



# Questions answered

This month, we have a selection of questions recently posted on social media and from readers



Firstly, a question has arisen about the use of smartwatches and the influence they may have on coaching a player.

There is no getting away with the fact that smartwatches are now extremely popular and why not? They are great at keeping us in touch and monitoring our wellbeing. I have a basic one that just tells me my heart is still beating, that I have walked a few steps and have maybe climbed some stairs. So, what is the issue in relation to playing bowls? Well in my opinion there is no problem whatsoever. It's interesting to know how far we have walked during a game of bowls and actually the information gleaned from the apps may be of huge benefit in monitoring a player's fitness, vitally important for elite players and very useful to coaches and high performance managers I'm sure. More to the point is the

## BOWL CARRYING

We often get questions on social media and via email asking if it is permissible to carry a bowl when visiting the head or whether the bowl should be declared dead? Well, it is permitted within Law 17.2.1 which states, "A bowl is not a dead bowl if it is carried by a player while inspecting the head."

Interpretations around whether the bowl is deemed delivered if it is left half-way up the rink, or indeed put down on the rink at the head end and picked up again, are also unfounded. A delivery is clearly defined in C.3 "**Delivery:** *deliberately releasing a jack or a bowl from the hand or an artificial device using an underarm movement. If the jack or bowl accidentally slips from a player's hand or artificial device during delivery, the*

*player can pick it up and start the delivery again.*"

However, casually carrying a bowl and hovering over a delicately balanced head is not without risk. What if the player dropped that bowl and displaced the jack and some bowls?

As with all displacement scenarios, we always have to establish what or who caused the displacement and then what was actually displaced.

Let's turn to the definitions first. What caused the displacement? It was the bowl that the player was carrying. If we look at definition C.24.2 we see that the bowl is NOT a neutral object because it belongs to the player and therefore the displacement is caused by a player.



question of communication and how that could be used to coach a player. Let's take a look at a couple of relevant laws:

## ROLE OF THE COACH

Either the coach of a player, team or side or, in their absence, the coach's delegated deputy, can give advice to a player during the course of play as long as:

**44.1** *the umpire is given the names of the coach or the coach's delegated deputy as appropriate before the game starts;*

**44.2** *only one person is present at the rink to give advice at any one time;*

**44.3** *the person giving the advice does so when their team or side is in possession of the rink; and*

**44.4** *the person giving the advice does so from outside the boundaries of the green.*

**44.5** *If, in the umpire's opinion, this law has been broken, the umpire must ask the coach or delegated deputy concerned to stay within the law. If they do not stay within the law, the umpire must ask the controlling body to take immediate action to make sure that the offender stops breaking the law.*

So, this is where the problem lies. We have no way of knowing if tactics or shot selection are being relayed to multiple players in accordance with the above law. However, we can be sure that the advice is being given outside of the rink of play. We should take a pragmatic approach to this. Is it really a problem? If we are going to clamp down on their use, how would we do it? I believe there are more benefits to having a smartwatch than any possible coaching that may be passed on via them.

In many areas, the use of mobile phones on the rink during a game is not permitted. How are they any different to a smartwatch? There are now apps allowing us to keep a scorecard electronically, there are apps that provide concentric rings for estimating shots. They are all useful tools and, whilst making a phone call is a bit distracting, is there any solid reason why smartphones and smartwatches should not be allowed on the rink.

## LEAVING THE GREEN

There has been a lot of discussion recently around players leaving the green for whatever reason. There are of course several legitimate reasons for a player to leave the rink of play including a comfort break, to get a refreshment or in the unfortunate event of feeling unwell.

Players can't just wander off though, delaying play and upsetting their opponent in the process. There are conditions which are outlined in law 32.

**32** *Leaving the green during the course of play and substitutes*

**32.1** *No player must delay play by leaving the rink of play or their team unless their opponent agrees, and then only for no more than 10 minutes.*

**32.2** *If a player has to leave the green during the course of a team or side game due to illness or some other reasonable cause, and they cannot return within 10 minutes, the umpire or the controlling body can approve the introduction of a substitute.*

**32.3** *A substitute must only be introduced if, in the opinion of both skips or, if they cannot agree, in the opinion of the umpire or the controlling body, the substitution is necessary.*

**32.4** *The substitute must play in any position other than skip, and the other members of the team can rearrange their positions as necessary.*

**32.5** *The controlling body will decide the substitute's eligibility.*

**32.6** *If no eligible substitute is available:*

**32.6.1** *in a team game, the defaulting team will forfeit the game to their opponents; and*

**32.6.2** *in a side game, either law 39.2.2 or law 39.2.3 will apply from the end in which the substitution became necessary.*

**32.7** *If a player has to leave the green during the course of a Singles game due to illness or some other reasonable cause, and they cannot return within 10 minutes, the defaulting player will forfeit the game to their opponent.*

**32.8** *If a player or team breaks this law, they will forfeit the game to their opponent.*

**32.9** *For domestic play, member national authorities can decide the requirements for introducing a substitute player.*

I have highlighted a couple of salient points the most important of which is in the very first clause. No player must delay play without permission of their opponent and then only for 10 minutes.

Note, there is no limit stated on how many times a player may leave the rink. This is simply because they must have permission from their opponent. If they don't have that permission then they can't leave and there is a penalty for doing so. Many people forget this important point and we often hear complaints from players about their opponents leaving the rink. When asked if they gave permission, usually they haven't.

Of course, most of this just happens naturally and everyone is happy. It only gets raised when it becomes a problem and then the law has to be reiterated to both those affected by the delay and those causing the delay. Note the penalty for not complying in law 32.8.

## C.24.2 NEUTRAL OBJECT:

**C.24.2.1** *a jack, bowl or other object not belonging to any player on the rink of play;*

**C.24.2.2** *a line jack or a line bowl belonging to a player on a neighbouring rink; or*

**C.24.2.3** *a dead bowl that is at rest and has not been removed from the rink of play.*

The bowls and jack that were displaced were at rest in the head and so this information will lead us to Laws 37.1.5 Displacement of a bowl at rest by another player and 38.1.3 Displacement of a Jack at rest by another player.

**37.1.5** *Displacement of a bowl at rest.*

**37.1.5.1** *If a bowl at rest or a toucher in the ditch is displaced by a player and it has not disturbed the head after it is displaced, the opponent must put the bowl back to its former position.*

**37.1.5.2** *If a bowl at rest or a toucher in the ditch is displaced by a player and it has disturbed the head after it is displaced, the opponent must put the bowl back to its former position and replace any part of the head disturbed after the displacement.*

**38.1.3** *Displacement of a jack at rest*

*If a jack at rest within the rink of play is displaced by a player, the opposing skip or opponent in Singles must put the jack back to its former position.*

Look at who gets the options to replace the bowls and the jack. Yes, the opponent gets all the say in how that head is replaced. So maybe it's wise to leave the bowl on the mat before visiting the head and then any clumsiness can avoid a potential embarrassing situation.