

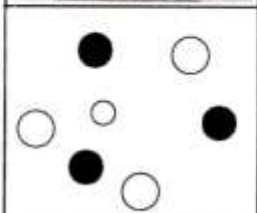
TEACHING THE NEW BOWLER



Here is a short summary on the teaching of new members over a period of five or more stages.

First, get to know your pupils. What sports have been played, what physical problems exist, if any, and whether they are right or left-handed.

Next, make sure the pupils know the object of the game, and how points are scored. This is done by placing two sets of bowls on the green and moving bowls round the jack to show the method of counting points. The coach should then point out all parts of the playing area, and then go on to describe how a game begins with the skips tossing a coin, with the winner deciding which team will have the mat and deliver the jack and first bowl.



At this point the coach should explain why tuition in the art of delivering the jack is so important. It is much easier to teach a pupil the body stance, feet position, grip of the jack and delivery than it is to teach how to deliver a bowl. Delivering the jack usually needs about 30 minutes to get a reasonably good delivery. The balance of the first lesson, which should not be more than one hour overall, would then be about 15 minutes, which should be used to explain the bias of the bowl, the grip, the delivery of bowls for a couple of ends, how to move bowls and, of course, this explanation: that if the pupil delivers the bowl with the same action as the way the jack is delivered, provided the aiming line of the bowl is correct, the jack and bowl should finish very close to one another. The last few moments of the lesson are used to make an appointment for the next lesson. Coaches will, of course, find that some slower learners may take two one-hour lessons to complete a particular stage.



When the pupil arrives for the next lesson, a few questions on parts of the green and placement of the mat on the commencement of a game would be appropriate. After the pupil has delivered jacks for about 15 to 20 minutes, the bowls will be brought out. The pupil, at this stage, should be shown how to polish them and the size of the bowl checked for the grip. It is the coach who must decide with the pupil what size bowl the pupil requires, and must firmly advise not to buy a set until both are satisfied about the most suitable size. This will not be known until the pupil has had a few more lessons.



At this stage, teaching the pupil how to find the aiming line for the delivery of a bowl is very important. The coach must make sure the pupil plays a number of bowls on both forehand and backhand. Before finishing this lesson, outline to the pupil how a pairs game is played.



The third stage begins by asking questions about placing the mat on the first and subsequent ends. Then the pupil will deliver the jack to a constant length for about five or 10 minutes. The pupil will follow this by delivering bowls for a few ends and will be given a little more instruction on how to find the aiming line. After some ends of this activity the coach will follow with a short session on how to measure with the measure and calipers. Then briefly discuss touchers, showing and demonstrating the use of touchers and a bowl in course and a bowl in motion. Then explain how a game of triples is played and the duties and etiquette required of a lead. It is at this stage that the coach, with the help of the pupil, should begin to find out the size of the bowls the pupil might need. Also talk about club officials, such as the President, Secretary and Bowls Selector, as well as some of the entertainment the club has listed for the near future. Finally book the date and time of the next lesson.

Step 4 begins with further questions on previous lessons and a little more on etiquette. A discussion on the effect of grass and wind and a little on a few of the laws you feel are important, but don't confuse the pupil with an excess of information.

Then get the pupil to place the mat and deliver the jack for a few ends. Then deliver more bowls and check on measuring. Discuss the duties of second, third and skip. Finally, book a time and date for the final lesson.

Stage 5 marks the time when the coach should ask the pupil at the beginning of the lesson whether there is confusion about anything that has been taught in the previous four sessions. After any problem is satisfactorily cleared up, practice jack delivery. This completed, enquire as to the duties of the skip and then explain the meaning of the word director as applied to the game of bowls.

Talk about commonly used expressions in the game, and the do's and don'ts which apply to new members. Explain the game of *singles*, *dead ends*, *dead jack* and *dead bowls*.

This is the stage at which the pupil will need to be reminded about how and when to participate in the first game. Ensure that the name of the club's Bowls Secretary and the club's telephone number is known. Finally tell the pupil what size bowls you consider should be purchased.

We advise that the National Manual for Coaches (Volume One) covers these stages in much greater detail, and should be part of the coach's equipment.

Another aspect of teaching the beginner



This method has been used by the author and other coaches, all of whom found it very helpful. One of the most difficult tasks when teaching new bowlers is to have them finish their delivery in a perfect position – for example, a normal step, 90 per cent of the body weight on the forward foot, the kneecap of this leg at least level with the toes, the shin of the back leg almost parallel with the ground, the bowling arm finishing firm, no higher than the front knee, with the palm of the hand facing up, and the eyes looking out along the aiming line. All this may be seen in Photo 1.



Once you've taught the beginner the basic movements of the arms and legs – this would be half-way through the second lesson – ask your pupil to go through the delivery and this time to stay down in the finished position. When in this position you observe faults, ask the pupil to adjust the body into the *correct finished position* as you instruct, and as you see in Photo 2. It is possible you may need to help, for in this finished position it may be difficult for the pupil to maintain balance for more than about five or ten seconds. When the pupil is in the perfect finished position say: "Do you think you can now go backwards through the delivery onto the mat, and then go through the complete delivery and finish in this position?" Only be concerned with the pupil finishing in the correct position, not the faults beforehand, since most of these are fixed if finishing in the perfect position.