

BERKSHIRE BOWLS COACHING SCHEME

Guide to Buying Bowls

Choose a bowl that suits your hand, your surface and your game

WHY THIS MATTERS

A set of bowls is a significant purchase. The best choice is not simply the newest model or the widest bias. It is the set you can hold comfortably, deliver consistently and use on the surfaces where you normally play.

The Six Main Decisions

Factor	What to consider	Practical question
Surface	Indoor, outdoor or both; faster surfaces usually create more turn.	Where will I play most often?
Bias	The width and shape of the bowl's draw line.	Which line feels predictable for my normal role?
Grip	Plain, dimpled or embedded grip and how securely it sits in the hand.	Can I hold and release it without tension?
Size and weight	Comfort, control and the ability to maintain a natural delivery.	Can I hold it securely throughout a full game?
New or second-hand	Budget, condition, availability and future resale.	What offers the best value for my needs?
Appearance	Colour and design after the practical requirements are satisfied.	Do I still like the set once the essentials are right?

Surface and Bias

- Bowls generally turn more on faster surfaces. A model that feels suitable outdoors may behave differently indoors.
- A narrower bowl may offer a more direct draw line, while a wider-bias bowl may provide more room to draw around short bowls.
- Your usual team role can influence preference, but there is no single model that is automatically right for every Lead, Second, Third or Skip.
- Try the bowl on the surface you normally use before committing where possible.

Size, Weight and Grip

Good signs	Warning signs
✓ The bowl sits securely without squeezing.	X The bowl slips or needs excessive finger pressure.
✓ You can support it through the full delivery.	X Your wrist or forearm feels strained.
✓ The grip feels natural on both hands.	X The release changes because the bowl feels too large or heavy.
✓ Your fingers and thumb remain relaxed.	X You choose a size only because others use it.

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Buying Second-Hand Bowls

Check	Why it matters
Size and weight	Do not rely on photographs or assumptions; confirm the exact specification.
Matching set	Check that all bowls belong to the same set and have matching serial numbers.
Date stamp	Confirm that the bowls are suitable for the competitions in which you expect to play.
Condition	Look for significant damage, deep scratches or uneven wear.
Bias and model	Make sure the model suits the surface and line you intend to play.
Total cost	Include postage, bags and any other equipment needed.

A Sensible Buying Process

1 — TRY	2 — COMPARE	3 — CHECK	4 — DECIDE
Borrow different sizes, grips and models at the club.	Use them on your normal surface and both hands.	Confirm specification, condition, stamp and matching set.	Choose comfort and control before colour or fashion.

Questions to Ask Before Buying

☐ Where will I play most often?	☐ Can I hold this bowl comfortably for a full match?	☐ Does the grip support a relaxed release?
☐ Does the bias suit my normal surface and role?	☐ Have I tried the bowl on both forehand and backhand?	☐ For a used set, are the size, stamp, serial numbers and condition satisfactory?
PRICE AND SUPPLIER NOTE: Prices, stock and suppliers change. Treat any current listing as temporary information and compare several sources before purchasing.		
KEY POINT: Try before you buy. Choose the bowl you can hold comfortably and deliver consistently on your normal playing surface.		