

Bowls WA ~ Field Of Play Rule ~ PLAYER DAMAGING THE GREEN

A new rule for all Umpires and controlling bodies to contemplate and apply as necessary was instituted for the first time in the Field of Play rules for Bowls WA events including Pennants in our State in 2012 – 2013 season.

Brought about from clubs seeking direction as to how we might limit the damage and subsequent cost of repairs to the numerous synthetic greens a lot of our clubs have opted for. The reality of the matter is that far from the years of care-free, low maintenance greens, some synthetics appear to be costing considerable sums to repair after only a very short period and, anecdotal comments would indicate that warranties are potentially negated by such damage.

FOPR Player damaging the Green

The Controlling Body shall be at liberty to warn a player if in their opinion he is causing damage to the green. Following the warning, if the player continues to cause damage to the green, the Controlling Body may request the player to retire from the green and take no further part in the match.

Refusing to leave the green

If the player refuses to leave the green, the player will be considered to become a defaulting player as per the Laws of The Sport of Bowls. The umpire's decision is final.

Of course, the "Controlling Body" is Bowls WA in Pennants and/or State competitions - & the **Umpire-of-The-Day** (of which there can be ONLY ONE per venue per round) is the representative of that Controlling Body at each venue, when a member of the Bowls WA Match Committee is unavailable. This FOPR will require the Umpire of the Day to apply it appropriately. If more than one Umpire is officiating due to separation of greens etc, The Umpire-of-the-Day will be the only person to make the determination upon appeal from any other Umpire-of-the-green.

While the expectation is that it will be more prominently applied at those by venues with synthetics, please note however, this RULE applies to all surfaces as necessary.

This rule was brought about by the increasing pressure from some clubs that have experienced varying levels of damage from "dropped-bowl" deliveries in the main. These are generally bowls that are delivered from a height that results in the 'denting' of the compacted material immediately beneath the synthetic surface. ***It is felt that bowls delivered in a proper manner, from around 30cm or below, would be unlikely to cause damage in this way and the full life expectancy of a synthetic would be within the realms of the possible.***

This FOPR should encourage coaches of clubs with players known to have difficulties with delivery of their bowls from a position low enough to avoid damaging the green, to take those players aside and attempt to correct their delivery in one of three ways; correcting their stance at point of delivery so that the point of release of the bowl is low enough; addition of a supporting walking stick (with the appropriate 75mm rubber base) to help maintain balance if balance is the issue; or by using one of the 3 brands of approved bowling arms (requirements and application forms for their use is available in downloadable form from the Bowls WA website link ~ www.bowlswa.com.au).

If a club selects a team with players of known delivery difficulties to play at a venue that has a synthetic surface, it may be prudent to include an additional player to act as a **SUBSTITUTE** in the event of the Player Damaging The Green Rule being invoked.

This rule is NOT intended to be a penalisation of players but an attempt to reduce the ever increasing impost on members of clubs with synthetics toward the upkeep caused by avoidable damage such deliveries contribute. Hopefully it will be accepted in this light by all.

The impact upon clubs with grass greens is not affected in quite the same way as it is relatively simple to 'top-dress' the divots for a reasonably rapid recovery of the playing surface, though as stated above, the rule will apply to ALL surfaces as necessary.

It is up to the **Club Committees** to consider what THEY believe is a delivery that may damage their green and to FULLY brief their Umpire/s who may preside as UMPIRE-OF-THE-DAY so that when called upon to adjudicate they will have that definition clear in their own mind.

This should be viewed as an endeavor to introduce a solution to address the issue in the first instance and apply it judiciously and not be over-zealous. After all we do not want drive members away from our clubs!

Clubs & Umpires are all asked to show some common sense in the application of the rule, for example, a single drive can NOT be considered under this rule unless the player **HABITUALLY** drives by delivering the bowl that hits the green from a height to cause damage, then with the appropriate WARNING having been given (including advising the side Manager), after a further such delivery that player will be asked to so modify his delivery or leave the green!

Clubs that will be invoking the rule, are asked as a matter of courtesy, to advise visiting club sides and/or teams so that appropriate team selections can be adjusted when they consider fielding a player who may possibly breach this rule.