

Woodcock Park Bowling Club

Explaining the Game

Contents

Foreword

1. Leading
 - 1.1 Before the game
 - 1.2 Placing the mat
 - 1.3 Delivering the jack
 - 1.4 Delivering the woods
 - 1.5 The Second's turn
 - 1.6 Completing the end
 - 1.7 After the game
 - 1.8 Afterword
 - 1.9 Addendum (Specific to WPBC)
2. Playing second
 - 2.1 Before the match
 - 2.2 While the leads are playing
 - 2.3 Your deliveries
 - 2.4 The skip's turn
 - 2.5 After all the woods have been delivered
3. Marking
 - 3.1 Preparation
 - 3.2 Trial Ends
 - 3.3 Match in progress
 - 3.4 Scoring
 - 3.5 End of match
4. Glossary of terms

Foreword

The purpose of this document is to provide a reference source to help you and your fellow players enhance your enjoyment of the game. Games will flow more smoothly and with less effort when you follow the advice given here. In time, it will become second nature and will seem to have always been the obvious thing to do.

There is no chapter on being a skip. By the time you have gone through leading, playing second and marking, you will have experienced several skips and will know what to do when the time comes.

1. Leading

This chapter describes how to become a valued lead (1st) player in the game of triples. The emphasis is on the duties, etiquette and rink craft. Bowling skills are not covered, they will come with coaching, practice and experience.

1.1 Before the game

Before the game, please help with setting out the rink ensuring markers are on the correct colour and all equipment necessary is in place. When about to walk past a rink where play is in progress at the far end, stop before the edge marker if a player is on the mat. Wait until their wood is rolling and then cross promptly. If play is in progress at the near end, you may proceed across provided you can do so silently (e.g., not rolling a couple of pushers).

Each lead needs to be able to recognise the woods belonging to their skip and the opposing lead, check the markings before starting the game.

Place, do not drop, your woods behind and well away from the mat line. Take care not to damage this area as it will be part of the playing area on the next end, indeed, a critical part if a long jack is put up.

1.2 Placing the mat

If your team has the mat, you must initially place it. Do this by holding the mat in front of you whilst facing the rink number and about 1 metre from the ditch. Carefully walk straight backwards until you are at the required distance (2 metres minimum, maximum up to the side marker indicating 25 metres from the far ditch) and lay the mat down so that it is centred and pointing straight at the rink number. If protective nets are in use, place the mat so that the front edge just overlaps the start of the net by an inch or two. This prevents the net becoming a possible trip hazard as the front foot goes forward during the bowling action.

1.3 Delivering the jack

Next, you deliver the jack. If your skip is indicating the length he/she wants (usually by standing somewhere on the centre line and pointing at their feet) try to bowl the jack to that point as best you can. Otherwise, the length is up to you but must be at least 23 metres and before the far ditch. For guidance there is a side marker at 25 metres from the rear ditch, this is the minimum distance for a minimum mat placing (2 metres), if the mat is moved up by a certain distance, the jack must be at least that distance past the marker. A jack within 2 metres of the far ditch is moved back so that it is exactly 2 metres from the ditch. Try to deliver to a length you can

comfortably achieve with your woods. Bowl the jack in the same manner as a wood but as straight along the centre line as you can as there is no bias on a flat green lawn bowls jack.

If the jack ends up out of bounds (too short, in the ditch or outside the rink boundaries) it will be returned and the lead of the opposing team delivers the jack. This will either result in a legal delivery or the jack will be placed two metres from the far ditch. If the jack is at maximum due to two foul deliveries, the mat may be moved nearer to the jack up until the first side marker. At this point whoever last delivered the jack must assist the skip to centre it. Indicate by standing with both feet on the mat and holding both hands clear of the side of the body showing the direction to move the jack and the distance between the hands giving the distance to be moved. Repeat the process until the jack is centred and acknowledge with a thumbs up. Note that a mat that is moved up may also need to be centred. This is done in a similar manner to centring the jack, but with the skip standing on the far bank behind the rink number and signalling direction and distance and the lead adjusting the mat.

Proficiency with the jack is an essential skill for a good lead, so don't neglect this during practice sessions.

1.4 Delivering the woods

If you are lead of the team that had the mat, it is now time to deliver your first bowl, if not, make sure you are behind the line of the mat and that your shadow is also not a distraction to the player about to bowl. You may bowl whichever hand (backhand/forehand) you feel comfortable with, consciously check that you have the right bias until this becomes automatic. After your bowl comes to rest, stay on the mat until your skip indicates how far your bowl was short or past the jack, then promptly vacate the mat and retreat behind its line so that your opposite number can take their turn. The distance may be indicated by the skip holding hands apart by that distance or a hand whose height above ground level gives the distance. Note that this distance does not consider how far the wood is from the jack in a sideways direction, it is only a length indication. You can see if a delivery ends up wide, but it can be difficult to judge the length. To deliver your second bowl, adjust your line and weight for a better result if needed but stick to the same hand as your first delivery. Stay with that hand throughout unless your skip instructs otherwise. Do not attempt to play weighted or 'firing' shots, always just try to draw near to the jack. If you need information such as the distance from a short bowl to the jack, ask your skip, but only when you are on the mat.

1.5 The second's turn

After both leads have bowled three pieces it is the turn of the seconds (covered in the next chapter). When the seconds have

completed their three woods each, the lead that bowled first should place one of the woods belonging to their skip by the mat before proceeding to the far end with the other lead and both seconds. Meanwhile the skips come down to the mat to bowl their woods. The leads should stand well back from the head taking care not to obscure the line of sight from the mat to the rink number and side markers, also any additional markers indicating live woods and/or jack in the ditch. The leads may converse quietly provided they are not disturbing adjacent rinks, but must be careful to stay still while either skip is on the mat preparing to bowl. There is no reason for either lead to approach the head to examine it. Both leads must remain situationally aware at all times and be ready to move out of the way of a wood or woods in motion and be careful not to disturb any stationary woods. Leads should not remove 'dead' woods from the ditch or any that have gone off rink, the seconds will do that.

1.6 Completing the end

Once all woods have come to rest, the seconds will decide on the shot count and perform any measuring if necessary and signal the result to the other end. The leads must not get involved in this process. The lead of the side that lost the end should get the pusher and the other lead should retrieve the jack whilst pushing any outlying woods so that they come closer to the rest of the woods, making it easier to gather them all up with the pusher. The seconds should assist with this. The woods should be pushed to a position behind the mat line and at least 1.5 metres clear of the centre line. The lead that did the pushing should place the pusher on the bank and then retrieve a wood belonging to the other lead and place it near to and in front of the mat while the jack is being delivered or centred so that it can be picked up and bowled without undue delay. Whenever it is your turn to play next, do not wait until the mat has been vacated to start searching for your wood. Use the previous player's turn to locate your wood and be prepared to take your place on the mat promptly. The initial lead and the skip will have their woods next to the mat, so the game can flow at a nice pace.

1.7 After the game

After the end of the match shake hands with all players and, win or lose, have only nice things to say. Don't forget to assist with putting away all equipment while taking care not to disturb any matches still in progress on other rinks.

If all the advice given here is followed the result is a game that is more enjoyable and less tiring due to an equitable distribution of responsibilities amongst team members. All this may seem complicated initially, but it rapidly becomes second nature because it is a logical way to do things that stands the test of time.

1.8 Afterword

Finally, let me dispel the myth that lead is where the weakest member of a triples team is assigned. The lead is very important and can make or break a team. A good lead can allow the skip to direct the second to play strategically, possibly placing woods beyond the head or, more rarely, short of the head, to protect the work of the lead. The skip is then free to add to, or defend, the team's work thus far. The myth comes about because lead is the best position for an inexperienced bowler, regardless of ability. There is only one task required - bowl as near to the jack as you can. Do this well and follow the rink craft advice given and you will become a much sought after lead for any club team.

1.9 Addendum: Specific to WPBC only.

Check the rink book for direction, colour of play and rink availability. ALL rink numbers and edge markers must be moved to the correct colour, not just the rink you are intending to play on.

The directions are ACROSS or AWAY. ACROSS is East/West and AWAY is North/South given that the clubhouse is on the South side of the green.

Check the notice board for any special instructions such as use of protective nets.

Unless playing a competition match that is booked in the rink book, enter your name in the roll-up book.

If protective nets are in use, the ability to move the mat closer to a full-length jack following two illegal deliveries is not permitted.

For organized roll-ups (e.g., Willie Osborne and club afternoons), the following apply:

Please turn up at least 15 minutes before the scheduled start of play. The match organiser needs to know the number of players in order to prepare the team selection disks and decide on the number of rinks required. Bowls shoes must be worn, rinks set out and teams assembled on the rinks. 15 minutes is barely adequate for all of this and latecomers' risk being left out. The match organiser will select the appropriate number of skips and ask them to select a 'Skip' disk at random. The remaining players then select one of the other disks apiece. The selected skips may ask if one of their team is prepared to volunteer to skip in their place.

Although you may have picked a disk that says 'Lead' or 'Second', the disks are only for the purpose of assigning rink and team (red or black), the skip decides the team's playing order.

Skips should ensure that all 6 disks (4 for pairs) are placed in a pile behind the scoreboard for collection by the match organiser.

The black team has the mat at the start of the game and is the HOME team on the scoreboard.

There are no trial ends. To compensate for this, only one shot is counted on the first end in each direction, normal scoring applies from end 3.

Triples matches are played over 16 ends. Because the number of players might not permit all matches to be triples, one or two pairs' matches may be needed to allow everyone to participate. Pairs matches use 4 woods for each player and are played over 18 ends. Either way, a total of 288 woods are bowled in a completed match, 48 by each player in triples and 72 each in pairs.

The overall winning rink is the one with the highest shot difference. In the event of a tie, the winner is the rink with the higher shot count. If this is still tied, the result is a draw and any prize is shared.

In order for the scores to count towards the season aggregate in the Willie Osborne, a minimum of 8 players (two pairs' matches) must play. Any match abandoned before the scheduled number of ends, for whatever reason, will not have a score recorded unless at least ten ends have been played.

Any changes to the above will be clearly communicated to the participants by the match organiser before teams are selected.

2. Playing second

This chapter describes how to become a valued second player in the game of triples. The emphasis is on the duties, etiquette and rink craft. Bowling skills are not covered, they will come with coaching, practice and experience.

2.1 Before the match

Before the game, please help with setting out the rink ensuring markers are on the correct colour and all equipment necessary is in place. Take care not to disturb any play in progress on other rinks. Ensure that you are equipped with chalk/chalk spray and a measure. A set of rubber wedges would also be handy to have. Make sure you can recognize each team's woods. This is easier than it sounds as you only need to remember two sets, the woods belonging to your lead and skip. Anything that isn't yours or one of those two must therefore belong to the opposition.

2.2 While the leads are playing

Pay attention while the leads bowl their woods. A lot can be learned about the line and the speed of the green even if your woods have different characteristics to those you are observing. Be ready to take your place on the mat promptly when your turn comes.

If you have an inexperienced lead, offer advice and encouragement, taking care not to disturb or hold up play.

2.3 Your deliveries

In the absence of any directions from your skip, try to draw close to the jack. If the opposition has a few woods just short of the jack on the forehand side, avoid promoting these by bowling backhand and vice-versa. If the short woods blocking the way belong to your lead, pretend they aren't there. You will either get past them or possibly push them closer. If you can't tell whose woods are in the way, ask for guidance from your skip. Sometimes your skip may ask you to bowl to a point not near the jack, often behind and possibly to one side. This is usually to cover the possibility that the opposition may gain a large score if they succeed in displacing the jack towards this position. If the opposition has a few woods near the jack and in a tight cluster forming a wide target, your skip may ask you to 'come into' those. This doesn't mean firing with all your might (and the usual loss of accuracy), imagine playing a drawing shot to a point about a yard or two beyond then play to a very slightly narrower line. This should bring your wood into one or more of the clusters and stop quickly while pushing back the scoring wood(s). This draw with weight and the normal draw form the mainstay of the number two player's repertoire of shots and they need to be able to play these on either hand.

2.4 The skip's turn

When both seconds have finished bowling their three woods apiece, they proceed to the head and take up positions behind the head but not obscuring rink markers. For the first wood that your skip is about to bowl, do not offer any advice unless asked, the skip has been at the head and has usually decided what shot to play before coming down to the mat. In general, don't offer advice to the skip unless asked. The exception to this is if the head is substantially altered. Ensure your skip is aware of whose woods are short of the jack. Point to each of your team's woods and then to yourself. Point to each of the opposition's short woods and then make a dismissive gesture. If you have a small group of woods beyond the jack with no opposition woods among them, make sure your skip is aware of this. It is important that after every wood bowled by each skip that your skip is updated on your estimate of the number of shots held. Just hold out the relevant number of fingers pointing upwards if the shot count is in your favour or downwards if not. Keep still while the skip is preparing to bowl until the wood is actually rolling.

Show appreciation for a well bowled wood from either team. Do not applaud a lucky shot even if it is very much in your favour. Just accept it and remember not to complain if it goes against you. These happen occasionally and will even out in the long term.

Be ready to intercept wayward shots from adjacent rinks, but do not stop them if they are on a track that may end up back in their rink unless they are on a collision course with something on your rink. Likewise, be prepared to intercept a wood from your own rink that is going out and unlikely to return. Place these woods and any that go in the ditch without having touched the jack during delivery onto the far bank. Any wood that does touch the jack after delivery and before coming to rest should be marked with chalk to indicate a toucher. A wood that touches the jack because it gets pushed onto the jack or is hit by a moving jack is not marked. Any unmarked wood that goes in the ditch should be taken out and placed on the bank. A marked wood in the ditch should have a red marker placed on the bank hanging over the back of the ditch in line with the wood so that the players on the mat are aware of its position. Likewise, if the jack is knocked into the ditch, a yellow marker should be placed in a similar manner.

If the jack is displaced to the side so as to go off the rink, the end is dead. There is no score and the end is not counted. It should be replayed from the same end, unless both skips agree to save a bit of time if most of the woods are already at the far end and decide to play from that end. Whichever team played first on that end will also start the replayed end.

2.5 After all the woods are delivered

After the last wood of the end has come to rest, the two seconds decide the score. Usually, one will claim a certain number as in "I'll ask for two" and if agreed, that is the result signalled to the skips. If disputed, as in "I'll give you one.", then the agreed number of shots (if any) are removed from the head and placed so that there is no possibility of them being counted twice (place a towel clear of the head and any woods that are potentially scoring and place the agreed shot woods on that), then the position is quickly reassessed. If neither side is happy to back down then a measure takes place. This should take place promptly, if a decision is not arrived at in a few seconds, it is unlikely to be resolved without measuring, so further discussion just wastes time. A very close measure should be repeated starting with measuring to the other wood first. If this fails to resolve the issue, call in someone neutral to act as an umpire. Everybody stands back to let the umpire do the measuring freely. The umpire's decision is final and binding.

The result is signalled to the skips (one tap to the shoulder for each shot up, or one tap just above the knee for each shot down).

It is possible that two opposing woods are exactly the same distance from the jack, most commonly because they are both resting on it. No shot is scored by either side for these woods, and woods further away do not count towards any score. In the event of a tie for shot wood, both teams score zero, but the end is counted.

Both seconds should help with grouping the woods together to help the lead that is pushing the woods back gather them up more easily. If at the scoreboard end, one of the seconds should put the score up, a skip will do it if at the other end.

3. Marking

A marker is needed for every singles competitive match. A good marker enjoys marking and will find opportunities to do so at every level of the game. A lot can be learned from marking as you get to watch the game from a unique perspective.

It is assumed that the reader is familiar with Chapters 1 and 2, so some details such as dealing with "touchers" need not be explained in detail here.

3.1 Preparation

Arrive in good time. Although markers need not help with setting out the rink, they are responsible for checking that a rink is properly set out with correct placement of side and edge markers. Also, they must ensure that all the rink equipment they need for their duties is available including a scoreboard and markers for the position of live woods and jack in the ditch.

A marker requires chalk for marking 'touchers', a measure for determining the nearest wood. Preferably some wedges and callipers for the trickier measures. Most important is a working pen and a scorecard to actually do the marking. A coin is also required to determine mat ownership at the start of the game. Optional extra equipment may include devices to help with centring the jack and placing scoring woods on as they are removed from the head. The marker should also have access to a long-distance measure and a book of rules.

The scorecard needs to have been prepared with the name of the competition, the date and the rink number and the marker's name. The players' names go immediately above the scoring area of the card with the challenger on the left. For handicap matches the handicap for each player is put in brackets immediately following their name.

Ask the challenger to call while tossing the coin to determine order of play. The winner of the toss decides who has the mat to start with.

When this is decided, ask the players if they will be having trial ends and, if they are, how many woods. They may elect to play up to the number of woods they each have available for play in the course of the match.

Ensure the score-board is zeroed, then, if it is a handicap game where someone is awarded a number of shots, put these up on the scoreboard before the game starts.

3.2 Trial ends

Take up a position away from the centre line and beyond the minimum jack distance side marker. When the jack is delivered,

centre it with the player's assistance and check that it is a legal length. Stand a little closer to the jack than a skip would normally do, but not directly in line with it. If a delivery looks like it may displace the jack, lift the jack out of the way and replace it after the delivery has gone through. If it looks like the displacement may be very small, i.e., lifting the jack and replacing it would not be possible as the delivered wood is likely to stop in a position overlapping where the jack was, then hold the jack in place and let the wood be stopped by it. The jack should be in the same position throughout the end.

Indicate by signal or voice the length difference from jack high. A foot past and five feet wide is indicated as 'a foot through'. The bowler should be able to see how wide the delivery went in order to adjust line. Length is not easily apparent from a large distance so this is the other piece of information needed to adjust the delivery by.

Move the wood away from the jack to a position nearer the ditch behind so it does not interfere with the next delivery. Each trial delivery is to the same jack with no other woods nearby to distract or deflect.

There will be a second end conducted in the same manner so that the players get a trial in this direction too. Following this end it is traditional for the players to thank the marker and for the marker to wish them a good game as they cross to take up positions for the start of the match. From this point the marker no longer automatically calls out lengths for any delivery.

3.3 Match in progress

It is vitally important that the marker remain 100% impartial throughout the match. There is to be no encouragement or advice given to either player no matter what friendship or relationship they have with the marker. The marker may reply to a direct question from a player who is on the mat. The reply should be a direct response to the question with no extra information conveyed. If a player asks "Am I holding?", the responses should be "Yes", "No" or "Measure". If the player wanted to know how many they were holding, then they should have made that their question. Non-specific questions like "What's the situation?" are preferably referred back by asking "What do you want to know". In the event that a tight head has built up it is difficult to answer a non-specific question so it is better if the player(s) come up and take a look for themselves provided the minimum number of woods as laid out in the rules have been played.

It is not the responsibility of the marker to accurately judge distances. If the position isn't obviously clear beyond any dispute, the marker should call or signal a "measure".

Whilst the marker has many of the responsibilities of a player at the head, such as chalking touchers and removing dead woods and dealing with jacks or woods in the ditch, there are other things a marker does not do. A marker does not indicate how far short or long a delivery was after the trial ends are completed. If the question is asked (only by the player currently on the mat), "How far short was my last delivery?", then the marker may reply. The other thing a marker does not do is decide the score. The players come up to the head and decide the score between them and inform the marker. If they cannot decide, they may ask the marker to measure. The marker performs the measure but does not turn out the shot wood or, indeed, move any of the woods. The marker points at the wood thought to be shot and, once again, it is up to the players to agree or not. The players may decide to measure for themselves or call in an umpire. If there is no suitable person handy to adjudicate as an umpire, the marker may be appointed. The measure should be carefully repeated starting from the other wood and this time the wood judged to be closest is turned out and there is no disputing the decision.

3.4 Scoring

The scores for each player should be entered on the scorecard and the totals columns updated. For the first end of a handicap competition, it is a good idea to write a player's score as their score then a plus sign followed by the handicap shots awarded. For example, someone scores a single shot and they are due three shots for the handicap difference. Enter "1+3" in the score column and "4" in the total.

Adjust the scoreboard accordingly if at that end. If at the other end, adjust it at the earliest opportunity that doesn't hold up or disturb play.

It is a good idea to get into the habit of checking that the scores on both the card and board agree at least once every two ends. When a match reaches the stage where a player can theoretically win within the next two ends, ensure the players are aware of the scores by telling them in addition to updating the scoreboard.

3.5 End of match

Update bottom of scorecard with final totals. Congratulate both players on a good game and get the loser to sign the card. The completed card should be deposited in the box for that purpose in the veranda. The competitions secretary will collect these in due time and update competition sheets accordingly. Neither the marker, nor the players should write results on the board. The marker may elect to help with clearing up the rink, but this isn't an expected duty. Filing the scorecard and returning any special marking aids to the correct places takes precedence.

A quick word to the players. There are two of you together at one end while the marker is alone at the other end. It may be nice to chat and joke with your opponent, but spare a thought for the person standing at the other end. I'm not advocating absolute silence, just don't delay the progress of the game. That way you can gain some time to use after the game to have a better chat involving all three of you (and maybe a drink).

4. Glossary

Back Bowl

A wood delivered to a point beyond the head. This is a tactical play often used when a team is holding a number of shots, but there is a risk that the opposition might strike the jack, taking it away from their shot woods. In this case, a well-placed back bowl could potentially become the new shot wood or at least minimize the count scored by the opposition.

Backhand

A backhand delivery for a right-handed player is one where the wood is sent towards the left of the centre line with the bias designed to bring it back towards the centre. For a left-handed player this would be a forehand delivery.

Bias

The tendency for a lawn bowl to run in a curved path. All legal lawn bowls must have a minimum bias in order to have the world bowls stamp marked on them making them valid for play. Bowls vary in bias with some having more turn (heavily biased) while others may have a more pronounced turn towards the end of their travel (hook). All four in a set of woods will always have identical bias. The sides of the woods will usually be marked with a small circle on one side and a larger circle on the other. The path or trajectory taken by the wood will always be that which turns towards the side of the smaller circle.

Ditch

The sunken area at the extreme ends of the rink designed to confine any woods or the jack within the playing area. A wood that goes into the ditch without being a toucher is deemed 'dead' and is removed and placed on the bank and cannot contribute towards any score. Touchers and the jack are still 'live' and special markers are placed on the ditch edge in line with them so the player on the mat knows where they are.

End

Play in one direction where the players, in turn, deliver each of their woods and finally determine a score. The next end takes place in the opposite direction. A game consists either of a fixed number of ends, or until a predetermined target score is reached.

Forehand

A forehand delivery for a right-handed player is one where the wood is sent towards the right of the centre line with the bias designed to bring it back towards the centre. For a left-handed player this would be a backhand delivery.

Friendly

An inter-club game where the result goes no further than determining a winner that day. It does not count towards a total score or league result or anything like that. The policy at WPBC is to try and ensure that as many different people as possible get to play in these to gain experience and it is more likely that a new player will be selected to play over an experienced player. If more people put their names down for selection than there are places, obviously some will be disappointed. They should persevere, as they will be given a higher priority than those selected last time. Members should never worry about 'being good enough', just put your name down, even for league or cup matches as it is the responsibility of the captain to make the selections. No captain has ever complained of having too many players to choose from.

Green

You may hear someone advising a player to "give it more green". They are telling the player to bowl wider as their last wood(s) curved back and crossed the centre line and ended wide on the opposite side to the direction they were sent. Less green means to bowl a narrower line as the wood did not come back far enough.

Head

The area surrounding the jack. A loose head is one where the woods are widely scattered, a tight head is one where many woods are all in close proximity to the jack.

Holding

A player or team is said to be 'holding' if they have the shot wood. This can also be followed by a number such as 'holding 3' meaning they have the shot wood and the next two nearest. In this situation, the opposing team are said to be '3 down'. These are just estimates to make the player at the bowling end aware of the current situation. The actual score is decided after all woods have been played.

Jack

A small white or yellow ball that is the target for the woods. Getting closest is the objective, however, there are occasions when hitting it to move it is the better strategy. A lawn bowls jack is about 2.5 inches in diameter. Indoor bowls jacks are the same size but heavier, while crown green jacks are much larger and also have a bias.

Line

One of the two parameters that defines where a delivery comes to rest. Line is simply the angle from the centre line that the delivery has to be made in order for the bias to bring it back to the centre line. Once the line is established, it may not be obvious, but the same line actually applies to all desired lengths (the other parameter). A faster delivery along the same line results in the wood going out wider, but because of the

extra distance it covers, it also comes in more, resulting in the final position moving further away, but no change in angle from the mat. Just remember that line and length are independent parameters and need to both be individually adjusted to achieve arrival at a particular target.

Mat

Rubber mat that is placed with the front edge at least two metres from the rear ditch and up to the first side marker and the centre of the mat in line with the centre of the rink (the line that would go through the rink numbers at either end. All deliveries must be made with one foot on or above the mat.

Mat line

Two metres from the ditch. This is the minimum distance for placement of the front of the mat.

At the far end it is the maximum distance for the jack to be placed. Rink equipment includes white poles that are two metres long which are used to make this measurement.

Nets

Nets (or sheets) are protective groundsheets placed on the mat line to protect the green from a dropped or bounced delivery. They must be used whenever there is a notice on the general noticeboard requiring nets to be used for a particular period of time and/or class of game.

Rink

The playing area for a game. The boundaries of a rink may vary in position from day to day (to even out wear), but will be the same width and length.

While a wood is rolling, it may go beyond one of the side boundaries, but it is still a 'live' wood provided it is inside the boundaries when it comes to rest.

Rinks

Apart from the plural of rink, it also refers to a classic variant of the game with 4 people on each team.

Each player uses just 2 woods, otherwise play is just similar to triples. The Woodcock Park Challenge Shield inter-club matches are rinks.

Sheets

See 'Nets'

Short bowl

A wood that has ended up short of the jack. This may be tactically useful to block an opponent's approach, but is rarely employed as the success rate tends to be low and a short bowl is unlikely to contribute to the score.

Shot

Also known as shot wood. This is the wood that is closest to the jack.

Toucher

A wood that makes contact with the jack at any time from the moment it is delivered until it comes to rest or becomes dead. This should be marked with chalk to ensure it isn't removed from play if it goes into the ditch. A wood does not become a toucher if it hits, or is hit by, the jack at any later stage.

Wood

A bowling ball. The term dates back to when bowls were made out of a hard wood (lignum vitae). Most bowls nowadays are made from a composite resin material, but the name 'wood' persists.