

Etiquette in Fours Play

WILLIE WOOD
The Peter Pan
of Bowls



ETIQUETTE IS something that we, as bowlers, tend to adhere to every game. Poor etiquette on the green can breed confrontation and even disciplinary action at times.

It is not only etiquette to an opponent that should be shown, but to your team-mates as well.

It is something that is extremely important in our sport and that can, from time to time, be overlooked. It is the essential pleasantries in bowls that make it such a fine sport.

The role of each player is different in the rink with regards to etiquette, and this month we will look at what each player should do during a game to ensure that simple niceties are performed so that a great game is had by all.



This picture was taken at World Bowls. As you can see, Australia has possession of the rink and the Scottish four has moved aside to allow them to direct accordingly.

ETIQUETTE FOR THE SKIP Six tips to the skips...

1. It is important a skip acknowledges a good shot played by an opponent. Sticking to the rules of etiquette in this way will ensure that the game is enjoyed by all.
2. Skips should have sole authority over their rink and demand that his/her instructions are obeyed. However, harmony in the rink depends on how this is administered. For example, some skips insist on their thirds not offering advice at any time unless asked to do so. A skip that plays this way should bear in mind that playing third in this atmosphere can be a very frustrating and unpleasant experience and can destroy team spirit. A good skip should be gracious enough sometimes to confer with his third as to the shot he/she proposes. Don't demand respect, earn it!
3. Nothing in the law permits leads or seconds offering some comments on the situation of the head. Skips should not overlook this as they have as much interest as any other member of the rink.
4. Skips should remember that players in the rink are as keen to win as he/she is and it is poor etiquette to show annoyance or disappointment should a team-mate play a bad shot. No amount of waving arms or shouting will bring a short bowl closer to the head or stop a heavy bowl passing through. A skip should remember that the bowler playing the worst bowls is the bowler trying the hardest.
5. When a team-mate's bowl comes to rest, the skip should stand aside and give possession of the rink to his/her opposite number. Failure to do this can sometimes cause a bit of unpleasantness.
6. If you are up at the head, when directing your player on the mat, retire as soon as his bowl has been delivered. By doing so you will give all of the players a clear view of the run of the bowl. Once the bowl has come to rest, no other remarks should be made.

ETIQUETTE FOR LEADS AND SECONDS

Pointers for the rest of the rink...

1. It is not conducive to a healthy relationship in a rink for the lead or second to signal to the skip behind the third's back.
2. Keep your attention on the game. Don't go wandering off talking to people on the bank etc.
3. Seconds should always wait for the skip's instructions.
4. It saves time in a fours game if the lead gets on with the job of placing the mat and delivering the jack, whilst the other leads and seconds attend to the removal of the bowls and marking the scoreboard.
5. Keep out of the way while shots are being measured.
6. It is a nice custom for a lead to place his opponent's bowls next to him as he is centring the jack.

ETIQUETTE FOR THIRDS

Two things for the thirds...

1. Opposing thirds should not argue with each other over which is shot bowl or go around it looking at it from all angles. Get down right away and measure.
2. A talking third in a rink can be a liability sometimes. The number three should NOT offer advice to the skip as he/she leaves the head to play his/her first bowl. If the head has changed he/she may offer advice, but should accept it if the skip decides against it.

TOP TIP FOR ALL

Don't openly wish ill luck on your opponent's bowl, and do not wish for your team's bowl to get a 'wick'. It is bad etiquette.

Next Time: Qualities a skip looks for in a rink.