



Hints For Markers

Compiled by the State Umpire Committee

2022

Updated July 2022

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INTRODUCTION:

Many people contribute to our enjoyment of the game of bowls but none more so than a good marker in a singles game. To be a good marker requires a thorough understanding and working knowledge of the Laws of the Sport of Bowls as they apply to singles play.

Marking is an art that can be acquired by any player who has the will to learn, practice and become proficient. The ability to concentrate on the player on the mat must be developed by those who wish to be “top” markers.

Markers should be well informed and experienced players – not necessarily “A” grade or champion players but experienced in the practice of marking.

The Controlling Body should always appoint markers. However, sometimes at club level the players may appoint their marker. It is here at club level that the new marker gains experience and expertise and to this end our State Umpires Committee have produced this booklet.

It provides the foundation for a marker to build on. Whether you are a player about to mark your first singles match or a seasoned marker about to mark an Association final, you will find something of interest within its cover.

A word of caution!! – a marker is not an umpire and for this reason there is nothing in this booklet dealing with matter properly the province of the umpire. Queries about displacement of the head or bowls played out turn must be referred to the umpire. It must be remembered that a marker is a neutral person in relation to the game being marked and must not influence the game in any way.

THE MARKER’S DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.

Dependant on the circumstances, most laws can have effect on a singles match but in practice the following are regarded as of immediate concern to the marker.

What is a Marker?

A marker is a crucial official with clearly defined duties as listed in the following Laws which need to be read in full before marking a game. (Please note these Laws may change if a new Law Book is introduced).

Law 42 – The Marker’s Duties – (pages 62, 63, 64):

Law 42.1 – In the absence of an umpire, the marker must:

Law 42.2 - The marker must:

Law 42.3 – When each end has been completed, the marker must:

Law 42.4 – When the game has been completed, the marker must make sure that the card and all markers need to read all these Laws and have a good understanding of them as the primary duty of the marker is to assist the players so that the game can proceed within the Laws.

While there no requirements in the Laws, the marker shall post the score on the scoreboard every second end or if there is a scoreboard attendant the marker shall ensure the board is always correct.

If you have been requested to mark a game of singles at your club, the preparation required is as follows:

- **Dress:**
Be neatly attired and in the required uniform, one that does not restrict your movement when bending to measure or mark touches.
- **Extra Items:**
Remove any extra unnecessary items from your pockets.
- **Water Bottle:**
Keep your water bottle in a safe position at the end of the rink, out of view of the players and spectators. A suggestion is to place it near the scoreboard if you are required to change the board every second end. Your water bottle would then be in a position to enable you to get a quick drink.
- **Conditions of Play:** Make sure you have a copy of the Conditions of Play, that you have read them and marked what you need to be familiar with for the event you are marking. For example:
 - Number of shots required.
 - If it is a timed game.
 - Rules for re-spotting the jack.
 - Player movement.
- **Arrival at the venue:**
Introduce yourself to all officials of the day, especially the umpire and find out where the umpire and equipment will be located.
- **Marker equipment:**
Chalk for marking touchers (spray chalk is recommended), box string measure, three or four wedges, pen or pencil, scorecard, coin for the toss at the start and for extra ends if needed, shot indicators if required. If using spray chalk, remove the lid and test that it is not blocked before going on the green.
- **Scorecard:**
Collect and make sure names of both players and rink number are on the card and whether there is a board turner.
- **Arrival at the rink:**
Introduce yourself to the players and:
 - Advise you will mark touchers as soon as they come to rest and before the next bowl is delivered, suggest players allow time for this.
 - Seek permission to remove obvious dead bowls.
 - Ask how players would like distances indicated, e.g., with hand singles and whether they would like distances in imperial (feet & inches) or metric (metres).
 - It is helpful to make a note on the card – colour of each player's bowls or any other features.
 - Ask if players have a preference for the position of the jack in the trial ends.
- **Trial Ends:**
 - Centre the jack where it comes to rest unless requested by the players.

- **Important:** centre with your hands not your feet.
 - Indicate as each bowl comes to rest with hand signals and pick up and place the bowls neatly in groups on opposite sides of the centre line, at the back of the rink near the ditch.
 - At the completion of trial ends, shake hands and wish the players all the best. Then take your position at the end of the rink ready for the start of the game.
- **At the start of each end:**
 - Write the start time of commencement of the first end on the scorecard.
 - Take position between the 2-metre mark and front ditch, making sure that the mat has been positioned correctly on the centre line.
 - Make sure the correct player has delivered the jack to a legal length and place it on the centre line.
 - Centre the jack that comes to rest between the 2m mark and the front ditch at the 2m mark as described under Law 9.2 (page 24). (This Law may change if a new Law Book is introduced).
 - Develop a routine for each end, which should include positioning and the position of the head.
- **Positioning:**
 - Two metres behind and 1 metre to the side of the jack.
 - Do not obstruct the centre line/boundary pegs so the head can be clearly viewed, and the marker is in a position to react to anything that happens at the head.
 - Stand in the same position each end except if the jack is in the ditch (still stay on the green unless the players request you not to) or if the jack has been moved. The marker will need to move to a new position but still try to maintain a position of 2 metres to the rear and 1 metre to the side of the jack.
 - Stay out of shadows – move to the other side or slightly further towards the back ditch.
 - Move to the front for a drive as this enables the marker to avoid bowls or the jack, which may be disturbed and make it easier to observe if a bowl becomes a toucher.
- **Position of the Head:**

The marker should only answer questions about the state of the head from the player in possession of the rink and should answer these clearly, precisely and positively. This may include:

 - Position of the jack – not the position of jack high, only show with hand not foot.
 - Who has shot?
 - Position of shot bowls indicate with hand only.
 - Distances between bowl/jack, jack/ditch, bowl/bowl.
 - If players have agreed that the marker indicate distances, these need to be clear and consistent by holding both hands the approximate distance apart with the palms facing inwards.
 - Mark all touchers preferably on both sides so that bowls do not have to be picked up to check if they are touchers in the event of changes to the head.
 - The marker should try to anticipate the player's questions so that an accurate answer is ready quickly and uses common sense.
 - When requested to use shot indicators it should be:
 - *After two bowls have been delivered by each player.

*As the position of the head changes.

*At the completion of the end after the result of the end has been determined.

*Shot indicators should be held in one hand with the arm extended to the side of

the body in line with the shoulders with the tops of the indicators in line with or slightly above the level of the marker's forehead.

- **Completion of the end:**

At the completion of an end the marker will stand two metres in the front of the head and wait until the players declare the head before giving any indication of the shots scored and before marking the card. Do not touch the jack or bowls as it is up to the players to decide if any bowls are to be removed. Once the number of shots has been decided advise the players of the score, then walk briskly up the rink indicating the score with spread fingers or by displaying the shot indicators.

- **Completion of the game:**

At the completion of the game, congratulate the players and shake hands. The marker then has a number of duties to perform as follows:

*Check the scores and transfer the result to the front of the scorecard.

*Ensure the players sign the scorecard immediately the game is finished in their correct designated areas.

*Complete any other relevant information required on the front of the card.

*Follow the Controlling Body's instructions regarding the return of the scorecard.

A good marker needs to develop and practice a regular routine to enhance the game and not interfere with the player's time during play, allowing players to concentrate on their own performance.

Practice Makes Perfect.

Set up a jack and bowls and try to judge distances. Check them with a tape measure. Set up a jack and bowls and conduct measures using all your equipment (including wedges). Mark as many games as you can to fine-tune your time management technique.

The above is a brief outline of what a marker is required to do during a game. A more detailed description of a marker's skills and duties can be read in the Officiating Manual for Markers, Measurers and National Umpires and it is recommended that you obtain a copy from Bowls Queensland as it is well worth reading and a great reference for you to look up all details covering marking a game of bowls.

If you are interested in becoming a marker, please contact your District Umpire Committee who will be happy to arrange the necessary course for you. We know that you will not regret the decision.

MARKERS DO'S:

- Be correctly attired and equipped (spray chalk, pen, card, coin, measure and wedges).
- Introduce yourself to both players.
- Be conversant with the ownership of bowls.
- Align the Jack after it has come to rest.
- Challenge the length of the jack roll if in doubt. If players agree return the jack for re-rolling.
If they do not agree with you call the umpire – (minimum length 21 metres).
- Note that the mat is correctly laid and aligned before play commences.
- Stand on the side of the rink where your shadow is not cast across the head.
- Try to stand 2 metres behind the jack and 1 metre to one side.
- Remain motionless with eyes fixed on the player in possession of the mat.
- Watch for questions or signals from the player in possession of the mat.
- Answer all questions briefly but specially.
- Move to a position to observe if a bowl becomes a toucher.
- Answer all questions briefly with “yes” or “no” if the answer is not misleading, and only to the player whose turn it is next to bowl.
- Stop bowls from adjoining rinks from displacing bowls or the jack on your rink.
- Remove all dead bowls immediately from the ditch. The status of bowls near the boundary should be determined by agreement by the players, or they should call the umpire.
- Keep clear of the head when players arrive, they determine the result not you.
- Walk from end to end midway between the centre of the rink and the boundary.
- Advise the players of the score every end.
- Place the score on the scoreboard every second end.
- It is rare for a bowl to be exactly “jack high.” A marker may answer just short of or just past jack high to a player’s question concerning a bowl’s position relative to the jack.
- Have the scorecard signed and timed at the completion of the game. Sign as a marker and return to the Official after the match.

MARKERS DON'TS:

- Move about when the player is on the mat.
- Stand among the bowls.
- Do not raise the jack above your head before you place it at the "T" mark – 2 metres from the front ditch.
- Move in to see who has the shot unless asked.
- Answer questions being asked on an adjacent rink.
- Say a shot is doubtful if it is not. Invite the player to inspect the head.
- Answer a question you did not hear properly or understand. Ask the player to repeat or rephrase the question.
- Give misleading answers to a badly worded question. Ask the player to rephrase the question.
- Supplement the answer with information not asked for.
- Watch the game alongside or sit on the bank or a seat. If you are tired, ask for a replacement marker.
- Talk to spectators on the bank.
- Applaud either player.
- Lean over sideways as if to "assist" a bowl to wick or miss.
- Invite the player to inspect the head (unless asked by the player).
- Stop the jack before it completes rolling.
- Lift a bowl on your rink to allow passage of a bowl from a neighbouring rink.
- Indicate a bowl with your foot.
- Stop or catch bowls about to enter the ditch.
- Remove the shot bowls or disturb the head in any way.
- Remove bowls near the boundary without agreement from the players.
- Remove any live bowls or disturb the head in any way.
- Tell the players who has shot or how many, when they arrive at the head at the end of an end.
- Carry more equipment than you need.
- Stand on the back even if the jack is in the ditch.

