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# BEGINNER'S GUIDE To LAWN BOWLS



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Produced by Bowls Queensland  
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## **A word from the President.**

Lawn bowls is the sort of sport that fits in with your lifestyle.

It can be as competitive or as social as you want it to be and you can find a game just about any day of the week.

You will find the clubhouse facilities comfortable and inviting and bowlers are well known for their hospitality towards newcomers.

Once you join a club you will discover your membership becomes a passport to a friendly welcome and a warm smile at any bowls club in Australia. Being an international sport, your membership means you will never be without a friend when travelling.

I welcome you to this great sport and wish you all the very best for the future.

***President  
Bowls Queensland  
admin@bowlsqld.org***

## **Who controls bowls?**

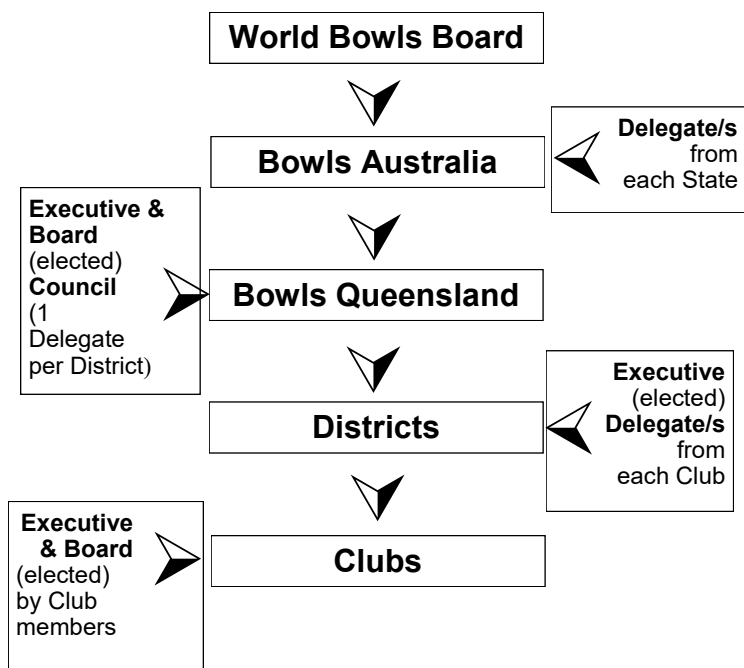
When you consider there are more than 2,000 affiliated bowling clubs and approximately 250,000 club members playing the game in Australia, you must agree that the sport of lawn bowls has a lot going for it.

Such a large sport doesn't run itself. Bowls Queensland is the controlling authority in this State. The organisation maintains a permanent Secretariat and office staff. The State Council at which all clubs are represented via their districts, elects a Board and Executive charged with the overall administration and promotion of the sport.

The National organisation is Bowls Australia.

Lawn bowls is also very popular in most of the British Commonwealth countries. These participating countries are members of the World Bowls Board.

The following flow chart gives you an idea of how it all comes together.



## **How to get started...**

### ***Clubs & Participants***

As stated earlier, in Australia there are over 2,000 affiliated clubs and the game is played by more than 250,000 club members and many more thousands of casual barefoot bowlers. Anyone can play this sport regardless of age, gender or disability.

### ***Meet you at the club!***

We've found the best way to interest people in lawn bowls is to let them try. It doesn't matter what level of fitness you have, you can participate in bowls. To get you started we will arrange a meeting date at our club.

### ***Lend you the gear!***

Lawn bowls is played with a bowl that is manufactured to roll in a curve (the bias) towards the objective (the jack or another bowl). Several sizes of bowls are available. Our club has various sized sets of bowls to lend to new recruits while they learn.

***Arrange for free coaching!***

It is possible to start the wrong way and everybody will give you helpful advice. To avoid the confusion and teach you the basic skills, objectives of the game, its rules and the etiquette that goes with it, we offer free lessons with our accredited club coaches.

***Levels of competition!***

Like every sport bowls has many levels of competition. Start by practising by yourself, playing in club roll-ups and social games. As you develop more control and technique you will soon advance to play in inter-club matches and carnivals.

***How little it costs!***

You will be surprised to find out how little it costs to belong to a bowls club. Once you have joined a club (a minimal fee) your only other expense is your own set of bowls, (they'll last a life time), your clothing, green fees and incidentals.

## **And now for the basics...**

### ***The game***

The object of the game is to get as many of your bowls (or your teams bowls) nearer the little white or yellow ball (called the Jack) than your opponent. The game can be played as singles (one against one) pairs, triples, or fours (four players against four). In each game the number of bowls varies, in singles (4), pairs (either 4 or 3), for each player, triples (either 2 or 3) and fours (4) bowls.

A game lasts about two and half hours (although there are shorter & longer versions) and consists of a pre-determined number of ends, (the delivery of all bowls from one end of a rink to the other) or first to a total of shots scored. The green or playing area is a level surface, carefully maintained grass or artificial surface measuring a minimum of 31 metres (102 feet) in each direction. Six or seven games can be played on one green at the same time.

This is just the basics – your coach and other members will teach you more.



### ***The players***

All people irrespective of age, gender or disability are equally welcome in the world of bowls. It is a great game for everyone. While there are separate men's and women's competitions, there are also mixed men's and women's competitions. There are junior and disability competitions. All of these competitions share the same club facilities and participate in many bowls competitions.

You can never be too young to start. Many top bowlers are younger aged players.

A team of four consists of a skip, a third (in charge of the head while the skip is bowling), the second and the lead (who delivers the jack and the first bowl). Bowls are delivered alternately by the players in each team until all bowls are played.

It is normal for new players to start as leads. You will get the chance to play in other positions but remember, a good lead is very important. Some bowlers specialise in this position.

### ***Areas of participation***

To start with, most of your bowls will be played at your home club. You'll find its members to be good friends and very helpful during your learning period.

There will be opportunities for informal "roll-ups" when you can practise by yourself or with other club members. This is the time to improve your skills and enjoy an informal game. Your coach will advise you when greens are available for "roll-ups".

Club social games provide the first level of competition. Usually all you have to do is put your name down on club social days and you will be included in a team.

There are numerous club competitions in which you can participate. There are also many opportunities to visit other clubs and play in their carnivals or tournaments.

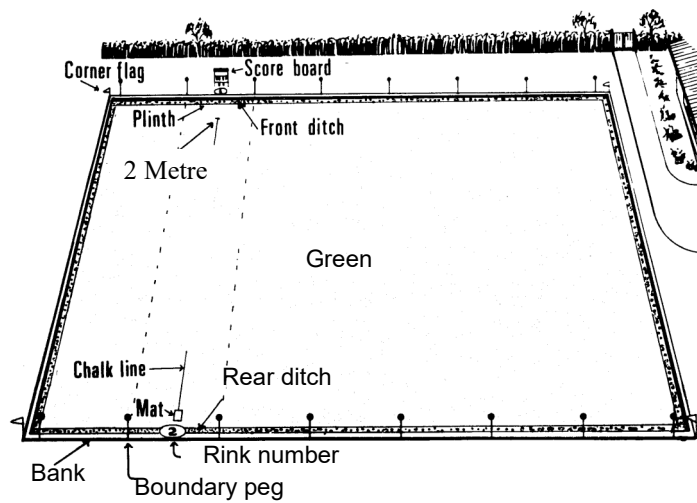
The most popular game is the weekly pennant competition. Teams from various clubs play one another in a series of home and away matches.

### ***Low annual cost***

Clubs will have varied annual membership fees depending on their own circumstances, but what they all share is that the amount required is low.

Compared to other major sports and activities, bowls is inexpensive. Your set of bowls is a one time expense and it is possible to purchase used bowls at a reduced price. You will need to purchase from a bowls shop, bowls shoes. These are special flat soled shoes designed for use in playing bowls. Running shoes with even a small amount of tread can damage the green. You will need a cleaning cloth, tape measure and chalk or chalk spray in addition to your clothing and a bowls bag and you are all set to go play.

For this comparatively small outlay you obtain for yourself a lifetime of participating in an outdoor sport where you can exercise and enjoy the company of fellow bowlers from your club or others, either just socially or as competitively as you wish, in very pleasant surroundings.



## The technical stuff...

### **The green**

The green or playing area is a square, flat surface of either grass or varying types of artificial surfaces "carpet". The green measures 31 – 40 meters and each game is played on a rink.

***The green comprises:***

***Corner Flags:*** They indicate wind direction at green level.

***Bank:*** Outside wall of the ditch above the green.

***Ditch:*** Excavated area between the edge of the green and bank (usually filled with sand). Bowl entering here is dead unless a toucher (you'll learn about these later).

***T:*** Each rink has a "T" point on the green 2 metres from the ditch in the centre of each rink.

***Rink Boundary Pegs:*** The pegs are at each end of the green and denote the outside boundary of the rink. The bowl can travel outside this line, but must finish inside when comes to rest.

***Rink Numbers:*** They are situated on the bank at the centre of each rink. Your game of bowls is allocated to a particular rink number.

***The Game:*** The game is started by the skip or captain tossing a coin to see who wins the right to play first. The lead then rolls the jack as close as they can to a length the skip chooses. The lead then rolls a bowl to finish as close to the jack as possible. The game can be made up of a number of ends: 18,21,25 etc, or the first

to score a predetermined number of shots 21 or 31 etc, or the ringing of a bell at the expiration of a predetermined time period. Also sets play is another way of playing the game, especially for televised games. Outdoor games are usually played in an east-west direction in the morning and a north-south direction in the afternoon.

**The Score:** After each end has been played, the player/team with the closest bowl scores. The number scored is determined by the number of their closest bowls they have to the jack before the opposing player/team's first closest bowl to the jack.

In competition bowls, conditions of play are set down by the controlling body for that particular competition and these determine how game(s)/round(s) are conducted in that competition

***Commonly Played Games are***

Singles, Pairs, Triples and Fours.

***Welcome to the game of bowls!***