

DRIVE TO SUCCESS

PERFORMANCE PODIUM PATHWAY:
2024 REVIEW



Drive to Success!

The Drive to Success – Performance Podium Pathway was established to outline the roadmap for players to progress through the sport from grassroots to international level. The pathway is aligned with our key strategic objectives:

- Strong and sustainable clubs
- The best performing bowls nation in the World
- A modern and progressive sport
- A diverse and accessible sport

We invited Players, clubs, officials and other volunteers involved in the 2024 Podium pathway to participate in a survey. This document will lay out both positive and negative feedback and highlight the changes being implemented to shape the pathway for next year.

Thank you to those who provided feedback on the first year of the Drive to Success – Performance Podium Pathway. Naturally with any new pathway system there are going to be learning points from the first year and we will look to continuously develop the system to meet the needs of a modern and progressive player assessment, selection and development tool for Bowls in Scotland.

Pathway Engagement



*2023 – 128 players total were involved in pathway for National team selection.

General comments from feedback survey

“Bowls Scotland should be applauded for introducing these events. Whilst I'm sure there are lessons to be learned, through time these events will evolve. The concept is to find some of the best talent in the country and is genuinely open to all. Hopefully these events can identify a development group of players whom some support can be given to emerging talent.”

“Really refreshing approach to team selection. Thoroughly enjoyed the process.”

Theme I: Communication

COMMUNICATION AROUND THE PODIUM CONCEPT
(Scored 3.5/5)



“As a new concept this was a good way for potentially unknown players to display their skill with a clear outcome of an assessment day invite if they managed to reach a final of the event.”

“The prior engagement teams sessions were very informative in order to get initial understanding and buy in as well as field questions players had.”

“Perhaps a better explanation to the players on how the scoring works would be beneficial.”



Communication continued...

COMMUNICATION AROUND THE PODIUM DRAWS

(Scored 3.6/5)



“Information was always available regarding the podium events and draws. Any changes were advised of and with as much notice as possible”

“Draw confirmations/changes to draws sent out late in week before tournament. Not helpful for those travelling.”

COMMUNICATION AROUND THE QUALIFICATION FOR ASSESSMENT WEEKEND

(Scored 3.1/5)



“The communication was clear. Some players obviously hadn't read or understood it properly as they thought it was about winning the podium events or their games rather than the scoring of each assessed game. I'm not sure how the communication could be improved hence the 5 stars”

“There seemed to be a lot of confusion from players what you had to do to qualify for assessment weekend i.e. did you need to win a section or make the final of the event at your green It was too short notice to be notified about selection for the assessment weekend. Finding out with less than a weeks' notice was not ideal knowing id need to travel the night before and book accommodation.”

“The dates of the podium weekends could be shared a bit earlier so players can plan their schedules accordingly. Only 1 week notice given to attend assessment weekend and then one week from being selected to squad meeting.”

Changes and developments being implemented in 2025

Following the feedback regarding communications, we undertake to make the following changes for season 25/26.

The podium dates were shared in November 2023 in the calendar of events. We have published them in Oct 2024 for the forthcoming season. We will continue to have online information evenings to keep all those on the pathway up to date and will publish competition entry information on social media sites a long with email contact addresses to ensure everyone is aware of venues, disciplines and format etc. We will also publish a venue player information document which will include a refresher of the assessment criteria and the information for the venue event.

In respect of draws, we faced significant difficulties with extremely late call offs for events. With changes to the number of events and the use of double green venues where possible, we hope this will reduce the overall impact regarding timings of events due to withdrawals. To maintain the integrity of the events in some cases a re-draw will be done rather than byes being given. We will endeavour as always to reduce inconvenience to players, but this also requires player co-operation.



Theme 2: Podium Event Venues

GENERAL COMMENTS:

“First class. All venues were well suited to the events and the organisers and volunteers at all events did a fantastic job”

“A very good location variation of venues to select from.”

“Venue was good. Easy to get to and plenty of nearby parking. Facilities onsite including the food available was also good. No complaints at all.”

“All venues where as expected, and food snacks were available to the players throughout the sessions, the teams at the bowling clubs were kind and informed.”

“Some greens are inherently better than others. Selection of greens should’ve focused on quality instead of location i.e would rather travel the extra 30 mins for a better green.

“No comment apart from the triples and singles should have had a more local green to be played at, as there was aims to have every player be within an hour of at least one green per competition, but the singles and triples for myself were a bit too far away from that estimate.”

PREFERRED VENUE REGIONS

When asked to identify preferred venue region these were the following results:



Changes and developments being implemented in 2025

We had some really positive feedback around our host venues for the 2024 Podium events and will continue to take these events around the country to increase our club engagement in the pathway and support our community clubs. We will continue to seek quality double greens where possible across the country at a minimum of 4/5 locations with a regional split. We recognise that this will have some impact on the initial plan of having a venue within 1.5hrs travel of our most rural regions.

Feedback from, umpires, volunteers, assessors, clubs and the player experience highlighted that by having a reduced number of venues with double greens we will be able to maintain the available number of entries, pool resources of our volunteers, make it much more viable for our clubs and improve the overall experience for everyone involved.

We understand that green condition varies year on year and the ability to ensure the quality of a green can vary dramatically, but we undertake to do everything we can to provide the best playing surfaces during the podium events.



Theme 3: Podium Schedule and Format

GENERAL COMMENTS:

“4 Sundays is a big commitment and then 2 assessment days.”

“Every weekend out one month is a lot when other associations have games going on”

PARTICIPATION NUMBERS IN 2024:

Pairs – 248

Singles – 230

Triples – 204

Fours – 176

FORMAT FOR SECTIONAL GAMES:

63% of all respondents requested two trial ends.

68% of all respondents requested 9 ends.

PODIUM EVENTS COUNTING TOWARDS NATIONAL RANKING:

61% of respondents would like to see this occur.

OTHER BOWLS SCOTLAND EVENTS CONTRIBUTING TOWARDS SELECTION:

Several Bowls Scotland events were identified by players as thought to be significant regarding performance and assessment. The overwhelming majority of respondents identified the National Championships as an event that should be considered for national team selection. A number of respondents also identified youth competitions and events that should be considered for age group representation.

Changes and developments being implemented in 2025

Most Podium events will remain in May due to the necessity of national team selection by the Internationals in June. A space between completion of Podiums and the assessment weekend has been implemented to allow players to plan travel and accommodation if required. Further podium event(s) will be added to the calendar later in the year to allow for a continued assessment of players throughout the season.

Feedback about an increased number of ends and the addition of trial ends will be applied. A review of participation numbers, preferred disciplines and ability to resource effectively has guided a change to the format of this years' podiums to pairs and triples disciplines.

Given the volume of responses regarding the national championships we have acted. Any player/team winning a "tier A" national championship discipline (singles, pairs, triples, fours) will be asked whether they wish to be invited for national team assessment. This will still be subject to fulfilment of engaging with pathway criteria and participating in podium events.

A review into Youth competitions and events is currently ongoing with our new working group and some changes have already been established in next seasons events. Further decisions will be made on these events regarding national selection policy.

Bowls Scotland will seek to develop a new ranking system to feed into and support the new World Bowls Ranking system.



Theme 4: Calendar Clashes

IDENTIFYING CALENDAR CLASHES:

There was a significant number of clashes listed from all over Scotland, regarding local events, county events, inter county events and district qualifiers for national championships.

Changes and developments being implemented in 2025

In respect of district events the district co-ordinators have been working with us and players to accommodate the requirement to rearrange district ties where a clash occurred. This will continue but we urge players to contact district co-ordinators as early as possible to raise their awareness of any possible clashes with performance events.

It is almost impossible to avoid clashes with the outdoor bowling calendar being so busy, however, we have now engaged with key stakeholders to produce a more collaborative calendar for 2025 and minimise the number of clashes where possible.



Summary of Changes for 2025/26 Season

- Continue player information evenings and provide detailed supporting documents
- Podiums played on double green venues where possible across 4-5 regions
- Increased number of ends and trial ends added
- Change to disciplines – pairs and triples
- Nationals' winners invited to assessment weekend
- Spread of Podium events to allow for continual assessment throughout season
- Collaboration with other stakeholders to minimise calendar clashes





For further information please contact:
kareenacuthbert@bowlsscotland.com