LAWS OF THE GAME OF CROWN GREEN BOWLS

(as adopted on March 5th 2022)

DEFINITIONS

D1a The LEADER Is the player who has the first attempt to set a mark and shall deliver

the first bowl after any attempt to set a mark.

D1b In pairs there shall be no changing in the order of play until the end is complete.

D2 A PRECEDING BOWL or JACK is a bowl or jack delivered immediately before the bowl

in question.

D3 A FORFEITED BOWL is a bowl taken off the green as a penalty for an offence under

the Laws.

D4 A DEAD BOWL is a bowl that cannot be counted and if on the green shall be taken off

the green so as not to interfere with play.

D5 An END:

 commences when the leader delivers the jack,

 is concluded when the last bowl finishes running and

 is completed when the score is agreed.

D6 A VOID END is an end to be replayed with the footer remaining or placed as near as

possible to where it originally lay during the void end.

D7 A DEAD END is an end which is deemed to have been completed with no score. The

new end should be started from where the jack lay.

D8 LAND: is the term used for the route taken by a jack and is then extended to cover

the route that may be taken by any of the bowls at that end. It is also the expression used to

indicate to any other player that they are causing a physical or visual blockage.

D9 JACK-UP: is called by either player when a jack other than their own ceases running

on, or adjacent to, the land which they will, or may, use to send their bowl/s.

D10 MEASUREMENTS: are taken between the nearest points of the jack and a bowl with

nothing to lie between. The adjustable end of an approved measure must be taken to the

jack. In the case of the footer the adjustable end of the certified tape is taken to the centre

of the footer.

D11 A STRIKE is a bowl delivered at such a speed as to attempt to negate the bias.

D12 A MARK is set by the leader sending the jack, to rest on the green, a distance of at

least 19 metres.

D13 A MEDICAL DISPENSATION can only be provided by the referee’s society on the

evidence of a medical practitioner. The Dispensation letter should be available for the

Referee if requested prior to the commencement of a game.

D14 (a) A GAME is a single contest between two/four players.

D14 (b) A MATCH is an amalgamation of individual games.

01 EQUIPMENT

1.1 The GREEN shall be a playing area of grass, or an artificial surface as approved by the

BCGBA

1.2 The ENTRANCE, which must be near the centre of any one side of the playing area,

shall be plainly marked.

1.3 The FOOTER, which shall be round, shall have a diameter of not less than 125mm

and not more than 155mm.

1.4 STANDARD JACKS as defined in Appendix A shall be used in all competitions. A jack

must only be used for the purpose of setting a mark.

1.5 A BOWL shall weigh not less than 907gms. (2lb), except that a player with medical

evidence of a wasting disease of bone or muscle may be allowed a dispensation. Where age

is a consideration, a player may use a bowl under the 907gms limit if the bowl has a

minimum profile of 100 mm. A bowl must not have any device for altering or adjusting the

bias.

1.6 BCGBA approved measuring devices, mechanical devices and artificial surfaces are

listed in the Appendices.

02 THE GAME

2.1 The game shall be played on a green by two players each having two bowls, normally

playing alternately until each shall have delivered both bowls, the object being to play the

bowls as near as possible to the jack.

2.2 Where more than two players take part in a game, these Laws shall operate when

applicable.

2.3 Before commencing play the number of points to be scored to win the game shall be

fixed.

2.4 The leader at the first end shall be as determined by the organising body of the

match.

2.5 At the commencement of a game the footer must be placed by the leader, within

three metres of the entrance to the green, on either the left or right side and one metre

from the edge but no more than two metres from the edge.

2.6 If during the course of play any player is found to have substituted a non-standard

jack for a standard jack, or has altered the bias of the jack or bowl(s) by any means, or is

playing with a bowl having a device for adjusting the bias, that player shall forfeit the game.

The offender(s) to receive the minimum score and the opponent(s) to receive the maximum

score.

2.7 If during the course of a match, any jacks are found to be not in accordance with

Appendix A, the affected games shall be declared void and restarted with standard jacks.

2.8 No player shall be allowed to change the jack or bowls during the progress of a game

except with the consent of the Referee and then only if, in the Referee’s opinion, the jack or

bowls are so damaged as to be unplayable.

03 SCORING

3.1 A bowl must be played at least three metres from the footer and rest on the green to

count, except when all the bowls of the opponent(s) are out of play.

3.2 The winner of an end is the player whose bowl is nearest the jack or, if all the bowls

of the opponent(s) are out of play, still has at least one bowl in play. The winner shall be the

leader and have the first attempt to set a mark at the succeeding end. In pairs either of the

winning pair may be the leader at the next end.

3.3 The winner of each end will count one point for each bowl nearer to the jack than the

nearest bowl of the opponent(s) or, if all the bowls of the opponent(s) are out of play, one

point for each bowl still in play.

3.4 The result of the end shall be clearly indicated, by the winner, to the two markers,

except at competitions at which an official marker for each game has been appointed, and

official scoreboards are in use. Where there are two markers they must sit together and

agree each other’s score cards every third end and at the end of the game. Where the score

cannot be agreed, by the markers or players, it shall revert to the end where both score

cards show the score to be in agreement.

04 SETTING A MARK

4.1 In an attempt to set a mark, a player bowling the jack must allow the opponent(s) the

opportunity of seeing with what bias it is delivered, and of watching its course from a point

near the footer.

4.2 A mark is set when the jack having been bowled, does not go off the green, is not

prevented from going off by resting against anything at the edge or in the channel or, after

lawful objection, is proved by measurement, with a certified measure, to be at least 19

metres from the footer, with the footer at least 1 metre from the edge.

4.3 If the jack in its course is impeded in any way, or stops on the land of other players, it

must under all circumstances be returned. If two jacks are bowled near the same place, the

one that is last stationary must be returned. The same player to have another attempt at

setting a mark.

4.4a Objection to a mark set by the leader can only be made by the leader’s opponent

after the first bowl has come to rest. If the opponent objects before the leader’s first bowl

has come to rest, the leader may have the jack, and bowl if played, returned to have another

attempt at setting a mark. Only the opponent can object to the mark. An opponent objecting

to a mark must make a clear indication that an objection has been made.

4.4b If, after an objection to a mark has been made, it is proved by measurement to be a

mark, the jack and bowl shall remain.

4.5 If the leader fails to set a mark, the leader’s opponent is then entitled to an attempt

at setting a mark. In pairs this will be the player waiting to follow the leader.

4.6 If the leader fails to set a mark, objection to an attempt by the opponent must be

made by the leader before delivering the first bowl.

4.7 If the opponent then fails to set a mark, the leader shall have another attempt and so

on, alternately, until a mark has been set by one of them. The original leader to play the first

bowl.

4.8 When the leader, having had an attempt to set a mark, is prevented from delivering

the first bowl through a tape on the green during the measure of a mark from another end,

or if the first bowl is impeded, the jack may be returned for the leader to have another

attempt at setting a mark.

4.9 The first attempt to set a new mark, after a dead end, shall be made by the same

player who set the mark in the dead end. Any dead bowls are reinstated for the new end.

Any forfeited bowls are not reinstated for the replayed end.

4.10 The first attempt to set a new mark, after a void end, shall be made by the same

player who set the mark in the void end. Any dead bowls are reinstated for the new end.

Any forfeited bowls are not reinstated for the replayed end.

05 METHOD OF PLAY

5.1 At no time may the footer be used with the centre less than one metre from the edge

of the green.

5.2 Objection to the placement of the footer must be made by the leader’s opponent

only after the first bowl has come to rest or, if in the leader’s first attempt at setting a mark,

the jack goes off the green. If the footer is then found, by measurement, to be incorrectly

placed the end shall be re-started, with the footer correctly placed, the opponent attempting

to set the mark, otherwise play shall continue.

5.3 A player’s foot must be placed on the footer when delivering either the jack or a

bowl. A player placing the right foot on the footer must play the jack and bowls with the

right hand, and a player placing the left foot on the footer must play jack and bowls with the

left hand. Nothing in this Law shall apply to any player who suffers a permanent disability of

a limb. The player must have a medical dispensation.

5.4 A player must bowl with the same hand throughout the game. Where disability or

infirmity prevent a player from delivering jacks or bowls directly from hand than a

mechanical aid, of a type approved by the Association, may be used to provide assistance.

5.5 Any bowl not played in accordance with Laws 5.3 and 5.4 may be stopped by the

Referee and returned to be played again. If a player offends again during the course of the

game, the bowl wrongly played shall be forfeited.

5.6 Players are required to give a verbal warning to their opponent and to take every

precaution before striking, to eliminate the possibility of causing injury to other players,

Referee, Measurers or spectators by being struck with a jack or bowls. A player shall receive

a caution for the first transgression of this Law. For a second offence, the game shall be

awarded to the opponent(s). The offender(s) to receive no further score and the opponent(s)

to receive the maximum score.

5.7 A player may retain possession of the footer until that player’s bowl has ceased

running. If a player has taken up the footer after playing a bowl, which for any reason has to

be replayed, or if the footer is accidentally displaced during an end, it shall be replaced as

nearly as possible in its former position.

5.8 If the leader’s first bowl has been forfeited, the leader’s remaining bowl shall be

played, followed by the opponent playing two bowls consecutively.

5.9 If the first bowl of the leader’s opponent has been forfeited, the leader’s remaining

bowl shall be played, followed by the opponent playing the last bowl.

5.10 A player may play a bowl so as to block an opponent’s course, but a bowl must not

be placed, or played a distance less than three metres from the footer, otherwise it shall be

a forfeited bowl.

5.11 If a player has taken up position on the footer and a bowl falls from that player’s

hand, even by accident, and travels more than 3 metres, from the centre of the footer, in a

forward direction, it shall be deemed to have been played.

5.12 If a player delivers any bowl out of turn it must be returned to be played in its proper

turn.

5.13 If a player, in turn, delivers a bowl of another player, it shall be returned to the

proper owner to be played, the offender forfeiting a bowl.

5.14 A player, when at the end where the jack lies, must not stand directly behind the jack

or obstruct the view of an opponent.

5.15 After each end is concluded, the footer shall be placed at the jack by the last

player. The footer may only be repositioned by the leader of the next end and before the

first attempt to set a mark, anywhere within a space of one metre from where the jack lay at

the conclusion of the last end but at least one metre in from the edge of the green. The

footer must not be moved after the first attempt to set a mark by either the leader or the

opponent until the end is concluded.

06 RUNNING JACK OR BOWL

6.1 A bowl played while the jack or preceding bowl is in motion shall be forfeited.

6.2 If a running jack or bowl appears to be in danger of striking a still bowl or jack

belonging to another end, such running jack or bowl should be stopped and returned to be

replayed.

6.3 If a running bowl is impeded in any way, except by either player, it must be played

again. If a running bowl is impeded by either player, all the offender(s) bowls shall be

forfeited at that end.

6.4 A player must not attempt to affect the running of any bowl, nor follow it up in such a

manner as to obstruct the view of the opponent. For a first offence, involving the player’s

own bowl, that bowl shall be forfeited. In the case of a further offence, the game shall be

awarded to the opponent(s). The offender(s) to receive no further score and the

opponent(s) to receive the maximum score.

6.5 Should a player attempt to influence the running of an opponent’s bowl, all the

offender(s) bowls shall be forfeited at that end.

6.6 A bowl played or struck off the green, or prevented from going off by resting against

anything at the edge or in the channel, is a dead bowl.

07 STILL JACK OR BOWL

7.1.a If, as a result of a lawfully played bowl, the jack is disturbed and goes off the green,

or is prevented from going off by resting against anything at the edge or in the channel, that

end shall be dead. If, after a legitimate mark has been set, the jack goes off the green, the

footer should be placed one metre in from the point where the jack left the green, the same

player setting the mark. Any dead bowls are reinstated for the new end. Any forfeited bowls

are not reinstated for the replayed end.

7.1.b If the disturbed jack comes into contact with a bowl or jack not belonging to that end,

or if it comes into contact with any person on the green the end becomes void.

7.2 If, as a result of a lawfully played bowl, the jack or any bowls are disturbed and come

into contact with other bowls belonging to that end, the jack and any bowls so disturbed

must remain where they stop.

7.3 If, as a result of a bowl wrongly played, the jack or any lawful bowl already played is

disturbed, such jack or bowls shall be replaced as near as possible in their original positions.

7.4 If the jack or any bowl is displaced by the jack or a bowl of any other players, or by

any exterior cause, and the players agree as to the spot of replacement, the end must be

continued, otherwise the end is void.

7.5a When an end is concluded neither the jack nor a bowl claimed to count may be

moved without the consent of the opponent until the points are counted and all players are

satisfied, otherwise all bowls of the offender(s) shall be forfeited at the end concerned.

7.5b When an end is concluded i.e., all the bowls have come to rest, a player may remove

their own non-counting bowl without incurring a penalty.

7.6 Should any player of an end touch or displace a still jack or bowl before the end is

complete, all the bowls of the offender(s) shall be forfeited at the end concerned.

08 MEASURING

8.1 No measurement of an end is permitted until the end is concluded.

8.2 When an end is being measured, all players must stand away and not interfere with

the actions of either the Referee or Measurer(s).

8.3 The Referee or Measurers are not permitted to place either their thumb or finger(s)

on either the jack or a bowl when measuring an end.

8.4 In the event of the displacement of the jack or a bowl being measured any points

already given shall stand. If no points have been given when all measurements are finished,

the end is complete. If either the jack or a bowl being measured is displaced by a player,

that player shall lose the point in question.

8.5 When a bowl is touching either the jack or another bowl, and has to be removed so

that nothing lies between the jack and the bowl to be measured, it must be removed by the

Referee and the measurement made after such removal.

09 REFEREE, MEASURERS AND PLAYERS

9.1 Referees are instructed to insist that games are carried out strictly in accordance with

the Laws of the Game.

9.2 No person, other than the players and the Referee, is allowed on the green (except

Measurers when their services are required). Nothing in this Law will apply to a severely

disabled person who needs assistance on the green.

9.3 If, after commencing a game, any player shall refuse or is unable to continue, the

Referee shall decide on the point at issue.

9.4 Should a player further refuse to continue the game, that player shall forfeit the

game. The offender(s) to receive no further score and the opponent(s) to receive the

maximum score.

9.5 Should a player leave sight of the green without informing the opponent and

obtaining the permission of the Referee, that player shall forfeit the game. The offender(s)

to receive no further score and the opponent(s) to receive the maximum score.

9.6 If a player has to stop play or leave the green due to any incident, and is unable to

resume play before the finish of the match, (or that round in a competition), the opponent(s)

shall be awarded the game. The score of the player who left the green to remain as it stood

and the opponent(s) to receive the maximum score.

9.7 In the case of any wilful breach of the Laws of the Game or any unfair play or

unsporting conduct, the Referee may caution the offending player(s) or spectator(s), or

order them to retire from the game or the surrounding area of the green. In the case of

players, no substitutes shall be allowed and the game shall be awarded to the opponent(s).

The offender(s) to receive the minimum score and the opponents to receive the maximum

score.

9.8 A player receiving a second verbal caution shall forfeit the game. The offender(s) to

receive no further score and the opponent(s) to receive the maximum score.

9.9 If, during the course of a game, it becomes so dark that the jack cannot be seen

distinctly from the footer, the player may request to have a light exhibited at the jack, or

may appeal to the Referee, whose decision shall be final, for the game to be suspended.

9.10 In the event of a suspension under Law 9.9 or any other unforeseen circumstances,

the points scored by each player shall stand and the position of the jack shall be

marked. Ends should be completed if possible. Games shall be restarted from an agreed

point as near as possible to where the jack lay at the last end played.

10 ELECTRONIC DEVICES, SMOKING AND FOOTWEAR

10.1 Electronic devices e.g., mobile phones, pagers, smart watches etc, in active mode are

not allowed on the green. Should a player fail to comply, that player shall forfeit the

game. The offender(s) to receive no further score and the opponent(s) to receive the

maximum score.

10.2 Smoking: Smoking, vaping and the use of electronic cigarettes is not allowed whilst

participating in the game of Crown Green Bowls. The offending player(s) shall receive no

further score and the opponent(s) shall receive the maximum score.

10.3 Footwear: Hard block-heeled or open-toed footwear must not be worn on the green

in any game played under the Association’s jurisdiction. The offending player(s) shall receive

no further score and the opponent(s) shall receive the maximum score.

11 DISPUTE NOT PROVIDED FOR IN THE LAWS

11.1 Any dispute arising which is not provided for in the foregoing Laws shall be decided

by the Referee whose decision shall be final.

12 ALTERATION OF LAWS

12.1 The Laws of the Game and interpretation thereof are the copywrite of the British

Crown Green Bowling Association, and from its decisions there shall be no appeal either at

Law or otherwise.

12.2 None of these Laws shall be altered except as provided by the Association’s Bye-Laws

numbered 16 and 17 for the alteration of Rules and Bye-Laws.

12.3 Amendments to the Laws of the Game can only be proposed every third year except

at a Special General Meeting.

APPENDIX A – A STANDARD JACK

1 The game shall be played with standard Jacks of 2 full bias as approved by the British

Crown Green Bowling Association.

Jacks manufactured after 1st March 2004 shall be black or yellow in colour. They shall weigh

666grams plus or minus 10grams. The width shall be 90.5mm plus or minus 0.5mm. The

height shall be 98mm plus or minus 0.5mm.

There shall be on both sides an engraved circle, the outer edge of which shall be 20mm in

diameter plus or minus 1mm. There shall be three solid inserted spots on the non-bias side

which shall be white in black jacks and black in yellow jacks. These spots shall be 6mm in

diameter and shall be spaced equidistant from each other at a radius of 19mm plus or

minus 1mm from the centre of the engraved circle to the centre of the inserted spots. The

engraved circles shall be coloured in unison with the inserted spots.

All new standard jacks shall bear the manufacturer’s name on the bias side. They shall be

branded BCGBA and the code letter of the official tester will be inserted within the

recognised kidney shaped stamp. Standard jacks shall not be numbered or lettered.

Evidence of ownership shall be made on the non-bias side. Manufacturers shall be allowed

to use their own distinctive configuration of grip marks, the pattern of which shall be

registered with the BCGBA.

2 All jacks submitted for testing must conform to the 1st March 2004 requirements. If

black in colour white mounts and spots, if white or Yellow in colour black mounts and spots.

In place of mounts, composition jacks may have engraved circles of approximately the

diameter of the mounts or spots and filled in the appropriate colour.

3 New and renovated jacks shall be stamped consecutively with the year of expiry and

for this purpose the year shall be reckoned from 1st January to 31st December. All jacks

shall be re-tested at not more than seven yearly intervals. Jacks manufactured before 2004

must comply with the 2004 requirements.

4 Jacks are not to be stamped on more than four occasions. The first three, in date

order, to be made on the bias side with the fourth and final one being made on the non-bias

side. The expiry date on that stamp will indicate the year after which the jack is no longer

legal.

ADDENDUM

All jacks submitted for renovation must be re-tested and re-stamped at the completion of

the work.

MANUFACTURERS & TESTERS

The following Companies are the officially appointed and only recognised Standard Jack

Makers and Bias Testers to the British Crown Bowling Association.

Letter A Thomas Taylor (Bowls) Ltd., Glasgow

Letter X E.A.Clare & Son Ltd., Liverpool

Letter F 2 Up Crown Green Bowls

Letter H Metrolux of Warrington (Bowls)

Letter C Premier Bowls, Stockport

TESTERS ONLY

Letter D Pershore Bowls Centre

Letter S Stevens Bowls, Stafford

APPENDIX B – APPROVED MEASURES

The following are approved by the BCGBA as measuring devices to be used in accordance

with the Laws of the Game.

1 A tape or other certified metric measure at least 19 metres long

2 Any Crown Green metal measure

3 Any form of string measure.

4 Any telescopic measure

5 Callipers

6 Feeler gauges

7 BOWLSLINE String Measure

8 BOWLSLINE Laser Measure

APPENDIX C – APPROVED MECHANICAL DEVICES

The following are approved by the BCGBA as mechanical devices to be used in accordance

with the Laws of the Game.

1 696 DHB Hacksaw Bowling Arm

2 The Bowling Arm

3 UBI Bowls Launcher

4 Bradshaw’s Bowls Buggy (With the approval of greenkeeper/home official)

5 Ordinary wheelchair (If used on an artificial surface and with the approval of

greenkeeper/home official)

6 Bowls Royce Bowls Wheelchair (With the approval of greenkeeper/home official)

7 Para Handy Wheelchair (With the approval of greenkeeper/home official)

8 Chariot Bowls Wheelchair (With the approval of greenkeeper/home official)

APPENDIX D – APPROVED ARTIFICIAL SURFACES

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