

GLoucestershire BOWLS ASSOCIATION COMPETITION RULES

2023

Changes from 2022 in red

Introduction

No laws governing a sport can cope with every situation, the laws of the sport of bowls are no exception and unusual situations not covered within the laws can sometimes arise. These Competition Rules for the Gloucestershire Bowls Association have been drawn up in the spirit of true sportsmanship and if a situation arises that is not covered, players, markers, umpires and County officials should use their common sense and a spirit of fair play to decide on the appropriate course of action.

All Championship and Competition matches shall be played under the current Laws of the Sport of Bowls and under Bowls England Regulations, incorporating GBA rule variations where appropriate. Competitors will be assumed to have read and be conversant with Appendix C of the Bowls England Championship/Competition Rules & Regulations : Code of Conduct.

Abbreviations : GBA - Gloucestershire Bowls Association
 DCC - Divisional Competition Committee
 Championship Competitions - Competition rounds leading to the English National Championships
 County Competitions - Competition rounds played in purely GBA competitions
 MD - Men's Division of the GBA
 WD - Women's Division of the GBA

1. Administration

- 1.1 The competition rounds leading to the English National Championships and the County Competitions of the GBA shall be administered by the Divisional Competition Committees described within the GBA Constitution & Rules (Clause 13.2).
- 1.2 Competition Secretaries may co-opt the assistance of any other GBA Officer, Official or other suitably experienced person to assist with their duties.
- 1.3 These GBA Competition Rules shall be reviewed annually – initially views taken from the DCCs and, if necessary, Divisional Management Committees, with changes then determined by the Unified Competition Rules Sub-Committee, these ratified by the GBA Joint Executive Committee. They shall then be printed in the Divisional Yearbooks and placed on the GBA Web sites.
- 1.4 Championship Competitions and County Competitions are open to affiliated GBA members. Competitors may enter as many of the Championship Competitions or County Competitions as they so choose, but shall not be allowed to enter from, or play for, more than one club in the same year.
 - 1.4.1 If a player moves Club after entering, their singles entries can be transferred to their new Club, if it is in the same section, providing that the County Competition Secretary (in the MD) or the members of the DCC (in the WD) are advised before 1st March in the year of the event.
 - 1.4.2 Should an affiliated club cease to exist after the entry date, the members may be permitted, for one season only, to compete under the name of that affiliated club, irrespective of the club or clubs that they have joined.
 - 1.4.3 Should an affiliated club cease to exist prior to the entry date, the singles Champion shall be eligible for one season only to enter a Champion of Champions competition under the name of their previous club.
 - 1.4.4 Entry into the Ken Griffin Mixed Pairs may be made by two players (one male, one female) from the same or different Clubs within Gloucestershire
 - 1.4.5 Entry into the Unbadged Singles (WD) is open to members who have not been County 'badged' prior to the entry date. Nobody who has won the competition previously may enter.
 - 1.4.6 **Entry into the Minor Singles (MD) is open to members who have not qualified for the National Championships via a County Championship and/or who have not played in the County's Middleton Cup or Balcomb Trophy teams prior to the entry date. Nobody who has won the competition previously may enter.**
- 1.5 Entry fees for all Championship Competitions and County Competitions shall be reviewed and determined annually by the GBA Joint Executive Committee, taking into account Bowls England entry fees for National Championship Competitions.
- 1.6 Each entry shall be made by one named player only. The named contact for each competition entry is the conduit for all communications in relation to that competition. If the named contact alters for any reason, that reason and the new named contact must be advised to their Section Competition Secretary.

- 1.7 Entrants for the Champion of Champions Competition shall be the previous year's winners in their club Four-Wood Singles Championship and shall be entered by their club.
- 1.8 Entrants for the Two-bowl Champion of Champions Competition (MD) shall be the previous year's winners in their club Two-bowl Singles Championship and shall be entered by their club.
- 1.9 If a player who has been entered by a club for any Champion of Champions competition leaves that club during the closed season and joins a new club they are automatically disqualified from the competition.
- 1.10 Clubs may enter only one side for the County Challenge Cup (MD) and the County Inter-Club Competition (WD), but may enter as many sides as they wish for the County Two Rink Competition (MD).
- 1.11 Competition entries must be made on the appropriate WD/MD forms and submitted – together with the total fees payable - by the date indicated on the form.
- 1.12 Late entries will not be permitted under any circumstances.

2. Draw organisation, schedule and arrangements

2.1 With the exception of the Two-Wood Singles, Junior Singles, Junior Pairs, Senior Fours (WD), Benevolent Triples (MD), Ken Griffin Mixed Pairs (details under MD) and County Two Rink (MD), the Championship Competitions and County Competitions shall be initially drawn on a geographical basis within the four County sections: Bristol, Cheltenham, Gloucester and Stroud. Each sectional draw shall be made by the members of the DCC and shall provide qualifiers as necessary for the 'County Rounds' (see 2.9 below). The draws shall be included in the Divisional Yearbooks.

2.1.1 Each section shall provide two qualifiers for the County Rounds in Singles, Pairs, Triples and Fours.

Men's Division

2.1.2 Each section shall provide one qualifier for the County Rounds in Senior Fours, Two-bowl and Four-bowl Champion of Champions, Minor Singles and County Challenge Cup

2.1.3 The MD Benevolent Triples and Ken Griffin Mixed Pairs shall be drawn on a geographical basis.

Women's Division

2.1.4 Each section shall provide one qualifier for the County Rounds in Champion of Champions, Unbadged Singles and County Inter-Club Competition

2.1.5 The WD Benevolent Triples is played on a single day, to a conclusion

2.2 The following Championships and Competitions will be played on 'fixed dates'. Those indicated N.Ch lead to the National Championships and shall be played as per current Bowls England regulations. The tabulation below also summarises the format of the remaining competitions.

Men's Division	Women's Division
Junior Singles (N.Ch)	Two-Wood Singles (N.Ch)
Junior Pairs (N.Ch)	Singles (N.Ch)
Two-Wood Singles (N.Ch)	Pairs (N.Ch)
Singles (N.Ch)	Triples (N.Ch)
Pairs (N.Ch)	Fours (N.Ch)
Triples (N.Ch)	Benevolent Triples 15 ends, 2 bowls each player
Fours (N.Ch)	
Senior Fours (N.Ch)	
County Challenge Cup 3 rinks, 18 ends, 4 players each rink, 2 bowls each player	
Benevolent Triples 15 ends, 2 bowls each player	

2.3 The 'fixed dates' for all section rounds shall be printed in the Divisional Yearbooks.

2.4 The following Championships and Competitions will be played on arranged 'play-by dates'. Those indicated N.Ch lead to the National Championships and shall be played as per current Bowls England regulations. The tabulation below also summarises the format of the remaining competitions.

Men's Division	Women's Division
Four-bowl Champion of Champions 21 shots, 4 bowls Two-bowl Champion of Champions 21 ends, 2 bowls Minor Singles 21 shots, four bowls Ken Griffin Mixed Pairs 18 ends, 3 bowls each player County Two Rink Competition 2 rinks, 18 ends, 4 players each rink, 2 bowls each player	Champion of Champions 21 shots, 4 bowls Junior Singles (N.Ch) Junior Pairs (N.Ch) Unbadged Singles 21 shots, 4 bowls Senior Fours (N.Ch) Inter-Club Competition 2 rinks, 18 ends, 4 players each rink, 2 bowls each player

- 2.5 With the exception of the Two-Wood Singles and the Junior Singles (MD), all rounds of Championships and Competitions up to the County Rounds shall be played on a home or away basis and be hosted by the first named competitor, known as the challenger.
- 2.6 Where section finals are to be played in **Four-bowl** Champion of Champions (MD), **Two-bowl** Champion of Champions (MD), **Minor Singles** (MD), Senior Fours (MD) and County Challenge Cup (MD), a neutral green shall be selected by the Section Competition Secretary.
- 2.7 The **WD** Two-Wood Singles Championships shall be played, up to and including the Semi-Finals, at venue(s) arranged by the **DCC**. The draws shall be made on the day. Full details of the arrangements for playing these competitions shall be printed in the Divisional Yearbooks.
- 2.8 **The MD Two-bowl Singles Championship last-16, quarter-finals and semi-finals shall be played on a day nominated by, and at a venue arranged by, the DCC. Details of the arrangements shall be printed in the Divisional Yearbook.**
- 2.9 The MD Junior Singles Championship shall be played on a day nominated by the MD DCC and shall be played up to and including the Semi-Finals. Details of the arrangements for playing this competition shall be printed in the Divisional Yearbook.

County Rounds

- 2.10 The 'County Rounds' shall be :
- 2.10.1 Men's Division - Quarter-Finals onwards in Singles, Pairs, Triples, Fours, and Semi-Finals onwards in **Four-bowl** Champion of Champions, **Two-bowl** Champion of Champions, **Minor Singles**, Junior Pairs, Senior Fours, Benevolent Triples, Ken Griffin Mixed Pairs, County Two Rink Competition, and County Challenge Cup.
- 2.10.2 Women's Division - Quarter-Finals onwards in Singles, Pairs, Triples, Fours, and Semi-Finals onwards in Champion of Champions, Unbadged Singles, Junior Singles, Junior Pairs, Senior Fours, and County Inter-Club Competition.
- 2.11 All greens selected for the Championship Competitions and County Competitions County Rounds and Finals may be inspected approximately one month before the event to ensure that the standard of the green has not significantly deteriorated since it was selected for the event.
- 2.12 The draw for the County Rounds of the Singles, Pairs, Triples, and Fours Championships shall be completed by the DCC with one qualifier from each section being placed in each half of the quarter-final draws. The draws shall be included in the Divisional Yearbooks.
- 2.13 The County Rounds of the Junior Pairs shall be an open draw completed by the DCC. The draws shall be included in the Divisional Yearbooks.
- 2.14 The County Rounds of the MD **Four-bowl** Champion of Champions, **MD Two-bowl** Champion of Champions, **MD Minor Singles**, MD Senior Fours, MD Benevolent Triples, Ken Griffin Mixed Pairs, County Two Rink Competition and County Challenge Cup and shall be drawn by the MD DCC and included in the Divisional Yearbook. The 'County Rounds' of the WD Champion of Champions, Unbadged Singles and County Inter-Club Competition are actually the semi-finals and are drawn on the day, so cannot be included in the Divisional Yearbook. The WD Senior Fours are drawn County-wide from the outset and are played through to a conclusion without a further draw taking place.
- 2.15 The County Rounds 'fixed dates' shall be selected by the DCCs and shall be circulated prior to the entry process. The County Round games shall be played on greens selected by the DCC; once selected, these venues will not be changed unless the green is unfit for play.

- 2.16 Where required, umpires and markers shall be appointed by the County Umpires Coordinator in consultation with the DCCs for all County Rounds.
- 2.17 If any side (or individual) withdraws at the Semi-final or Final stage of the County Challenge Cup, the County Two Rink Competition, the County Inter-Club Competition, **Four-bowl** Champion of Champions, **Two-bowl Champion of Champions (MD)**, **Minor Singles (MD)** or the Unbadged Singles (**WD**) Competitions, the side (or individual) that they had defeated in the Section Final will be invited to take their place if sufficient time exists, and the side (or individual) that withdraws will not be accepted in the following year's competitions. In a singles competition (only) an exception may be made where a medically certificated illness or injury intervenes after qualification provided the County Competition Secretary (in the MD) or the delegated member of the DCC (in the WD) is notified in advance, receives the medical certificate and accepts the incapacity of the player.
- 2.18 Players selected for approved international duties, together with Officers and Officials on duty with the England teams, shall be allowed to play in all stages of County Championships leading to the National Finals, should dates clash.
- 2.19 The DCC reserves the right to reschedule dates of County Rounds where unforeseen circumstances occur; competitors shall be given as much notice as possible.
- 2.20 Scheduling of Finals Day shall be carried out by the DCC taking full recognition of any competitors qualifying for more than one Final. If Finals event competitors do not turn up, their opponent(s), provided they are on the green and prepared to play, shall be awarded the County Championship title; if they also are not present the title shall remain unclaimed.

3 Match arrangements

- 3.1 The first-named club or competitor in each round is the challenger and for games prior to County Rounds they shall be responsible for all match arrangements. It is their responsibility to ensure :
- That the surrounds and rink set-up comply with the regulations and equipment set out in the Laws of the Sport, Section 4.1: The green, ditch, banks and rinks.'
 - That the playing surface is of acceptable quality on the rink(s) **made available** for play.
 - That a draw for the rink of play takes place, or that the opponent is given a choice, from the rinks made available (minimum of two or sufficient rinks for the match to take place).**
- 3.2 Where matches are subject to a 'play-by date' the challenger shall, at least three weeks before the 1st Round date or within **48** hours of the end of the previous round, offer their opponents a minimum of three dates which, unless agreed to by the opponent, shall not be dates on which Championship Competitions, County Competitions or County Matches are being played :
- 3.2.1 At least one of the dates offered must be a Saturday or Sunday.
 - 3.2.2 The Opponent or Opposing Teams or Sides shall, within **48** hours of receipt of the challenge, reply and accept one of the dates offered.
 - 3.2.3 In the event of a club, an individual, a team or a side not offering **or accepting** dates within the set period, the opposing club, individual, team or side shall be **awarded** a 'walkover'.
 - 3.2.4 Where results are known there is nothing to stop players, **teams or sides** making arrangements for a game prior to the end of the previous round.
- 3.3 The Ken Griffin Mixed Pairs (details under MD) may be played at either of the challengers' home clubs. The opponents should be advised of the venue when match arrangements are made.
- 3.4 Whether games are scheduled on a day chosen by the competitors or with a 'fixed date' the guidance for timings is the same.
- 3.4.1 The start time of games will be 6.15 pm but an earlier time may be arranged by mutual agreement. Games played on a weekend must start no earlier than 9:30 am.
 - 3.4.2 If circumstances arise, (as, for example, in relation to limitations in green capacity) games scheduled on 'fixed dates' may be re-scheduled on a date mutually agreed by both parties before the 'fixed date'.
- 3.5 If a player/team/side fails to appear and be ready to play within 30 minutes after the scheduled or agreed time for the game, the opponent shall be **awarded** a 'walkover'.
- 3.6 All singles competitors drawn at home in a competition shall be responsible for providing a marker. Failure to abide by

this rule shall mean automatic disqualification.

3.6.1 Markers should be able to communicate clearly with both players. In the situation of play between a deaf player and a hearing player each player should be allowed to use a person who can communicate with them. If a marker who can both sign and speak/hear is not available, then a second marker is permitted. Both markers must be nominated before commencement of the game and only they may communicate with the players during the game. Unless otherwise agreed, the challenger's marker should maintain the scoring methods.

4. Substitutes and withdrawals

4.1 Other than in singles games, players taking part in the first game shall constitute the team and shall normally play together throughout that competition.

4.2 Other than in singles games, a substitute is permitted provided the substitution is made before the game has started. Only one, and the same, player may be used as a substitute at any time and may play in any position. They shall not have already played for another team nor can they subsequently play for another team in the same competition.

4.2.1 If a substitute is required once a game has started, then the Laws of the Sport of Bowls shall apply.

4.3 A named entrant of a team cannot be a member or substitute of any other team in the same Championship or Competition in the same year.

4.4 Where a substitute will need to be used in a game within the Sections, the relevant Section Competition Secretary must be informed as soon as possible. During the County Rounds the County Competition Secretary (in the MD) or the nominated member of the DCC (in the WD) must be informed.

4.5 On County Finals Day, the County Competition Secretary (in the MD) or the delegated member of the DCC (in the WD) must be informed of any substitution prior to the match being played. If the team is successful, the substitute will be named in the team as the County Champions.

4.6 Deliberate intention not to play in later round(s)

As soon as any individual, individual in a team or club side become aware that they are unavailable for a subsequent round they shall advise the County Competition Secretary (in the MD) or the delegated member of the DCC (in the WD) and withdraw from the competition immediately. If they do not and it is subsequently discovered that they knew of their unavailability in advance they shall be removed from the competition and receive a one year ban from the relevant Championship or Competition.

5. Notification of Results

5.1 Section tie/match results must reach the appropriate Section Competition Secretary by 10.00 pm on the day the game is played. If Rule 3.4.2 is invoked, the result must still be reported on the original date for that round.

5.2 Results of competitions not held within sections should be submitted according to the instructions printed in the Divisional Yearbook.

5.3 Score cards, **containing the names of all those who played**, shall be signed by both players/skips and the winner shall retain them until the Quarter-Finals in case of dispute or protest.

5.3.1 Score cards for County Two Rink Competition shall be submitted to the County Competition Secretary according to the instruction in the Divisional Yearbook.

5.3.2 Score cards for County Challenge Cup shall be submitted to the Section Competition Secretary within 24 hours of the match being completed.

5.4 A game conceded is considered to be a game lost. Concession applies at any point after the draw is made.

5.5 Failure to notify results unambiguously (particularly with regard to concessions), accurately, completely and on time may lead to disqualification.

6. Dress Code

Unless the relevant DCC advises otherwise the dress code shall be in accordance with current Bowls England regulations. Failure to comply may result in disqualification from the Championship Competition or County Competition.

6.1 All rounds prior to Finals - club shirts or predominantly white above the waist with grey or GBA/Bowls England approved coloured clothing below the waist.

6.2 All Finals - club shirts or predominantly white above the waist with white or GBA/Bowls England approved coloured clothing below the waist.

6.3 General dress rules

- a) Sandals shall not be permitted in events under the jurisdiction of Bowls England, except in medical circumstances where a doctor's note has been provided.
- b) Shorts manufactured for the sport of bowls may be worn below the waist.
- c) All members of the side or team shall wear the same colour below the waist.
- d) Club apparel may be worn provided that all members of the side or team wear the same and provided that the design of such apparel has been registered with the County.
- e) Bowls England licensed apparel may be worn provided that all members of a side or team wear the same colour above and/or below the waist.
- f) Players governed by requirements of a specific ethnic culture shall be permitted to wear their traditional dress if they so desire.
- g) Shell suits, jeans and shorts other than those manufactured for the sport of bowls are not acceptable.
- h) Headgear, if worn, should be white or a registered colour.
- i) Socks, if visible, should be white.
- j) White waterproof clothing may be used, or, providing all members of a side or team wear the same, registered colour waterproof/fleeces are permitted. Bowls England licensed apparel may also be worn.

7. **Bowls**

7.1 Bowls England Domestic Regulations apply.

7.2 Unless differentiating stickers have been provided by the DCC, club stickers shall be used by competitors in all matches. All bowls belonging to individual players or players within a team or side should have the same stickers. Any team or side with one of their players with incorrect or no stickers on any bowl, the whole team or side must play without stickers.

8. **Umbrellas**

For health and safety reasons, players may not use umbrellas on or off the green while the game is in progress.

9. **Smoking**

Smoking is not permitted on the green by a player while the game is in progress. Smoking includes all electronic cigarettes. The 'green' is deemed to include a minimum of 1 metre of the bank surrounding the playing area. These are the minimum rules and more stringent 'club rules' take precedence.

10. **Stoppages or Postponements**

10.1 Challenger and Opponent must come to a reasonable agreement in the case of **exceptional weather**, as to whether continuing play is possible or might become possible within a short time period. This could relate to :

- a) the deterioration of the playing surface
- b) the impossibility of bowls running normally and truly
- c) safety considerations for any of the players involved

In all three cases Clauses 10.2 and 10.3 would then need to be invoked.

10.2 If a game is stopped either by the mutual agreement of the player, by the DCC or by the Umpire on account of darkness, weather, green conditions or any other valid reason, it should be resumed as soon as possible, without causing subsequent delay or interruption to the following round, on the same green and the same rink(s), with the scores as they were when the game stopped.

10.2.1 An end commenced but not completed shall be declared dead.

10.2.2 If the same green is not available then another green must be arranged by the Challenger(s).

10.3 When it is impossible to rearrange a game without causing subsequent delay or interruption to the following round and **five or more** ends have been completed, the score will stand.

10.3.1 If the score is a tie, then the result will be decided by the toss of a coin.

10.3.2 Where matches have not started or insufficient ends have been played, the result shall be determined by the toss of a coin.

This rule applies similarly to inter-club matches [County Inter-Club Competition, County Challenge Cup or County Two Rink Competition] but is subject to rule 12.6 in respect of how many ends must have been completed.

10.4 When a green is declared unplayable prior to the match by an appropriate club official, it is the responsibility of the challenger to arrange an alternative green for the match to be played on either the fixed date or an agreed play-by date.

10.5 Semi-Finals and Finals Days may be exempt from the above and games/events re-arranged where deemed necessary.

11. National Championships Qualifiers

11.1 With the exception of the Senior Fours and the Junior Pairs, the winner(s) of County Championship Semi-Finals shall qualify for the National Championships, with the winner of Semi-Final 1 qualifying as Gloucestershire A and the winner of Semi-Final 2 as Gloucestershire B. The DCC reserves the right to reverse these allocations in order to avoid a clash of events at the National Championships, or on the instructions of Bowls England.

11.2 In the Senior Fours and the Junior Pairs, the winners only of the County Championship Final shall qualify for the National Championships

11.3 If a Singles competitor or a Pairs, Triples or Fours team who has qualified for the National Championships does not represent GBA at the National Championships, that Competitor/Team shall be disqualified from the County Competition, shall not be awarded a County trophy or prize money, and will not appear in the County Competitions Honours Roll. The qualifying players' entry shall also not be accepted for the following year's Championship Competitions or County Competitions. An exception (in the case of a singles player) may be made where a medically certificated illness or injury intervenes after qualification provided the County Competition Secretary (in the MD) or the delegated member of the DCC (in the WD) is notified in advance, receives the medical certificate and accepts the incapacity of the player.

11.4 National Championship qualifiers are representing Gloucestershire and must wear County Uniform at the National Championships.

12. County Challenge Cup, County Two Rink Competition and County Inter-Club Competition

12.1 A side shall consist of:

- County Challenge Cup : three rinks of four players
- County Two Rink Competition : two rinks of four players
- County Inter-Club Competition : two rinks of four players

12.2 Failure to field a full team shall result in a walk-over for the opponent.

12.3 Clubs may use as many members of their club as necessary. In the County Two Rink Competition players may only play for one team.

12.3.1 Players may only play for one club and that must be the same club from which they play Championships.

12.3.2 Playing an ineligible player shall lead to disqualification.

12.4 The total number of shots on the two or three rinks shall determine the winner. In the event of a tie after 18 ends then an extra end shall be played by a pre-nominated rink to determine the overall winner.

- 12.5 Before the commencement of the match, the nominated captains will toss a coin (three times) to determine :
- 12.5.1 Choice of jack (first end), the winner having the choice of keeping or giving the jack away.
 - 12.5.2 Which rink will play the extra end. The winning captain will nominate the name of the skip to play the extra end. This must be declared prior to the match commencing.
 - 12.5.3 Choice of jack (extra end), the winner having the choice of keeping or giving the jack away should an extra end be necessary. The winner has the option to make the choice immediately or after the **18th** end has been played.
- 12.6 If a game is stopped, matches shall be deemed to have been completed if the following numbers of total ends have been played: County Challenge Cup : **30** ends; County Two Rink Competition : **20** ends; County Inter-Club Competition : **20** ends. If a game cannot be completed and there is no time remaining to allow re-arrangement, then the result is determined by a coin toss.

13 Complaints, disputes and appeals

Competitors should, at all times, be mindful of the fact that we play our sport for fun and to make friends. Complaints should not be made lightly and never in temper. They will be damaging and will involve both the complainant and County officers in considerable effort and sometimes expense, that will on occasions result in only an inconclusive outcome.

Please think very carefully indeed before initiating a formal complaint and read all relevant parts of these GBA Competition Rules. Also then refer to **Schedule G : GBA Competitions - Complaints, disputes and appeals**, which is to be found in the GBA Club Handbook, on the Gloucestershire Bowls Web Portal, or copies can be obtained from the GBA Administrator.