BUYING BOWLS

1) All four bowls must be identical with the bowls bearing an individual distinguishing mark on the side of the bowl.

2) The bowls distinguishing mark takes the form of a stamp. What is important to you as a player is that the stamp must be legible, and if playing in high level games (National) the date stamp must still be within its date. If you do buy second hand bowls, which we would recommend, you do need to take this into consideration. If you know someone who will lend you a set for the first season which are a suitable size for you, even better.

3) You are not allowed to alter the bias. That means you cannot have more than one sticker on each bowl and you cannot do any engraving on your bowls.

4) I am sorry to say purchasing bowls isn't as straightforward as one would assume it to be. There are a number of things which you need to take into consideration when making a choice, namely = size, weight, bias, grips or no-grips, slim line or not, colour.

5) When looking at the size element of a bowl, it is true to say that there advantages to using the biggest size possible. Bigger size woods do tend to run truer. However one must not go too big in size. The last thing you need is to create a situation where you are over gripping the bowl. This will bring in unnecessary muscle tension, which will affect your delivery. Alternatively, it can be just as wrong to use a bowl that is too small.

If you can hold a bowl and turn it over in your hand so that the palm of your hand is face downwards, without dropping it, then you are on the right lines.

One also needs to consider how supple our fingers are and one should take into consideration that we have to bowl in wet and cold weather at times making bowls slippery. One can purchase GRIPPO (an additive to the bowl or hand) which will add to the grip.

6) The weight of a bowl also needs to be considered. Bowls can be purchased in medium, heavy or extra heavy. Over recent years the bowls manufacturers have produced narrower bias woods in-order to accommodate the faster indoor greens. I do not want to go into great depth on this matter but I suggest you consider all the information supplied by the manufacturers of the different company's on what you should take into consideration when buying. When one starts bowling the bowl does feel awkward in the hand but as one become more proficient in the delivery, this improves.

BIAS

What do we mean when we talk about bias?
If you look at a bowl it is not perfectly round. The running surface is round, however during manufacture there is careful shaping of the bowl so that one side is slightly flattened leaving the other side heavier. This heavier side is known as the bias side. This alters the centre of gravity, which allows the bowl to travel in a curve.

Each bowler should know in time how their bowls behave in relation to your home green. The number of experienced bowlers' who buy a new set of bowls, go straight into a match and expect a transformation, only to be disappointed, and placing the bowls at fault. The fault lies with the bowler, who should have had a number of practice sessions with the new bowls.