

Mat Placement and Rules – Player's Workbook

The mat is the foundation of every delivery in bowls. It sets alignment, defines the legal playing area, and can be used tactically to control the game. This guide blends narrative explanation with step lists, checklists, tables, and tips so you can learn how to use the mat with confidence.

Why the Mat Matters

- Provides a consistent base for delivery.
- Protects the green surface from wear.
- Front edge ('mat line') is the reference point for all distance measurements.
- Tactical tool – jack length and mat control can influence the game.

How to Place the Mat

1. Face the rink number at the near end.
2. Align the mat with the centre line of the rink.
3. Place the mat at least 2 metres from the rear ditch.
4. Ensure at least 23 metres from the front ditch.
5. Pick up by the corners, crouch/step forward, and lower smoothly.

Rules for Using the Mat

- At least one foot must remain on/above the mat until the bowl is released.
- Mat may be straightened at any time before delivery.
- Mat may be lifted temporarily to allow a neighbouring bowl through.
- Mat cannot be moved or relocated during an end.
- The winner of the previous end decides who controls the mat next.

Tactical Choices with the Mat

Option	Advantage	Limitation
Keep the Mat	Control jack length, force opponents to adapt	Opponents still have the last bowl
Give the Mat	Gain last bowl advantage (hammer)	Opponents choose jack length



Practice Drill – Mat and Jack

1. Roll the jack and deliver 4 bowls to that position.
2. Aim for 2 bowls, jack high and 2 bowls 1 foot behind.
3. Vary the jack length by 3–5 metres each time.
4. Repeat across multiple ends until you feel comfortable at all lengths.

Tip – Foot Placement

If your bowls are consistently too wide or too narrow, check your stance. Adjust where your toes point on the mat to correct your delivery line.

Key Takeaways

- The mat is both a legal requirement and a tactical weapon.
- Correct placement ensures fair play and accurate measurement.
- Mat control influences jack placement and, therefore, game rhythm.
- Practice with varied jack lengths to improve adaptability.

