

## Bowls

By far the most important purchase you will make will be your choice of bowls. At first glance it appears to be a fairly simple choice, but when you have played a few times you will understand that there is much to be considered.

Firstly there is the make of bowl. Each manufacturer produces a range of models unique to them. Each model within the range has slightly different characteristics and an individual bowl line. Lawn bowls are biased causing them to travel in a parabola (curve). Some take a narrower parabola and some are wider. Some follow a more even parabola and some have more of a distinct hook at the end of their travel.

As well as bias there is size and weight to be considered. Bowls range in size from size 00 (smallest) to size 5, and there will be a size that is correct for your hand. It is very important that a bowl **feels comfortable** in your hand when using your preferred grip. Bowls can be either medium or heavy in weight with some makes and models offering extra heavy. They can be regular or slim in their profile and this has also an effect on the size bowl you can manage. Some bowls have dimples on the side to assist your grip and others are smooth. It's a personal choice, choosing what feels best. Every set has its own individual colour markings and a motif. With some manufacturers you can pay a little extra and order your own personal motif. Obviously you will then have to wait for them to be made in Australia and shipped. Most people are happy to 'buy off the shelf'. Our club has a number of sets of club bowls (located in the store-room).

**As a new member we encourage you to experiment with and practice with our club bowls (for free for the first season) before you decide to buy your own set of bowls.**

Brand new bowls cost anywhere from around \$600 to about \$800 (average probably around \$700) – with coloured bowls usually being more expensive than black bowls. Check out manufacturer's websites or see products available at the Bowls Canterbury Shop 28a Makora Street Fendalton ([www.bowlscanterbury.co.nz](http://www.bowlscanterbury.co.nz))

Talk to one of our club coaches, quiz other members on their choice – read up about the manufacturers and generally take your time before buying. Some manufacturer's / agents have sets of trial bowls available – and it's well worthwhile to trial if you can before you commit. Remember, even experienced, successful bowlers are very unlikely to have personally used certain makes and models and bowlers have a natural tendency to recommend what they use! Some bowlers inherit a set of old family 'heirloom' bowls – beware – it is unlikely they will fit your hand properly

and the bowls being made today are definitely superior in handling and running characteristics.

Like all sports gear, bowls move on and improve! When you find a set that suits you – cherish them. A well looked after set of bowls should last you 15 or 20 years. Dry them thoroughly after use and apply a sparing amount of bowls polish regularly to help protect them from scratching and marking. A few marks on your bowls won't affect their performance but over time as the bowls wear and get progressively scratched it does affect their bias and run on the green.

## **Bowls bags**

Look around at what other members are using. Bowling bags need to hold a complete set of four bowls, compartments for other gear, and are priced from \$60 to \$240.

Many women bowlers (and a growing number of men) are now using the 'glide' type of bag, with wheels that you can easily pull along, rather than lifting. Bags are typically made in tough vinyl or fabric. The fabric tends to last longer. Check the quality of the zips – that is very important. To start, you may opt to use an older, second hand bag and that's OK – as long as it protects your bowls properly. Do not overfill your bag with unnecessary items as you will soon find it can get rather heavy – a particular problem if you have to park some-way away from the club you are visiting!

## **Measures**

You won't need a measure as soon as you start (you can ask to borrow someone else's) but it's definitely something you will want to own eventually. Henselite and Taylors both make measures. They are surprisingly expensive, around \$60 plus, so you'll want to look after your measure and keep it in a safe place in your bag. Perhaps you can suggest to your family or friends that it will make a good Christmas or birthday present – becoming a bowler opens up a whole new range of possibilities for presents!

## **Bowling Shoes**

It is important to have comfortable, good fitting bowling shoes, when you are spending all day on the green, especially in the hot summer months. There is a great range of makes and styles available and a wide range of prices. The soles of your bowling shoes must be flat so as not to damage the greens. A tip to make your bowling shoes last longer is to change into them just before you play and keep them only for bowls. If you walk

around the shops and on concrete surfaces with your bowling shoes on they will wear out much faster!

## **Apparel**

Club uniform for both men and Ladies is maroon trousers or shorts with club shirts. These can be purchased at the Club. During midweek play Men can wear grey trousers or shorts with a club top.

Ladies can wear black/maroon trousers or shorts with a club top. Having the right clothing is important so that you look your best and feel 'good' and we suggest that this is something you discuss with other members or the Club Captain.

If you are playing in a Morrison Avenue team the rules say that you must all be wearing the same uniform.