

Berkshire Bowls Coaching Scheme

Berkshire Bowls Coaching Outdoor Programme (2025 Edition)

Part 1: Introducing the Beginner to Bowls (Condensed 6-Lesson Outdoor Course)

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Version: October 2025

A complete guide to delivering a six-session outdoor coaching programme for new bowlers, focusing on the core principles of delivery, line, and weight control.

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Welcome & Course Overview

Welcome

Welcome to the Berkshire Bowls Outdoor Coaching Manual (Part 1). This programme has been designed to help new bowlers quickly develop confidence and competence in the three fundamental elements of the game — delivery, line, and weight control — while learning the essential etiquette and rhythm of outdoor play.

Outdoor coaching environments often require shorter, more focused courses. This condensed six-lesson format maintains the core content and skill progression of the full 10-week Berkshire Bowls indoor course, while adapting the tempo and session structure for 2-hour outdoor club sessions.

Each lesson is highly practical, combining technical teaching, purposeful practice, and game-based learning. The emphasis is always on doing, observing, questioning, and refining — principles that underpin good coaching at every level.

Course Objectives

- Deliver a bowl smoothly and consistently with balance and control.
- Understand how line and weight (length) combine to achieve accuracy.
- Adjust their play to different jack positions and mat placements.
- Demonstrate correct stance, grip, and arm swing mechanics.
- Apply basic etiquette, rules, and measurements in a friendly game setting.
- Participate confidently in club roll-ups or progress to higher-level coaching.

Structure of the Course

Each 2-hour session follows a clear and consistent structure:

1. Welcome & Warm-Up (10 min) – orientation, stretching, and recap.
2. Skill Focus (55–60 min) – introduction of new technical element(s).
3. Applied Practice (40 min) – practical, game-based learning with feedback.
4. Reflection & Summary (10 min) – questioning, key points, next steps.

Each session builds directly on the previous one, reinforcing delivery before advancing to line and weight variations. The pace is steady but progressive, ensuring all players can achieve tangible success each week.

Coaching Approach

The Berkshire Bowls philosophy of coaching is rooted in:

- Observation and questioning, not instruction alone.
- Purposeful practice over repetition for its own sake.
- Encouragement and enjoyment, ensuring players leave on a high note.
- Learning through doing — 'I see, I do, I understand.'

Coaches are encouraged to adapt drills to local green conditions and group ability. The aim is not

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perfection but progress — helping every new bowler achieve a smooth, natural delivery and a growing appreciation for the skill and art of bowls.

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Lesson 1 – Delivery Foundations & Finding a Line

Session Focus

This first outdoor lesson establishes the essential *delivery action* — the movement that every bowl depends on.

Players learn that the **whole body** must point and move along the **aiming line** — the path the bowl travels on before its natural bias returns to the centre line of the rink.

Good delivery comes from balance, alignment, and rhythm — not force.

“Your body sends the bowl where it’s pointing — align your whole body to the aiming line and the bowl will find its way home to centre.”

Learning Objectives

By the end of the session, players should be able to:

- Align their **feet, hips, shoulders, and head** along the intended aiming line.
- Deliver the bowl smoothly, releasing close to the green.
- Keep the **head still** and maintain good balance throughout the action.
- Understand that the bowl follows an *aiming line* that curves back to the centre.
- Demonstrate basic on-green etiquette and safe bowl handling.

Coaching Points

Element	Key Points	Common Errors	Coach Cues
Alignment	The entire body faces along the aiming line, not directly at the jack.	Only turning the head, stepping across the line.	“Toes and nose to target.”
Grip	Natural, relaxed hold; fingers under, thumb resting lightly.	Over-gripping or tension in the wrist.	“Hold it like a bird — firm but gentle.”
Stance	Balanced, knees soft, weight even.	Rigid or leaning back.	“Soft knees – steady head.”
Delivery Action	Step along the aiming line and release close to the ground.	Stepping across or dropping a bowl.	“Step through the line and let it roll.”
Follow-Through	Arm finishes toward the target; eyes stay fixed on the aim point.	Snatching back or looking up early.	“Hand to target – hold the pose.”

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Session Template (2 hours)

Time	Activity	Content & Method	Coaching Emphasis
0–10 min	Welcome & Safety	Introduce self, aims, safety rules, and etiquette.	Build rapport; clear expectations.
10–20 min	Warm-Up & Balance	Light stretches; stance without bowl; mirror posture.	Comfort, balance, body awareness.
20–35 min	Alignment Demonstration	Show how toes-hips-shoulders-head face along the aiming line, not the jack. Use a marker on the bank.	Reinforce full-body direction.
35–60 min	Drill 1 – Centre Line Return	Jack on the centre line. Deliver on both hands so the bowl travels out and returns naturally to the centre. Vary lengths.	Watch alignment; still head; smooth release.
60–85 min	Drill 2 – Chalk Rail Alignment	Chalk a straight line from the mat to the aiming area. Players align their bodies parallel to the rail; shadow deliver 6–8 times, then live bowls.	Foot placement and stepping <i>through</i> the line.
85–110 min	Drill 3 – Aiming Line Marker	Place a small disc/cone 3–5 m in front, offset from the centre. Deliver <i>over</i> the marker so the bias curves back to the centre. Narrow target as skill improves.	Visual targeting and aim-out/return-in awareness.
110–118 min	Applied Ends	Two short ends reinforcing alignment and follow-through (no weight games yet).	Consistency and control.
118–120 min	Summary & Reflection	Group review: “What changed when your body pointed correctly?”	Reinforce alignment = direction.

Practice Drills

1 – Centre Line Return

- Place jacks at short, three-quarter, and full lengths on the centre line.
- Players deliver forehand and backhand so the bowl **starts on the chosen aiming line** and **returns to the centre** via bias.
- *Purpose:* Build an immediate sense of how the bowl curves and why alignment matters.

2 – Chalk Rail Alignment

- Chalk a straight line from the mat toward an aiming area.
- Players set toes, knees, hips, and shoulders **parallel to the rail**, stepping and releasing along it. Begin with shadow deliveries, then roll bowls.
- *Purpose:* Reinforces full-body direction and step control along the intended line.

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3 – Aiming Line Marker Drill

- Place a small disc or cone 3–5 metres ahead, slightly off centre.
- Players deliver the bowl **over the marker**, watching it curve back to the centre line.
- *Purpose:* Sharpens focus and links the visual target with the bowl's natural path.

Mini Etiquette Focus

- Step onto the mat only when it's your turn.
- Stand still and quiet during another's delivery.
- Avoid walking on neighbouring rinks.
- Return bowls safely after each end.
- Compliment good bowls — yours or others'.

Coach Reflection

After the session, note:

- Did players align their whole body or only their eyes?
- Were they able to see and describe the bowl's curve back to the centre?
- Who maintained the best balance and rhythm?
- Do visual guides (chalk rail/marker) need adjustment next time?

Key Message

“Good delivery starts with direction — when your whole body faces the aiming line, your bowl will follow it home.”

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Lesson 2 – Arm Swing, Follow-Through & Weight Control (Part 1)

Session Focus

This lesson refines the *delivery motion* learned in Lesson 1 by adding rhythm and feel.

Players will understand how **arm swing**, **body tempo**, and **follow-through** work together to determine **weight**, how far the bowl travels.

The goal is to develop a *repeatable action* where the arm, step, and release are connected in a smooth, balanced rhythm, and to start judging distance through control, not power.

“Line gives direction, weight gives distance — both must be in harmony.”

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, players should be able to:

- Maintain a smooth, pendulum-style arm swing through delivery.
- Coordinate step and release for rhythm and timing.
- Follow through naturally along the aiming line.
- Control the distance a bowl travels by adjusting the **speed of the arm swing**, not force.
- Begin to *feel* the difference between short, medium, and long lengths.

Coaching Points

Element	Key Points	Common Errors	Coach Cues
Arm Swing	Smooth pendulum motion close to the body; backswing and forward swing same plane.	Jerky movement, swinging across the body, or over-lifting.	“Straight back, straight through – pendulum rhythm.”
Step & Release Timing	Step forward as the arm comes through; release just past the ankle.	Stepping too early or late; losing balance.	“Step and roll – one movement.”
Follow-Through	Arm finishes toward the target, palm open.	Snapping or pulling the arm back.	“Hand to target – hold your finish.”
Weight Control	Change <i>arm speed</i> and <i>swing length</i> for distance – not strength.	Trying to force distance with the body; overstepping.	“Same line, change tempo.”
Rhythm & Feel	Encourage consistent tempo, relaxed breathing, and smooth finish.	Tension or rushing the motion.	“Smooth is strong.”

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Session Template (2 hours)

Time	Activity	Content & Method	Coaching Emphasis
0–10 min	Warm-Up & Review	Quick recap of alignment & aiming line. Stretch arms & shoulders.	Connect Lesson 1 learning to today's theme.
10–25 min	Demonstration: Pendulum Arm & Follow-Through	Coach shows full delivery motion – focusing on rhythm and timing between step and arm swing.	Observe smooth flow – no jerking.
25–50 min	Drill 1 – Swing to Length	Without a bowl, players practice arm swing through a full range (short–medium–long). Then roll bowls to each length, feeling the tempo difference.	Emphasise “arm speed = distance.”
50–75 min	Drill 2 – 4-Step Ladder	Deliver 4 bowls: minimum → medium → full → ditch length. Then repeat in reverse (decreasing distance).	Focus on rhythm, not power; same aiming line.
75–95 min	Drill 3 – Line & Length Harmony	Jack on centre line, $\frac{3}{4}$ length. Deliver alternating hands, aiming for a consistent draw reaching within 1m of the jack.	Watch timing, finish position, and smooth release.
95–110 min	Partner Challenge – Target Distance	Place cones or hoops at short/medium/long zones. Each pair alternates calling a target distance; 1 point if the bowl stops in the zone.	Fun reinforcement of distance control.
110–120 min	Reflection & Review	Group discussion: “How did you change the length of your bowl?” “What felt different in your arm speed?”	Reinforce feel and consistency.

Practice Drills

1 – Swing to Length

- Without a bowl, players rehearse pendulum motion – short, medium, long swing.
- Add bowl and deliver to Jack's at those lengths.
- Purpose:* Builds muscle memory and connection between swing length and distance.

2 – 4-Step Ladder

- Deliver four bowls in sequence: short → medium → long → ditch length.
- Then reverse (ditch → long → medium → short).
- Purpose:* Reinforces the feel of progressive tempo and control through arm speed.

3 – Line & Length Harmony

- Jack on the centre line at $\frac{3}{4}$ length.

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- Deliver alternate hands, keeping the same line but adjusting weight slightly to finish within a defined area around the jack.
- *Purpose:* Integrates alignment with emerging distance control.

Mini Etiquette Focus

- Return bowls carefully behind the mat.
- Do not walk past another player's head while bowls are still running.
- Wait for all bowls to come to rest before stepping onto the mat.
- Always acknowledge a good bowl, even if it's your opponent's.

Coach Reflection

After the session, record:

- Were players able to connect arm swing rhythm to bowl distance?
- Did anyone revert to forcing the bowl instead of using tempo?
- Were line and weight beginning to harmonise?
- Are players developing a *feel* for different lengths or still relying on visual estimation?

Key Message

"Weight comes from rhythm — not muscle. A smooth swing and steady step control the distance far better than effort."

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Lesson 3 – Developing Weight Control & Line Adjustment

Session Focus

Lesson 3 builds on the smooth delivery and arm rhythm established previously.

Now, players begin to **control distance precisely** and **adjust line intelligently** by linking weight, mat, and jack position.

They will learn that consistent delivery tempo and body alignment remain the foundation, but fine adjustments of mat or jack position alter both *length* and *line*.

This develops “green sense” — the ability to read and adapt naturally to each situation.

“Change the mat or jack, and the picture changes — adjust your aim, not your rhythm.”

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, players should be able to:

- Deliver to a called length within a set tolerance.
- Control distance by arm speed and rhythm, not power.
- Adjust the aiming line when the mat or jack is moved.
- Understand how shorter and longer jacks affect line and tempo.
- Retain smooth, balanced delivery through all variations.

Coaching Points

Element	Key Points	Common Errors	Coach Cues
Weight Awareness	Feel distance through controlled arm tempo; no extra effort.	Over-forcing heavy greens or slowing arm on fast greens.	“Same swing, change tempo.”
Mat Movement	Moving the mat forward = shorter line; back = longer line.	Forgetting to change the aiming point or step distance.	“Move the mat, move the line.”
Jack Placement	Jack length sets rhythm — adjust sightline, not strength.	Trying to ‘push’ the bowl to reach long jack.	“Trust your tempo; let it travel.”
Line Adjustment	Narrower line for short ends, wider for long ends.	Aiming directly at Jack.	“See the arc — aim wider for length.”
Consistency	Maintain identical delivery action for all lengths.	Varying step size or release height.	“Same action, only arm speed changes.”

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Session Template (2 hours)

Time	Activity	Content & Method	Coaching Emphasis
0–10 min	Recap & Warm-Up	Review Lesson 2: rhythm and follow-through. Light stretching.	Reinforce smooth tempo and relaxed posture.
10–25 min	Demonstration: Mat & Jack Effect	Coach moves the mat up/back and jack length accordingly, showing how line and tempo shift.	Encourage players to see the difference, not just feel it.
25–55 min	Drill 1 – Progressive Length Control	Deliver 4 bowls at short, medium, long, and full-length jacks. Repeat in reverse.	Emphasise steady rhythm; note body alignment is constant.
55–85 min	Drill 2 – Mat Movement and Line Change	Move the mat from 2 m to 4 m from the ditch; deliver to the same jack length each time. Observe the required change in aiming line.	“As mat moves back, aim wider; tempo stays calm.”
85–105 min	Drill 3 – Target Zone Challenge	Mark 3 chalk circles (short, mid, long). Players call the target zone before delivery; score 1 pt if the bowl stops inside.	Builds conscious weight judgement and pre-shot routine.
105–115 min	Applied End – Adapting to Change	Play two short ends where the coach changes the mat or jack unexpectedly each time.	Encourages observation and adjustment under pressure.
115–120 min	Summary & Reflection	Discuss: “What changed when mat moved?” “Did you keep the same delivery?”	Reinforce tempo consistency and tactical awareness.

Practice Drills

1 – Progressive Length Control

- Deliver to four jack lengths: short → mid → long → full.
- Then reverse order.
- *Purpose:* Strengthens feel and teaches controlled acceleration/deceleration.

2 – Mat Movement and Line Change

- Keep jack in same place; move mat back in 1 m increments.
- Players adjust aiming line each time.
- *Purpose:* Demonstrates geometry of line and its link to mat position.

3 – Target Zone Challenge

- Chalk 3 circles (approx. 1 m radius) at varying distances.

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- Players must call target zone before delivering.
- *Purpose:* Promotes conscious weight control and commitment to a chosen length.

Mini Etiquette Focus

- When mat or jack is moved, ensure all players agree before delivery.
- Do not walk across another rink to retrieve a bowl.
- Keep clear of the line of sight while others are delivering.
- Encourage positive feedback and calm communication during practice.

Coach Reflection

After the session, note:

- Who naturally adjusted to mat/jack movement?
- Did players understand line widening/narrowing?
- Was the rhythm consistent across lengths?
- Is any player still forcing distance rather than feeling tempo?

Key Message

“Mastering weight means mastering rhythm. When the mat or jack changes, the green changes — but your delivery never should.”

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Lesson 4 – Drawing Between Bowls & Controlled Finish (Weight II)

Session Focus

Lesson 4 is about **precision** — controlling both **line and weight** under pressure and with obstacles in play.

Players learn how to *trust their aiming line, fine-tune weight*, and deliver confidently into narrow spaces between bowls.

The focus is to develop **touch, calm rhythm**, and **visual confidence** — teaching that bowls should be *placed*, not pushed.

Smoothness, patience, and concentration are key.

“Drawing between bowls isn’t power — it’s touch. The smoother the delivery, the finer the control.”

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, players should be able to:

- Adjust their line and weight to deliver between two stationary bowls.
- Demonstrate soft, precise weight control at short and medium distances.
- Finish bowls within defined positional targets (front, jack-high, or behind).
- Maintain rhythm and alignment even under visual pressure.
- Understand how small line and weight changes produce big results at the head.

Coaching Points

Element	Key Points	Common Errors	Coach Cues
Weight Control (Fine)	Deliver with a soft hand; shorten arm swing slightly for control.	Jerky or rushed swing; forcing through the gap.	“Smooth and soft — let the bowl die in.”
Line Awareness	Keep the same aiming alignment; trust the bias to curve between bowls.	Over-adjusting or aiming too narrow.	“Aim wide — let bias do the work.”
Finish Position	Control distance to finish in front, jack-high, or 1 m behind.	Overrunning or falling short.	“Touch, not thrust.”
Tempo & Focus	Stay calm; take time to visualise gap and roll.	Rushing due to a narrow target.	“Breathe, see it, roll it.”
Observation	Watch every bowl’s path and finish; learn from results.	Looking away too early.	“See it home.”

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Session Template (2 hours)

Time	Activity	Content & Method	Coaching Emphasis
0–10 min	Recap & Warm-Up	Review weight control & mat movement. Gentle stretching and balance drills.	Reinforce smooth tempo.
10–25 min	Demonstration: Drawing Through the Gap	The coach sets up two bowls 1 metre apart. Shows line & weight needed to draw through.	Emphasise visualisation and composure.
25–50 min	Drill 1 – Gate Draw	Two bowls set 80 cm apart (reduce to 60 cm as skill improves). Deliver through the gap, both hands.	Watch alignment, tempo, and soft finish.
50–75 min	Drill 2 – Positional Draw Practice	Deliver to finish <i>in front</i> , <i>jack-high</i> , and <i>behind</i> the jack (use chalk markers).	Develop an understanding of controlled weight variation.
75–100 min	Drill 3 – Three-Target Circuit	Three stations:	
A) Gate draw;			
B) Jack-high control;			
C) Front-position block. Rotate every 10 minutes.	Keeps variety and reinforces purpose in practice.		
100–115 min	Applied End – Building the Head	4-bowl end where each player must draw around or between bowls.	Reinforces pressure focus and self-correction.
115–120 min	Summary & Reflection	“What did you change to control the finish?” “Did you trust the bias?”	Reinforce feel, not force.

Practice Drills

1 – Gate Draw Drill

- Set two bowls 60–80 cm apart at mid-rink.
- Deliver through the “gate” without touching either bowl.
- Narrow the gap as confidence grows.

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- *Purpose:* Builds precision and trust in natural bias.

2 – Positional Draw Drill

- Deliver to finish in three positions relative to jack:
 1. **Front (protective bowl)** – just short of jack.
 2. **Jack-high** – level with jack.
 3. **Back bowl** – 1 m behind.
- *Purpose:* Reinforces distance control and tactical awareness.

3 – Three-Target Circuit

- Set three mini-stations across the rink:
A) Gate draw, B) Front position, C) Jack-high.
- Rotate every few minutes.
- *Purpose:* Adds variety, repetition, and situational application.

Mini Etiquette Focus

- Never walk between head bowls still in play.
- Respect the “quiet zone” when another is drawing through a narrow line.
- Always acknowledge a successful positional bowl — accuracy deserves encouragement.
- Retrieve bowls only when all have stopped completely.

Coach Reflection

After the session, note:

- Who maintained composure when drawing through narrow gaps?
- Did players trust bias, or attempt to steer the bowl?
- Are players now judging finish distances more accurately?
- Did you observe smooth, quiet deliveries without forced effort?

Key Message

“Drawing between bowls is about feel and focus — slow down, stay smooth, and trust your line.”

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Lesson 5 – Reading the Head & Simple Game Application (Integrating Line and Weight)

Session Focus

Lesson 5 introduces tactical thinking through **head reading** and **decision making**.

Players learn how to analyse a head — identifying which bowl is shot, which is vulnerable, and what tactical options are available.

The session links back to delivery, line, and weight, showing how these fundamentals influence *every* shot choice.

By now, players should be ready to think strategically, not just mechanically.

“Every head tells a story — learn to read it before you deliver.”

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, players should be able to:

- Identify which team holds shot and which bowls are threats.
- Decide the correct drawing line and weight for the situation.
- Use line and weight to either protect, trail, or save.
- Understand the difference between aggressive and defensive shots.
- Demonstrate basic etiquette and communication within a team format.

Coaching Points

Element	Key Points	Common Errors	Coach Cues
Head Observation	Walk up and look before each bowl; visualise the shot path.	Delivering without assessing the head.	“Look, think, then bowl.”
Shot Choice	Choose a draw, cover, or back bowl based on risk.	Always playing the same shot regardless of position.	“What’s safest? What’s smartest?”
Line & Weight Link	Line dictates direction; weight dictates result.	Changing both together without reason.	“One change at a time.”
Team Communication	Share observations and encourage teammates.	Silent play or contradictory calls.	“Talk through the options.”
Calm Decision	Always step back and visualise before delivering.	Rushing to deliver under pressure.	“Pause, picture, play.”

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Session Template (2 hours)

Time	Activity	Content & Method	Coaching Emphasis
0–10 min	Warm-Up & Recap	Brief review of drawing between bowls, light mobility and line drills.	Calm rhythm and focus.
10–25 min	Demonstration: Reading a Simple Head	Coach sets up 4–5 bowls around the jack. Discuss which bowl is shot, nearest back, and danger areas.	Encourage observation and reasoning.
25–50 min	Drill 1 – Identify & Draw	Coach sets up pre-arranged heads. Players identify the best shot and play it. Rotate between heads.	Question players before each bowl: “Why this shot?”
50–75 min	Drill 2 – Protect & Save	Use heads where one bowl is holding. Players must draw to protect (front bowl) or to save (back bowl).	Focus on the tactical use of line and length.
75–100 min	Drill 3 – Trail or Cover	Short heads set up to practise <i>trail</i> (move jack) or <i>cover</i> (position behind).	Introduce a slightly firmer weight but maintain control.
100–115 min	Mini Game – 4 Ends (Pairs)	Players pair up; one acts as skip, one as lead. Discuss tactics before each end.	Communication and shot choice under match flow.
115–120 min	Summary & Reflection	Group talk: “How did reading the head change your shot?”	Reinforce the thought process before delivery.

Practice Drills

1 – Identify & Draw

- Coach creates various heads (some close, some open).
- The player must decide: draw for shot, protect, or cover.
- Deliver accordingly, explaining reasoning aloud.
- *Purpose:* Encourages visual reading and decision-making before delivery.

2 – Protect & Save

- Set a head with one shot bowl and a vulnerable jack.
- The player must draw a short guard or back bowl.
- *Purpose:* Teaches weight variation and strategic placement.

3 – Trail or Cover

- Create a head where Jack can be trailed back.
- The player plays with slightly increased weight to move Jack.

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- *Purpose:* Builds confidence in controlling outcome using line and weight.

Mini Etiquette Focus

- Always ask before removing bowls for scoring.
- Only the skip or designated player measures the head.
- Avoid walking through the head when discussions are in progress.
- Compliment good tactical play, not just successful results.

Coach Reflection

After the session, note:

- Did players begin to look at the head before bowling?
- Were they able to verbalise their shot choices?
- Did they use the appropriate weight for each situation?
- Were team communication and etiquette improving?

Key Message

“Good players deliver well — great players think first.

Before every shot, read the head, choose your line, and trust your weight.”

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Lesson 6 – Putting It All Together (Assessment, Team Play & Game Confidence)

Session Focus

Lesson 6 is the culmination of the Outdoor Coaching Programme.

Players apply every principle learned so far — smooth delivery, alignment to the aiming line, rhythm for weight control, and intelligent decision making.

This session is about *playing bowls*, not just practising it — using the right shot, at the right time, with confidence.

The emphasis is on teamwork, communication, observation, and maintaining composure under match conditions.

“You now know how to deliver — now learn to *play*.”

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, players should be able to:

- Deliver consistently under match-style pressure.
- Apply correct line and weight for tactical situations.
- Communicate and work effectively in pairs or small teams.
- Read heads, plan simple shot strategies, and make adjustments.
- Demonstrate good etiquette, sportsmanship, and respect for the game.

Coaching Points

Element	Key Points	Common Errors	Coach Cues
Consistency	Maintain identical delivery and tempo at every end.	Rushing, tension, or reverting to old habits.	“Same rhythm, every bowl.”
Line & Weight Control	Adjust for green speed or pressure calmly.	Overcompensating after a bad bowl.	“Trust your tempo.”
Tactical Play	Choose the correct shot (draw, guard, back) for the situation.	Emotional or reactive choices.	“Think before you bowl.”
Communication	Clear and supportive discussion within a pair/team.	Confusion or negative talk.	“Keep it simple, keep it positive.”
Composure	Stay calm when behind; focus on the process, not the score.	Hurrying or frustration.	“Reset and roll.”

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Session Template (2 hours)

Time	Activity	Content & Method	Coaching Emphasis
0–10 min	Welcome & Overview	Outline session aims: recap all five lessons.	Confidence and enthusiasm.
10–25 min	Warm-Up & Rhythm Check	Simple draw-to-jack and tempo ladder drills.	Reinforce smooth delivery and balance.
25–55 min	Drill 1 – Skill Assessment Circuit	Three stations:	
A) Straight Line Draw;			
B) Weight Ladder (short–long);			
C) Gate Draw (between bowls).			
Players rotate every 10 minutes.	Informal assessment; note technique consistency.		
55–90 min	Drill 2 – Mini Match Play (Pairs or Triples)	Play short 4–6 end games. Rotate roles between lead, second, and skip.	Apply all elements: line, weight, tactics, and teamwork.
90–110 min	Drill 3 – Pressure Ends	Coach sets “challenge heads” (e.g. 1 down with one bowl left). Players must choose and play the best shot.	Reinforces composure and shot selection.
110–120 min	Course Review & Feedback	Group discussion, strengths, development areas, next steps.	Encourage reflection and enjoyment.

Practice Drills

1 – Skill Assessment Circuit

Three short activities designed to confirm mastery of delivery, line, and weight:

- **A)** Deliver four bowls down the centre line (forehand & backhand).
- **B)** Deliver four bowls at short, medium, long, and full length (the “weight ladder”).
- **C)** Draw through a narrow “gate” between two bowls.

Purpose: Allows the coach to observe technical and mental control under light pressure.

2 – Mini Match Play

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- Pairs or triples format, four to six ends.
- Rotate roles after each end so every player experiences leading and skipping.
- Encourage discussion before each shot and reflection after.

Purpose: Consolidates teamwork, communication, and tactical application.

3 – Pressure Ends

- Coach creates situational heads (e.g. opponent holding two shots, open jack, blocked draw).
- Each player must select and play their chosen shot.
- Discuss alternative options and what worked or didn't.

Purpose: Builds confidence in decision-making and problem-solving under game pressure.

Mini Etiquette Focus

- Always shake hands at the start and end of the match.
- Compliment opponents' good shots.
- Keep score accurately and agree on results before clearing the head.
- Respect the marker's role in singles play.
- Leave the green tidy — respect the rink and equipment.

Coach Reflection

After the final session, record:

- Which players now demonstrate consistent delivery and judgement?
- Are they confident in reading heads and making tactical decisions?
- Who is ready to participate in club roll-ups or assessments?
- Did the group develop good communication and enjoyment of the game?

Use this feedback to recommend next steps — such as continued guided practice, joining club competitions.

Key Message

"Bowls is a simple game made great by precision and thought.

When your delivery, line, and weight work together, confidence and enjoyment follow."

End of Outdoor Coaching Programme

At this point, participants should:

- Understand the key principles of **delivery, line, and weight control**.
- Be able to play confidently in social and club environments.
- Demonstrate correct etiquette and teamwork.
- Be ready to develop further under guided club or county coaching.

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Coach Notes – Lesson 1: Delivery Foundations & Finding a Straight Line

Lesson Overview

This first outdoor session sets the foundation for every future skill.

The coach's aim is to help each new player achieve a smooth, balanced delivery and understand how the bowl follows an *aiming line* that returns to the centre line.

Keep it simple, calm, and encouraging — players should leave feeling confident that they can “make the bowl go where they intend.”

Key Coaching Priorities

1. **Full-Body Alignment** — ensure players point their *whole body* (feet, hips, shoulders, head) down the aiming line, not directly at the jack.
2. **Balance & Comfort** — stance must feel natural and stable; check head stillness and smooth tempo.
3. **Smooth Delivery Action** — straight-line pendulum swing; release close to ground.
4. **Follow-Through** — arm finishes along the line of aim; maintain pose for a second.
5. **Early Awareness of Bias** — explain that the bowl curves naturally back to the centre line.

Coach Preparation

- Arrive 15–20 min early to set up:
 - 3–4 centre-line jacks at varying lengths.
 - Chalk line or rope for “rail” alignment drill.
 - One or two cones/discs for aiming markers.
- Check the rink surface for safety and obstacles.
- Brief any assistants on safety, retrieval, and player rotation.
- Have short reflection cards ready if using feedback forms.

Coaching Method

- **Demonstrate, then ask questions.** Use open questions like:
 - “What did you notice about where my body is pointing?”
 - “Where do you think this bowl will start and finish?”
- Use visual aids — chalk lines or cones — rather than lengthy explanations.
- Focus on one correction at a time. Avoid over-coaching.
- Praise progress (“That was smoother”, “You held your line better”), not outcomes (“You were closest”).
- Reinforce confidence — beginners should feel small success early.

Berkshire Bowls Coaching Scheme

Observation Points

During delivery, observe:

- **Feet:** Are they aligned along the aiming line?
- **Head:** Is it still during swing?
- **Arm:** Is the swing close to the body, a straight pendulum?
- **Step:** Is it along the line, not across it?
- **Release:** Smooth and low, not dropped or lobbed?

If one element falters, return to the alignment check — most issues start there.

Common Player Issues & Quick Fixes

Problem	Likely Cause	Quick Coaching Fix
Bowl finishing narrow/wide.	The body aiming at Jack instead of the aiming line or arm away from body	Realign feet and shoulders to the aiming point on the bank
Bowl bumped or short.	Early release or slow arm speed	Practise shadow swings; “let it roll past the ankle”
Bowl wobbles	Over-gripping or off-centre hold	Adjust grip; relax fingers and thumb
Loss of balance	Step across the line or long stride	Shorten step; align feet along the delivery path
Bowl pulled across the body.	Swing outside-in	Keep the arm close to the hip; palm follows through to the target

Key Teaching Phrases

- “Toes and nose to target.”
- “Step through the line.”
- “Smooth back and through.”
- “Let the bowl roll — don’t throw.”
- “Hand to target — hold your finish.”

Use the same phrases repeatedly so the group develops shared language.

Time Management Tips

- Keep demonstrations short — 3 min maximum before practice.
- Allow 10–12 bowls per player per drill; change length or side to maintain interest.

Berkshire Bowls Coaching Scheme

- Rotate players quickly between drills to prevent fatigue.
- Use the final 10 min for feedback and highlighting improvement rather than introducing new material.

End-of-Session Reflection (Coach)

Ask yourself:

- Did all players grasp the difference between the aiming line and centre line?
- Who demonstrated natural balance or rhythm?
- Who needs more work on alignment or release?
- Did I give everyone at least one positive comment and one improvement point?

Key Message to Reinforce

“Everything begins with direction — when your body points along the aiming line and the delivery stays smooth, accuracy will follow.”

Berkshire Bowls Coaching Scheme

Coach Notes – Lesson 2: Arm Swing, Follow-Through & Weight Control (Part 1)

Lesson Overview

Lesson 2 builds directly on the body alignment and aiming-line work from Lesson 1.

The coach's focus is to help players **link rhythm, arm swing, and step timing** so they begin to feel how **weight (length)** is created through controlled tempo rather than effort.

This is often the hardest concept for beginners — weight control depends on *feel and rhythm*, not strength.

Key Coaching Priorities

1. **Pendulum Arm Motion** — straight back and straight through; arm close to body, smooth tempo.
2. **Timing of Step & Release** — foot steps forward as arm comes through, bowl released just past the ankle.
3. **Follow-Through Stability** — hand continues toward the target; hold finish briefly.
4. **Weight Control Awareness** — length determined by speed and amplitude of swing, not body force.
5. **Consistency & Calmness** — repeatable rhythm across all lengths.

Coach Preparation

- Set up **three jacks** at short, medium, and full length on the centre line.
- Mark **distance targets** with cones or chalk rings for the “4-Step Ladder.”
- Have a few spare bowls ready for the demonstration of tempo changes.
- Keep one rink free of obstacles for new learners who need extra visual clarity.
- Bring a stopwatch or a metronome app if you wish to demonstrate tempo beats (optional).

Coaching Method

- Begin with a quick review of alignment from Lesson 1, then transition:

“Now that we can send the bowl in the right direction, let's learn how far to send it.”

- **Demonstrate** three swings — short, medium, long — emphasising *rhythm not force*.
- Have players shadow-swing without a bowl before rolling.
- Use questioning to develop awareness:
 - “What changed in your swing when it went too short?”
 - “How did it *feel* when it reached the jack?”
- Encourage players to verbalise what they feel — builds kinaesthetic learning.
- Avoid mechanical corrections beyond rhythm; don't over-analyse angles.

Berkshire Bowls Coaching Scheme

Observation Points

Watch for:

- **Arm Path:** Smooth pendulum; no crossing body.
- **Swing Length:** Longer swing = longer distance.
- **Step Timing:** Step forward as arm moves through; avoid early or late step.
- **Release Height:** Close to green; no bounce.
- **Follow-Through:** Hand continues along the aiming line.
- **Body Relaxation:** Shoulders relaxed; breathing steady.

Correct any tension early — tension kills rhythm.

Common Player Issues & Quick Fixes

Problem	Likely Cause	Quick Coaching Fix
Bowls stopping short	Arm swing is too slow or short	Practise shadow swing with a larger range; encourage smoother tempo
Bowls over-running	Over-forcing or stepping too far	Relax grip and shoulders; shorten step, slower tempo
Erratic distance	Inconsistent rhythm between bowls	Count “one-and-two” rhythm aloud during swing
Wobbling release	Twisting wrist or rushing follow-through	Keep palm flat; hold the finish position for one second
Loss of balance	Over-reaching or leaning forward	Shorter step; maintain upright posture through finish

Key Teaching Phrases

- “Same line — change the tempo.”
- “Smooth back, smooth through.”
- “Step and roll — one movement.”
- “Hand to target; hold the finish.”
- “Feel the length — don’t force it.”

Keep language rhythmic and calm; tone of voice influences player tempo.

Time Management Tips

- Keep demonstrations short but repeat them twice (once forehand, once backhand).

Berkshire Bowls Coaching Scheme

- Use 10-minute blocks per drill:
 - 10 min *Swing to Length* (shadow then live)
 - 10 min *4-Step Ladder*
 - 10 min *Line & Length Harmony*
- Between drills, gather players briefly to discuss “What did you feel?” rather than “What went wrong?”
- Reserve the last 10 minutes for the **Partner Target Challenge** — keeps the session fun and positive.

Coach Behaviour

- Encourage a relaxed, patient atmosphere — avoid quick-fire corrections.
- Stand at an angle (not directly in front) so players see both swing plane and footwork.
- Demonstrate humility — mention that weight control is something *all bowlers constantly refine*.
- Use gentle humour to release tension when players over-throw.

End-of-Session Reflection (Coach)

Ask yourself:

- Did players begin to *feel* the link between arm speed and bowl distance?
- Who demonstrated early rhythm control — who needs extra shadow-swing work?
- Did anyone revert to “forcing” the bowl under pressure?
- Were corrections clear and encouraging?
- Are players now ready to combine length control with line adjustment (Lesson 3)?

Key Message to Reinforce

“Weight isn’t power — it’s rhythm.

When your arm, step, and follow-through flow together, the bowl will travel the right distance naturally.”

Berkshire Bowls Coaching Scheme

Coach Notes – Lesson 3: Developing Weight Control & Line Adjustment

Lesson Overview

Lesson 3 helps players understand how **changes to the mat and jack position** affect the *line* and *length* required.

The aim for the coach is to strengthen the player's *spatial awareness* — learning how to adapt smoothly without altering their delivery rhythm.

It introduces the beginnings of tactical play: *reading the green* and adjusting for green speed or jack length.

“The delivery stays the same — it's the picture that changes.”

Key Coaching Priorities

1. **Weight Control Consistency** — players must deliver different lengths with the *same* rhythm, simply adjusting tempo and swing range.
2. **Mat Movement Awareness** — demonstrate how moving the mat alters the available draw line and sight picture.
3. **Line Adjustment** — encourage players to aim wider as the mat moves back or for longer jacks.
4. **Observation & Feedback** — help players notice how their bowl reacts to mat and jack changes.
5. **Confidence in Adaptation** — reduce fear of change; develop curiosity instead.

Coach Preparation

- Prepare **three mat positions** (front, mid, back) on the rink.
- Place **three jacks** on the centre line at short, medium, and long lengths.
- Chalk **three target circles** (approx. 1 m radius) at varying distances for the *Target Zone Challenge*.
- Have cones ready to mark different aiming lines as visual references.
- If possible, choose a rink with slightly different green pace (shaded/sunny) to discuss adaptation.

Coaching Method

- Begin by reviewing rhythm and follow-through from Lesson 2.
- **Demonstrate** how moving the mat or jack changes the visual perspective:
 - Short end = narrow line, shorter swing.
 - Long end = wider line, longer swing.
- Ask:

Berkshire Bowls Coaching Scheme

- “What do you notice about where the jack looks now?”
- “What happens to your aiming point when we move the mat?”
- Encourage players to **predict** before they deliver — builds thinking skills.
- Reinforce that the *delivery action never changes* — only the sight line and tempo do.

Observation Points

While coaching, watch for:

- **Consistency of Rhythm:** Same tempo across all ends.
- **Alignment:** Players re-adjusting stance with mat/jack moves.
- **Visualisation:** Eyes fixed along the new aiming line before stepping onto the mat.
- **Weight Adjustment:** Controlled swing speed, not forced effort.
- **Feedback Discussion:** Are players describing what they see and feel?

Encourage short, specific feedback conversations: “I felt I needed to widen the line by this much.”

Common Player Issues & Quick Fixes

Problem	Likely Cause	Quick Coaching Fix
Over-throwing long ends	Forcing delivery with power	Reinforce “longer swing, not stronger push”
Narrowing the line when the mat moved back	Not re-adjusting the aiming point	Use cones or markers to show a wider line
Short on fast rink	Holding back the swing to avoid overshooting	Emphasise consistent tempo, lighter feel
Forgetting alignment when the mat changes	Focusing only on the jack distance	Reset body each time – “toes, hips, shoulders” check
Inconsistent length	Varying step or tension	Keep delivery identical, adjust only swing amplitude

Key Teaching Phrases

- “Move the mat — move the picture.”
- “Same action, different tempo.”
- “Trust your rhythm, adjust your sightline.”
- “Wider for longer.”
- “Feel, don’t force.”

Berkshire Bowls Coaching Scheme

Time Management Tips

- Keep the pace dynamic: alternate between demonstration, player discovery, and correction.
- Use 10–15 min blocks per drill:
 - **Progressive Length Control** (4 × ends short–mid–long–full)
 - **Mat Movement and Line Change** (mat forward/back)
 - **Target Zone Challenge** (points game)
- Allow at least **15 min** for applied play (coach changing mat/jack unexpectedly).
- Gather group mid-session for discussion of what they notice — promotes peer learning.

Coach Behaviour

- Encourage self-analysis: ask “What did you feel changed?” rather than telling them immediately.
- Use visual anchors — cones, chalk lines — to make line adjustments clear.
- Avoid standing on the head during early delivery; observe from the side for rhythm and tempo.
- Praise *adaptability*, not just accuracy — the aim is to build confidence in changing conditions.
- If players become frustrated, reset the drill to a familiar distance to rebuild trust.

End-of-Session Reflection (Coach)

Ask yourself:

- Did players grasp how mat and jack changes affect line and length?
- Who adjusted naturally, and who resisted altering alignment or tempo?
- Are players thinking and talking in terms of *line and weight*, not just “hit or miss”?
- Did I provide enough visual demonstrations of mat movement effects?
- Who shows readiness for precision work (Lesson 4: drawing between bowls)?

Key Message to Reinforce

“Control comes from rhythm, not effort.

When the mat or jack moves, the only thing that should change is your picture — not your delivery.”

Berkshire Bowls Coaching Scheme

Coach Notes – Lesson 4: Drawing Between Bowls & Controlled Finish (Weight II)

Lesson Overview

Lesson 4 introduces **precision drawing** and the concept of *positional play* — teaching bowlers how to control their line and weight to draw between obstacles and finish at specific distances relative to the jack.

It builds confidence in **touch play**, requiring calm rhythm, focus, and trust in the bias.

The coach's aim is to create a **quality of feel**, not volume of bowls rolled. Accuracy and composure are the key learning outcomes.

"The quieter and smoother the action, the more control the bowler gains."

Key Coaching Priorities

1. **Fine Weight Control** – teach players to "place" bowls gently rather than drive them to the target.
2. **Visual Trust** – players must *see* the line and trust the bowl's natural curve.
3. **Focus & Composure** – reduce tension through breathing and deliberate rhythm.
4. **Positional Understanding** – demonstrate front, jack-high, and back positions and their purposes.
5. **Reinforcement of Rhythm** – maintain previous delivery consistency while reducing effort.

Coach Preparation

- Set up **"gate" stations** using two bowls 60–80 cm apart (narrow to 50–60 cm for advanced players).
- Chalk **position rings** around the jack for "front", "jack-high", and "back" targets.
- Prepare **three short stations** on one rink for the Three-Target Circuit (Gate, Jack-high, Front).
- Keep spare jacks and cones handy for quick resets.
- Have a separate coaching area for hesitant players needing more open space.

Coaching Method

- Begin with a discussion: "Why do we need to draw between bowls?" — make players think tactically.
- Demonstrate gate draw both hands, narrating your aim line, tempo, and finish.
- Ask players what they *saw* rather than what they *did* — focus on visual learning.
- Introduce positional play using coloured chalk marks for "front" and "back" bowls.
- Emphasise patience: "Don't chase the perfect bowl — chase the perfect rhythm."
- Allow multiple short practice ends instead of long continuous ones.

Berkshire Bowls Coaching Scheme

Observation Points

- **Line:** Is the aiming line consistent or adjusted every bowl?
- **Tempo:** Is the swing smooth and quiet? Any signs of tension or over-swinging?
- **Finish Control:** Are players aware of where their bowls finish (front/jack-high/back)?
- **Composure:** Do they rush after a miss or stay calm and deliberate?
- **Use of Bias:** Are players trusting the natural draw instead of steering the bowl?

Reinforce body stillness and focus after release — no sudden movements or reactions.

Common Player Issues & Quick Fixes

Problem	Likely Cause	Quick Coaching Fix
Hitting gates or guards	Aiming too narrow	Encourage wider starting line; “trust the bias”
Over-running target	Too much tempo or rushing delivery	Shorten backswing; count slow rhythm aloud
Falling short	Decelerating through swing	Maintain tempo all the way through the release
Losing focus after a miss	Overthinking mistakes	Reset mentally: “Next bowl, new picture”
Bowl deviates early	Twisting the wrist or turning the head	Keep palm upright; steady head through swing

Key Teaching Phrases

- “Soft hands — smooth bowl.”
- “Aim wide, let bias work.”
- “Touch, not thrust.”
- “Quiet rhythm, steady finish.”
- “See the line, feel the distance.”

Use calm, slower speech when coaching this session — your tone sets the rhythm players adopt.

Time Management Tips

- Work in **short 10-minute drill blocks** — fine control requires focus, not fatigue.
- Alternate forehand/backhand each drill to reinforce both sides equally.
- Between drills, use short discussion questions like:

Berkshire Bowls Coaching Scheme

- “What did you notice about your rhythm?”
- “Did the bowl finish where you expected?”
- Dedicate the final 15–20 min to the **Applied End** — players now handle obstacles with purpose.
- End with quiet reflection rather than competition — builds calm confidence.

Coach Behaviour

- Position yourself near the mat during gate drills for immediate alignment feedback.
- Use soft, encouraging language — never rush corrections.
- Demonstrate the concept of *trusting the bowl*; exaggerate a calm tempo.
- Praise control, even when the bowl misses narrowly — “That’s the right weight, now refine the line.”
- If tension rises, pause and reset group breathing or light humour.

End-of-Session Reflection (Coach)

Ask yourself:

- Did players start to “place” bowls instead of throwing?
- Were they consciously thinking about finish positions (front/jack-high/back)?
- Did they remain composed when space narrowed?
- Who demonstrates natural touch and feel — possible future draw specialists?
- Is the group rhythm calm and steady or rushed and loud?

Key Message to Reinforce

“Control is the art of patience.

Draw with rhythm, trust your bias, and let the bowl do the work.”

Berkshire Bowls Coaching Scheme

Coach Notes – Lesson 5: Reading the Head & Simple Game Application (Integrating Line and Weight)

Lesson Overview

Lesson 5 is the first real step into *game understanding*.

The aim for the coach is to help players connect their technical abilities (line, weight, delivery) with *decision making and tactical play*.

Players should begin to read the head, recognise who is holding the shot, and choose an appropriate shot accordingly.

This session also introduces teamwork and communication — building confidence to play in pairs and small group games.

“Before every shot, take a moment to look, think, and decide. The bowl follows your plan, not your guess.”

Key Coaching Priorities

1. **Head Awareness** – teach players to look at the head before bowling; identify shot bowls, back bowls, and opportunities.
2. **Decision Making** – help players choose the correct shot (draw, protect, back, or trail).
3. **Linking Line and Weight** – reinforce that line and weight work together; one should not be altered without purpose.
4. **Communication** – foster dialogue within pairs/teams; encourage clear, positive instructions.
5. **Calm Tactical Thinking** – develop composure and patience before each delivery.

Coach Preparation

- Set up **three pre-arranged heads** using spare bowls and jacks to demonstrate typical game situations:
 1. *Open head* – draw for shot.
 2. *Holding one shot* – draw to protect or cover.
 3. *Losing head* – draw to save or trail.
- Prepare **markers** for “shot bowl” and “danger bowl” using coloured rings or cones.
- Bring a **measuring device** to demonstrate simple measuring etiquette.
- Arrange a **pairs mini-rink** for a 4-end practice game at the end of the session.

Coaching Method

- Begin with an open discussion:

“What do you look at before you deliver?”

Guide players toward scanning the head — not just focusing on the jack.

Berkshire Bowls Coaching Scheme

- Demonstrate by walking to the head, pointing out shot bowl, potential blockers, and options.
- Encourage players to verbalise reasoning:

“Which bowl is holding? What’s the safest option?”

- Reinforce that *shot selection comes before skill* — technical execution follows tactical understanding.
- Use questioning after each delivery:

“Did that achieve what you pictured?”

“Would you play that again, or change line/weight?”

Observation Points

Watch and listen for:

- **Pre-Shot Routine:** Do players pause to assess before stepping on the mat?
- **Verbalisation:** Can they explain why they chose their shot?
- **Delivery Under Pressure:** Are they rushing when facing a complex head?
- **Team Interaction:** Is communication clear, positive, and calm?
- **Shot Execution:** Are they matching line and weight to the situation?

Encourage visualisation and slow breathing before each shot — thinking clearly is half the battle.

Common Player Issues & Quick Fixes

Problem	Likely Cause	Quick Coaching Fix
Playing the wrong shot for the situation	Rushing decision; poor head reading	Ask: “What’s your purpose?” before every bowl
Forgetting back bowl or cover	Focusing only on the shot bowl	Reinforce “what if” thinking — plan ahead
Overweight on trail attempts	Adding force instead of control	Use “firm draw” tempo, not drive
Confused communication in pairs	No clear roles or signals	Assign one as skip/decision-maker at each end
Anxiety after a mistake	Overthinking outcome	Refocus on next delivery; “one end at a time”

Key Teaching Phrases

- “Look, think, then bowl.”
- “One change at a time — line or weight, not both.”

Berkshire Bowls Coaching Scheme

- “Talk it through before you deliver.”
- “Trust your decision once you’ve made it.”
- “Good thinking leads to good bowling.”

Use consistent phrases so tactical language becomes habit for players.

Time Management Tips

- Spend 15 minutes on a **head demonstration and discussion** (keep it interactive).
- 15–20 minutes on **Drill 1 – Identify & Draw** (rotate through set heads).
- 20 minutes on **Drill 2 – Protect & Save** (cover and back bowl work).
- 20 minutes on **Drill 3 – Trail or Cover** (controlled firm draw).
- Finish with **Mini Pairs Game (20–25 minutes)** — reinforce communication and shot choice.
- End session with short debrief:
 - “What did you learn about reading the head?”
 - “What will you do differently next time?”

Coach Behaviour

- Act as facilitator, not lecturer — encourage players to *see and think*.
- Model calm pre-shot behaviour; your pace sets the tone.
- When players choose a poor shot, ask *why* before correcting.
- Praise good decisions even if the bowl outcome isn’t perfect.
- Encourage open dialogue within pairs — “What do you see?” rather than giving orders.
- Introduce “freeze” moments during drills to pause and discuss positions.

End-of-Session Reflection (Coach)

Ask yourself:

- Did players begin assessing the head before every bowl?
- Were they confident explaining their shot choices?
- Did they apply the correct line and weight for their chosen tactic?
- Was communication supportive and organised?
- Are players showing readiness for structured match play (Lesson 6)?

Berkshire Bowls Coaching Scheme

Key Message to Reinforce

“Every head gives clues.

Good bowlers deliver well — great bowlers think well.

Read the head, make your plan, and deliver with trust.”

Berkshire Bowls Coaching Scheme

Berkshire Bowls Coaching Scheme

Coach Notes – Lesson 6: Putting It All Together (Assessment, Team Play & Game Confidence)

Lesson Overview

Lesson 6 brings the course to its natural conclusion.

The coach's goal is to confirm that players can consistently apply their technical and tactical skills in realistic, game-like situations — demonstrating rhythm, accuracy, and teamwork under gentle pressure.

This is not a “test” in the formal sense, but an *observation-based assessment* where the coach quietly evaluates control, composure, communication, and understanding.

“You don’t need to tell me you understand bowls — show me by how you play.”

Key Coaching Priorities

1. **Consistency of Delivery** — same stance, alignment, and smooth rhythm under match pressure.
2. **Line and Weight Integration** — ability to combine a correct aiming line with weight for the situation.
3. **Tactical Awareness** — sound shot choice, good reading of head, and positional awareness.
4. **Team Communication** — effective interaction with partners; clear, encouraging tone.
5. **Confidence & Enjoyment** — relaxed, focused mindset; playing with intent, not anxiety.

Coach Preparation

- Mark **three skill stations** for the Skill Assessment Circuit:
 - *Station A:* Straight Line Draw (forehand/backhand).
 - *Station B:* Weight Ladder (short–medium–long–full).
 - *Station C:* Gate Draw (precision between bowls).
- Prepare **two short rinks** for mini-match play (Pairs or Triples format).
- Have **assessment sheets or checklists** ready for informal feedback.
- Ensure measuring equipment and scorecards are available for realism.
- Confirm all players understand it's a **confidence-building session**, not a pass/fail test.

Coaching Method

- Begin with encouragement and clarity:

“Today we’re going to put everything together — let’s see how your delivery, line, and weight work in real play.”

Berkshire Bowls Coaching Scheme

- Run through light warm-up: a few smooth deliveries to the centre jack to re-establish rhythm.
- Rotate players through skill stations first, allowing observation of individual technique.
- During mini-matches, adopt a *mentoring presence* — observe quietly, step in only when necessary.
- Use feedback between ends, not during play: “What was your thought there?” or “How did that feel?”
- Focus equally on mental calmness and technical quality.

Observation Points

Area	What to Look For	Coaching Response
Delivery Technique	Balance, rhythm, smooth release maintained under pressure.	Quiet reminder if rushed: “Take your time, settle first.”
Weight Judgement	Consistency across changing lengths and heads.	Reinforce tempo awareness; encourage feel.
Line Discipline	Body alignment and follow-through consistency.	Quick cue: “Toes and nose to target.”
Decision Making	Logical shot selection; no unnecessary risks.	Ask a reflective question: “What was your plan there?”
Communication	Clear, positive, and concise interaction in team play.	Praise cooperative behaviour and calm leadership.
Composure	Emotional control after poor bowls; ability to reset.	Support: “Every bowl’s a new start.”

Common Player Issues & Quick Fixes

Problem	Likely Cause	Quick Coaching Fix
Rushing deliveries	Pressure or excitement	Remind of breathing and pre-shot routine
Inconsistent line	Losing alignment focus under game speed	Reinforce alignment routine: feet–hips–shoulders
Overthinking weight	Anxiety or fear of error	“Trust your rhythm — you already know the feel.”
Lack of team communication	Players are unsure of their roles	Assign skip/lead clearly for each game
Frustration from mistakes	Perfection mindset	Normalise errors: “Even county players miss.”

Berkshire Bowls Coaching Scheme

Key Teaching Phrases

- “Trust your routine — it got you here.”
- “Same delivery, new picture.”
- “Keep it simple, keep it steady.”
- “Good communication builds good heads.”
- “Confidence grows through calm repetition.”

Keep language supportive and positive; this session should feel like a celebration of progress.

Time Management Tips

- 10–15 min warm-up and recap.
- 25–30 min **Skill Assessment Circuit** (rotate between three skill stations).
- 35–40 min **Mini Match Play (Pairs/Triples)**.
- 20 min **Pressure Ends/Coached Scenarios** — one-bowl situations with tactical decision.
- Final 10 min **Feedback Circle** — open discussion, praise effort, identify next steps.

Coach Behaviour

- Adopt a *facilitator mindset*: guide, don’t instruct.
- Take notes quietly rather than interrupting play.
- Recognise effort, progress, and composure over results.
- End on positivity — highlight individual strengths.
- Emphasise that every bowler’s journey continues beyond this course.

End-of-Session Reflection (Coach)

Ask yourself:

- Did players demonstrate a stable, repeatable delivery technique?
- Are line and weight decisions now instinctive rather than forced?
- Did teamwork and communication improve under the match format?
- Who showed readiness for club games?
- Was the atmosphere confident, supportive, and enjoyable?

Provide individual verbal feedback and, if possible, a short written summary of progress.

Berkshire Bowls Coaching Scheme

Key Message to Reinforce

“Confidence is not perfection — it’s consistency under calm control.
Deliver smoothly, think clearly, and enjoy every bowl.”

End of Coaching Notes – Lesson 6

By this stage, every participant should:

- Demonstrate reliable delivery and line control.
- Understand weight judgment and adaptation.
- Communicate effectively in team situations.
- Play with purpose, confidence, and respect for the game.