If shot bowls have been placed in a group, the number of bowls in the group must be agreed by the opponents.

22.6 The skips or the marker where appropriate must be told (or have signalled to them) the number of shots scored in each end.

Pretty clear so far. Now we come to the actions of the red skip. The leads were quite rightly making the decisions on shots and were most likely about to have a measure. The skips cannot deny their opponent the right to measure, the number of shots scored is still being determined in accordance with Law 23. Indeed, the end does not finish until the number of shots scored has been decided as defined by Definition C.7 – end. Should the red skip have been at the head? Well, there is nothing to stop them being there, but they certainly should not interfere with the decision making process that the leads are ably conducting unless there is a dispute.

The skip proceeds to displace a yellow bowl. Law 37.1.5 will deal with that.

37.1.5 Displacement of a bowl at rest by another player.

37.1.5.1 If a bowl at rest or a toucher in the ditch is displaced by a player and it has not disturbed the head after it is displaced, the opponent must put the bowl back to its former position.

37.1.5.2 If a bowl at rest or a toucher in the ditch is displaced by a player and it has disturbed the head after it is displaced, the opponent must put the bowl back to its former position and replace any part of the head disturbed after the displacement.

So, the lead or the skip of the yellow team replace their bowl that was kicked out. They then proceed with the measure for the fourth and fifth shot. I will leave you to decide if they replaced that bowl in its former position and won the fifth shot on the measure!

I hope that helps answer the question Jeanette.



Above:
Responses to
players questions
are important

This month, I will be officiating at the World Bowls Indoor Championships. This World Bowls and IIBC co-badged event is being hosted by president of the IIBC, Alison Merrien MBE, at the fabulous Guernsey Indoor Bowls Centre. There are 30 men and 29 ladies competing in singles and mixed pairs in sectional rounds followed by knockout. I will be joined by fellow ITOs Huw Jones from Wales and Martyn Jenkins and Jacqueline Neill from Scotland. A talented team of Guernsey markers will be doing all the hard work marking the singles matches. Live streaming will be provided by the Guernsey club so look out for the official links and results service and detailed reports from our very own editor, Ceris Hewlings.