



# ALTERNATIVE BOWLS FORMATS

Fun games for you and your members

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We have compiled this guide to assist individuals and clubs who wish to try different and fun variations of our sport.

Our guide includes some simple 'how to play' information, however please feel free to tailor to your own requirements.

Don't forget that many of these games could utilise a 'fixed jack' to save time and avoid multiple people from touching them.

Bowls England wishes to thank all those clubs and individuals who have contributed their ideas in producing this guide.

Abbots Langley BC, Hertfordshire  
Farnborough BC, Hampshire  
Gerrard's Cross BC, Buckinghamshire  
Newhaven BC, Sussex  
Redland Green BC, Gloucestershire

If your club has developed any other fun format and wishes to share it, please send details to: [matt@bowlsengland.com](mailto:matt@bowlsengland.com)

## 100 Up Singles

### **Players:**

- 2 or 3 players

### **Equipment required:**

- Two mats
- Two jacks
- One scoreboard/scorecard
- Measure
- Bowls



### **Object of the Game:**

First to 100 shots wins. If a draw, 100 each, play on until one player has a two shot lead.

### **How to Play:**

1. Toss a coin to decide who plays first. (If three players a second toss will be required to see who goes second). The winner of the toss places the mat and decides on the length of play, the opposing player/player playing last places the jack in the desired position
2. Each player has four bowls, each playing in turn – after all bowls are played the nearest four bowls to the jack score (10 points on offer per end)
  - a. Closest: 4 points
  - b. Second: 3 points
  - c. Third: 2 points
  - d. Fourth: 1 point
3. Scores are recorded on the scoreboard/scorecard
4. The player who scores the most shots on the previous end plays first on the next end and decides on the position of the jack. The player who scored the least shots places the jack into the desired position

This game can be played as a one off or part of a mini league/ladder.

## Metre Singles

### **Players:**

- 2 players
- 1 Marker (optional)

### **Equipment required:**

- Two mats
- Two jacks
- One scoreboard/scorecard
- Measure
- Two Bowls per player



### **Object of the Game:**

The player with the most shots after 21 ends of play is deemed the winner.

### **How to Play:**

1. Toss a coin to decide who plays first. The winner of the toss places the mat and decides on the length of play, if no marker the opposing player places the jack in the desired position
2. Each player has two bowls, each playing in turn. After all bowls are played only the bowls within a metre of the jack are in contention, all other bowls can be removed. The player with the nearest bowl(s) scores
3. One shot awarded to the player whose bowl is nearest to the jack, two shots if the same player has the two nearest bowls to the jack. No shots scored if no bowls get within a metre of the jack, the end still counts with no score. Scores are recorded on the scoreboard/scorecard
4. The player who scores on the previous end plays first on the next end and decides on the position of the jack. The player who scored the least shots places the jack into the desired position

This game can be played as a one off or part of a mini league/ladder.

## 'Jack Last' Bowls

### **Players:**

- 4 players (Pairs)

### **Equipment required:**

- Two mats
- One jack
- One scoreboard/scorecard
- Measure
- Bowls



### **Object of the Game:**

The player with the most shots after the agreed number of ends played is deemed the winner. In this variation the jack is cast last.

### **How to Play:**

1. Play as pairs, toss a coin to decide who plays first
2. The winner of the toss places the mat and delivers their bowl up the green
3. The jack is not cast until all the bowls have been delivered, the jack is then cast by the last player to deliver a bowl
4. After the jack has come to rest the end is declared finished. Shots are scored as per normal rules and recorded on the scoreboard/scorecard. The winner of the end then plays first on the next end

There are a number of tactics that can be used including:

- pairs can deliver their bowls into separate groups or into their opponents groups
- the last player can then deliver an isolated bowl in the hope that they can accurately cast the jack to it or to their team members bowls

A further variation of this format is to toss for the right to deliver the jack on each end after all bowls have been delivered.

## Roving Jack

### **Players:**

- Any format of play/number of players

### **Equipment required:**

- Two mats
- One jack
- One scoreboard/scorecard
- Measure
- Bowls



### **Object of the Game:**

The player/team with the most shots after the agreed number of ends played is deemed the winner. In this variation the jack is not centred and players bowl to where the jack has been cast.

### **How to Play:**

1. Toss a coin to decide who plays first. The winner of the toss places the mat and delivers the jack
2. Where the jack stops is where to bowl to. If the jack finishes outside the confines of the rink (off side or in back ditch) or on the line it is declared dead and will need to be recast by the opposing team/player
3. Each player plays in turn – after all bowls are played the end is declared finished
4. Scoring is per normal Laws
5. Scores are recorded on the scoreboard/scorecard
6. The player/team who scores the most shots on the previous end plays first on the next end and decides on the position of the jack

This game can be played as a one off or part of a mini league/ladder.

## Variable Pairs/Triples

### **Players:**

- 4 or 6 players

### **Equipment required:**

- Two mats
- One jack
- One scoreboard/scorecard
- Measure
- Two bowls per player from a set



### **Object of the Game:**

The team with the most shots after 21 ends played is deemed the winner. In this variation players have the opportunity to change playing positions after each end is completed.

### **How to Play:**

1. Toss a coin to decide who plays first. The winner of the toss places the mat and delivers the jack. If the jack finishes outside the confines of the rink (off side or in back ditch) it is declared dead and will need to be recast by the opposing team/player
2. Each player plays in turn – after all bowls are played the end is declared finished
3. Players have the opportunity to change positions prior to the commencement of the next end
4. Scoring is per normal Laws
5. Scores are recorded on the scoreboard/scorecard
6. The team who scores the most shots on the previous end plays first on the next end and decides on the position of the jack

This game can be played as a one off or part of a mini league/ladder.

## High Fives

### **Players:**

- 5 players

### **Equipment required:**

- Four mats
- Two jacks
- Two scoreboards/scorecards
- Two Measures
- Pairs - Three bowls per player from a set
- Triples - Two bowls per player from a set



### **Object of the Game:**

Each team consisting of 5 players will play as a pair and a triple. Format will be two sets of seven ends.

### **Scoring:**

10 points up for grabs:

- 2 points for a set win, 1 point for a draw
- 2 point for the overall win.

### **How to Play:**

1. Toss a coin to decide which team takes the jack, the winner of the toss places the mat and delivers the jack. If the jack finishes outside the confines of the rink (off side or in back ditch) it is declared dead and will need to be recast by the opposing team/player
2. Each player plays in turn – after all bowls are played the end is declared finished
3. Players have the opportunity to change playing disciplines after the first set has finished
4. Scoring is per normal Laws
5. Scores are recorded on the scoreboard/scorecard
6. The team who scores the most shots on the previous end plays first on the next end and decides on the position of the jack

This game can be played as a one off or part of a mini league.



## Power Play

### **Players:**

- 4 players

### **Equipment required:**

- Two mats
- One jack
- One scoreboard/scorecard
- Measure
- Three bowls per player from a set



### **Object of the Game:**

Each match to consist of two sets of seven ends with a best of three end tie break (if required). Teams to nominate one Power Play end per set prior to match starting, enabling teams to earn double the shots scored in that end. (i.e. two shots rather than the normal one shot an end). The team with the most set wins is deemed the winner.

### **How to Play:**

1. Before the start of each set both teams will declare which end will be their 'Power Play' end
2. Toss a coin to decide who plays first, the winner of the toss places the mat and delivers the jack. If the jack finishes outside the confines of the rink (off side or in back ditch) it is declared dead and will need to be recast by the opposing team/player
3. Each player plays in turn – after all bowls are played the end is declared finished
4. The team who scores the most shots on the previous end plays first on the next end and decides on the position of the jack
5. Players have the opportunity to change playing positions at the conclusion of a set. The team that lost the toss at the start of the match takes the jack in the second set
6. Scoring is per normal Laws except when the nominated 'Power Play' end is in play when shots scored are doubled
7. Each set scores are recorded on the scoreboard/scorecard. If one set each, then a three end tie break is played to determine the winner
8. Only one shot per end counts in each end of the tie break, 'Power Play' cannot be used
9. All seven ends of a set to be played if playing as a league

This game can be played as a one off or part of a mini league.

## Australian Pairs

### **Players:**

- 4 players

### **Equipment required:**

- Two mats
- One jack
- One scoreboard/scorecard
- Measure
- Four bowls per player from a set



### **Object of the Game:**

The team with the most shots after the agreed number of ends to be played is deemed the winner. In this variation players play their bowls in the sequence 2-4-2 with the lead and skip rotating.

### **How to Play:**

1. Toss a coin to decide who plays first. The winner of the toss places the mat and delivers the jack. If the jack finishes outside the confines of the rink (off side or in back ditch) it is declared dead and will need to be recast by the opposing team/player
2. On the first end the lead deliveries two of their four bowls, the lead and skip then change ends. The skip then plays four bowls before swapping ends once again with the lead to allow the lead to play their final two bowls
3. Once all bowls are played the end is declared finished
4. The order of play is reversed on the next end with the Skip leading off. This sequence continues throughout the whole of the match with the lead leading off on odd ends and the skip leading off on even ends
5. Scoring is per normal Laws
6. Scores are recorded on the scoreboard/scorecard
7. The team who scores the most shots on the previous end plays first on the next end and decides on the position of the jack

This game can be played as a one off or part of a mini league.