V3.1 October 2026

Etherow Indoor Bowling Centre

Rules and Regulations

for the safe and fair enjoyment of all members and visitors

The following rules must be observed whilst attending Etherow Indoor Bowling Centre (EIBC).

Although this list is not exhaustive, it is expected that, where any doubt arises, common sense and good sportsmanship will prevail. Where clarification is required, the Centre Management should be consulted, and their decision will be final and binding. Team captains are responsible for ensuring that all team members are familiar with these rules.

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1. Player Conduct

EIBC aims to provide a fun, safe, and respectful environment for all members and visitors. By attending the Centre, you agree to support this aim by following the guidance below:

1.1. Code of Conduct – Read and comply with the Centre's Code of Conduct. A copy can be found on the website, the notice board, or obtained from the office.

1.2. Rules and Policies – Comply with all rules and policies currently in force at the Centre.

1.3. Management Requests – Listen to and comply with requests from Centre Management at all times.

1.4. Safety and Awareness – Familiarise yourself with fire exits and evacuation procedures, which are displayed prominently around the Centre.

1.5. Reporting Issues – Report to Centre Management any behaviour or issue that conflicts with the aims of providing a safe and enjoyable environment.

1.6. Compliance with Management Decisions – In rare circumstances, Centre Management may ask you to leave the rink and/or the Centre. You agree to comply with any such request immediately.

1.7. Use of Mobile Phones- All players must put their phones on silent whilst playing a match. The only permitted exception is when a medical call is anticipated. In this case inform your team captain and the opposing team captain of this possibility. If you do receive a call, please leave the rink and move to a quiet corner.

2. Protecting the Green and Players

EIBC is committed to maintaining a safe playing environment and protecting the quality of the green. All players are therefore expected to:

2.1. Footwear – Wear clean, flat-soled indoor footwear whilst on the green. Ideally, footwear produced by recognised bowls manufacturers should be used. A list of recommended retailers can be found in Appendix A of this document.

2.2. Equipment – Ensure that any bowls used do not exceed 127mm (5”) in diameter or 1.59kg (3½ lb) in weight. For most flat-green bowls manufacturers, this equates to a size 5 bowl.

2.3. Food and Drink – Do not bring food or drink onto the rink.

2.4. Delivery of Bowls – Delivering bowls with excessive pace (“striking”) is not permitted. If a bowler intends to deliver a bowl at moderate pace (i.e. a “running bowl”), they **must** give both a verbal and visual warning to the players at the head end, allowing sufficient time for adjacent rinks to be alerted. Any breach of this rule may result in the player being asked to leave the rink and take no further part in the game.

2.5. Rink Boundaries – Remain within the confines of the rink during play whenever possible. Stepping on and off the rink unnecessarily may present a trip hazard.

2.6. Safety – Player safety must always take priority.

3. Rink Booking and Payment

All rink bookings and payments must be managed responsibly by team captains to ensure fair and efficient league operations.

3.1. Booking Procedure – Rinks must be booked by team captains at the start of the league season with the Centre Manager or their appointed delegate. Completion and acceptance of the Bowling League Team Application Form will fulfil this requirement.

3.2. Commitment to Payment – Booking a rink constitutes a commitment by the team captain to pay for each of the booked sessions.

3.3. Payment Schedule – All rink games must be paid for before play commences.

3.4. Forfeited Games – In the event that a team fails to muster a side for a booked league game, a score of 12 points will be awarded to the opposing team.

3.5. Team Availability – Every team must come from the squad registered at the beginning of the season. However, in certain circumstances e.g. Long term illness, which would deprive a team of a member for the rest of the season, an alternative member can be substituted after prior notification to the Committee.

It is recommended that the squad should consist of eight (8) players to give flexibility and ensure the availability of 4 players for a match. i.e. .double the number playing.

Centre members are encouraged to make themselves available for more than one team but a member can only play / be affiliated to one team in each league.

There will be no substitutes allowed on the day. Where a full team is unavailable Rule 4.1 will apply.

3.6. Partial Teams – Unused

3.7. Rearranged Matches – At the discretion of the Committee, and with the agreement of both teams, a postponed or unplayed match may be rescheduled and replayed at a later date.

4. Playing with a Player Missing

In a game of fours or triples every team must come from the squad registered pre-season.

Where play proceeds with a team short of one player, the following rules apply:

4.1. Extra Bowls – The first and second bowlers on the team with the missing player shall each play additional bowls so that the total number of delivered bowls is equal for both teams.

4.2.1 Adjusted Score – Fours

The final shots score for the team with the missing player shall be calculated as **75% of their total shots**. In other words, multiply the total shots by 3 and divide by 4.
Example: If the team's total shots equal 20, the final adjusted score will be 15 (20 × 3 = 60, and 60 ÷ 4 = 15).

4.2.2 Adjusted Score – Triples

The final shots score for the team with the missing player shall be calculated as **67% of their total shots**. In other words, multiply the total shots by 2/3
Example: If the team's total shots equal 20, the final adjusted score will be 13 (20 × 2 = 40, and 40÷ 3 = 13. 33 < 0.5 = 13)

4.3. Rounding Rule – After the 75% rule has been applied, if the result is not a whole number, it must be rounded to the nearest whole number. If the fractional result is 0.5 or greater, round up; otherwise, round down.
Example: A result ending in (.25) is rounded down, while (.50) or (.75) is rounded up.

4.4. Scorer Agreement – Both captains must agree on a nominated scorer before the commencement of play.

4.5. Scorecards – Scorecards must be signed by both captains at the completion of the game and handed in to the Centre Manager or their delegate.

4.6. Points Allocation –

- **Game won** = 2 points
- **Game drawn** = 1 point
- **Game lost** = 0 points

5. Play Form and Duration

All games must be played within the time limits set by the Centre to ensure fair use of rinks and smooth operation of scheduled sessions.

5.1. League Games – League games shall be played to as many ends as can be completed within the allocated time frame.

All matches to begin at the scheduled time. If a player is late rule 4.1 applies until the player arrives.

Players are recommended to arrive no later than 20 minutes prior to the scheduled start time to allow time for the 2 trial ends etc.

Each game to include a maximum 20 minute beverage/comfort break.

5.2. Social and Casual Games – All social or casual games must conclude once the allotted session time has expired.

5.3. Official Timekeeping – The clock displayed within the Centre must be used as the official reference for all game timings.

6. Short Mat Games

All Short Mat games played at EIBC must adhere to the official regulations set by the English Short Mat Bowling Association (ESMBA).

6.1. Laws of the Game – Short Mat games shall be played in accordance with the latest version of the *ESMBA Laws of the Game*. A copy of these Laws can be found on the ESMBA website, accessible via the EIBC website, or in hard copy from the Centre office.

7. EIBC Rules of Play for Long Mat Bowling

These rules are specific to the Etherow Indoor Bowling Centre (EIBC). They are designed to be clear, minimise disruption, and ensure that all matches are played in a friendly and sportsmanlike manner.

7.1. Before Commencement of Play – Before any match begins,

the Team Captains should

- make their team members aware of the rules
- inform one another which team member is responsible for controlling the head, determining the number of shots scored, and measuring for shot if necessary.

All other players must remain away from the head while the declaration of the head is in progress.

7.2. Trial Ends – All players are entitled to two trial ends before the scheduled start of a match. These must be completed before the official start time.

7.3. First End of Play – The designated *away* team, as indicated on the scorecard, shall place the mat and cast the first jack.

7.4. Placing the Mat – The mat must be positioned on the Tee, which is two metres from the rear ditch, and centred along the rink's centre line. If displaced during play, it must be returned to its original position at any time during the end.

7.5. Position on the Mat and Foot-Faulting – Before delivering a jack or bowl, a player must have all or part of one foot on the mat.

7.6. Delivering the Jack – The jack, in its original course, must travel at least 23 metres from the front of the mat and must not enter the ditch. Once at rest, it must be positioned centrally on the rink.

7.7. Improper Delivery of the Jack –
A jack is deemed to have been improperly delivered if it:
a) Comes to rest in the rear ditch.
b) Comes to rest outside the boundaries of the rink.
c) Travels less than 23 metres from the front line of the mat.

If any of these occur, the opposing team may reposition the jack anywhere between the 23-metre mark and the Tee at the far end. The first bowl of the end shall still be played by the team that originally cast the jack.

7.8. Order of Play – The leads shall play their bowls in turn, followed by the remaining players in the team as determined by their order of play. Player positions within a team may not be changed after the first end unless a substitute is introduced. A substitute may play in any position except as captain.

7.9. Marking a Toucher and Movement of Touchers –
a) A *toucher* is a bowl that, in its original course, touches the jack, even if it comes to rest in the ditch. A bowl that falls and touches the jack before the next delivery also becomes a toucher. A bowl is **not** a toucher if it contacts a jack already in the ditch.
b) A toucher must be marked with chalk by a member of the team that delivered it. If marking the bowl risks moving it or disturbing the head, it may be nominated as a toucher and marked later when safe to do so. The position of a toucher in the ditch must be indicated by placing a disc on the bank directly in line with it.
c) If a jack or toucher in the ditch is moved by another toucher or the jack in play, its new position is valid. If moved by a non-toucher, it must be replaced in its original position.

7.10. Dead Bowls (Non-Touchers) –
A bowl is considered *dead* if it:
a) Comes to rest in the ditch and is not a toucher.
b) Passes completely out of the rink of play.
c) Passes outside the boundary on a bias that would have prevented it from re-entering play.
d) Comes to rest outside a side boundary but remains in contact with a jack or bowl in play.
e) Doesn't travel more than 14m or half the length of the rink

Dead bowls must be removed from the rink as soon as they are declared dead.

7.11. When a Bowl Is Not Considered Dead –
A bowl is **not** a dead bowl if it:
a) Comes to rest within the boundaries of the rink.
b) Is a toucher that rebounds from the face of the bank back into play.
c) Is a toucher that comes to rest on top of the jack or another toucher in the ditch.

7.12. Live Jack in the Ditch and a Dead Jack –
a) A jack moved by a bowl into the front ditch within the side boundaries of play remains *live*.
b) The position of a live jack in the ditch may be validly altered by a toucher in play.
c) If a live jack moves, the marker on the bank must be adjusted to show its new position.
d) A jack that passes completely outside the rink is deemed *dead*.

7.13. Dead End –
If the jack is displaced beyond the rink boundaries, the end is declared *dead*. It must be recorded on both the scoreboard and scorecard. Play resumes from the opposite end, with the team that cast the jack on the dead end casting again on the next end.

7.14. Deciding the Number of Shots Scored –

This process must not begin until the final bowl has come to rest. The players designated by each captain shall then agree the number of shots scored. All other players must stand back from the head.

When measuring is required:
a) Measurements must be taken between the nearest points of the jack and the relevant bowls.
b) If a bowl is likely to fall during measuring, its position may be secured by the best possible means.
c) If the jack or bowl is displaced during measuring, it must be replaced in its original position with the agreement of both sides.

7.15. No Shot Scored – Tied End –

An end is declared *tied* when:
a) The nearest bowl of each team is touching the jack.
b) The nearest bowl of each team is equidistant from the jack.
c) No live bowls remain within the rink of play.

The end must be recorded as *no score* on the scorecard and the scoreboard. Play resumes from the opposite end, with the team that cast the jack previously casting again.

7.16. Irregularities in Play –

a) *Playing Out of Turn* – If a player delivers out of turn, the opposing captain may stop the bowl and return it to be replayed in the correct order or leave the head as it is and play two consecutive bowls to restore sequence. If the original bowl disturbed the head, the opposing captain may either accept the head as it stands, restore it to its previous position, or declare the end dead.
b) *Playing Another Player's Bowl* – If a player delivers another player's bowl, it must be replaced with their own. If the original was a toucher, the replacement must be nominated or marked as a toucher.

7.17. Bowl or Jack Displacement –

a) If a bowl or jack is accidentally moved during play, it must be replaced in its original position by mutual agreement between the captains or the players controlling the head.
b) If a bowl or jack is displaced by another bowl or person while still in motion, it must be returned to the player to be replayed.

7.18. Placement of the Mat on Completion of an End –

The mat must not be draped over the bank, as this may interfere with the movement of a bowl or jack during the next end. The mat should be:

- Rolled up and placed on top of the bank; or
- Placed on the floor behind the bank; or

- Placed on a nearby chair or table close to the rear of the bank.

7.19. Unforeseen Circumstances –
If any situation arises during a match that is not covered by these rules, and the captains cannot reach agreement, a Committee Member on site may be consulted to make a ruling. That decision must be accepted and is final.

7.20. Possession of the rink – Position of players

In relation to the rink of play

a) Players at the mat-end of the rink who are not delivering a bowl must stand at least 1 metre behind the mat.

b)Players at the head-end of the rink and who are not controlling play must stand:

- behind the jack if they are members of the team which is in possession of the rink;
- behind the jack and away from the head if they are members of the team which is not in possession of the rink;
- on the surrounds of the green if the jack is in the ditch; or
- well clear of the head if it is not possible to stand on the surrounds.

c) As soon as a bowl is delivered, a player who is controlling play from a position that is either level with or in front of the jack, must take their position as described above.

Appendix A – Bowls Footwear Suppliers

Whilst not exhaustive, the following list of bowls footwear suppliers may be helpful when purchasing the correct footwear for our sport.

Supplier	Website / Details
Sports Direct	www.sportsdirect.com
Whitehead Bowls	https://whiteheadbowls.co.uk
Bond Bowls	www.bondbowls.co.uk
New Forest Footwear	https://newforestfootwear.com
Bowl-Bi-Us	https://bowls-bi-us.co.uk
Bush Hill Bowls	https://bushhillbowls.co.uk
Premier Bowls *(local supplier based in Stockport)*	www.premierbowls.co.uk