

**This book has been produced by the
Director of Coaching.
New Zealand Indoor Bowls Inc.**

**It is intended for new players to help
them understand the game of Indoor Bowls'**

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Director of Coaching February 2002.
THE BASICS of INDOOR BOWLS.

Indoor Bowls mat

The mat is made of wool or wool and nylon mix and is approximately 6.7 metres long and 1.8 metres wide. They are predominantly of a green colour. The mat is marked as in figure 1

Not to scale

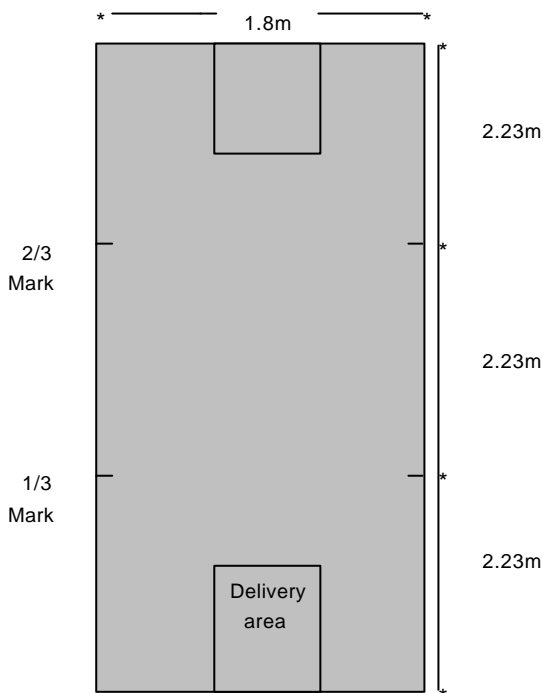


Figure 1: A correctly marked mat.

The mat is marked or divided into 3 equal areas and looking from the bowling end then the first mark up the mat is the 1/3 mark and the

second is the 2/3 mark. At each end is marked a delivery area from where all bowls are delivered .All bowls must be kept behind and clear of the delivery area .Any irregularities in the level of the floor will result in a bowl not following the predetermined course. A skill to be mastered is how to deal with the uneven floors.

The Bowls

When using a standard set of bowls there are eight black and eight brown bowls.

The side that has a small coloured ring is the “ bias “ side and the bowl will turn to that side. (See Fig 2)Bowls travelling along the mat, will travel a curved path. Getting that curve correct is one of the skills to be mastered. The side that does have the small coloured ring, must always face the centre line when the bowl is being delivered.

Not to scale

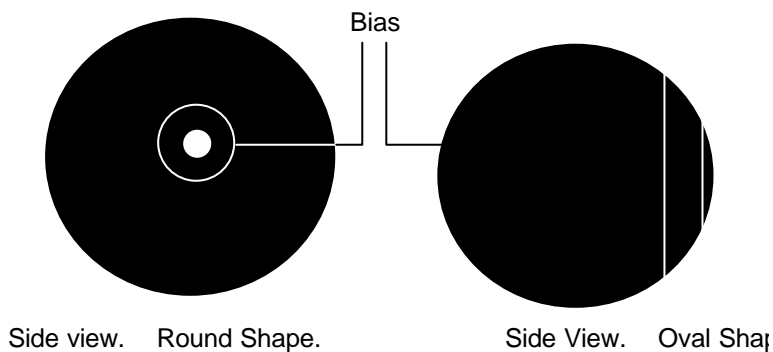


Fig 2

The Jack

In a set of bowls there is a round white ball called “ The jack ”.

The jack has no bias and when delivered , along the mat, will run in a straight line.

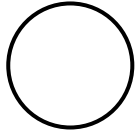


Fig 3

The Jack is Spherical, White and has no bias.

Body Position

To be able to help understand the skill involved, in delivering a bowl, so that it travels on a curved path and stop close to a chosen position then it is important to get your body in the correct position. (Figs 4)

Positioning the body, to deliver the bowl, along the line you have chosen, starts with getting the feet in the right place.

The player should stand to the side of centre, behind and clear of the mat, and turn to far corner of the side you are bowling along.

See (Figs 4a to 4d)

The player then adopts the stance of their choice

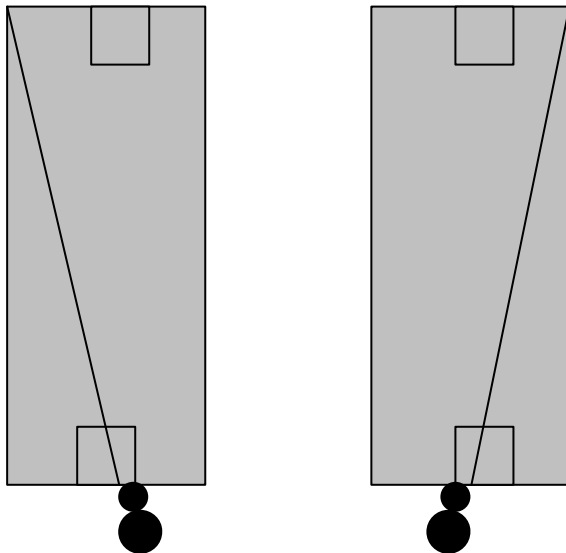


Figure 4:

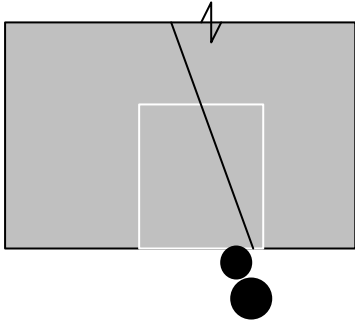


Fig 4a (1) Righthand Backhand

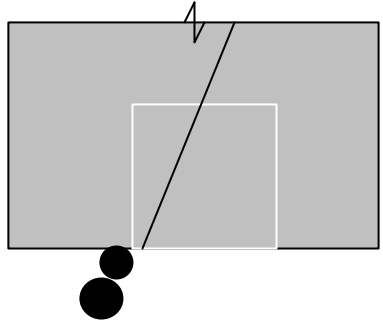


Fig 4b (1) Righthand Forehand

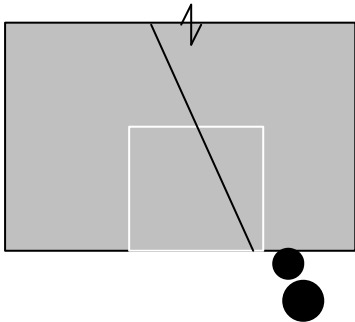


Fig 4c (2) Lefthand Forehand

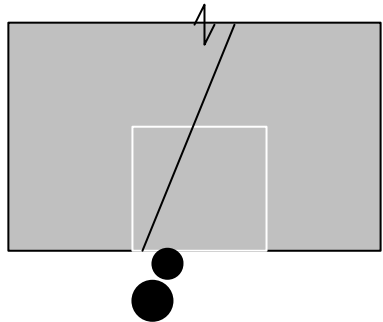


Fig 4d (2) LefthandBackhand

The body positions are the same for all types of stance, ie Kneeling or Standing.

The Stance or Bowling Position

A satisfactory stance is all important. The player who starts with a good style requires only practice to improve his or her performance. There are a number of stances that are equally capable of being used. The one described here is that most commonly used. It provides physical comfort, is natural, and is a very stable position from which to bowl.

The most commonly used stance is to kneel on one knee (Fig 5a), and a commonly used variant, kneeling on two knees (Fig 5b). Standing up is also permitted and used by many players .

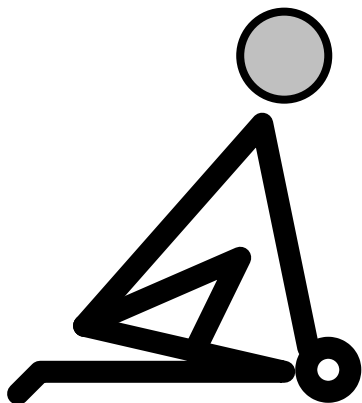


Fig 5a on one knee

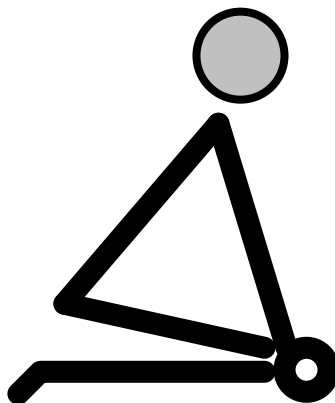


Fig 5b: on two knees:

Note that when kneeling on one knee, it is the right knee for right-handed players and the left knee for left-handed players.

The arm which is not being used for bowling may rest on the knee or the floor.

The bowling hand is extended on a straight arm so that the bowl rests on the mat.

The body should be leaning forward so that the weight rests mainly on the knee, or knees. When kneeling on one knee, the ball of the other foot will be carrying the weight, not the heel.

The body must be faced in the correct direction and the foot and / or knee(s) placed close to the mat without touching it.

While bowling, no part of the body, other than the bowling hand, must be touching the mat unless a dispensation has been given because of disability.

Holding the Bowl

For descriptive purposes, imagine the surface of the bowl marked out with lines of latitude and longitude (Fig 6)

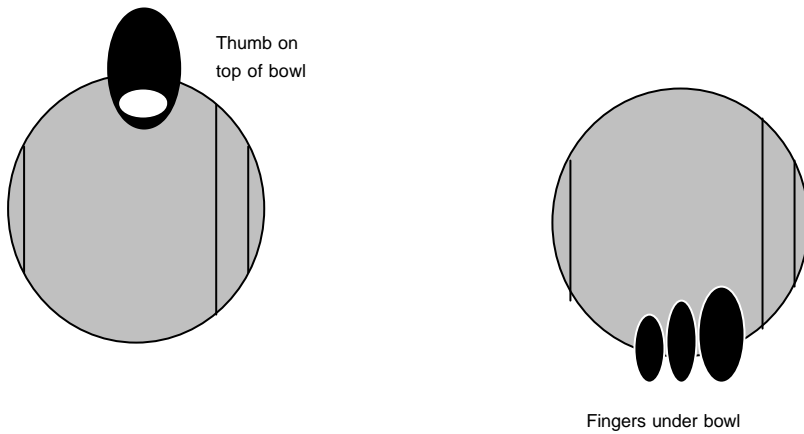


Fig 6:

Let one pole be where the coloured disc is.

When the bowl is properly held, the Centre of the second finger-pad will lie on the equator with the pads of the first and third fingers equi-distant from it.

All three finger pads should lie as nearly as possible on the one line of longitude.

The thumb forms the opposing pincer of the grip and should be placed as near to the equator as is comfortable.

Its actual position is not critical as long as the grip is secure and does not strain the hand or arm.

Similarly the fingers and thumb should not be strained by forcing them too far around the bowl. Rather the bowl should be held on the finger-pads only.

The little finger may be rested lightly on the bowl surface, but should not play any part in the action of bowling.

It is essential that the bowl runs along the mat on the running surface - for all practical purposes this is the imaginary equator line. The bowl should be held during delivery in such a way that a line drawn through the two poles is parallel to the mat surface and at right angles to the desired direction of travel.

It is important that the hand is not twisted at any time during bowling

Bowling the Bowl

When bowling, the bowl is brought back in contact with the mat then lightly rolled along the mat in the desired direction.

As the arm extends, the bowl is released and the hand follows through along the bowling line.

Let's follow this step by step. (Fig 7).

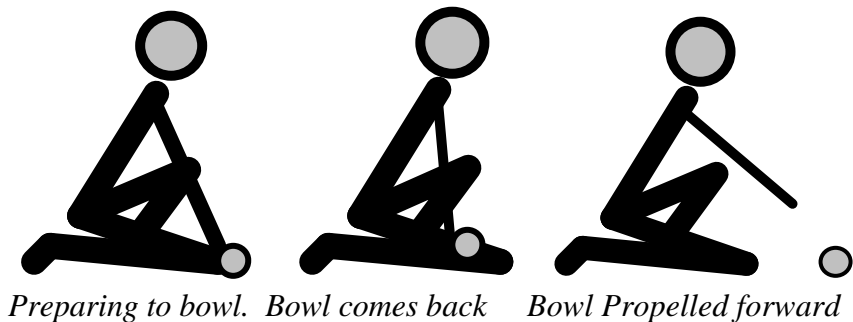


Fig 7:

Bowling the Bowl

The bowl, correctly held, is placed on the required bowling line with the bowling arm extended.

The bowl is drawn back along the mat until it is a few centimetres from the end.

It is then accelerated forward along the same line (the bowl is still in the hand and touching the mat),.

When a desired speed has been reached, the bowl is let go. The fingers actually rotate the bowl, so as to roll it along the mat.

Once the bowl is let go, the bowling arm follows through until the hand is well above the mat.

The bowl must be in contact with the mat as it crosses the front line, of the delivery area. It may not have left the hand before crossing that line.

A bowl must not be bowled disc over disc.

It is essential that smooth, even arm action be cultivated.

Points to be watched.

[1] The back movement should not be too fast and should be smooth.

[2] The forward movement should begin as soon as the back movement has ceased so that there is no awkward pause in the motion.

[3] Acceleration of the bowl on the forward movement should take place over as long a period as possible.

[4] The path of the bowl and bowling hand, on both the back and forward movement, should be identical and should follow a straight line right through to the end of the delivery and follow-through.

[5] The follow-through should not be restricted in any way.

Bowling the Jack

The jack should stop legally on the mat between the $\frac{2}{3}$ line and the front line of the far bowling area. If it does then the Skip of that team places it on the centre of the mat, in line with where it comes to rest.

If the jack does not legally reach the $\frac{2}{3}$ line, goes past the front line of the bowling area or goes off the mat, the Skip of the other side can put the jack anywhere legally on the centre line. (Fig 8)

The jack determines the ‘length of the head’ in playing games. A long head obviously requires more weight to be given to the bowls than a short head.

The Jack is held and delivered the same as a bowl.

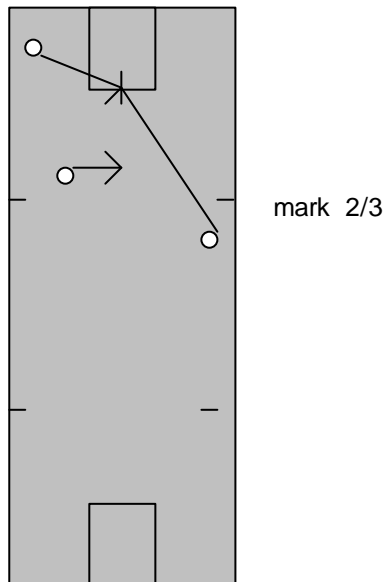


Fig 8

Bowling Line and Weight

A good bowler bowls a bowl with a definite purpose in mind. Maybe it is intended to finish touching the jack (a draw shot) or to stop at a particular place on the mat.

Or perhaps the purpose of the shot is to hit another bowl so it will be pushed away. This is a little faster than a draw shot. Whatever the purpose, the bowler delivering the bowl has two critical decisions to make :the speed at which the bowl will be bowled (ie. weight) the direction in which to bowl (ie. the bowling line).

The speed with which a bowl has to be bowled is dependent on the texture of the mat, the material of which the floor is made, the general slope of the floor and the type of shot to be played .For a given type of shot, a thick mat requires more weight (ie. a higher speed of bowling) than a thin mat. The thick mat is said to be ‘slow’. Similarly a damp mat is slower than a dry mat.

A mat laid on a concrete floor is faster than one laid on wood. A floor with a general slope along the length of a mat produces a fast mat in one direction (when the bowls run downhill) and a slow mat in the reverse direction.

A draw shot requires the lowest possible weight.

Shifting the jack or a bowl requires a little more weight.

More weight still is required to shift a number of bowls.

A bowl, when bowled truly, follows a curved path.

The bowl follows a straight line when travelling fast but as it slows the degree of turn increases .

A bowler has control of the bowl until it leaves their hand.

What happens afterwards depends upon the delivery of the bowl, variations in the floor surface, the particular place in the bowling area that a bowl is delivered from and the particular direction of the bowling line.

That is that imaginary straight line extending from the point where the bowl is expected to leave the hand extending, back to the edge of the mat at the rear of the delivery area. Along this line the bowler delivers the bowl.

The success of the shot will be dependant, apart from weight, on judgement in sighting the bowling line correctly and accuracy in following it with the bowl.

Positioning the bowling line is simply a matter of mentally drawing on the mat the shape of the path of a bowl back to the bowling area from where it is required to come to rest.

THE GAME of INDOOR BOWLS.

Getting Started

To be able to start to play a game of Indoor Bowls the players will now need to know how and why the Jack is delivered and its relevance to the game.

Games of singles, pairs, triples and fours can be played. The captain of the team is called the Skip and only they can tell the players of their team what to do. Each game consists of a number of “ends”. This can be any number, decided upon before play starts.

It is usual for the two sides to toss a coin to decide who goes first. The side that goes first bowls the jack and has choice of which coloured bowls they will play with. Once the jack has been centred, (see Fig 9), the person that bowled the jack can bowl their first bowl and the game proceeds.

Once the score has been decided, the bowls must be cleared away behind the delivery line and clear of the delivery area and the next end started. Ends are played from alternate ends of the mat.

The side that wins an end, i.e. scores points, bowls the jack and goes first on the next end. If an end is drawn (see Measuring) the winner of the previous end bowls the jack and goes first.

It is recommended that the players know the terms or jargon used in indoor bowls. (See Glossary)

A Game of Singles

Singles is played by two players who have four bowls each, which they play alternately.

The draw shot dominates singles, and accuracy in drawing is paramount in a good singles player.

The position of the first bowl played is important. If you play the first bowl, you cannot do better than to get it directly in front of the jack, so that the jack is obscured.

Should your opponent fail to get near the head with their first bowl then get your second bowl close behind the jack. Should your opponent draw the jack with their first bowl then your continuing strategy has to be decided as you go.

The optimum number of your own shots near the jack is two. More than two produces a large target. Less than two makes it easy for your opponent to rest your counting shots out of the head.

As both players are at one end of the mat at all times, a “Marker” is used where available. The Marker centres the jack, answers questions from the players and keeps the score.

A Game of Pairs

Pairs is played between teams of two players.

There are six or eight bowls for each team, each player playing three or four bowls.

One player is called the Skip and the other the Lead.

The Leads play first, playing their three or four bowls alternately.

The Skips remain at the other end of the mat. They may give instructions to the lead.

When the Leads have played their bowls, they change ends with the Skips, who then play their bowls.

The Lead's job is to achieve a good position with their three bowls.

One bowl on the jack and the other two positioned just behind the jack is usually good.

Whether your team has the shot when Leads and Skips change over is of little consequence. What is important is that your team has "good position".

What constitutes a good position at change over depends upon the ability of the two teams, and the state of the game.

With a maximum of 12 or 16 bowls on the head, a great deal of vigilance is required to either prevent the opposition from shifting the jack, to their advantage, or to spot the opportunity of doing so yourself.

Deciding the score at the completion of an end is the responsibility of the Leads.

The Skips record the score.

Game of Triples

Triples is played between teams of three players.

All members of the team play two bowls each. The captain of each team is called the Skip, the first player the Lead, and the player between Lead and Skip is called the Two. The Leads play first, playing their two bowls alternately followed by the Twos. The Skips remain at the other end of the mat and may give instructions when they want the Lead or the Two to play a particular shot.

When the Leads and Twos have played their bowls, they change ends with the Skips, who then play their bowls.

Once again the Lead and Two lay the foundation for the Skip to build upon.

Bowls on the jack and positioned just behind the jack are usually good.

While the Lead is usually required to simply draw to the jack, the Two may be asked to play draw shots not only to the jack but to any position on the mat or as indicated by the Skip. The Two may also be asked to play light impact shots to move bowls or the jack so as to give the Skip a better position.

Deciding the score at the completion of an end is the responsibility of the Twos.

The Skips record the score.

A Game of Fours

Fours is played between teams of four players.

All members of the team play two bowls each. The captain of each team is called the Skip, the third player the Measurer, or Third, the second player the Two and the first player the Lead.

The Leads play first, playing their two bowls alternately followed by the Twos and Measurer.

The Skips remain at the other end of the mat and may give instructions, should they want the Lead, Two, or the Measurer to play a particular shot. When the Leads Twos and Measurer have played their bowls, they change ends with the Skips, who then play their bowls.

Once again the Lead and Two lay the foundation for the Measurer and Skip to build upon. Bowls on the jack and positioned just behind the jack are usually good.

While the Lead is usually required to simply draw to the jack, the Two may be asked to play draw shots not only to the jack but to any position on the mat or as indicated by the Skip. The Two may also be asked to play light impact shots to move bowls or the jack so as to give the Measurer or Skip a better position. The Measurer may be asked to play a range of shots

Deciding the score at the completion of an end is the responsibility of the Measurer.

The Twos record the score.

Penalties

For penalties associated with the game then the relevant laws from the “Laws of the game “ should be referred to.

New players should be made aware of these as they proceed in their learning.

Measuring and Determining the Score

The aim of Indoor Bowls is to get your bowls closer to the jack than your opponent and thus score more points.

Points are lost only when the jack is knocked off the mat.

Once all the bowls have been played, an end is said to have been completed.

The score is then taken.

The team that has the bowl that is closest to the Jack scores one point.

If the second closest bowl to the Jack belongs to the same side then a further point is scored and so on.

It can happen that each team can have the first counting bowls the same distance away from the Jack.

In this situation the end is drawn; no points are scored but the end is counted as having been played.

If you cannot tell by sight which team has the bowl that is closest to the jack then you may have to measure. Measuring is usually done using a pair of callipers. (Fig 9a, 9b)

When measuring, place yourself in a comfortable position on the mat, preferably on your knees, with your hands resting on the mat, and holding the callipers between the first finger and thumb of each hand. Callipers should be adjusted away from the bowls being measured and then lowered carefully until the callipers just enter the gap between the bowl and the jack.

Continue adjusting until the callipers are as close as possible to the bowl and jack, and then carry them to the other bowl in the measure. Be very careful when moving the callipers so that the adjustment does not move.

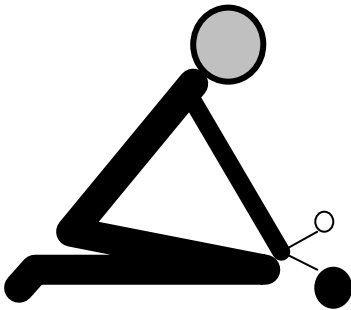


Fig 9a Kneeling to measure

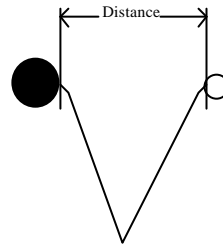


Fig 9b Placing of the callipers.

Sample of scoreboard or card

Brown			Black	
Points	Total	End	Points	Score
1	1	1	---	---
---	1	2	2	2
3	4	3	---	2
1	5	4	---	2
---	5	5	3	5
---	5	6	1	6

Fig 10 Keeping the score

During a game the score is recorded either on standard scorecards or on a blackboard, marked out in a manner similar to the card.

(see Figure 10)

Each team has two columns on the card. The left-hand column is used to write down the score for that end, while the right-hand column shows the cumulative score as the game progresses.

GLOSSARY

Back Bowl	A bowl that comes to rest past the jack
Backhand	Bowled across the body
Bias of Bowl	The side of the bowl, towards which, the bowl turns as it runs along the mat
Bowling Line	An imaginary line from the delivery area along which the bowl is bowled
Delivery Area	The area at each end of the mat from which a bowl or jack must be bowled (sometimes called the Square)
Delivered Bowl	A bowl that has left the hand and crossed the front line of the delivery area.
Delivered Jack	A jack that has left the hand and crossed the front line of the delivery area
Draw Shot	A bowl played to come to rest at a desired point on the mat
Front Line	The line running across the front of the delivery area
Forehand	Bowled away from the body
Green	The distance the bowl goes out from the centre line before it turns. (See BOWLING LINE)

Head	The group of delivered bowls at the far end of the mat
Jack	The small white spherical ball
Light Impact Shot	A bowl played so as to lightly hit another bowl or the jack
Mat	The surface on which the game is played
Running Shot	A bowl played with more weight than the light impact shot
Short Bowl	A bowl which comes to rest before the line of the jack
Weight	The speed at which a bowl is bowled

