

Berkshire Bowls Coaching Manual

Level 3

(2025 Edition)

Prepared by the Berkshire Bowls Coaching Team

Version: October 2025

Based on the English Bowls Coaching Society (EBCS) framework, modernised to reflect current coaching methodology, mentoring practices, and diagnostic technologies in the sport of lawn bowls.



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Foreword

The Berkshire Bowls Coaching Manual – Level 3 has been developed as part of the Berkshire Bowls Coaching Series to modernise and advance the traditional English Bowls Coaching Society (EBCS) framework. This manual represents the culmination of practical and theoretical learning that prepares coaches to become Senior Coaches, capable of leading high-level sessions, mentoring developing coaches, and influencing player performance at club, county, and national levels.

Our aim is to bridge the gap between traditional skill-based coaching and the dynamic, reflective, and player-centred approaches used in modern sport. Level 3 coaching is about leading with expertise, empathy, and evidence — empowering others to reach their potential through purposeful, diagnostic, and adaptive coaching practices.

The Berkshire Bowls Coaching Team extends gratitude to the English Bowls Coaching Society for its original materials and foundational philosophy. We also acknowledge the continued contributions of county coaches and practitioners who have provided valuable insights into this modernised framework.

We hope this manual continues to uphold the spirit of excellence and education that defines Berkshire Bowls Coaching.

Berkshire Bowls Coaching Team

October 2025



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Welcome and Course Overview

Welcome to the Berkshire Bowls Coaching Manual – Level 3. This course represents the highest level of county-based bowls coaching and is designed to expand your skills, deepen your tactical understanding, and strengthen your mentoring and leadership capabilities.

As a Level 3 coach, you are expected to:

- Lead and design advanced coaching sessions for individuals and groups.
- Diagnose and correct technical and tactical faults using observation and video technology.
- Facilitate advanced tactical exercises including *Freezing the Head*, *The Phantom Four*, and *Australian Pairs*, helping players understand shot options, decision-making, and communication under pressure.
- Conduct a Diagnostic Clinic using video playback and guided questioning.
- Deliver off-green coaching in physical preparation, nutrition, goal setting, and mental skills.
- Mentor developing coaches through observation, feedback, and reflection.

Level 3 includes a major focus on tactical and match-play coaching through structured scenarios such as *Freezing the Head*, *The Phantom Four*, and *Australian Pairs*. These methods help bowlers learn to analyse heads, justify decisions, communicate effectively, and adapt under realistic pressure.

Level 3 blends high-level practical work with reflective theory. The focus is not only on technical excellence but also on communication, leadership, and adaptability. Through each module, you will enhance your ability to coach, assess, and inspire bowlers to achieve their personal and competitive goals.

The programme also integrates current sports coaching principles, including diagnostic video analysis, purposeful practice planning, performance psychology, and reflective learning. Assignments and assessments have been designed to measure applied competence rather than rote knowledge, encouraging coaches to think critically and coach creatively.

Level 3 coaches are also encouraged to maintain up-to-date First Aid knowledge so they can support safe practice and respond appropriately to incidents during independent coaching sessions.

Although not formally assessed, First Aid awareness is considered best practice for all senior coaches.

By the end of this programme, candidates will have demonstrated their capability in practical diagnostics, advanced tactical management, off-green professionalism, and mentoring of other coaches.



Module 1 – Coaching Advanced Bowlers

Purpose

To refine the coach's ability to analyse, diagnose, and correct delivery technique, tactical awareness, and decision-making in experienced bowlers.

This module builds on Levels 1 and 2 by introducing advanced observation, video diagnostics, and progressive practice design.

Learning Objectives

On completion, the candidate will be able to:

- Conduct advanced observation of a player's delivery, both live and on video.
- Identify technical, tactical, and psychological factors that affect performance.
- Develop progressive, purposeful practices tailored to individual learning needs.
- Use guided questioning to encourage player self-correction and reflective learning.
- Mentor other coaches in applying diagnostic and questioning methods.

1 – Understanding Advanced Delivery

At this level, "good delivery" goes beyond balance and smoothness—it becomes **repeatability under pressure**.

Coach focus:

- Observe *how* and *why* a player adjusts delivery between shots.
- Note consistency of arm plane, rhythm, and follow-through speed.
- Recognise when compensations for green pace or tension are altering technique.
- Identify subtle timing issues rather than overt mechanical faults.

Practical Drill:

Ask the player to deliver four bowls alternately on each hand at medium length.

Record slow-motion video from side and front angles.

After recording, invite the player to reflect on what they noticed about their own rhythm, step length, and release timing on each hand.

Discuss your own observations too — focusing on specific differences you both saw or felt — *before* showing the video playback.

This encourages self-awareness and primes the player to look for those elements during review.



2 – Diagnostic Observation and Communication

Observation should progress from “spotting faults” to **understanding cause and effect**.

Key questions for the coach:

- What has changed in the setup or rhythm since the last successful bowl?
- Is the fault mechanical, tactical, or emotional?
- How does the bowler describe the feel of the shot?
- What is the most efficient single change that will make the greatest improvement?

Technique Tip:

Use the *observe – question – confirm – re-test* sequence:

1. Observe the action.
2. Ask an open question (“What did you feel through your arm on release?”).
3. Confirm understanding (“So you felt rushed on the backswing?”).
4. Re-test under guidance.

3 – Progressive Purposeful Practices

Advanced players improve through finely graded progressions rather than repetition.

Design Principles

1. Start simple—target one variable (line, length, or weight) for the bowl.
2. Add decision elements: moving targets, tactical choices, or pressure scoring.
3. Finish with self-assessment and peer feedback.

Example Practice:

Precision Weight Control

- Deliver four bowls: first just past the jack, second to touch, third 60 cm past, fourth 1 m short.
- Score 2 points for each bowl within ± 15 cm from the target.
- Repeat on the opposite hand.

Encourage players to verbalise adjustments after every end.



4 – Video Diagnostics

A modern Level 3 coach must use video ethically and effectively.

Coach Checklist

- Obtain player consent and explain the purpose.
- Use a tripod at player height; ensure lighting and safe positioning.
- Capture: side, front, and rear views.
- Playback at half-speed; freeze at release.
- Ask the player to describe what they notice before giving your feedback.

Follow-Up

Develop a short written *Diagnostic Report* outlining:

- Identified strengths and areas for improvement.
- Recommended drills or physical corrections.
- Review date and method of follow-up (video 2 or live check).

5 – Mentoring and Coach Development

Senior coaches must model reflective practice.

Mentor Tasks

- Invite a Level 1 or 2 coach to observe your diagnostic session.
- Debrief together, comparing observations.
- Provide constructive feedback using “feed-forward” language—focus on next steps, not just errors.

Assignments

1. **Observation Task** – Conduct a 20-minute advanced delivery analysis (no video).
Submit notes on questioning, observation points, and key findings.
2. **Video Task** – Record and review a 15-minute diagnostic session.
Produce a summary with still-frame analysis and a remedial plan.
3. **Practice Design Task** – Create a progressive, purposeful practice that adapts to three ability levels (intermediate / county / national).
Include objectives, scoring system, and reflection prompts.



Assessment Links

Aligned with the Level 3 Assessment Form criteria for:

- *Diagnostic Clinic (using video)*
- *Personal & Purposeful Practices*
- *Mentoring and Communication Skills*

Reflective Prompt

“An senior coach doesn’t fix actions—they release understanding.”

After each diagnostic session, note one insight you gained about your own coaching.

Module 2 – Tactical Thinking and Head Management

Purpose

To develop the coach’s ability to guide players and teams in tactical analysis, situational decision-making, and strategic control of the head.

This module reinforces communication, observation, and questioning as tools to develop player independence and tactical awareness.

Learning Objectives

On completion, the candidate will be able to:

- Facilitate tactical exercises such as *Freezing the Head* and *The Phantom Four*.
- Encourage reflective and analytical discussion during complex head situations.
- Use questioning and role-play to strengthen player decision-making.
- Identify how head-building, shot selection, and team communication affect end outcomes.
- Manage the energy and engagement of players during extended tactical sessions.

1 – The Art of Tactical Coaching

At a senior level, coaching moves from *telling players what to play* to *helping them explore what might work best*.



Core Coaching Shifts:

Traditional Approach	Advanced Coaching Approach
"Play this shot."	"What options do you see here?"
Focused on outcome	Focused on process and reasoning
Coach provides the answer.	Player explores and justifies decisions.
One right shot	Multiple valid tactical solutions

This shift builds thinking players and collaborative team leaders.

2 – Freezing the Head

One of the most valuable exercises in tactical coaching.

Purpose:

To create a realistic competitive scenario where players must analyse a static head, discuss tactical options, and justify shot selection.

Setup:

- Divide players into **two teams** of equal numbers (typically two/four players per team).
- Assign each team a **bowl colour** (e.g., Red vs. Blue).
- Explain that the scenario represents a **partially completed end**.
- The **Lead and Second from each team have already played their bowls**, creating the frozen head.
- The coach prepares the head in advance *or* allows the group to build it and then freezes it once a realistic situation exists.
- Two mats are placed **approximately 5.5 metres from the head**, one on each hand (forehand and backhand).
- Designate one side as the **attacking team** (due to bowl next) and the other as the **defending team**.
- Clearly communicate the match context (e.g., "Red trails by two shots", "Blue needs to defend the count", "Final end", etc.).

This ensures that all players enter the exercise with:

- accurate team structure,
- clear bowl identity,
- a realistic tactical head, and
- a defined decision-making scenario.

Coach Role:

- Ask guiding questions, not instructions.
- Encourage both teams to justify their thinking.



- Use open questioning to challenge decision quality:
 - “What is your best percentage shot here?”
 - “What happens if you miss narrow or heavy?”
 - “What will change in the head if that shot succeeds?”
- Act as *Devil’s Advocate* when needed to stimulate deeper reasoning.
- Introduce the scenario clearly (“Brown trails by two on the final end”).
- Ask the attacking team to discuss and justify their proposed shot. Once they’ve presented their reasoning, invite the defending team to comment:
 - Is that the shot you most feared from them — and if not, why not?
 - What would you have liked them to attempt instead?
- Ask the **defending team** to comment on the attacking team's choice:
 - “Is this the shot you most feared from them?”
 - “If not, what would you rather they attempted — and why?”
- Encourage both teams to compare alternative options before agreeing on the shot to be played.
- Encourage open discussion before play resumes.

Key Coaching Skills:

- Maintain session flow – don’t let it stagnate.
- Ensure equal participation and prevent domination by one player.
- Recognise learning moments over performance outcomes.

Learning Outcome:

Players should leave the exercise understanding *why* they chose a shot, not just *what* they played.

3 – The Phantom Four

This senior coaching simulation tests team structure, decision-making, and communication.

Purpose:

To replicate match play with one “phantom” rink directed by the coach, focusing on tactical intent and reading the head.

How it Works:

- Players act in their true positions (Lead, Second, Third, Skip).
- The coach places or bowls one or more opposing bowls from a close range to create game pressure.
- Play two trial ends to read the green, then full scoring ends under tactical review.



- Coach pauses play after each bowl and/or end for reflection and tactical discussion.

Coach Role:

- Observe team communication, signals, and tactical choices.
- Ask the skip to explain the strategy to teammates.
- Challenge the team: “What’s your plan if you lose the shot here?” or “What are the alternatives if this bowl fails?”

Outcome:

Builds team decision flow, communication clarity, and mutual trust under pressure.

4 – Australian Pairs

Purpose

To develop advanced tactical awareness, communication, and shared decision-making between partners by rotating roles between lead and skip every two ends.

This format exposes both players to tactical responsibilities, improves reading of the head, and strengthens communication under pressure.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the exercise, players will be able to:

- Rotate effectively between lead and skip roles.
- Communicate clearly using agreed signals and concise language.
- Analyse head-building responsibilities from both ends of the rink.
- Make percentage-based decisions under varying tactical situations.
- Apply tactical reasoning collaboratively, not individually.

Setup

- Pair players into **teams of two**.
- Explain that roles rotate every **two ends** (lead ↔ skip).
- Establish simple scoring (e.g., 4 ends total or a 20-minute block).
- Create realistic game scenarios — medium pace green, standard jack length.
- Coach stands mid-rink to observe both ends equally (if possible).

Coach Role

1. Build Tactical Awareness

While players discuss shot options:

- Ask the delivering player:
“What’s your highest percentage shot here?”
- Ask the partner:
“As skip/lead, what information do you need to give them?”



2. Strengthen Communication

Prompt players to:

- Use clear, consistent signals.
- State intentions concisely (“Draw behind”, “Cover the split”, “Two-foot weight”).
- Confirm understanding before each delivery.

3. Develop Role Understanding

Lead Focus:

- Setting the head.
- Establishing line and length.
- Staying disciplined and consistent.

Skip Focus:

- Reading the head.
- Deciding whether to attack or defend.
- Managing risk based on match context.

Works exceptionally well for Level 3 because players learn both roles under coach's supervision.

Suggested Coaching Questions

To Attacking Team:

- “What outcome do you want from this shot?”
- “If you miss narrow or heavy, what happens?”

To Defending Team:

- “Is the shot they’re choosing the one you most fear? If not, why not?”
- “What would you want them to attempt instead?”

(Integrates perfectly with the enhanced *Freezing the Head* dialogue.)

Progressions

1. **Change Mat & Jack Length**
— Players must adapt tactical plans dynamically.
2. **Introduce Time Pressure**
— e.g., 30 seconds to decide a shot.
3. **Scenario Starts**
 - Start 2 down.
 - Start 1 up with one bowl left.
 - A blocked hand must be navigated.



Common Errors & Coaching Tips

Player Issue	Coaching Cue
Skip over-coaches	"Guide, don't dominate." Use questions, not commands.
Lead forgets positional play	Reinforce "Bowl to a safe zone behind."
Poor rotations	"Treat each rotation as a new game: reset your head."
Loss of communication	Revisit agreed signals and concise language.

Assignment Link

Australian Pairs can be used as valid evidence for:

- **Game-Based Coaching (Portfolio Section 4)**
- **Tactical Decision-Making**
- **Communication & Leadership**
- **Scenario Coaching**

5 – Decision-Making Under Pressure

Introduce time-limited or score-based constraints:

- "You have 30 seconds to decide your shot."
- "You're 1 down with one bowl left—what's your decision-making process?"

Use these scenarios to train *clarity under stress*.

Video or note the discussion phase rather than the shot itself—this captures true learning.

6 – Group Management and Engagement

Coaching complex tactical sessions demands energy and control.

Top Tips:

- Keep groups small (4–6 players).
- Rotate roles to prevent fatigue.
- Debrief after every exercise using three questions:
 1. What worked well?
 2. What could be improved?
 3. What will you do differently next time?



This reflective framework develops self-coaching and collaborative learning.

Assignments

1. Practical Facilitation:

Conduct a *Freezing the Head* session with 4 players.

Record observations on questioning, group management, and tactical insight.

2. Reflective Report:

Write a 1-page analysis of a tactical coaching session, identifying how your questioning influenced decision-making.

3. Design Task:

Create a “Head Reading Toolkit” for coaches—include checklists for communication, shot choice, and percentage play.

Assessment Links

- *Freezing the Head* (practical criteria)
- *Group Control and Session Flow*
- *Diagnostic Questioning and Tactical Reasoning*

Reflective Prompt

“Good tactical coaching doesn’t give the answers — it reveals better questions.”

Record three powerful questions you used this week to make players think differently.

Module 3 – Diagnostic Coaching Using Video

Purpose

To equip Level 3 coaches with the ability to use video technology as a tool for observation, analysis, and player self-discovery.

The aim is not only to *see faults* but to help the bowler *understand cause and effect*, recognise their own patterns, and implement meaningful corrections.

Learning Objectives

On completion, candidates will be able to:

- Set up and operate video equipment safely and effectively.



- Record and analyse delivery actions using playback, slow motion, and still frame review.
- Engage the player in guided self-assessment before providing feedback.
- Identify and prioritise technical faults and appropriate corrective practices.
- Produce a structured Diagnostic Report with measurable follow-up objectives.

1 – The Role of Video in Coaching

Video technology transforms how coaches see and explain movement.

At Level 3, the goal is *interpretation*, not just recording.

Video helps the coach to:

- Capture evidence of consistency, timing, and control.
- Slow down complex movements to highlight subtle imbalances.
- Encourage player ownership by showing—not just telling.
- Validate or disprove the coach’s first impression.

“The camera doesn’t coach — but it teaches both the coach and the player to see.”

2 – Setting Up for Success

Preparation Checklist

Step	Action	Reason
1	Obtain player consent and explain the process	Builds trust and transparency
2	Check lighting, weather, and background	Ensures a clear image and visibility
3	Position the tripod for 3 camera angles: side, front, and rear	Captures all aspects of the delivery
4	Test playback speed and sound	Prevents loss of data
5	Arrange for an assistant to return bowls	Allows uninterrupted observation
6	Mark the mat position and target for consistency	Enables accurate comparison

3 – Observation and Filming Techniques

Coach Focus:

- Watch rhythm, alignment, and head position through all frames.
- Note the timing of the step vs. backswing and release.
- Observe signs of tension (shoulders, hands, facial strain).



- Record at least 3 deliveries per hand, plus 1 jack cast.

Best Angles:

- *Side view*: for stance, balance, step length, and arm swing.
- *Front view*: for shoulder alignment, stability, and bias control.
- *Rear view*: for swing path and release accuracy.

Pro Tip:

Use cones or chalk marks for consistent camera reference points.

4 – Player-Led Analysis

Modern coaching emphasises the player's own interpretation first.

Procedure:

1. Play back the first clip in slow motion.
2. Ask the player:
 - "What do you notice first?"
 - "How does that compare to how it felt?"
3. Replay with still frames at release, follow-through, and finish.
4. Encourage them to identify one technical area they wish to improve.

This promotes self-awareness and ownership of the improvement process.

5 – Coach-Led Discussion

After player reflection, the coach can guide interpretation.

Discuss:

- What is consistent in every delivery?
- Where does the rhythm change (backswing, release, recovery)?
- How does body alignment affect line or weight?
- Is balance maintained from stance to follow-through?

Avoid:

Flooding the player with information — choose one *root cause* per session.

Link Observation to Correction

For example:

Fault: Bowl released with a bump due to rising head.

Correction: Practice "eyes forward – chin level" drill with a mirror or a camera.



Follow-up: Re-record after 10 minutes of focused repetitions.

6 – The Diagnostic Report

A formal summary provides structure, accountability, and continuity.

Report Template

Section	Details
Player Name	
Date / Venue	
Coach	
Observed Strengths	
Identified Fault(s)	
Corrective Focus / Drill	
Progress Indicators	
Next Review Date	

Attach still-frame images if possible (labelled at point of release, back swing, or follow-through).

7 – Using Video as a Mentoring Tool

As a Level 3 coach, you may guide other coaches through this process.

Mentoring Focus:

- Show how to observe without bias.
- Encourage assistants to describe what they *see*, not what they *assume*.
- Compare observations between coaches to build shared accuracy.

Consider running short “coach observation clinics” to strengthen collective analytical skills within your county network.



Assignments

1. Video Diagnostic Task

Record a player from three angles. Conduct a feedback session where the player comments first. Submit a short report including annotated screenshots and a follow-up plan.

2. Peer Mentoring Task

Work with another coach to review one of your diagnostic videos. Compare observations and document what each person noticed differently.

3. Reflective Task

Write a short reflection on how your questioning influenced player awareness during a video session.

Assessment Links

- *Diagnostic Clinic Using a Camera*
- *Communication, Observation, and Remedial Planning*
- *Player Involvement and Reflective Learning*

Reflective Prompt

“Video reveals what eyes miss, but understanding reveals what eyes can’t see.”

After your next diagnostic session, note one thing you learned *about yourself* as a coach.

Module 4 – Advanced Game Strategy and Coaching Scenarios

Purpose

To strengthen a coach’s ability to guide players through tactical, psychological, and environmental challenges during competitive play.

This module connects *technical skill* with *strategic awareness*, *mental resilience*, and *in-game adaptability*.

Learning Objectives

On completion, candidates will be able to:

- Plan and deliver tactical practice sessions replicating real-game conditions.
- Teach advanced singles and team strategy, adapting to varying greens and opponents.
- Apply performance psychology to maintain player composure under pressure.



- Use questioning and scenario-based learning to build decision-making confidence.
- Mentor players and developing coaches in strategic planning and match preparation.

1 – Understanding Game Strategy

Strategy in bowls is **the intelligent management of risk**.

Core Principles

1. **Control the Jack** – distance, side, and pace dictate opportunity.
2. **Own the Mat** – vary mat placement to disrupt rhythm.
3. **Play to Strengths** – align tactics with the player's natural tendencies.
4. **Force Decisions** – present the opponent with low-percentage options.
5. **Read Early, Adjust Quickly** – treat every end as a feedback loop.

“Strategy isn't what you plan before the match – it's what you recognise and adapt during it.”

2 – Advanced Singles Play

Singles demand total self-reliance and mental discipline.

Coach Focus:

- Establish each player's *favourite length* and *comfort zone*.
- Teach early adaptation: when the pace changes, change the mat first.
- Train decision flow: *observe – assess – decide – commit – reflect*.

Pressure Drill Example – “Last Bowl Wins”

- Set up a head with one shot down.
- The player must choose and play within 30 seconds.
- Coach observes breathing, body language, and pre-shot routine consistency.

Learning Outcome:

Improved ability to manage stress and clarity in decision-making.

3 – Team Tactical Development

Team play requires synchronised thinking rather than identical thinking.

The Coach's Role:

- Promote communication: concise signals, shared vocabulary, mutual respect.
- Encourage *collective planning, individual execution*.



- Rotate positions to build empathy and understanding of all roles.

Scenario Example – “Role Reversal Ends”

Each player rotates positions after every two ends; after each rotation, discuss how perception and shot options changed.

4 – Situational Coaching and Game Simulation

Create real-match environments to test adaptability.

Sample Scenarios

Situation	Focus	Coaching Aim
Windy outdoor green	Weight control, stance stability	Develop physical and mental adjustments
Playing a defensive skip	Patience, shot selection	Learn to draw rather than chase
Needing 3 to win the final end	Tactical aggression	Explore calculated risk-taking
Wet/slow rink	Power generation	Train low-body engagement and smooth acceleration

Encourage players to design one scenario themselves—self-generated challenges build ownership and creativity.

5 – Psychological Readiness and SMACT Goal Planning

Mental preparation transforms performance consistency.

SMACT Framework

Specific | Measurable | Achievable | Controlled | Timed

Example:

Goal: Improve drive accuracy.

Specific: Hit the nominated bowl 6 times out of 10.

Measurable: Use scorecard.

Achievable: Within 4 weeks.

Controlled: Under self-set tempo.

Timed: Review every second Thursday.

Mental Tools:

- **Cue Words** – e.g. “smooth,” “flow,” “commit.”
- **Pre-Shot Routine** – consistent breathing and focus anchor.
- **Reflection Breaks** – use between ends to reset mind and body.



6 – Mentoring and Leadership in Match Contexts

A Level 3 coach is a **leader-mentor** as much as a tactician.

Leadership Practices

- Model calm, respectful conduct in all competitive situations.
- Provide post-match feedback using the “Praise → Question → Challenge” format.
- Encourage autonomy: guide players to diagnose their own solutions.
- Support emerging coaches during practice matches—let them lead a scenario, then debrief collaboratively.

7 – Performance Review and Debriefing

After every match or simulation:

1. **Facts:** What happened?
2. **Feelings:** How did it feel?
3. **Findings:** What did we learn?
4. **Future:** What will we do next time?

Record outcomes in a *Performance Journal* to track trends in decision-making and tactical growth.

Assignments

1. **Tactical Practice Plan**
Design and deliver a 2-hour game-scenario session (singles or pairs). Include objectives, structure, reflection prompts, and scoring method.
2. **Match Analysis Report**
Record or observe a competitive game. Identify 3 key tactical moments, analyse the decisions, and propose alternative strategies.
3. **Mentor Task**
Supervise a Level 2 coach leading a tactical session. Provide written feedback on their communication, control, and decision flow.

Assessment Links

- *Off-Green Tactical Analysis and Mentoring*
- *SMACT Goal Planning and Leadership*
- *Game Strategy and Scenario Facilitation*



Reflective Prompt

“Tactics win ends — habits win matches.”

After your next game simulation, list two habits that strengthened or weakened decision-making under pressure.

Module 5 – Off-Green Competence

Purpose

To ensure Level 3 coaches demonstrate full professional competence both on and off the green. This includes understanding the impact of physical health, nutrition, psychology, ethics, first aid awareness and personal conduct on coaching effectiveness and player performance.

Learning Objectives

On completion, candidates will be able to:

- Educate players on appropriate nutrition, hydration, and physical preparation for play.
- Integrate warm-up, flexibility, and recovery practices into sessions.
- Set and monitor personal and player goals using S.M.A.R.T. and reflective methods.
- Demonstrate awareness of mental well-being, ethics, and safeguarding.
- Present themselves as ambassadors for the sport and mentors to developing coaches.

1 – Physical Preparation and Conditioning

Although bowls is not a high-impact sport, it demands balance, flexibility, coordination, and endurance.

Physical preparation prevents injury, improves delivery consistency, and sustains focus throughout long games or tournaments.

Key Components of Bowls Fitness:

- **Mobility and Balance** – stability for consistent delivery.
- **Flexibility** – smooth movement through the delivery phase.
- **Core Strength** – supports posture and prevents fatigue.
- **Endurance** – maintains decision quality over long sessions.

Practical Routine (Pre-Session Example):

1. Gentle walk around the rink (2–3 minutes).



2. Shoulder rolls and trunk twists.
3. Hamstring and calf stretches.
4. Controlled delivery motion (no bowl) 5 times.
5. Two light jack rolls before practice.

Encourage players to stretch again after sessions to aid recovery and reduce stiffness.

2 – Nutrition and Hydration

Nutrition directly influences performance consistency and concentration.

Coaches must model and promote healthy habits.

Guidelines for Competitive Bowlers:

- **Hydration:** Begin the day hydrated; drink regularly, especially during long sessions.
- **Energy:** Choose slow-release carbohydrates before play (oats, bananas, wholegrain bread).
- **During Play:** Light snacks (nuts, fruit, energy bars) maintain blood sugar levels.
- **Recovery:** Combine carbohydrates with protein (sandwiches, yoghurt, milk drinks) post-session.
- **Avoid:** Heavy meals, sugary drinks, alcohol, and excess caffeine before competition.

Example Day of Competition Meal Plan:

Time	Nutrition Focus
Breakfast	Oats with fruit, water or tea
Mid-morning	Banana and light hydration
Lunch	Chicken/vegetable wrap, water
During play	Water + handful of mixed nuts
Post-match	Milk drink or protein bar

“A well-fuelled mind makes better decisions.”

3 – Mental Skills and Emotional Control

At an advanced level, *mental preparation is performance preparation.*

Mental Skillset for Bowlers:

- **Self-Awareness:** Recognising emotions and maintaining composure.
- **Focus Control:** Using breathing and cue routines to reset between ends.
- **Confidence Building:** Anchoring to past successes and trusted routines.



- **Resilience:** Recovering quickly from setbacks or missed shots.

Coach Role:

- Encourage players to develop pre-shot routines that include visualisation and self-talk.
- Reinforce the concept of “process over outcome.”
- Identify early signs of frustration or fatigue and use time-outs or short resets.

4 – Goal Setting and Reflective Practice

Goals give structure to both coach and player development.

SMART Framework (reviewed from Module 4):

Specific – Measurable – Achievable – Controlled – Timed

Example Coaching Goal:

To improve the ability to facilitate reflective questioning in player reviews.

Specific: Use reflection prompts in every session.

Measurable: Minimum of 3 questions per debrief.

Achievable: Within the next 4 sessions.

Controlled: By personal checklist.

Timed: Review after one month.

Encourage players and assistant coaches to maintain journals recording:

- What they practised
- What improved
- What they learned about themselves

Reflection Questions for Coaches:

1. What went well today and why?
2. What was challenging, and how did I respond?
3. What will I change next time?

Reflection transforms experience into progress.

5 – Professional Standards and Ethics

As senior representatives of Berkshire Bowls, Level 3 coaches are role models for conduct and values.

Key Responsibilities:

- Maintain confidentiality and respect in all interactions.
- Model inclusivity and equality of opportunity.



- Uphold the Code of Ethics and Safeguarding at all times.
- Ensure the safety and welfare of all participants, including juniors and vulnerable adults.
- Refrain from criticism of officials or colleagues in public forums.
- Present a professional appearance and punctuality for every engagement.

Mentoring Conduct:

- Give feedback privately and respectfully.
- Balance praise with constructive challenge.
- Demonstrate patience and empathy, especially with developing coaches.
- Encourage self-sufficiency rather than dependence.

“Professionalism is not a uniform—it’s consistency of behaviour when nobody’s watching.”

6 – Coach Well-being and Sustainability

Senior coaches often mentor, teach, and lead multiple roles — balance is essential.

Strategies for Longevity:

- Schedule recovery days during intensive coaching periods.
- Seek mentorship from peers or senior coaches.
- Continue CPD through workshops, webinars, and county coaching forums.
- Keep learning — every session should teach the coach something too.

7 – First Aid Awareness & Player Welfare

Although First Aid is no longer a formal assessment requirement of the EBCS Level 3 award, senior coaches are strongly encouraged to maintain up-to-date First Aid knowledge. Level 3 coaches often lead sessions independently, support player welfare, and work closely with bowlers of varying ages, mobility levels, and health needs.

Key Expectations for Level 3 Coaches:

- Demonstrate awareness of basic First Aid principles, including how to respond calmly and appropriately to common incidents.
- Know the location of First Aid kits, defibrillators (AEDs), emergency exits, and venue procedures.
- Ensure that sessions are organised in a way that minimises risk and maintains a safe playing environment.



- Recognise when a player may be unwell, injured, or unsafe to continue, and act accordingly.
- Maintain accurate incident notes when required and follow club or county reporting procedures.

Recommended Training:

A recognised First Aid qualification (Emergency First Aid at Work, Sports First Aid, or equivalent) is strongly recommended as part of a Level 3 coach's professional practice. This supports safer coaching environments and aligns with national expectations for senior coaches working independently.

"Player welfare is a fundamental responsibility of the senior coach. Good First Aid awareness helps protect players, reassure groups, and promote a safe and professional coaching environment."

Assignments

1. **Nutrition and Fitness Plan**
Create a one-page player guide on pre-match preparation, hydration, and stretching.
2. **Goal-Setting Project**
Design a SMART goal plan for both personal coaching and a player's development.
3. **Professional Reflection**
Write a one-page reflection on how your behaviour models the Berkshire Bowls coaching ethos.
4. **CPD Record**
Maintain a continuing development log for the next 12 months, noting courses, mentorships, or tournaments supported.

Assessment Links

- *Off-Green Questions (Nutrition, Goal Setting, Ethics)*
- *Professional Conduct and Self-Reflection*
- *Mentoring and Leadership Responsibilities*
- *Optional First Aid Requirement*

Reflective Prompt

"Your players will mirror your standards before they mirror your skills."

What professional behaviour do you most want your players and mentees to learn from you?



Conclusion

The **Berkshire Bowls Coaching Manual – Level 3** represents the high tier of the Berkshire coaching framework.

It prepares experienced coaches to lead others with confidence, insight, and professionalism — blending traditional skill coaching with evidence-based modern practice.

By completing this course, a Level 3 coach should now be able to:

- Coach, analyse, and mentor at club, county, and representative level.
- Deliver diagnostic and tactical sessions using both observation and video technology.
- Manage complex group dynamics, ensuring engagement, purpose, and progress.
- Model professionalism, ethical standards, and reflective learning.
- Contribute actively to the development of other coaches within Berkshire Bowls.

The journey from Level 1 to Level 3 is both technical and personal.

At this level, *how you coach* becomes as important as *what you coach*.

The best senior coaches inspire others not only through knowledge but through consistency, humility, and curiosity.

“True coaching mastery is quiet — it listens, observes, questions, and guides.”

Continue to evolve, learn, and share. Your example will shape the next generation of Berkshire coaches.



Appendices

Appendix A – Level 3 Assessment Summary

Assessment Component	Method	Focus	Notes
Diagnostic Clinic (Video)	Practical	Observation, player feedback, and remedial correction	The candidate uses the camera and playback effectively
Freezing the Head	Practical	Tactical questioning, session flow, and communication	Player-centred, inclusive, outcome-based discussion
Off-Green Questions	Oral/Written	Nutrition, fitness, ethics, goal setting	Practical application rather than theoretical recall
Logbook / Assignments	Written	Coaching sessions, reflective practice	Must include purposeful practice and mentoring examples
Trainer Observation	Continuous	Professionalism, planning, and adaptability	Ongoing through the course

Appendix B – Diagnostic Report Template

Section	Details
Player Name	
Date / Venue	
Coach	
Identified Strengths	
Areas for Development	
Corrective Focus	
Progress Indicators	
Next Review Date	



Player Feedback

Appendix C – SMART Goal Planning Sheet

Goal	Specific	Measurable	Achievable	Controlled	Timed	Review Date

Appendix D – Player Progress Record (Advanced Level)

Date	Focus	Key Drills	Observations	Next Steps

Appendix E – Reflective Journal Template

Session Date	Topic / Focus	What Went Well	What Could Improve	Lessons Learned	Actions for Next Time

Appendix F – Optional Requirement- First Aid Awareness

Although First Aid is not a formal component of the EBCS Level 3 practical assessment, Berkshire Bowls strongly recommends that senior coaches maintain up-to-date First Aid training.

Level 3 coaches often lead sessions independently, support players of all ages, and act as senior figures within their clubs and counties. For this reason, maintaining basic First Aid competence is considered part of best coaching practice.

Recommended Standard:

Coaches should ideally hold a recognised First Aid certificate (Emergency First Aid at Work, Sports First Aid, or equivalent) that enables them to respond appropriately to common incidents and support safe coaching environments.

Why This Matters:

- Promotes player safety and welfare.
- Supports risk management during sessions.
- Aligns with wider sporting expectations for senior coaches.



- Builds confidence among players, clubs, and coaching colleagues.

This requirement is recommended rather than mandatory and does not form part of the formal pass/fail criteria for Level 3 certification. It reflects Berkshire Bowls' commitment to safe, professional, and player-centred coaching practice.

Glossary of Terms

Bias:

The curved path taken by a bowl due to its shape and balance characteristics.

Blocker:

A bowl intentionally placed short to protect the shot bowl or block an opponent's line.

Delivery:

The complete action of pre-stance routine, stance, backswing, release, and follow-through.

Diagnostic Coaching:

A method of analysing a player's performance using observation and questioning to identify cause-and-effect relationships.

Freezing the Head:

A tactical coaching exercise where the head is set up statically, allowing discussion of possible shots, outcomes, and strategy.

Head:

The group of bowls surrounding the jack during an end.

Mat Positioning:

Adjusting the mat's location on the rink to alter the delivery line or pace control.

Phantom Four:

A simulation game where a coach creates tactical situations to test team communication and decision-making.

Purposeful Practice:

A focused training activity designed to develop specific skills under realistic conditions.

SMACT:

A goal-setting framework meaning Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Controlled, and Timed.

Weighted Shot:

A delivery with extra pace designed to displace bowls or move the jack.



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