



BOWLS SCOTLAND

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

RULES AND BYELAWS

2026

1. CONDITIONS OF ENTRY

- 1.1 All clubs in Membership of Bowls Scotland and not in arrears with the Annual Capitation Fees and are not subject to ongoing Bowls Scotland Disciplinary process or investigation are eligible to participate in all or any of the Competitions. Payment of the appropriate entry fee for each Competition shall be held to constitute the official entry. Failure to pay by the published date may result in no entry to Championships.
- 1.2 No player shall be permitted to play British Isles Bowls qualifying events in any other British Isles Bowls National Authority in the same year.

2. ADMINISTRATION

- 2.1 The management and control of the Competitions shall be vested in Bowls Scotland, who shall determine all questions or disputes that may arise which do not come within the scope of the duties of an Umpire referred to under **UMPIRE DUTIES**.
- 2.2 For each District, Bowls Scotland shall appoint a local District Coordinator who shall, under the authority of Bowls Scotland, be responsible for arranging District ties so as to ensure the completion by the published date. Each District Coordinator shall submit to Bowls Scotland a full report to include competitor(s) full names and the results of the ties.
- 2.3 District Coordinators will arrange ties so that they do not clash and that;
 - 2.3.1 All Singles, U25 Singles, Pairs, Triples and Fours are played in the evenings or at weekends.
 - 2.3.2 All Over 55 ties are played in the morning, afternoon, evening or at weekends.
 - 2.3.3 All Mixed Pairs ties are played in the evenings or at weekends.
- 2.4 In the First Stage, District Coordinators are required to arrange all stage I ties prior to 30th June. District Coordinators are requested to avoid clashes in dates with the Bowls Scotland Competitions Calendar allowing all Bowls Scotland players, officials and members of staff the opportunity to participate in all of our events.
- 2.5 Where a player/coach is participating in a Bowls Scotland International, selection event or pathway event the player/coach must inform the district secretary in order have a date exemption applied. The player/coach must make themselves available to play the exempted game within 7 days of the end of the international/pathway event. No player/coach either not informing the district co-ordinator or making themselves available within the 7 days shall be entitled to the exemption.

3. ORGANISATION

- 3.1 The Competitions will be played in two Stages:
- a. First Stage - District ties where Member Clubs will be formed into Districts and play to the last 32.
 - b. Second Stage - National Championships will be competed for by the 32 District winners.
- 3.2 **FIRST STAGE:** Clubs competing in the National Championships are required to provide green space for ties when requested by the District Coordinators. Host Clubs must appoint an Umpire and Markers when required, failing which the competing Clubs may mutually agree on a competent person to act as Umpire.
- 3.3 The host club official on whose Green the tie has been played must ensure that scores are communicated to the District Coordinator at the earliest opportunity.
- 3.4 On the day on which a District tie is to be played, no participating player shall play on the same rink as that on which the tie is to be played, the penalty is disqualification.
- 3.5 The failure of a player to appear after a period of 30 minutes from the start time of a tie will result in the player and club being disqualified from that particular competition.
- 3.6 The method of selection of players shall be left to the discretion of each Member Club. All players selected must be Members of the Club they are chosen to represent. The competitor(s) playing in the first tie shall be the official selection of the Member Club.
- 3.7 There is no lower age restriction for the U25 Singles, Singles, Pairs, Triples, Fours and Mixed Pairs. Clubs must ensure that players under 16 years of age are registered members of their club.
- 3.8 **No player shall represent more than one club.** Any breach of this rule will result in the player and Clubs being disqualified from the competition entered by the player.
- 3.9 No player may enter more than one District Competition other than those specified in the Competitions and Substitution section. Any breach of this rule will result in the player and Club being disqualified from the competitions entered by the player.
- 3.10 All Competitions shall be played under World Bowls Laws of the Sport of Bowls (Crystal Mark Fourth Edition) as published by World Bowls and including Bowls Scotland domestic regulations.
- 3.11 **SECOND STAGE:** Bowls Scotland will manage this stage in the competition and will make a draw of the 32 District winners which will be played at such time and place as fixed by Bowls Scotland.

4. **COMPETITIONS**

National Competitions will be held in the following disciplines and all finals will be played at Ayr, Northfield at the advertised dates.

4.1 **Singles**

- a. There will be separate competitions for male and female members.
- b. Each club may enter two players in the male and female competitions.

- c. Each player will play four bowls.
- d. The winner being the first to score 21 shots.

4.2 **U25 Singles**

- a. There will be separate competitions for male and female members.
- b. Each club may enter an unrestricted number of players in the male and female competitions.
- c. All Players must be under 25 years of age on the 1st April of the year of the Championships.
- d. Each player will play four bowls.
- e. The winner being the first to score 21 shots.
- f. Players may also play in the Mixed Pairs and one of the Singles, Pairs, Triples, Fours and also Youth (U18) Singles, Pairs, Triples.

4.3 **Pairs**

- a. There will be separate competitions for male and female members.
- b. Each club may enter two Pairs in the male and female competitions.
- c. Each player will play four bowls.
- d. Each tie will be decided over 17 ends, with an extra end(s) if required to determine a winner.

4.4 **Triples**

- a. There will be separate competitions for male and female members.
- b. Each club may enter one triple in the male and female competitions.
- c. Each player will play three bowls.
- d. Each tie will be decided over 15 ends, with an extra end(s) if required to determine a winner.
- e. Three players must play at all times.

4.5 **Fours**

- a. There will be separate competitions for male and female members.
- b. Each club may enter one Four in the male and female competitions.
- c. Each player will play two bowls.
- d. Each tie will be decided over 17 ends, with an extra end(s) if required to determine a winner.
- e. Four players must play at all times.

4.6 **Over 55 Singles**

- a. There will be separate competitions for male and female members.
- b. Each club may enter an unrestricted number of players in the male and female competitions.
- c. Each player will play four bowls.
- d. The winner will be the first to score 21 shots.
- e. All players must be 55 years of age or over on the 1st April of the year of the Championships.
- f. Players may also play in one of the Singles, Pairs, Triples and Fours. Players may also play in the Mixed Pairs.

4.7 **Over 55 Fours**

- a. There will be separate competitions for male and female members.
- b. Each club may enter an unrestricted number of players in the male and female competitions.
- c. Each player will play two bowls.
- d. Each tie will be decided over 15 ends, with an extra end(s) if required to determine a winner.
- e. All players must be 55 years of age or over on the 1st April of the year of the Championships.
- f. Four players must play at all times.
- g. Players may also play in one of the Singles, Pairs, Triples, Fours. Players may also play in the Mixed Pairs.

4.8 **Mixed Pairs**

- a. Each club may enter two pairs of one male and one female each in this competition.
- b. Both players must be members of the entering club.
- c. Each player will play four bowls.
- d. Each tie will be decided over 17 ends, with an extra end(s) if required to determine a winner.
- e. Players may also compete in the following competitions: Singles, U25 Singles, Pairs, Triples, Fours and either the Over 55 Singles or Over 55 Fours, Youth (U18) Singles, Pairs, Triples in accordance with each competition's rules.

4.9 **Youth Competition**

- a. Each club may enter an unrestricted number of players in the youth competitions.
- b. Each discipline will be in a Round robin format and games will have a time limit of 40 minutes per match (not including trial end - first game only). The 40 min bell/whistle will be sounded on the 40th minute and the end in play must be completed.

- a. Singles – First to 21 or 40 minutes
 - b. Pairs – Four bowls per player - 40 minutes games
 - c. Triples – Three bowls per player - 40 minutes games
- c. Players may also play in one of the Singles, Pairs, Triples, Fours. Players may also play in the Mixed Pairs.

4.10 Para Competitions

- a. Each club may enter an unrestricted number of players in the para singles competitions.
- b. Each player will play four bowls.
- c. The winner being the first to score 21 shots.
- d. Players may also compete in the following competitions: Singles, U25 Singles, Pairs, Triples, Fours and either the Over 55 Singles or Over 55 Fours, Mixed Pairs in accordance with each competition's rules.

5. SUBSTITUTION

- 5.1 **FIRST STAGE:** the players participating in the first tie shall be regarded as the official selection of the Member Club.
- 5.2 Between each round players may alter playing positions.
- 5.3 **During play**, if it is agreed that a substitute is required, the substitute should play in any position other than skip, and the other members of the team can rearrange their positions as necessary.
- 5.4 **First Stage:** Once it is agreed that a substitute is required during play the substitute must be ready to play within 30 minutes or the tie will be forfeit.
- 5.5 The full rules for substitution during play are contained in the World Bowls Laws of the Sport of Bowls (**Crystal Mark Fourth Edition**) Rules 32 and 33.
- 5.6 The National Championship competitions are divided into 6 groups;
- Group A – Singles, Pairs, Triples & Fours
 - Group B – Over 55 Singles and Fours
 - Group C – Mixed Pairs
 - Group D – U25 Singles
 - Group E – Youth (Under 18) Singles, Pairs & Triples
 - Group F – Para Singles
- i) Stage 1 competitions will be played at different times so as not to clash.
 - ii) Stage 2 competitions will be separated as much as possible, and any duplication of qualifiers will be accommodated.
 - iii) Players may be substituted and then return to the competitions in the following circumstances, with the basic principle being that a player can substitute provided

that they have not played and been not knocked out in the same Group of competitions.

- iv) A player cannot move directly from one discipline or team into another i.e. from a Triples into a Pairs or another Pairs team, a substitute who has played in the Group then missed a game or a player who has not played in the Group before can only be used as a substitute.
- v) Players can only play in one competition within the same group at a time.
- vi) The number of times a substitute can be used remains the same;

Singles	–	1 substitute
Pairs	–	2 substitutes
Triples	–	3 substitutes
Fours	–	4 substitutes

Each time any player is substituted counts as 1 substitution.

Stage I – District Championship

- Only 1 substitute is permitted in all the singles competitions.
- In Group A, B, C and D, players can play in any round, then be substituted and then return to any competition in the same Group or play in any other Group (provided they comply with the age rules), provided they have not been knocked out in the same Group of competitions.
- The players who win the District Championship will be the clubs registered players for the Second Stage.

5.7 **FIRST STAGE** and for one round only, a replacement player can be used to replace a player necessitated by immediate family bereavement or jury duty. The player who was replaced may return and play in the subsequent rounds. This replacement does not count as a substitution.

5.8 **FIRST AND SECOND STAGE:** In the event of the death of a player in the First or Second stages a replacement may be made, and this does not count as a substitute. Substitutes must be notified to the District co-ordinator and emailed to events@bowlsscotland.com at least 7 days prior to first day of the national championships, in the circumstances of death or illness occurring within the 7 day period. Players must still meet the other criteria for substitutions.

5.9 **SECOND STAGE – NATIONAL FINALS**

- a) Only one substitute is permitted in all competitions.
- b) In the Singles, U25 Singles, Over 55 Singles and Para Singles no substitute shall be introduced after the first round.
- c) Players can be used as substitutes who have either

- (i) Played in the same group of competitions but not knocked out or
 - (ii) Players who have not played in any of the same group of competitions.
- d) Substitutes must be notified to the District Co-ordinator and emailed to events@bowlsscotland.com at least 7 days prior to first day of the national championships. In the circumstances of death or illness occurring within the 7 day period an email should be sent to events@bowlsscotland.com. Players must still meet the other criteria for substitutions.

5.10 In the Pairs, Triples, Fours and Over 55 Fours, the substitute may be introduced in any one of the five rounds.

5.11 **Second Stage** – Players must register at least 30 minutes before the advertised start time of the competition.

5.5.1. If a player fails to register **within 15 minutes after the registration time**, the player and their club **will be disqualified from that competition**.

5.5.2. Once the tie is scheduled to begin, **players must be present at the rink within 15 minutes of the start time**. Failure to appear within this 15-minute period **will result in the player and their club being disqualified from that competition**.

6. Restricted movement in play

Movement of players during play will be restricted at **Second Stage as follows:**

After delivering their first bowl, players shall not approach the head unless permitted to in the following circumstances;

6.1 Singles Game.

After delivery of their third and fourth bowls.

6.2 Pairs Game (each player playing four bowls)

6.2.1 The leads: after delivery of their fourth bowl

6.2.2 The skips: after delivery of their third and fourth bowl

6.3 Triples game (each player playing three bowls)

6.3.1 The leads: after delivery of their third bowl

6.3.2 The seconds: after delivery of their second and third bowls

6.3.3 The skips: after delivery of their second and third bowl

6.4 Fours Game (each player playing two bowls)

6.4.1. The leads: after delivery of their second bowl

6.4.2. The seconds: after delivery of their second bowl

6.4.3. The thirds: after delivery of their second Bowl

6.4.4. The skips: after delivery of each of their bowls

6.5. In exceptional and limited circumstances.

A Singles player can ask the marker for permission to visit the head before delivery of their third bowl. The markers permission is entirely at their discretion and professional judgement. If a player approaches the head, without the consent of the marker, on the first occasion the player shall be warned. If the infringement is repeated then the bowl to be played shall be declared dead.

6.5.1. In Singles both players **must** start at the mat end on delivery of the jack.

6.5.2. If any player in singles, pairs, triples or fours does not meet the terms of this law, Laws of the Sport Crystal Mark Fourth Edition, law 13 will apply regarding rink possession.

6.6. Illness/Substitution

If a player wishes to leave the rink of play, Law 33.1 will apply. However, if on more than one occasion, then on each occasion after the first they can only do so with their opponent's and the umpire's permission. If either the player's team manager or coach are present, the umpire will consult with them before deciding whether or not to grant permission. During the game in the event the following rules are applicable in the case of a player requiring medical attention

6.6.1. At the Skip's discretion a substitute may be introduced providing the substitute is eligible under COP 5 above should a player be unable to continue due to a medical incident.

6.6.2. A decision as to whether a substitute is required must be made within 10 minutes of the game being suspended. Should there be any delay in the person being medically **assessed** then this 10-minute period will commence from when medical attention begins. Should the medical assessment not be completed and an informed medical opinion not be available within 10 mins this period may be extended by a further 10 mins.

6.6.3. Any substitute must be available and at the rink within 10 mins of the decision of a substitute being required being taken under 6.6.2. The substitute must wear footwear which complies with the law and must use bowls which meet the requirements of the law, however the requirement to be dressed in the same manner as team members will not apply.

6.6.4. On the basis of medical advice Bowls Scotland reserves the right to refuse a player to return to the green and insist upon a substitute being played. This decision will rest with the medical staff on site, and the substitute must then be available in accordance with 6.6.3 above.

6.6.5. Should the substituted player subsequently be fit to return at future games in the championships they will be allowed to return. If they have been withdrawn due to medical advice, then this will only be permitted where the medical staff on site approve this.

7. DRESS CODE

7.1 FIRST STAGE:

- a. **All players** – Any coordinated outfit is permitted with a mix of trousers, shorts, skirts, culottes or mid-calf trousers.
- b. There is no requirement to register coloured tops. Any colour of bowling top may be worn; this includes shirt & tie, blouse, bowling top or polo top.
- c. In Pairs, Triples and Fours players do not have to be dressed alike.
- d. Football tops or tops resembling football strips or football colours are not acceptable, neither are tops bearing football badges or logos similarly tops with slogans or political/religious statements are not acceptable.
- e. There is no restriction on advertising or sponsors logos provided they comply with d. above.
- f. Appropriate warm and waterproof clothing may be worn.
- g. All players must wear flat, heel-less footwear.

7.2 Players failing to comply with the dress code may be reported to the District Coordinator who will consider what action is to be taken, this may include the player(s) disqualification.

7.3 SECOND STAGE:

- a. **All players** – Any coordinated outfit is permitted with a mix of trousers, skirts, shorts, culottes or mid-calf trousers. Team should be dressed alike.
- b. Shorts may be worn; they must be of a reasonable length and must comply with rule a or c.
- c. In Team games all players must have coordinated dress, but any combination of shorts, skirt and trousers is permitted, but the colour must be alike. In youth pairs and triples it shall not be necessary to wear matching tops. Where there is a design this must be consistent across all the player in the same team.
- d. Football tops or tops resembling football strips or football colours are not acceptable neither are tops bearing football badges or logos similarly slogans or political/religious statements are not acceptable.
- e. There is no restriction on advertising or sponsors logos provided they comply with d. above.
- f. Appropriate warm and waterproof clothing may be worn.
- g. All players must wear flat, heel less footwear.

7.4 **UMPIRE DRESS CODE FOR THE SECOND STAGE.**

Umpires dress code will be decided by the Bowls Scotland.

8. **GENERAL**

8.1 **STAMPING OF BOWLS**

All bowls must bear a legible, approved stamp and serial number. For the avoidance of doubt, bowls bearing only the BIBC stamp with or without a serial number are ineligible for play at all stages. There is no restriction on the date of the stamp.

8.2 **UMPIRE DUTIES** - In the First stage.

Examine bowls and be fully conversant with and enforce the Rules. Players in doubt of any ruling should at once consult the Umpire. At the completion of all competitions and after the scores have been agreed the Umpire shall ensure that the score cards have been properly completed showing the Club, full names of competitors, and the time the game finished and signed by the competitor(s). The score cards to be passed to the host club official on whose Green the tie has been played must ensure that scores are communicated to the District Coordinator at the earliest opportunity.

The Umpire, in addition to exercising the functions as set out in Law 43 of the World Bowls Laws of the Sport of Bowls (Crystal Mark Fourth Edition) shall determine whether the Green is in a fit condition for playing the tie and decide appeals on the ground of darkness, condition of the weather or any other valid reason. If the Umpire decides that the game must be postponed, the Umpire shall there and then in the presence of the competitors fix another time for the tie (either at a later hour on that day or some other day before the due date of the next round) and the parties shall be held to have thereby received due notice of the fixture.

8.3 **ALCOHOL**

Players competing in the National Championships, at any stage, are not permitted to consume alcohol within the parameters of the green whilst playing.

8.4 **SMOKING**

The following areas shall be **smoke-free** at all times:

- 8.1.1. the green;
- 8.1.2. the bank;
- 8.1.3. all indoor areas;
- 8.1.4. all enclosed outdoor areas
- 8.1.5. all spectator seating areas;
- 8.1.6. all outdoor dining areas, al-fresco dining areas; and
- 8.1.7. within 10 metres of any building entrance, or in accordance with Government Legislation.

This applies to any member, player, official, spectator, visitor or any other person

attending the event and includes all electronic devices.

Smoking **shall only be permitted** in designated outdoor smoking areas.

Bowls Scotland **will only** apply this ruling at National Championships Stage 2, Gents & Ladies Top 10 Finals played at the National Centre for Bowling.

Failure to adhere to a warning will be reported to the controlling body for consideration of what action to take and could result in expulsion from the event.

8.5 DRUG TESTING

- a. A number of checks may be taken at the National Championships.
- b. It is very important that if you are taking any drugs prescribed by a doctor or otherwise that you check the enclosed guidelines carefully as all players need to be aware of the principle of strict liability. This means that all players are solely responsible for any banned substance they use, attempt to use, or that is found in their system, regardless of how it got there and whether they had an intention to cheat.
- c. More information on Anti-Doping can be found here:
<https://www.bowlsscotland.com/high-performance/anti-doping>

8.6 ABUSE

Any player who subjects their opponent or any official to physical or verbal abuse will be warned by the umpire. Failure to adhere to the warning will be reported to the controlling body for consideration of what action to take, including the players disqualification. Clubs have 24 hours to give a written report to Bowls Scotland Competitions & Events Team of any incident on the green in the absence of a warning being issued by any officials at the time.

8.7 PRESS AND TV INTERVIEWS

Bowls Scotland expects any member invited to take part in a press/TV interview to conduct themselves in a befitting manner as an ambassador of the sport and country. Should a player/team be allocated to the streaming rink then it is required that the player plays on this rink, failure to play on the rink shall be considered as a failure to fulfill the fixture and the tie be forfeited. In the event of exceptional circumstances, the tournament director reserves the right to amend playing schedules.

8.8 Para Bowling Equipment

More information on Para Bowling Equipment can be found here:
<https://www.bowlsscotland.com/competitions/rules/equipment-guidance-for-para-bowls>

8.9 Coaching

In relation to the nomination and the powers of a coach, Law 44 of Chrystal Mark fourth addition applies.