

BERKSHIRE BOWLS COACHING SCHEME

Trial Ends

Use every bowl to learn about the rink before the match begins

WHY THIS MATTERS

Trial ends are not simply a tradition. They provide early information about the pace and line of the rink, the preferred hand, the behaviour of your bowls and the likely strengths of both teams.

What Normally Happens

Trial-end feature	Practical meaning
Number of trial ends	Often two, one in each direction, but the competition conditions may provide otherwise.
Rink	They are played on the same rink as the match.
Bowls used	A player must not use more bowls than will be used in the game.
Different sets	Different bowls may be tried during the trial ends, but one approved set is used once the match starts.
Starting each direction	The team winning the toss normally starts the first trial end; the opposition starts the second.
Jack position	After delivery, the jack may be placed at the required length in accordance with the applicable conditions.

What Should You Learn?

Observe	Question to ask	Use in the match
Pace	How much weight reaches the required length?	Choose a reliable delivery cue.
Width	How much does each hand draw?	Identify the more predictable route.
Finish	Where does the bowl begin to turn and stop?	Improve the aiming point and intended finish.
Ditch end	How positive must the bowl be near the ditch?	Prepare for longer or ditch-end bowls.
Opponents	Which hands and lengths appear comfortable?	Recognise likely strengths and difficulties.
Team	What information does each teammate discover?	Share one clear fact before the first end.

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A Purposeful Trial-End Routine

1 — PLAN	2 — DELIVER	3 — OBSERVE	4 — SHARE
Choose what the bowl will test: hand, length, draw line or controlled weight.	Use the normal routine and deliver to a clear finishing area.	Watch the whole path and where the bowl stops.	Give one useful fact to the team before the match starts.

Role of Each Player

Player responsibility	Useful contribution
Every player	Test a useful hand and length, observe their direct opponent and remember the result.
Lead	Assess mat position, jack delivery and a dependable opening draw line.
Second / Third	Observe alternative routes, positional bowls and how added weight changes the line.
Skip	Collect information from both teams and decide the likely opening plan.

Common Mistakes

Mistake	Better approach
Delivering without a purpose.	Decide what each bowl is testing.
Watching only your own bowl.	Observe teammates and direct opponents as well.
Using every bowl on the same hand.	Compare both hands where time and conditions allow.
Treating the result as unimportant.	Remember one fact that will influence the first end.
Trying too many different shots.	Prioritise the information most likely to be useful.

Player Self-Check

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| ☐ What did I learn about the pace? | ☐ Which hand felt more predictable? |
| ☐ What did I observe about my opponent? | ☐ What one fact should my team use in the first end? |

COMPETITION NOTE: The number and procedure for trial ends can vary. Always follow the laws and the conditions of play for the particular match.

KEY POINT: A trial end is valuable only when you observe, remember and use what each bowl tells you.