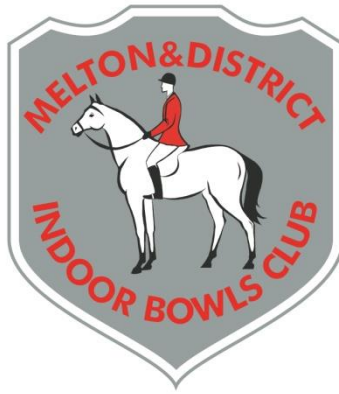




MELTON & DISTRICT INDOOR BOWLS CLUB

New to the Game of Indoor Bowls?

The Recruitment & Retention Team

May 2025

Recruitment & Retention Team Booklets

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- Booklet 2 New to the Game of Indoor Bowls**
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How are we doing?

Our aim is to make your introduction to Indoor Bowls to be as simple and pleasurable as possible. We welcome / need your feedback on your overall experience as new joiners in order to help us continue to improve the welcoming package. Your feedback will help us to lead the way on recruiting and retaining new members into the sport of Indoor Bowls here at M&D IBC.

The Recruitment & Retention Team

New to the Game of Indoor Bowls?

Here are a few things to know about this fascinating game.

The object of the game is to get your bowl, or one of your team's bowls (also called **WOODS**), nearest to the yellow, object ball – the **JACK**. Simple! If only that were true.

The coaches are often asked, “How do I improve? Should I have more coaching?” The answer is quite simple. Once you have mastered the basics of delivering a bowl up your own rink, **there are no shortcuts, you just need to practice**. The more you play, the better you will become. New players often come with other new players for friendly practice sessions during the quieter times of the week. All practice helps, but ultimately you will need to play with more experienced players in order to improve. Initially this is best done by taking advantage of the various open sessions and galas arranged by the Club.

Please note here that even experienced players will have bad days, but the opposite also holds – as a new player you will have days when you can't do anything wrong. Your next bad day will seem to be a massive setback. It is all part of the learning process.

As you improve you have to make a decision about whether you want to further your experience by playing in a league team, or entering a Club competition. This is your decision to make, and

there will be no pressure to force you away from social bowling if that is your preferred game. There are several types of competition;

SINGLES	played between two players with four bowls each
PAIRS	played between two teams of two players with four bowls each
TRIPLES	played between two teams of three players with three bowls each
FOURS (or RINKS)	played between two teams of four players, each with two bowls each

In all forms of the game, an **END** is complete after the last bowl of the last player has come to rest. Then a count is made of the number of bowls that are closer to the jack than the nearest opponent's bowl.

A measure (like a tape measure but with a string reel, or even a set of calipers for very short distances) is used if necessary to decide which of the two opposing team's bowls is the closest. This score is then recorded on the score sheet (in a match) and also on the electronic score board.

Each position within a team might require different skills or need to meet a different objective other than just drawing to the Jack – see later. You may be asked to bowl to a position on the rink rather than always going for the jack.

Bowls Team Positions & the skills required

Title: The Lead, or One

Player No.: 1

Role

- i) Places the mat legally, on a position up the rink as agreed with (or called by) the Skip, when starting play of a new end.
- ii) Casts the Jack to the length required by the Skip, and ensures that it has been brought to the centre-line before playing the first bowl.
- iii) May choose to use either hand (to either side) unless directed otherwise by the Skip. At this point of the game, normally trying to get as close to the Jack as possible.
- iv) Once his/her bowls have been played, the leads move to a position behind the mat. When the players change ends for the Skip's turn to bowl, the No1's move to a position behind the head.
- v) At the completion of an end, and after scoring has been agreed, the losing No1 should collect the woods (using a wheeled rake if available), and move them to a safe position well behind the "T" ready for the next end.

Skills

- i) Able to cast the jack.
- ii) Able to draw to a given position or the jack.

Title: The Second Player No.: 2

Role

- i) To wait for Skip's instructions before playing shots and be able to play positional bowls as directed.
- ii) Acts as Skip in Pairs.
- iii) In Fours (Indoors only) has the duty of filling out the Score Card (if home team) and Score Board (if away team).

N.B. In Outdoor Fours, this role falls to The Skip.

Skills

- i) Able to Measure, and give clear instructions to the Skip in Triples Games.

Title: The Three Player No.: 3

Role

- i) Must know where all previous bowls are positioned before playing shots as directed by the Skip.
- ii) Maintains the scorecard and/or scoreboard in Triples.

Skills

- i) Be able to Measure and give clear instructions to the Skip in Fours Games.

Role

- i) Be a tactician and leader for the Team.
- ii) Be positive and encouraging to Team members.
- iii) With the opposing Skip shall decide any disputed points.
- iv) Able to designate his/her powers and duties to other team members, provided that such delegation is first notified to the opposing Skip.

Skills

- i) Be competent to read and build the 'Head'.
- ii) Be able to play a full range of shots at all times especially when under pressure.
- iii) Able to give clear instructions to team players, and to know each player's bowls and therefore how best to direct them into the head.

LIVE or DEAD Bowls or Ends

Coaches are often asked to explain about when a bowl is “live” or “dead”, and confusion is only increased when an end is declared “dead”.

- i) If a bowl hits the jack on its original delivery path down the green it is called a **TOUCHER**, and is marked with chalk spray, and even if it then goes in the end ditch during the rest of that end it is still live, and can be counted if appropriate when the **END** is complete. If any Bowl including the **TOUCHER** goes outside the lane boundaries then it is **DEAD** and cannot be counted.
- ii) If the Jack goes into the ditch during play, its position is marked at the end of the rink with a yellow disc visible to the remaining bowlers, and if the Bowl that hits it goes in the ditch as well its position is marked with a red (home) or white (away) disc.
- iii) If the Jack goes outside the lane boundaries, it is re-spotted on the nearest **Re-Spot** (or **side spots**) to the right or left of the “T”. [It is now rare, but in some National Competitions if that occurs it is classed as a **DEAD END**, and the whole end has to be re-played and no score or end is recorded.]
- iv) If the two nearest opposing bowls are measured to be equidistant to, or are both touching, the Jack then it is declared a tied end. [The end is counted on the scorecard but no score is recorded for both teams.]

Signals Used

You will often hear a lot of advice being shouted down the rink to team mates from the Skip. As you will find out very quickly, it is difficult to estimate distances at the far end of the rink from the mat. The position of the jack can also be hidden by bowls in play. When all eight rinks are being used then the place can be very noisy. For this reason, there are some common signs made with hands and arms to convey the same information. Most of the information will convey either front-to-back distances from the Jack (as side-to-side distances aren't as difficult to judge) for your delivery, the desired aim point or line of approach, the position of the jack or a running score for your team in that end.

Common signals used at M&DIBC include the following samples (but do vary club to club);

Front-to-back distance. For long bowls, a single extended open hand showing a vertical distance to the floor equivalent to the distance of the delivered bowl to the jack. Or for short bowls, two extended open hands horizontally in front of the chest, the horizontal distance apart being the distance to the jack. A level bowl ("Jack High") signaled with a single hand in a pendulum motion.

Current Score. A hand, or hands, raised to shoulder height with the index finger raised (or pointed downwards) shows the current state of play of shots for (or against), i.e. one finger for one shot up (down), or two fingers (one on each hand) up for two shots up (down). A three shot score is signalled by raising one foot as well

as using the hands. A four shot position is signalled by raising and lowering both hands twice.

Position of the Jack. If the jack cannot be seen from the mat, its position can be indicated by pointing an open hand downwards over, but not touching, the jack.

Ownership. It is often difficult to determine which bowls are belonging to your own team. The Skip may point at a bowl and then put the hand to the chest, in which case that bowl is one of yours. If the signal is a hand sweeping to the side, then the bowl indicated is one of the opposition's bowls.

Bowls Glossary

These are some of the terms that you may hear used on or about the rink;

AUSTRALIAN SPOT, or SIDE SPOT or RE-SPOT – these spots are carpet markers either side of the T at each end of the rink. The significance was explained earlier in the section on “Live or Dead Bowls”.

BUILDING AN END – the team tactical game, as you will start to learn, is more than just playing to finish at the jack. Your skip may ask you to place your bowl in the way of the preferred line of a following opposition player, or protect your own team's bowls from being knocked out of the head.

“(GOOD) BACK WOOD” – Your shot has passed the jack and ended up behind the jack, but still near enough to the head to perhaps count if the jack gets moved from its current position.

BACKHAND – for a right-handed player, the bowl is sent to the left of the centre line.

BLOCKER – a bowl delivered deliberately short in order to make the opposition’s subsequent deliveries more difficult.

DRAWING (to the Jack) – the basic delivery of the bowl, taught as a smooth arc to the Jack.

END – a complete set of deliveries by all players of both teams.

“FIRING” – this is a **warning** that the player making the call is about to play a hard, fast shot to disrupt his target end. It is possible that woods or the jack could be catapulted from an adjacent rink in your direction. It is worth pausing and keeping an eye on the result! This sort of shot is normally only played by Skips.

FOREHAND – for a right-handed player, the bowl is sent to the right of the centre line.

“GOOD LINE” – your shot has not entered the scoring, but has ended up close to the centre-line of the rink, meaning that a small adjustment of weight on your next shot is needed.

HEAD – the scoring area surrounding the Jack.

“JACK HIGH” or **“LEVEL”** – your wood has ended level with the Jack.

“MORE (or LESS) weight (or ummph)”– alter the amount of power you give to your next bowl

“MORE (or LESS) green” – alter the aim–point width that you are using on the next bowl compared to the last effort.

RINK – your game’s playing area of the carpet. The carpet is divided into 8 rinks (equivalent to the lanes in 10–pin bowling). The width of the rink is defined by vertical markers on the bank at each end of the carpet.

“SECOND WOOD” – your shot has come close to the jack and lies slightly further away than the bowl holding shot.

“SHOT” – your bowl has finished closest to the jack.

SKIP – the team captain

SPOT – The centre–line of the rink in front of each T is marked with five spots. The spots are 2 metres apart to aid communication of Jack placement, and decisions on distances.

“T” – a “T” shaped, white mark on the carpet at each end of the RINK. This indicates the furthest starting position from the mat of the JACK at the start of each END.

“WICKIE” – this term is used when you hit another stationary bowl near the head in order to deflect your bowl on its journey to the Jack.

WOODS – another name for your bowls (taken from the original material used for manufacture of lawn bowls).

WRONG BIAS – the bowl has been played with the bias on the wrong side for the direction played.

Coaching

Should you feel that you would benefit from one-to-one coaching to improve your play (at any stage of your game), then the Club does have a number of qualified coaches. A list of coaches, and their contact details, is available from your session organiser or the Office. The Club will also hold Open coaching sessions about every two months. Our Level 2 coaches will run a series of different exercises to improve your skill level. Very popular sessions.

Playing Etiquette

Indoor Bowls remains one of the few sports where common courtesy and etiquette still prevail. We should be proud of this, and in order to make the game as enjoyable as possible rink etiquette should be

promoted to members old and new. The Club continuously strives to become one of the best Indoor Bowls Clubs, and this booklet, together with another related to the Laws of the Game, has been prepared for new members in order to clarify the Club's expectations in this important matter.

Some recent calls for improvement are highlighted in red, thus showing that even experienced members can forget to behave considerately. In no particular order of importance, and far from comprehensive, please note and practice the desired ethical behaviours listed below;

1. The Bowls carpet is extremely expensive. Do not drink or eat whilst on the carpet, and do all you can to protect its condition, e.g. do not drop your bowls.
2. Dress in accordance with the Club's Dress Code – See Year Book or ask a Club Official if there is doubt.
3. Ensure that you arrive, and are changed, and ready to play well in advance (15 minutes) of any start time.
4. **Do not sit at your rink until it is vacant. Never walk across, or behind, other rinks which are in play.**
5. Introduce yourself to any newcomers/visitors who are involved in your rink.
6. Before the game, shake the hands of all players in your rink and wish them well, e.g. "have a good game".
7. Play your game within the Laws and in good spirit irrespective of the outcome.
8. Stay at least one metre behind the Mat when a bowl is being delivered to ensure you are outside of the player's line of vision.

9. Do not sit on the bank edge whilst waiting your turn to play, please use the benches and chairs provided and placed well away from the bank edge.
10. After delivering a bowl the player loses control of the mat as soon as the bowl has stopped and should therefore vacate the mat and make way for his/her opponent. Do not delay the game. (If you walk a few paces up the rink after a delivery you must be back 1 metre behind the mat before the bowl stops. Do not encroach on adjacent rinks if they are being used.)
11. When moving to the Head all players should walk down the centre of the rink to ensure that players on adjacent rinks are not obstructed.
12. On arrival at the Head players should quickly view the situation, and then retire at least one metre behind the Jack giving priority of position to the Second(Triples) / Third(Fours). Remember that some players like to be able to see rink side marks and/or central rink numbers on the adjacent rinks when preparing to bowl, please do not obstruct these markers.
13. All players at the head should avoid distracting the attention of a player when they are about to bowl. They should keep still and quiet whilst any bowl is being delivered.
14. When all bowls have been delivered, they should not be moved until the persons responsible for the measuring indicate which bowls are being measured.
15. All players, wherever practicable, should help move all the bowls to a safe position behind the spot where the lead player indicates he/she wants to place the mat and ensure the next End starts without delay. When collecting bowls do not stray

into or walk across adjacent rinks, or move the pushers across adjacent rinks, to get to your own.

16. The responsibility of measuring is allocated as follows, in pairs it is the Lead, in Triples it is the No. 2, in Fours it is the No. 3. It is not etiquette for other players, including the skips (unless there is a dispute) to be involved unless asked to do so.
17. Players should politely acknowledge good deliveries from your opponent and your own player. **But do not comment on poor ones.** Admit any fluke in a good spirit.
18. At the end of a game all players of the losing side should congratulate their opponents, should shake hands and in matches the home/winning side might offer their opposite number a drink.
19. **If you are walking along the walkway at either end of the rinks, or up the side of rink 1 to a locker, ensure you do not distract bowlers, who are bowling towards you, by moving in their eye-line as they prepare to bowl. STOP, WAIT, and only move once they have delivered their bowl. At all times be aware of the games in play and keep alert. Do not stop for conversations with fellow members along the side of Rink 1 if a game is in progress.**

If we all adhere to the above and the many other practices we will enjoy the bowling experience far better, enjoy the game, irrespective of the result and look forward positively to the next bowls occasion.

But most of all – ENJOY your bowling – have fun!