

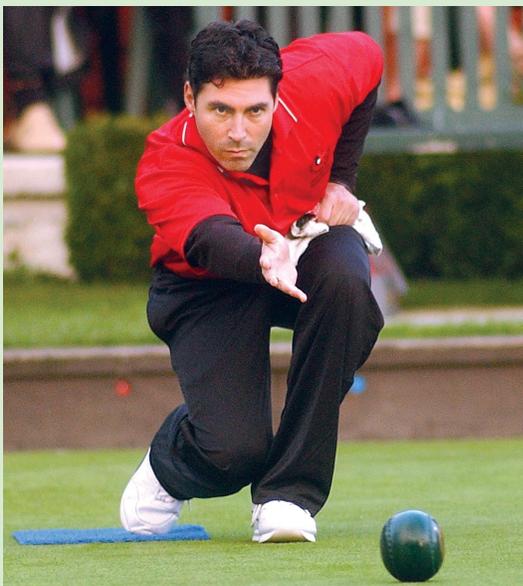
An Introduction to the Game of Bowls (or lawn bowls or lawn bowling)



The object of the game is to get your BOWLS as close as possible to the JACK (the little white ball). Simple! A basic introduction is provided below.

Bowls can be played indoors or outdoors on grass or a synthetic surface that is called a green. In Asheville we play on a synthetic surface. You can play a singles match, one-on-one, or in teams of doubles, triples, and even four on a team. Men and women, young and old, can bowl together on equal footing in a friendly and competitive fashion.

The GREEN is flat and usually square-shaped. The length of the green in the direction of play is standardized between 110' and 120'. The green is divided into sections called RINKS (think 'lanes'). See diagram.



A DITCH surrounds the green and is usually filled with sand. The ditch has a BANK against its outer edge. Banks are constructed to prevent the jack and bowls from leaving the area of play. Vertical MARKS along the bank identify the center and boundary lines of each rink.

A player stands on a MAT to deliver the jack or bowl. While the mat must be placed lengthwise along the center line of the rink, it can be placed at varying distances from the rear and front ditches.



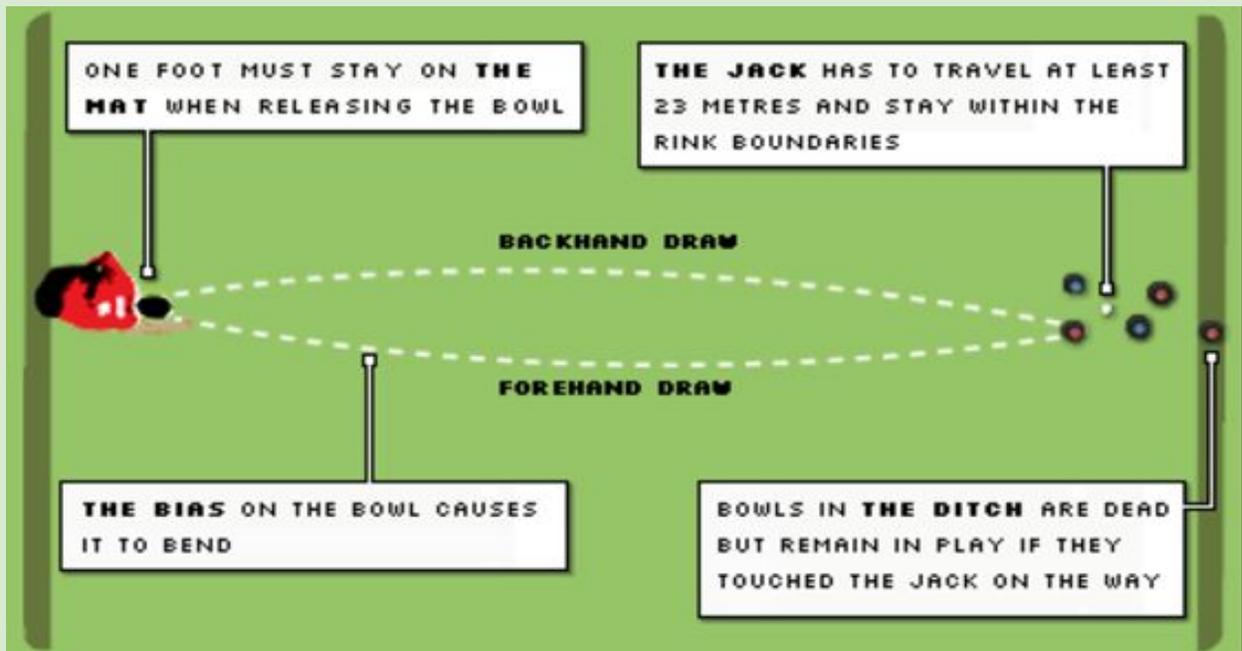
The JACK is a solid sphere and is white or yellow in color. It is delivered by rolling it to a minimum distance from the mat and then centering it. The jack becomes the target of the bowls. The jack can be moved by bowls during play and is ALIVE as long as it remains on the green or in the ditch within the rink boundaries.

BOWLS are solid and round, but not spheres. They have a circular running surface, but if you look closely at the sides, you'll see that one side is rounded (big circle) and one side is more tapered (small circle). This results in a "bias" and causes the bowl to curve towards the tapered side while it rolls. (See diagram of curvature below.) Bowls are delivered by rolling them along their running surface towards the jack, delivering the bowl 4' to 8' to one side and allowing the natural bias of the bowl to curl it towards the jack. This may sound a bit odd, but "drawing the jack" is super fun and rewarding. It's sort of like putting on a slope, needing to factor in a curve, but then getting the exhilarating feeling from seeing the ball drop in the cup. Awesome. A player keeps the small circle (tapered side) to the inside and can change between forehand or backhand simply by flipping the bowl over.



Bowls come in sets of four and each bowl of a set is identical to the others. Sets also come in different sizes, weights, colors and degree of bias. Years and years ago, bowls were made of lignum vitae, a dense wood, but today bowls are made of a solid plastic resin. A set of bowls will last for decades.

In Asheville spare sets of bowls are available for use, so no need for purchase until you're hooked! As for footwear, bowlers wear a shoe without a heel.



Once play begins, bowlers alternate turns delivering their bowls. The object is to have your bowls, or your team's bowls, closer to the jack after all bowls have been delivered. This constitutes an "end". (In baseball a side out is called an inning, but in bowls it's called an end.) During the course of an end, both the jack and bowls can be moved around by knocking them with other bowls. If a bowl gets knocked out of play or into the ditch, rules apply to whether a bowl remains in play or not, but that's more information than you need at this point. Play continues for a designated number of ends or points.



When all the players have delivered their bowls, they count the SHOTS (points) in the HEAD (arrangement of bowls around the jack). Only one player/team scores, and the winner of the end gets one point for each bowl that is closer to the jack than the opponent's closest bowl. If there is a question of whose bowl is closer to the jack, the players use a MEASURE. Now we're getting serious! Once the shots are

awarded, the END is considered complete. The next end is played in the opposite direction that was just played.

A SINGLES game is played between two opposing players. Players usually use four bowls each.

A PAIRS game is played between two opposing teams, each with two players. Each player on the team plays a certain position, LEAD or SKIP. The opposing lead players take turns delivering their bowls towards the jack. When the leads are finished, the opposing skips take turns delivering their bowls towards the jack. Player usually use four bowls each.

A TRIPLES game is played between two opposing teams, each with three players. Each player on the team plays a certain position, LEAD, VICE SKIP or SKIP. The leads play first, followed by vice skips, and then the skips. Three bowlers per player is usually the norm, so there are a total of 18 bowls on the green at the conclusion of an end.

A FOURS or RINKS game is played between two opposing teams, each with four players. Each player on the team plays a certain position, LEAD, SECOND, VICE SKIP or SKIP. The leads play first, followed by seconds, then the vice skips, and finally the skips. Each player may use two of a set of bowls.

Bowls is a dynamic game requiring a minimum level of physical fitness but keen mental toughness. Think zen. The sport is easily learned but can take years to master. Are you ready for the challenge? Come give it a try.



(adapted from information on the Milwaukee Lake Park Lawn Bowling Association website)