



Article: Possession of the Rink

Bowls can be an exciting game at times with players becoming somewhat animated and enthusiastic about the result of their last bowl which may have been one of those illusive shots that produced stunning results. We just need to remember that in all that excitement, when our bowl comes to rest, the possession of the rink changes.

Counties Manukau Umpires have noted that sometimes there is a tendency for players to follow the bowl up the green and still be forward of the mat when the bowl comes to rest. So, what do the Laws of the Sport say about this and why is it an issue?

Under Law 12, players at the mat end of the rink must stand at least 1 meter behind the mat. Players at the head end of the rink must stand behind the jack and away from the head if they are not in possession of the rink and behind the jack if they are in possession of the rink. A player directing play may stand over the head but must go behind the jack once the bowl has been delivered. Law 12 also covers neighboring rinks. Players are not to walk into neighboring rinks, even if unoccupied.

So, what does possession actually mean? This is outlined under Law 13. Possession of the rink changes once a bowl comes to rest including time taken to mark a toucher. All players need to be at the places outlined in Law 12 once the bowl comes to rest.

The issue is, the movement of players around the rink can cause opponents to be interfered with, annoyed, or distracted. Most opponents probably ignore it and just get on with the game, but the fact remains, if the actions of a player do interfere, annoy or distract, they are quite within their rights to advise an umpire and ask for the behavior to cease.

Umpires want players to be aware of this issue so they can regulate themselves and avoid warnings. Continued noncompliance with Laws 12 and 13 after a warning requires the removal of a bowl from play by the Umpire.