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| **Directing & Clock System.** |
| Directing the blind lawn bowler.  Blind bowlers use various techniques when bowling. Some bowl from a kneeling position similar to indoor bowls, some have a fixed stance and some bowl like sighted bowlers do by stepping out and delivering. Most totally blind bowlers like to bowl towards a voice to get the correct line. This involves the director standing between the bowler and the jack  at a distance of about three metres from the mat and issueing voice commands. Visually Impaired bowlers commonly like to be aligned up from behind the mat and then deliver the bowl. What technique is used depends on what type of vision impairment the bowler has and how confident they are in their own ability. Some other bowlers use a range of things to help align their body etc before delivery but apart from audio commands the only other aid for blind bowlers in competition bowls is a centre string running down the green from end to end. This enables the bowler to work out angles from the front of the mat in combination with their director.   The Clock System.  All blind bowlers like to use the clock system for a description of how their bowl has finished in relation to the Jack. From this information the blind bowler can build up a mental picture of the developing head while playing. This is very important to all blind bowlers and vital information in serious competition. It allows the bowler to choose what type of shot to play and on what hand during an end.  As a director you need to imagine that the Jack is located in the centre of a clock face. You will be viewing the clock from the mat and the closest point to you would be 6 o'clock. If a bowl was perfect green but long/past the jack it would finish at 12 o’clock. Alternatively if it was perfect green but short of the jack it would finish at 6 o’clock. Add to this information the distance from the jack that the bowl has finished in metres and that’s all the info the blind bowler requires.  Other examples are if the bowl has finished jack high it will either be at 9 o’clock or 3 o’clock. Add in the distance and its a simple but effective system.  Of utmost importance is the directors ability to know their left from their right and to be able to tell the time quickly and accurately.  Judging distance is also vital as is being accurate with all the information. The worst possible thing a director could do is give in correct information or lie about the distance of a bowl. The trust factor between the director and blind bowler is of huge importance and there is no point telling the bowler they have bowled a "toucher" when in fact they are a metre over at 2 o'clock for example.  Once the clock system is mastered it becomes second nature and the info is passed on to the bowler with ease.    Distance of the Jack.  Blind bowlers roll up the Jack the same as sighted bowlers do. Once it has been straightened the director will pass on information about the distance. In competitions there are measurement signs on both sides of the greens outer area showing both metres and feet and the director passes on an accurate distance to the bowler.   In practice it can be as simple as stating that the end is short, medium or long. Once the info has been passed on the bowler delivers the bowl.   Based on the finishing point of the bowl using the clock system the bowler will try and adjust their weight accordingly. |