

WILL YOU MARK FOR ME PLEASE?

We have reached that time of year when everybody will be looking for markers for the various singles competitions. Many of those asked may be new to the task and unaware of the actual duties and responsibilities involved, in addition there are many misconceptions about the job. Due to reports, and some personal observations, about incorrect procedures, I feel after discussion with other committee members, that club members might like some advice, to try to ensure uniformity while officiating. In the following notes, plain text is a direct quote from Law 71, the text in italics are my personal comments intended to assist you in the future.

The Marker should appraise him/herself before the game as to what the competition is and the number of ends to be played, or shots scored. Also for the Handicap Competition, each players handicap score. He/she should also have the necessary tools (measure, props, etc).

DUTIES OF A MARKER – LAW 71 – (Please read “he” as also “she”)

(a) In the absence of the Umpire the marker shall control the game in accordance with the Laws of the Game. He shall, before play commences, examine all bowls for the imprint of the I.B.B/W.B.B. Stamp, or that of its National Authority, such imprint to be clearly visible, and shall ascertain by measurements the width of the rink of play.

We don't really expect markers in club competitions to carry out a detailed examination of the bowls but it is useful to note the stickers and the colour on the card for reference. Remember that the marker does not assume the duties of an Umpire and that control does not imply decision_making. For more information about stamping see the notes at the end of the Laws and on the inside back cover.

(b) He shall centre the jack and shall place a full length jack 2m from the ditch in compliance with Law 28.

If in doubt use the 2 metre measuring stick. Remember to place the jack beside the end of the stick and not at the front of the end.

(c) He shall ensure that the jack is not less than 23m from the mat line (front of the mat), after it has been centred.

If in doubt use the long tape measure. Ask one of the players to hold the end of the tape firmly at the centre of the front end of the mat while you check the measured distance by holding the tape above the jack and viewing the point of the jack nearest to the mat.

(d) He shall stand at one side of the rink, and to the rear of the jack.

Stay within the rink and **remain perfectly still while play is in progress**, ensuring that you do not obscure the rink markers. Do not move until the bowl comes to rest. Do not change sides during an end unless the position of the jack compromises your position. In no circumstances should you walk through the head except when it becomes necessary to get a clear picture of the lie to answer a specific question or to measure when requested at the completion of the end.

(e) He shall answer any specific questions relating to the existing state of the head while the player is in possession of the rink and, when requested clearly indicate the shot if possible.

Answers used to be Yes or No but now sensibly you may answer the player's questions.

Remember that a player's possession of the rink ends when the bowl comes to rest.

(f) He shall mark all “touchers” immediately they come to rest, and remove the chalk marks from “non-touchers”. With the agreement of both Opponents he shall remove all “dead” Bowls from the green and the ditch. He shall mark the position of the jack and “touchers” which are in the ditch. (See Laws 32 and 39).

Tell the players prior to the start that you will mark touchers immediately they come to rest and ask them to wait for this to be done before their delivery. Ask their agreement to remove dead bowls from the green and the ditch prior to start. In no circumstances should you step into the ditch, regard it as a minefield! When possible, always mark both sides of the toucher.

(g) He shall not move, or cause to be moved, either jack or Bowls until each player has agreed to the number of shots.

In no circumstances should the marker interfere with the head. The players must make an agreed decision and only they should move jack or Bowls. The marker should remain at the head until the players have agreed the number of shots.

(h) If unable to come to a decision satisfactory to the players he shall call in an Umpire. If an official Umpire has not been appointed, the marker shall select one. The decision of the Umpire shall be final He shall measure carefully all doubtful shots when requested by either player.

Remember you are measuring for the players and should only do so at their request. You do not make a decision, only express an opinion. It is for the players to decide, not the marker! If they cannot decide, or cannot accept your opinion, nominate suitable Umpire from those present at the club. If there is nobody else there but the players and yourself, nominate yourself as Umpire, repeat the measuring process and, as the appointed Umpire, make a decision. I hope it never happens to you! (Incidentally, it is a mark of courtesy that players and marker should leave the rink while an Umpire is called to officiate).

(i) He shall enter the score at each end, and shall intimate to the players the state of the game. When the game is finished, he shall see that the score card, containing the names of the players, is signed by the players, and is disposed of according to the rules of the competition.

Enter the score agreed by players to the card only after both have had the opportunity to study the head. Enter the score on the board at the conclusion of each end, not simply when you are at the same end as the board. At the conclusion of the match, obtain both players signature on the card and leave the card in the rack under the main competition board. If the match is a County or District competition, give the card to the winning player who is responsible for notifying the result.

(j) He shall remove the mat from the previous end, as necessary.

Sounds simple, but always check that the mat, if already removed, has been placed safely on the bank and that it is not over-lapping into the ditch. Always ensure that you remove it and place it safely on the bank.

If you need further advice, I am sure that the club coaches, who are all qualified and registered markers, will be pleased to help. In addition, the bowling rule book does cover the usual questions that are asked by most bowlers.