

The Numbers Game

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Keeping You on the
Right Side of the Law



THIS MONTH I am going to answer a question that has been sent to me through the magazine. Should you have a question please contact me by e-mailing the editor and I will do my best to answer it. If you don't want your name published we can also arrange for that to happen.

Question: What are the laws relating to 'playing short' in a fours game?

The answer to this can be found in Section 11 'Defaults of Players in Fours Play' in the World Indoor Bowls Council Laws of the Sport of Indoor Bowls (First Edition Revised). This states the following:

Law 52: Absentee Players in any Team or Side

Law 52A: In a single fours game

(i). For a trophy, prize or other competitive award, where a club is represented by only one four, each member of such four shall be a bona-fide member of the club.

(ii). Unless all four players appear and are ready to play at the end of the maximum waiting period of 30 minutes, or should they introduce an ineligible player, then that team shall forfeit the game to the opposing team.

Law 52B: In a side game

If, within a period of 30 minutes from the time fixed for the game, a single player is absent from one or more teams in a side game, whether in a friendly club game or a game for a trophy, prize or other award, the game shall proceed but:

(i). in the defaulting team, the number of bowls shall be made up by the lead and second players playing three bowls each, and

(ii). one fourth of the total shots scored by each team comprising three players shall be deducted from their score at the conclusion of the game. Fractions shall be taken into account.

One question that I have been asked many times is: "What if both sides are



Three players look at their watches hopelessly, desperate for their fourth man to turn up.

short and three players play against three players; do we need to deduct 25% from the totals?" The answer to that question is yes you do. Law 52B (ii) states "...one fourth of the total shots scored by EACH team comprising three players shall be deducted..."

From the above laws it appears that you can only play with three players in a 'fours' match if it is only a friendly as the law states that matches where an award of any kind is at stake you cannot play short. I hear many of you saying: "That can't be right, we often play short in our weekly leagues indoor and we are playing for a trophy". The way that national associations, counties and clubs get around this is by invoking Law 63 DOMESTIC ARRANGEMENTS, and this law states the following:

Law 63: Domestic Arrangements

Law 63A: Powers to make regulations

(i). In addition to any matters specifically mentioned in these laws, Member National Bowling Authorities may, in circumstances dictated by local conditions, make such other regulations as are deemed necessary and desirable, but such regulations must be submitted to the World Indoor Bowls Council as appropriate for approval.

(ii). For this purpose the World Indoor Bowls Council shall appoint a committee to be known as the 'Laws Committee' with powers to grant approval or otherwise to

any proposal, such decisions being valid until the proposal is submitted to the World Indoor Bowls Council as appropriate for a final decision.

NOTE: Therefore, if a Member National Bowling Authority wishes to amend a law to suit a particular situation, which could include allowing a team to play with three players, they should apply to the World Indoor Bowls Council for approval.

Law 63 B: Local arrangements

Constituent clubs of Member National Bowling Authorities shall also, in making their domestic arrangements, make such regulations as are deemed necessary to govern their club competitions, but such regulations shall comply with the World Indoor Bowls Council Laws of the Sport of Indoor Bowls and be approved by the council of their member National Bowling Authority and shall be displayed at each club.

NOTE: This is the law that allows clubs to make their own arrangements for club matches and tournaments. In theory, each club should apply to their own National Bowling Authority. For example, clubs in England would apply to the EIBA Limited, clubs in Scotland to the SIBA etc.

In practice this does not always happen and each National Bowling Authority permits clubs to run their own 'domestic programme' and only gets involved with tournaments leading to national qualification.