

The laws are not perfect...

(but experience can close the gap)

Given that rules of a sport are written about the game as we know it and not how it might evolve in the future, situations will occur that are not covered by the rules. To quote The Laws of the Sport of Bowls:

“If a situation arises that is not covered by these laws, players, markers and umpires must use their common sense and a spirit of fair play to decide on the appropriate course of action.”

WOW! Common sense and fair play, aren't they seen differently by different people? What can an umpire do they have to make a decision without possibly being criticised as unfair or lacking common sense.

Well, there is some help available and there are things an umpire and bowlers can do in the event of uncharted umpiring situations.

Firstly, in addition to the 'Laws' as written by World Bowls there are other rules that apply to our games.

They are:

- Bowls Australia Policies plus...
- Bowls WA Field of Play rules in the Handbook plus
- any Conditions of Play put in place by the 'Controlling Body'.

For our convenience, if you buy a Law Book through Bowls WA, it contains both the Laws and in the appendix the Bowls Australia Policies. The Field of Play rules are in the Bowls WA Handbook as are the Conditions of Play for Bowls WA organized events. In addition for your club events, such as club championships there will be Conditions of Play, that should be available to all players and officials.

Secondly, there is 'Bowls Etiquette'. The etiquette of Bowls

is a combination of good manners, sportsmanship and sociability and are designed to promote the friendliness and sportsmanship of which the sport has rightly earned. Be conversant with the Laws of the Game, Etiquette and observe them.

These are not firm rules to be enforced by Umpires but good ideas of how we should behave to make each game more enjoyable for all.

While there is no one set of Bowls Etiquette and the total list is long, below is a selection you might adopt either as a player or as a club.

1. Don't drop bowls from the bank to the green, respect the surface of the green.
2. Keep quiet and still while players are on the mat.
3. Stand at least 1 metre behind the bowler on the mat.
4. Don't prattle- watch all bowls and know their positions. Keep your mind on the game, be ready with your bowl in your hand when it's your turn.
5. Don't step onto the mat and indicate which way you want to play. Wait for the Skips instructions.
6. Don't ear bash your opponent about your previous successes.
7. All at the head assist in kicking bowls.
8. Don't complain about the skip's bowls, they have only two bowls and the rest of you have had six.
9. Take an interest in the skip's bowl when it is their turn.
10. Don't query the skip's instructions.
11. Acknowledge good shots from your opponents and thank them if they do the same to you.
12. Don't applaud unlucky bowls, or urge their bowl through.
13. Don't deliver your bowl until the previous bowl comes to rest. (Playing prematurely).
14. Walk close to the centre of the rink when crossing over and with a minimum of delay.
15. If you lose, be a good loser, don't blame your loss on other people, the green, weather etc. Always thank your opponents for the game. Be a good winner. Don't be too taken with your win because the position could be very

well reversed tomorrow.

16. Offer your opponent a drink after the game; don't forget the marker in singles.

17. Do not walk in front of the last third to bowl they have a right to see where their bowl finishes, and it is against the law.

18. Be punctual to commence play and be correctly attired

19. Laws of the game demand that you inform your opponent if you wish to leave the green.

20. Learn to be a good marker. Stand behind the head and to one side. Don't sit on the bank or in the ditch.

21. Respect the position and decision of umpires.

Above all enjoy the game for its pleasure and the lasting friendships it provides!