Delivery

Delivery takes in everything you do from the moment you pick your bowl up and step on the mat, to the point where your bowl is at least half-way up the green. It is basically in five functions:-

GRIP
STANCE
AIMING LINE
DELIVERY
FOLLOW THROUGH

GRIP - There are basically three ways of gripping the bowl for delivery:-

The CLAW
The CRADLE
The FINGER

The most important factor about grip and delivery is that when the bowl goes down on the green it goes down in an identical manner every time. The fingers should be parallel to the running base of the bowl at all times. If the fingers are slightly across the running surface – it will create a wobble on the bowl

THE CLAW - this grip is the more widely used. The bowl comes forward out of the palm and rests on the fingers, the thumb moves in the region of the rings, with the little finger lower in the grip.

THE CRADLE - for the cradle the bowl nestles in the palm of the hand with the thumb angled slightly upwards, the little finger is slightly spread to form the cradle.

THE FINGER GRIP - Not used much in this country, but most popular in Australia and New Zealand. The thumb rests on the top of the bowl, just inside the rings and the bowl more forward in the fingers, allowing more sensitivity on the faster greens.

Remember the grip needs to be tension free and relaxed; there is a danger of over-gripping which will result in again a “wobbly” delivery.

When you pick up your bowl look to check you have the right bias (the small disc is on the inside) at your grip each time, is the bowl level in your hand. It is important to get this right.

(The AIMING LINE is explained as a Separate item.)

THE STANCE

The stance one adopts on the mat is a matter of personal preference. There is only one law which must be followed and that is that at the moment of delivery, when the bowl touches the surface of play, the player must have all or part of at least one foot on the mat, either on or directly above the mat.
As beginners it is best to start by standing in the centre of the mat with the feet parallel, a few inches apart, with the outside of your right foot positioned exactly along the line that your bowl is going to take. (This would be the left foot for the left hander)
If your feet are positioned correctly, your whole body should be facing along the delivery line. More experienced bowlers will work out what they feel is their best position on the mat, but in my opinion many would benefit from adopting the position we are recommending you to take and their bowling would improve.

Basically there are four stances that can be adapted for the delivery –

THE ATHLETIC STANCE
THE CROUCH
THE FIXED STANCE
THE SEMI-FIXED

THE ATHLETIC STANCE - Also known as the upright stance it is the most popular. You will start by standing erect on the mat with the bodyweight evenly balanced between the two feet and the body inclined slightly forward. The bowl is normally held around the level of the diaphragm, although this alters from player to player, Bend your knees as you swing the bowl backwards, stepping smoothly forwards with the leg opposite the bowling arm, planting the foot in line and then you release your bowl.

THE CROUCH STANCE - The degree of crouch naturally varies from player to player and also with the pace of the green. Normally, the crouch stance would begin with the feet placed more apart and with the leading foot (the left for the right hander) in the forward position on the mat. Whatever slight variations of the crouch you adopt, the bowler must rise from it to the athletic position to deliver. Whether that is partially or fully depends on the pace of the green and what type of shot to be played.
What is similar to both the athletic and the crouch stance is the movement along the bowling line and the swing of the arm through the point of release.
Some bowlers like to lightly place the fingers of the left hand on the side of the bowl to steady it while taking up the stance.

THE FIXED STANCE - Take away the forward movement and you have the fixed stance. The fixed stance has the bowler taking up a position on the mat with his right front foot placed down the line of delivery. It is the least used but is often adopted by bowlers with a physical disability as it is the most comfortable way for them to ground the bowl. As the step has already been taken the free hand stabilises the body by gasping the thigh or knee of the front leg. The main point of merit in this stance is that the only

moving part during delivery is the arm, so there is certainly less to go wrong, but its drawback is that no momentum is provided by the forward movements of the body.

THE SEMI-FIXED STANCE - Is a cross between the athletic and the fixed stance as the front foot is moved partly down the delivery line when the player takes his position on the mat. During the delivery the front foot moves forward to complete the step. As in the fixed stance the body is stabilised by the free hand grasping the thigh or knee of the front leg. The main merit of this type of stance is selection of the delivery line by the front foot in the initial stage.

THE DELIVERY

The actual delivery is a combination of a forward step with the left foot and a pendulum-like swing of the right arm.
The bowl is held in front of the body addressing the aiming line and as it swings back and it passes the body, the left foot is raised and moves forward along the line of delivery. The foot however, makes contact with the green before the arm has begun its forward swing and it's essential that the knees are bent and relaxed enabling successful transfer of weight to the left foot.
The timing of the release is very important for the successful delivery of any bowl. A fraction too early or too late will mean the bowl being bumped as it leaves the hand. It is essential to lower the body as close as possible to the playing surface and this action can be practised at home by going through the delivery action without a bowl, making sure that the fingers brush the carpet each time.
One common fault with many bowlers is that at the precise moment of release there is an unnecessary flick of the wrist, either inwards or outwards which does not allow the bowl to be delivered with the smoothness essential for a good result.
It is important to keep the head still during the delivery action with your eyes focused on your aiming point. Try to avoid bobbing your head upward at the moment of release, which can cause the bowl being bumped on delivery.

FOLLOW THROUGH

No matter which position you adopt to deliver your bowl, you must realize that your delivery isn't complete once the bowl touches the grass. Follow through is extremely important. As the bowl is rolled away, your hand and arm should follow along the delivery line until they are stretched horizontally in front of you with the palm uppermost and ideally with the hand pointing along your aiming line. On follow through many bowlers bring their bowling arm across the body. If the bowl has already left the hand, then probably no harm is done. However as I have already said if this is just prior to or as you release the bowl then the bowl will be less than effective. Try to get a nice stretched arm along the aiming line.
Another factor, which is important, is for a bowler never to lift the head until the bowl has left the hand.

Whatever grip or stance you choose, the main points to remember are:-

a) You should feel tension-free and relaxed.

b) The body should be well balanced and the weight evenly distributed between both feet.

c) The bowler should bend forward from the waist with the knees slightly bent. This should not be overdone to the degree that a bowler ‘falls’ into his delivery.

d) During delivery, the non-bowling arm should not wave about aimlessly and can stabilise balance by resting on the front leg, thus restricting any swaying or sideways movement as the bowl is grounded.

e) Feet should be correctly positioned on the mat, with the right foot pointing along the aiming line, (the left for a left-hander) while the left is brought alongside yet sufficiently far apart to give good balance.

f) During the delivery the shoulder, elbow, wrist and bowl should move rhythmically down the aiming line with a smooth, flowing action. The elbow must not be allowed to stray from the side of the body, as this will cause a ‘hooked’ delivery. Neither must the wrist be allowed to twist as the bowl is grounded.

g) The knees must always be relaxed, particularly at the point of delivery.

h) To ground the bowl perfectly the player must bend from the waist with the head well forward and the head must not lift until after the bowl has left the hand.

i) To avoid any bumping or wobbling, the bowl should be released as close to the grass as you can physically manage.

j) The eyes must be riveted to a point down the aiming line.

k) Complete the follow through with the arm fully stretched along the aiming line, palm facing upwards.