PLAYING POSITIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The vast majority of bowls games played in the U.K. will consist of team games – whether it is for two players (pair's), three players (triples) or four players (rinks). So I will first talk about the playing positions in a rinks game.

1) THE LEAD - Places the mat, delivers the jack and delivers his bowls, alternately with the opposing lead, as close as possible to the jack, in order to lay a good foundation for a favourable head.
It is important for a lead player to be able to use the mat to the advantage of the team and to be able to deliver the jack to a required length.
During the trial ends the lead player should decide whether the forehand or backhand draw will produce the best results, and, having chosen which hand to use in each direction, he should continue to play that hand throughout the game, unless he finds it unsuccessful as the game progresses or if directed otherwise by the skip. Often one finds it is best to play the same side where possible, i.e. forehand in one direction and backhand in the other.
A lead player should not change hand just because the opposition bowl appears to be in the way. Ignore it and draw to the jack, you may get shot or a good second bowl. **The ideal lead bowl is just behind the jack.**
Don't be short if the shot is against you, it is better to have a bowl a yard/meter behind the jack, than a similar distance in front.
Most new players are asked to play lead as this position allows you the opportunity to master delivering the jack and learn the art of playing good draw bowling. No club bowler has ever reached top class without mastering this.

NO 2 - The seconds, main bowling task is to consolidate or retrieve the head. The No 2 player must be a good draw player but may also be called upon to play all types of shots. We will be showing you some of those shots before the end of the course.
No 2 is the player responsible for keeping the scoreboard up to date. He should not only ensure that his

NO 3 - The responsibilities of a bowler greatly increase when he takes No 3 spot on the rink. The player at No 3 is the skip's right-hand man – second in command. The third usually positions himself, before the lead player bowls at the end of the green to which play will be directed. He stands with the skip to observe the Lead and No 2 bowls (*this is known as 3's up*). He and the opposing Third then deliver their bowls in turn, after which he returns to the head.
He directs the skip, which shot to play when, requested.
The third player will be called upon to play various types of shots, must be enthusiastic, encouraging to the other members in the team and possess loyalty to the skip.
After completion of each end, the No 3 is normally given the job of agreeing the score with his opponent.
Playing 3rd one should have a good knowledge of the laws of the game.

SKIP - the skip is in charge of the rink and his instructions will be followed by all his team members.
Skip's need to be good players but the most important task will be to establish his team as a unit and get the best out of the other three players with him.
Not only has the skip to play his two bowls but he has to briefly :-
1) Study the green and the playing conditions.
2) Watch every move on the green.
3) Sum up the opponents.
4) Sort out his opponent's strengths and weaknesses.
5) Know the strengths and weaknesses of his team.
6) Inspire his players to bring out their best.
7) Give encouragement to players both when they are playing well and particularly lifting them when they are playing badly.
8) Give clear instructions on what shot he wants.
9) Bring all players into the discussions of tactics.
10) Produce every shot in the book to inspire by example.

QUITE A TASK!!!!!! A good skip needs to be a good diplomat.
The skip will toss for right of possession of the mat at the start of a game and also introduce the members of the team.

In a pair's game you have a lead player and a skip.
In a Triples game a lead, No2 and a skip.
The responsibilities are the same as for a rinks game except that whoever delivers their bowls just before the skip, directs the skip if required and decides on the shots.