

Scorecards and Match Rules – Quick Reference Guide

Bowls matches are not only about delivering bowls – they also rely on accurate recording, fair play, and understanding key rules. This guide blends short narrative explanations with tables, checklists, and callouts to make scoring and rule situations clear for every player.

Key Terms in Play

Term	Definition	Why It Matters
Scorecard	Official record of the game, usually kept by the skip	Ensures accurate scoring
Toucher	A bowl that touches the jack during its course of travel	Remains live, even if it enters a ditch
Dead Jack	Jack out of the rink or jack ends up too short (<20m)	Ends the end immediately
Dead End	End replayed unless 'no dead ends' rule applies	Keeps the game fair
Dead Bowl	Bowl not a toucher and in ditch, outside rink, or travels <14m	Removed from play
Possession of Rink	Only the team with the bowl in play may communicate	Prevents distraction

Scorecards

The skip is responsible for filling in the scorecard, but may delegate if necessary.

Checklist – Scorecards

- Enter names, rink number, competition, and start time.
- Record shots for and against after each end.
- Use a dash (–), never a zero (0), for ends with no score.
- At game end, total scores and have both skips sign.
- Record finish time if required.

Touchers

A toucher is a bowl that makes contact with the jack during its course. It remains live even if it later enters the ditch, provided it stays within the rink boundaries.



Tip

Always remove chalk marks from previous ends before the bowl is played again.

Dead Jack and Dead End

When the jack is out of play or travels too short (<20m), the end is declared dead.

What Happens in a Dead End

1. The end does not count – it must be replayed.
2. Replay in the same direction unless the skips agree to change.
3. The same player or team delivers the jack again.
4. If 'no dead ends' rule applies, jack is re-spotted instead of replaying.

Dead Bowls

A bowl is dead and removed from play if it meets any of these conditions:

- Not a toucher and finishes in the ditch.
- Completely outside rink boundaries.
- Knocked out of the rink by another bowl.
- Comes to rest less than 14m from the mat line.

Possession of the Rink

Possession of the rink belongs to the side whose bowl is being played. This prevents distractions and ensures fair play.

Possession Rules

5. Possession starts when a player steps onto the mat and lasts until their bowl comes to rest.
6. Once delivered and before the delivered bowls comes to rest, the player must step back behind the mat or head.
7. Possession then transfers to the opposing side.
8. Only the side in possession may communicate with teammates.

Key Takeaways

- Accurate scorecards keep matches fair and organised.
- Touchers remain live even in the ditch – mark them with chalk.
- Dead jacks end an end, while dead bowls are removed immediately.
- Possession of the rink is strict – only one side may communicate at a time.

