 BEXHILL BOWLING CLUB

MARKERS DUTIES

A good marker is not only an asset to a club, but he adds considerably to the enjoyment of the game by players and spectators alike.

**DUTIES:**

* Assisting to straighten the mat.
* Aligning the jack.
* Marking a toucher, or removing a prior chalk mark.
* Removing a dead bowl.
* Replacing a disturbance caused by himself.
* Answering questions of fact.
* Recording the score.
* Advising the players of each progress score.
* Seeing that the score board is correct.
* Handling the completed and signed score card to the proper authority.

The Marker should never forget that the main purpose for his presence is to assist the players to enjoy the game, as well as to facilitate the actual play, by only answering the questions asked by the player next entitled to bowl. This should be done quickly and accurately to avoid the necessity of the players having to make a personal inspection of the head.

**COURTESY:**

It is not sufficiently appreciated that a singles match is essentially an elimination contest in which the players take the game seriously and therefore the marker should likewise accept and perform his duties in a serious manner. The game requires the players to exercise their maximum powers of concentration, and all they ask from a marker is his undivided attention, which should be given firstly as a matter of courtesy, secondly as an interesting study of the individual player's capabilities, and thirdly because it provides an opportunity for learning more about the game even if it be only what not to do.

**STUDY:**

A good marker, in whom the players have complete confidence, materially contributes to the quality of their game. It is a much-mistaken notion that anyone can undertake the duties. No novice should ever volunteer to mark a game until he is completely versed in the duties of a marker, as set out in the Laws, and even then, not until he has carefully studied other markers and their actions. In the closing stages of an Association event, when markers are carefully selected, the novice will do well to particularly study these officials

**EXPERIENCE:**

A marker should be an experienced bowler and a good judge of distance. "Experienced" does not mean a very good bowler, as there are excellent markers who have never been first-class bowlers, but they have had experience in the game and have found the job a pleasant and interesting one, as it undoubtedly is.

Far too many markers are distracted by the spectators and their comments, but could they "hear" the thoughts of the players they would quickly realise where their "reputations" were going. In matches, other than club events, a marker is virtually "wished" upon the players, and his efficiency, or lack of it, becomes a reflection on the club management, for, to the players, the marker IS the club for the time being. This aspect is one that club officials should remember, and should not hesitate to decline the services of non-competent volunteers.

The minimum requirement of a marker is that he shall know the duties as set out in the Laws, but few there be that fulfil even this standard. Fewer still are definite on what is meant by "jack high", yet the Laws contain an official definition, which clearly states what is meant in answer to this very frequent question.

Before proceeding to the Head End the Marker should extend the hand of friendship to both players and make himself fully conversant with the ownership of the respective bowls. Certainly, in Association events and at least in club finals, the Marker should pay a compliment to the contestants by being correctly attired according to the Laws.

**LOCATION:**

Before aligning the jack, he should check whether the mat has been correctly laid. He should then retire to the position indicated in the Laws, until the first bowl has been delivered, and, during its course, proceed to alter the score board (if at that end) returning to his position in time to observe whether the bowl becomes a toucher. If possible, a spectator should be asked to manipulate the score board, in which case he should be instructed not to do so during the period a player is on the mat prior to making a delivery. The exact position for a marker to stand is purposely not stated in the Laws, but the usual and generally acceptable position is from two to three metres (approximately 6 to 8 feet) behind the jack and two metres (approximately 6 feet) to one side, depending on the location of his shadow. Any extensive increase in these distances is undesirable as it involves a greater delay in answering a question.

A marker should remain motionless at his chosen spot with his attention and eyes fixed on the player whose turn it is to bowl to observe whether a question is asked, as quite frequently the question is not expressed in words, but in an action, such as holding an arm up indicating the question: "Am I the shot?" The marker's reply can then be given silently by an action (up or down) and in so doing no information is necessarily disclosed to the opponent unless he happens to observe the actions. In general, a good marker is able to anticipate a likely question as the result of his own experience, plus the fact that he is sufficiently close to the head to know the position.

A marker must not move from his position except to observe whether a bowl is likely to become a toucher or to answer a question requiring a closer inspection. Under no circumstances whatsoever must he move, even by simply leaning over or turning sideways, to observe the head to satisfy his own curiosity or to anticipate a possible question. To move in any way is contravening a Law as it gives an indication to the players of a possible change in the position that is not apparent to them. A marker must realise that the resultant effect of a bowl is not his concern, and any personal interest he may have in a player must not be shown.

**CONCENTRATION**

It is somewhat surprising that, so many players ask so few questions during a match and yet on reaching the head are so frequently heard to remark on the position being different from what they thought. Even if players have every confidence in their marker they become reluctant to ask a question if it involves a walk to the head by the marker because of the time delay in getting an answer. Therefore, it is essential for the marker to be alert and adjacent to the head.

The only player entitled to ask a question is the one whose turn it is to bowl, but he does not necessarily have to be standing on the mat, as some markers seem to think. One other point that every marker should always remember is that an inefficient marker can frequently be justifiably blamed, by the loser, for the result of the game, and that is something to be avoided at all costs.

**DON’TS**

In conclusion, this would be incomplete without setting out a few of the major "Don'ts" to be observed-

(1) Don't answer questions that are being asked in an adjacent rink. Concentration and attention to the man on the mat will prevent this happening.

(2) Don't say the shot is doubtful if it is not so. Experience at judging distances is something that can be acquired by anyone, provided they will indulge in a little practice on their own. It is most disconcerting to be told it is "up and down" and then find your opponent is at least one or more without even a measure.

(3) Don't forget to immediately advise the player if a bowl falls over and alters the position after a question has been answered or an inspection of the head has been made by the player.

(4) Don't give a misleading answer to a badly-worded question. A marker is entitled to ask the player to restate or clarify his question to enable an intelligent answer to be given.

This particularly applies to such a question as: "Am I one down?" when he may be three down and to answer "Yes" or "No" is equally correct and incorrect, such a question is a badly worded one. The proper form is: "Am I more than one down?" or "How many down am I?"

(5) Don't supplement your answer with information not asked for. Remember, every answer is common to both players and the questioner may not wish to gratuitously give information to his opponent. For instance, if asked to indicate which bowl is third shot, do so, but do not say whose bowl it is, or if asked whether the player is lying second shot, just say "Yes" or "No", but do not add that he is also third shot or some such similar information. The game provides ample scope for players to indulge in tactics to outwit each other, and the marker must be careful not to nullify their efforts.

(6) Arrange with the players before the match commences when they prefer touchers to be marked. The general practice is to mark a toucher immediately it has come to rest.

(7) Don't forget HOW to measure, as distinct from what to measure with. If you suspect A's bowl to be the nearer one, measure that first and then transfer to B's bowl, but on no account, give an immediate decision, even if the answer be obvious. It is essential that the distance be transferred back to A's bowl to be quite sure that no movement has occurred. In the case of a close measure, or where the players have previously measured, and a tie is a possibility, it is wise to repeat, at least once, the foregoing procedure.

(8) Don't, under any circumstances, suggest or invite a player to inspect the head. To do so implies inability to give a satisfactory answer.