

# Details For Beginners

## Thinking about taking the sport up?

Bowls is a sociable game that can be played by a wide range of ages and physical abilities.

We have a very exciting and vibrant youth development scheme with young people from aged eight through their teens with under 18 and under 25 competitions and County representative sides. There are Blind & Partially Sighted, Deaf, Amputee, and Wheelchair Bowlers all who enjoy the sport to the full. Few sports combine a competitive and social opportunity that a full family from children to grandparents can enjoy together.

If your worried about it being too competitive don't be, you will choose the level you wish to play at which will range all the way from friendly Club matches up to County competitions.

## How do you get started?

Find the telephone number of an Indoor or Outdoor Bowling Club nearest to your home and ring them and express your interest. They will give you details of any Beginners or "taster" sessions that are available for you. They also will probably arrange for you to borrow or rent some shoes and bowls to allow you to try the sport before you make up your mind to purchase your own. It really is as simple as that. I can guarantee you will be surprised at the warm welcome you will receive by all of your potential new club colleagues. The only thing you have to do is make that call and turn up at the appointed time.

## Training.

Having made up your mind to take up the sport it is highly recommended that you find a Beginners course being conducted by trained personnel of the English Bowls Coaching Scheme. They will take you through an approved syllabus that will assist you learn all of the basics. They will also help you find the most effective way for you to bowl. We are all different and the right way to do it is what works most effectively for you.

## Reading Material.

The E.B.C.S. (**ENGLISH BOWLS COACHING SCHEME**) have a new booklet designed specifically to give you all of the information and answer all of the questions you are likely to now have running through your head. WE STRONGLY ADVISE that you do not rush out and buy all sorts of equipment and shoes etc. until you are certain it's right for you.

The best initial purchase you can make is a copy of "Guide for Beginners" by sending a cheque for £2.85 per copy made out to E.B.C.S. to

Mr Peter Harris, National Coaching Coordinator, 70, Banbury Rd, Brackley, Northants, NN13 6AT.

Or contact a coach at your local club. At Ashford Indoor Bowls Club these are.

**Level Two Coaches – Frank Betts, Len Nolan and John Hulls.**

**Level Three Coach – John Oliver.**

# DO I NEED COACHING?

"I always play a bit heavy indoors"

"I always play a bit narrow on that hand. I think it's the Woods I play with"

"I hate it when they bring the mat right up. I just go to pieces"

"I'll be alright after the first couple of weeks of Indoor. It normally takes me at about that time to adjust from Outdoor"

Recognise these comments?

Heard them and comments like them many times?

Ever find yourself saying any of them, either out loud or in your mind?

I have a friend who told me that it doesn't matter what the game is he starts to get "*butterflies*"

starting around lunchtime. It's excitement and anticipation. Do you get like that or do you actually start to dread playing in some matches? Do you actually dislike playing with certain Club colleagues or, in particular, certain Club Skips because you know there's a weak spot in your game that they may criticise? Is it bad enough to make you not want to play in that match?

Forget about the grandiose term Coaching and ask yourself if you simply don't just need a little help.

Doesn't sound so bad that way does it.

Nobody can make you a Champion but you but maybe you'd settle just for a "*Well Played*" a few times in your next Club friendly. How can we help?

We can give you one thing to start with **KNOWLEDGE**. Employing this we can assist you to convert this into **SKILL**.

## Knowledge

We can help you analyse why the Bowl will not go where you want it to go consistently. A simple statement but what makes the difference between frustration and success.

## Skill

Through using the knowledge you've gained we can start you on the road of building your skill levels and assist you to continue building these via practise, practise and practise.

Cant' play a good forehand drawing shot?

**We can help.**

Only ever play Backhand and have done so for years?

**We can help.**

Dread being asked to play a running or firing shot?

**We can help.**

Used to be deadly accurate when firing but not lately?

**We can help.**

Each individual is different and we can help you as an individual with any aspect of your game. This personal approach is absolutely essential.

**You need to make the first move by contacting a qualified Coach**

### Quick Coaching Tips

**The following are not the definitive answer to the problems. They are designed to be a bit like a sticking plaster that just may help until you get to your Coach. Not much good however if you need stitches or maybe even more intense treatment.**

## 1. Playing Heavy

Slow down, just move slower and reduce the speed of your delivery, speed comes from velocity, your creating this so reduce it and the Wood won't travel so far.

## 2. Playing Short

Practice this to find the right level for you before you try it in a match.

## 3. Playing Narrow

Ensure your whole body is committed down the line you're trying to play. Have you picked the shoulder? (The point at which the Wood should start to turn) Are your eyes, feet, whole body pointing at the shoulder? Bet you're looking at the Jack!

Simply turn your whole body more, not a half turn with your feet pointing elsewhere. Stop looking at that Jack (Jackitis), Look and aim at the shoulder.

## 4. Playing Too Wide

Again, ensure you are addressing the line down to the Shoulder. Ensure you "Step Down This Line"

You may be stepping out too far to the side. You may be "throwing your arm out" It should be a smooth pendulum action down the side of your body. Again it could be as simple as turning your body less. Also, watch what shoulder other player's successful Woods are turning on.

You may be over compensating for your Woods. Try their line.

(Be careful that they're not left handed and your right handed, different line altogether)

## 5. Delivering the Jack into the Ditch

Too many people just "Cast the Jack" up the green in order to get on with the match. This is a disaster waiting to happen. The control of the match rests with the person who controls the Jack. This is undoubtedly the most important delivery in every single end and should be treated with more care and effort than any wood. Great care should be taken with the grip and delivery of the Jack.

On very fast greens it's possible to bowl the Jack across the Green to one of the corners of the rink, the principal being that the greater distance will take some of the weight out. Scientifically sound but not a great base to build your long-term game on. Don't treat the symptom but tackle the reason for the disease by learning how to control the Jack on all types of Greens.

## 6. Trial Ends "What's the Point?"

This is a sad development creeping into the game. The learning about the green, your opponents & your colleagues, starts from the first trial Wood. You and your Skip should be learning with every wood that is delivered. In some Counties they ensure they play Drawing, Running, Firing, Edge of the Ditch and various different lines, all in the trial ends. Each person in the rink has a job to do even in the Trial ends. The Skip should start the first competitive end with the information on the green gathered from the delivery of 16 woods from their own team, delivered to their instructions. They also have the information gained from watching their opponent's 16 woods. Not only will they have Green information but may have started to formulate views on strengths and weaknesses in each of their opponents that they may confirm early in the match and exploit to their advantage. Each player should also have been watching their direct opponents Bowl and started to formulate similar views.

What is the point? None what so ever, unless you use them and don't just treat them as a tradition.

## 7. Bumping Your Wood

Can be very embarrassing, particularly if you mark the green or even worse "take a divot" on an outdoor Green. The reason is very simple; you are releasing your Wood too high up. You need to get closer to the Green and release it so that it simply runs off the ends of your fingers along the Green like it was on silk. Easy to say but not always easy to achieve because many a time it's caused by physical conditions which make it difficult to get down low enough. Simple little test we use in many of our classes that you can try. Put a £10 on the ground in front of you at approximately where you would normally release your Wood. Pick it up. If you can, we can help you stop bumping your woods.

If you can't we can help you develop a delivery that is easier for you. Why bother if it's successful. The problem is that when you bump it takes "weight" out due to the result of the impact on the ve-

locity of the Wood. You may have learned to compensate for it however be aware some Clubs have large signs stating that if your perceived to be damaging their Green you will be asked to leave it, irrespective of the competition.

A trained Coach can help you cure it once and for all. If you have a video camera film yourself, stop it on freeze frame when the Wood actually leaves the tips of your fingers. There should be no discernable space between the Wood & the Green. If there is then watch it skip like a flat stone across water.

## **How can I become a coach?**

**Why Do You Want To Do It? Be Very Certain You Know the Honest Answer to That Question.**

Many people think that they would like to Coach and their reasons vary tremendously. There are those who feel that their playing days are coming to an end and they want to put something back into the game. Others state that because they have been bowling for many years they should be able to teach others.

The first is noteworthy the second may simply not be true. Think hard and answer these questions honestly before you go much further.

1. Do you want another badge for your collection or a certificate to hang on the club wall?
2. Do you believe it will give you some form of Kudos or Status?
3. Do you genuinely have an interest in working with other people?
4. Is it going to be a high priority or just something else to fit into your already busy diary?
5. Do you only want to coach at your own club and not travel?
6. Are you fit enough to "handle" a group of children for two hours or more?

There is very little monetary reward; in fact, most times you may be out of pocket. Relationships with club mates and friends can change and it's possible may become negative. "Who do you think you are? You are not that great a bowler what makes you think you can coach?" Remember "A prophet is not always recognized in their own land" We can of course give knowledge and assist in building coaching skills but the things we can do nothing about are Desire, Commitment, Determination, Good Humour, Thirst for Knowledge.

## **The Process for Becoming A Coach.**

**Make contact with the coaches at your local club, or contact E.B.C.S. via the contact section and we will start the ball rolling by getting someone to contact you.**

**There are five Levels but the first step is called.**

**Level One - licensed to conduct Foundation Coaching it consists of three modules.**

**1. An initial meeting with your Trainer.**

**2. Learning how to work with Pupils on the green without any being present.**

**3. Assisting at a Beginners Course.**

**Your Trainer will determine the point when you are assessed based on your progress. Everyone learns in different ways and at different speeds.**

**When you have been successfully assessed you can only work unsupervised with Beginner Adults. When working with Children or Vulnerable People you must be supervised at all times by a Level Two or higher qualified coach. You will need to have attained your Level Two before you are able to work unsupervised with these types of Pupil.**