

BOWLING TECHNIQUES

GENERAL COMMENTS:

There is always room for improvement.

There is always time for refinement of technique.

It is never too late to change your action.

There is no 'ideal' action but there are some basics that are sound.

A sound action seeks to result in a natural, simple, easy, fluent style.

Practise any alteration to technique long enough during your own individual practice for it to become automatic, say, at least three weeks.

SOME BASICS:

GRIP:

- Place the end joint of your middle finger on the centre of the bowl's running surface.
- Hold the bowl so that it leaves your hand upright and pointing along the bowling line.

STANCE:

- Be well-balanced and relaxed with your feet apart a normal distance and with one foot in front of the other.
- Have your sighting eye, shoulder, arm and bowl vertically above your bowling line.
- Hold your bowl at hip level.

DELIVERY:

AIMING LINE:

Visualise a line from a marker on the bank back to a focal point from 4 to 6 metres in front of the mat. Concentrate your gaze on that point. Bowl over that mark. If you have chosen the right line, that focal point will serve you for all lengths of jack. If your bowl finishes off-line or you need to bowl off-line, it is the surest point to correct from.

SWING:

Swing your bowl straight back and forward alongside your back foot and vertically above your bowling line.

STEP:

Step parallel to your bowling line, not onto it.

Take a normal to short step so that your weight remains over your front foot as you release your bowl. This weight position is equally important when driving.

STABILITY AND BALANCE:

These are vital at the moment of delivery. Step early enough before the forward swing of your arm to establish a stable and balanced base to bowl from.

WEIGHT CONTROL:

Have a smooth, grooved, consistent delivery PLUS a 'let your body do it' belief. - Any conscious effort to correct usually results in over-correction.

BOWLING TIPS

PLAYING TOO HEAVY

Slow down - just move slower and reduce the speed of your delivery. Speed comes from the velocity you're creating this so reduce it and the Bowl won't travel so far.

PLAYING SHORT

Move quicker - simply increase the speed of your delivery. Swing your arm back slightly more for the additional weight.

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

PLAYING TOO 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 Bowl visibly starts to turn)? Are your eyes, feet, and whole body pointing at the shoulder?

Simply turn your whole body more, not a half turn with your feet pointing elsewhere.

Stop looking at that Jack. Look and aim at the 'Shoulder' (the point where the bias of the bowl takes over).

PLAYING TOO WIDE

Ensure you are addressing the line down to the 'Shoulder'. Ensure you "step down this line"

Watch what shoulder other player's successful Bowls are turning on. You may be over compensating for your Bowls. Try their 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.

It could be as simple as turning your body less.

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 bowl.

Great care should be taken with the grip and delivery of the Jack.

BUMPING YOUR BOWLS

You are delivering your bowls too high. Try and bend your knees to get closer to the green and release your bowls at green level. When the bowl leaves your hand it should leave your hand over your fingers straight onto the green. The problem with Bumping your bowls is that as soon as the bowl hits the floor it loses approximately one third of its speed and will more than likely not reach the Jack. You might think that you could increase the speed of your bowls to compensate for the Bumping. This would cause an even worse problem and that is you could mark the green and take out divots, if you are bowling Outdoors, this would not please the Green keeper.

GENERALLY LOSING THE LINE

There is a position that is most comfortable and profitable for all bowlers. Ideally, the eyes must be concentrated along the line of delivery, almost stare along the line for as long as it takes. Having decided the line along the green the bowl has to travel, and see this clearly in the mind's eye, deliver the bowl.

Your leading foot (left - for right-handed bowlers) should generally be extended no more than a walking pace, providing perfect balance, pointing along delivery line. Balance is improved by resting your non-bowling arm on the knee or thigh of the leading leg. However, looking at your feet at the moment of release can cause a player to lose line.

The position of your head is critical at this point the bowl is delivered. Some bowlers look downward at the moment of release this can cause you to lose line; sometimes releasing the bowl slightly behind the leading foot and before the swing is fully complete. There are others that hold the head too high. This puts a strain on the neck and shoulders and can transmit to the arm. The bowl is bumped because the bowling arm has already started to move up. Your head should always feel relaxed, comfortable, and remain as still as possible.

The distance from the mat at this point of eye contact will vary from bowler to bowler. The head must remain still but not rigid, and it is up to every bowler to find a comfortable spot along that line without any strain in the neck and to make an elegant delivery. Some will opt to gaze at the shoulder of the green. That is to say; the point where the bias begins to curve the bowl toward its objective. Some will select a point a couple of yards from the mat and on every delivery to run over the same spot, that's fine so long as you can adjust for various mat positions.

Movement of the whole body at the point of delivery can result in a bowl being bumped out of your hand. This happens when your arm is jerked up too high or is quickened at the moment of release. When you deliver, stay down for a few seconds and watch your bowl run along the line you have taken - is it the line you intended to take?

RECAP

Use a good follow through.

Non bowling arm resting on knee of lead foot.

Do not look at feet on point of delivery.

There is a point where the head can be too high for a smooth delivery.

When bowl is bumped, this causes loss of weight, and lost line.