**GUIDE TO BAREFOOT BOWLS**

Lawn bowls is a challenging game that requires a high level of expertise and skills to execute the right play. However, for barefoot lawn bowls, you do not need to be an expert to play it. The game offers a lot of physical and therapeutic benefits to its participants. Barefoot lawn bowls can be played by both the old and the young. If you want more on the basic rules of bowls, then checkout our lawn bowls rules guide.

Although barefoot lawn bowls is a low-impact game, you can play it as a way of enjoying your leisure time or as a challenge in a competition. But what exactly is barefoot lawn bowls? How is it played? How beneficial is the game? And where can you play barefoot lawn bowls? To find answers to these questions, this article will give you a clear guide to barefoot bowls.

**What is Barefoot Bowls?**

Barefoot lawn bowls has grown for over a decade now, with the game finding its roots in Australia. The game sets to dispel the traditional view that lawn bowling is boring. Barefoot lawn bowling involves rolling a bowl along a squared grass lawn without shoes. It has few rules and few regulations on the dress code. If you are looking for an outdoor sport blended with art, music, parties, drinking, and a combination of fun moments, then barefoot bowling is the game for you.

The game is ideal for team building, get-togethers, parties, corporate social events, and bridal shower celebrations. However, you must take into account the one liability that comes with the game; knocking down of your ankles. Barefoot bowling is done in bare feet, and there is a possibility of knocking your ankles when playing, but with proper training on precision, this has no chance of happening.

**Comparing Barefoot Bowls and Traditional Lawn Bowls**

The traditional lawn bowling has been preserved for older people, and many young people perceive it to be boring. This ancient game, tracing its conception in the 13th century, comprises of numerous rules that are updated by different sports boards across various countries in the world. Traditional lawn bowls is a game for competitions; therefore, participants must adhere to the rules to stay in the game. However, the traditional lawn bowling has been losing popularity for over a decade, with bowling clubs losing financial agility over the game.

Fortunately, we Aussies discovered that bowling could attract more participants if it was tailored into the needs of the millennials, hence the inception of barefoot bowling. The aim of the game is to purely have fun; although you can still play the game for competitions. Barefoot lawn bowling has gained popularity over the past decade, with different countries adopting the sport, including the UK. Here is a comprehensive guide to barefoot bowls, and its benefits.

**What You Need to Know About Barefoot Lawn Bowls**

You do not need bowling expertise to participate in barefoot bowling. However, it is important to know how the game is played and some of its basics, to get started. Remember the objective of this game is to get your bowls as close to the jack as possible than your opponent’s. Here are several things you need to know about barefoot Lawn Bowls

**The bowls**

These are the balls you use when playing, up to four bowls per player. The bowl is weighted on one side and it is made to provide the bowl with some weight bias. This nature of the bowls enables them to curve and turn while rolling, they, therefore, do not move in a straight line. Aiming the bowl to the precise target area is where the challenge of the game lies.

There are different colours for different bowls and they all weigh about 1.5Kg.

They are often provided for you when you play, so there is no need to buy a set of your own.

**The mat**

This is a pad where players usually stand on while bowling. It is usually placed on the central line of the rink.

**Rink (lane)**

This is the grass region where the actual play takes place. It is usually demarcated using some boundary pegs. There are several rinks within a lawn to allow several games to be run at the same time.

**Centre line**

This is the line that runs to the centre of the rink.

**The jack**

Jack is a white ball, also known as the kitty, which acts as the target of the game. The concept of the game is to deliver bowls as close to the jack as possible. Getting to the jack is not as easy as you would anticipate, but that is where the interest of the game lies.

**The grip**

How comfortable you hold the bowl determines how good you will deliver it. A comfortable grip should have your middle finger centrally positioned on the bowl. It also implies that you should have a bowl of considerable size for your hands. Bowls are made of different sizes ranging from zero for smaller hands to five for larger hands.

**The green**

The green is a large square lawn with an approximate measurement of 30m by 30m or 40m by 40m. The green is divided into several rinks which should be large enough to accommodate the barefoot bowling experience.

**The draw shot**

This is the most challenging shot for players. It requires a balanced distribution of weight to have a precise movement of the bowl right to where the jack is. The bowl moves at a slow continuous motion, making it the hardest shot to make.

**The drive shot**

This shot moves at a very high speed with an intended high level of accuracy. When the opponent’s bowl is closest to the jack, the drive shot is the ultimate tool to apply. The intention is to knock the opponent’s bowl off the jack to a further position along the rink. The drive shot can be perilous when directed to someone’s ankles due to the force and speed of its movement. It should be used with caution.

**The yard-on shot**

This is a very strategic shot. It has two objectives. One is to push the jack away from your opponent, drawing it closer to your advantage. The second objective is to push the opponent’s bowl out of its head to have yours take the position.

**Types of Barefoot Bowling Teams**

There are different types of teams in barefoot bowling, which vary with the number of players. These teams include singles, pairs, triples, and fours.

A singles team consist of one player, with four bowls to deliver.

A pairs team consists of two players, each player has four bowls to deliver.

Triples, on the other hand, consists of three players, with each of these players having three balls to deliver.

The team of fours consists of four players, each player has only two balls to deliver.

**Basic Rules for Barefoot Lawn Bowls**

Players are divided into two teams which use bowls with the same emblems or colours.

The order of bowling by the team members is divided into two; first bowler (known as Lead), and last (Skipper) bowler.

The decision about the team that plays first is made through the tossing of a coin by the Leads of the two teams. The Skippers of the two teams will be positioned on the other end of the rink (scoreboard end) when the game begins.

The Lead of the starting team rolls the jack along the ditch to the other end of the rink. The jack is then placed on the centre line along the spot where the jack stopped.

Bowling is then done by the playing teams alternatively in the order the bowling sequence by team members.

When all players are done bowling, they switch sides with the Skippers of the two teams who also make their bowl delivery.

Bowls must remain within the defining pegs of the rink. Bowls that move out of the rink are removed.

Bowls that run into the ditch before they touch the jack are also removed.

If not barefooted, you should only have socks or shoes with flat soles.

**How to Play Barefoot Lawn Bowls**

Now that you know the basic rules to the playing of the game, here is how you do the bowling:

* Stand on the mat or the pad provided with your feet closed together. You should bend your knees and your waist slightly for better bowling.
* Hold the bowl in your preferred hand, left or right. Ensure that you get a good grip on the ball.
* Step out on one foot. If your preferred hand is the right hand, then you should step out with your left foot and vice versa.
* Take a backward stance. While rising on your toes, swing the hand holding the bowl backwards. Ensure that you have a body balance.
* Take a bend and roll the bowl along the ground. Bowls do not move in a straight line unless you are making a drive shot. Roll the bowl at a calculated angle so that it curves towards the jack. The closer the bowl gets to the jack, the higher the chances of getting high scores.

**How Scores are Determined in Barefoot Bowling**

Aiming at the jack is the central objective of this game. Scores are, therefore, awarded based on the team with the bowls closest to the jack. The higher the number of bowls closest to the jack, the higher the scores. The distance between the bowls and the jack is measured by eye by the players of the two teams. In case of dispute over the range, a measuring tape is used. When there are further disagreements on the scores, an umpire is called upon to determine which team wins. An umpire is an official appointed by particular barefoot Lawn Bowls clubs to see the smooth running of the game.

**Benefits of Barefoot Lawn Bowls**

The main aim of the game is to have fun. However, barefoot bowling offers several physical and mental benefits for the participants. Here is an outlook of the gains you are likely to encounter through playing barefoot lawn bowls.

**Bodybuilding and Fitness**

Although barefoot bowling is a low-impact sport, requiring limited stress on your body, the techniques applied in rolling of the ball improves the participant’s body fitness. There is an impact on muscle strength, endurance, and physical flexibility each time you engage in the game.

**Mental Well-being**

Mental therapists and specialists recommend physical exercise, connecting with others, and relaxation as some of the useful tools for handling mental stress and depression. That is what barefoot bowling is all about. With the company of friends, fresh and cool air, relaxed feet and the engagement in playing the sport, there is little room left for stress and anxiety, this is a sure way to keep your mental health in check.

**Skill development**

Barefoot lawn bowls is a game of having fun and personal enjoyment. But it requires you to put some skill in it too. It can only get better when you are making good scores against your friends. Through this game, you can learn how to deal with defeat and strive to win on the next round of the game. With time, you will develop a competitive skill, as well as be an expert in the game. Competing with others in the game will also earn you some good problem-solving skills. Beginners who start with little skill end up being great problem solvers.

**Improved Coordination and Concentration**

Rolling the bowls along the green lawn requires some good coordination and concentration. It is not easy to judge the accuracy of the rolling bowls due to the nature of the outside and inside bias (circles on the bowls).

**Improves on Your Sleeping Habits**

Barefoot bowling is well known to be a good ‘pill’ for sleep. Participants with sleeping problems will not need to use sleeping pills anymore. Known for its therapeutic nature, barefoot bowling will help you to destress, eliminating every inhibiting factor to getting good sleep.

**Networking**

Barefoot bowling is a social sport. You get to interact with people from different walks of life when playing the sport.

**Cost of Participating in Barefoot Lawn Bowls**

Different bowling clubs and centres have varying costs for participation in barefoot bowling. Some clubs will only require you to the membership fee and annual subscriptions to the club. On the other hand, some clubs will need you to pay participation fees in addition to the membership and subscription fees. It is, therefore, vital to make enquiries from the various bowling authorities and clubs before subscribing for a bowling experience.

We acknowledge the following Source for articles:

Jack High Bowls (www.jackhighbowls.com)