

# BOWLS SUMMER FACT SHEET

## PREPARING FOR A CLUB TOURNAMENT

### 1. Introduction

Over the coming months, bowling clubs throughout New Zealand will host many tournaments of varying importance (Club Centre, Regional and National). In order that these tournaments are a success and bowlers want to return for future events, the greens need to be up of a suitable playing quality / standard.

### 2. Bowler Requirements

The key requirements that bowlers are looking for green keepers to provide are:

1. Green speed (15) 16 – 17seconds.
2. Uniform draw on both hands, i.e. a bowl comes back to the centre line.
3. Smooth surface.

### 3. Achieving these Goals

To achieve these playing goals will require green keepers to consider a number of issues, of which the main considerations are summarised below.

#### 3.1 Timing

Allow yourself plenty of time, typically at least two weeks to prepare the green for a tournament. A longer period may be required for major tournaments. Time is necessary to enable operations such as grooming; changing mowing heights, increased mowing frequency, selective treatments on localised areas of the green etc. to achieve the desired result of a consistent playing surface.

#### 3.2 Green Assessment

As a starting point, bowl a few test bowls up the green to check how the bowl runs up the green in particular its speed and smoothness of the roll. This will form the basis of what your green(s) require with respect to mowing, grooming etc. over the coming days.

#### 3.3 Unused Rinks / Green

It is reasonably common these days that the full green or all greens will not be used for club play. The result is that these less frequently played areas will generally play different to the rest of the green. This is because they can be softer and puffier generally resulting in a slower surface than for the remaining rinks of the green(s).



If the scheduled tournament will require that these lesser used rinks or green to be used, especially in the case of smaller member clubs consider:

- Closing popular rinks, thereby directing club play (especially roll ups) onto these less favoured rinks to 'firm' them up. Schedule triples & fours to practise on these rinks can quickly bring them into playing order
- Additional grooming (raking, verti-cutting) and mowing to 'fine up', the turf canopy.
- Additional ironing of the unused rinks or green.

### 3.4 Grooming

Particularly on greens with a mixed cover or starweed, verti-cutting, raking, brushing or similar will generally be required 7 – 10 days out from the event in order to provide a smoother and more consistent running surface. Best results are generally achieved with a double pass of the implement set so that it works within the leaf canopy only rather than entering the soil surface.

#### Caution

Lowering mowing height should be considered as a last option. The green needs to be mown at the lower height for at least 3 – 4 cuts, prior to the event, to enable the leaf to 'fine up' and density to be re-established. Make sure that the new height does not result in scalping or thinning of the turf cover such that the soil surface is exposed. The latter will almost certainly end up as a weak or bare area later in the season.

To improve speed, consistency and provide a smooth surface, aim to mow the greens at least daily for 4-6 days prior to the event. The last 3-4 metres of the green can be mown every 2nd – 3rd time.

Key points to consider are:

- Mow using the slowest forward speed (where you have an option)
- If you have faster growing areas (hydrocotyle, different cotula strains etc.) these will likely require additional mowing prior to and during the tournament.
- As a minimum aim to mow the green the night prior to each day's play. If possible, also mow on the morning of play.
- Once the tournament is over, let the green recover by avoiding mowing for 1 – 2 days afterwards.

### 3.6 Ironing

To provide the best surface, the green should be ironed the morning of play. For best results:

- Complete ironing at a 'brisk walking pace' to enable the rolling energy to be transmitted to and flatten the leaf.
- Complete ironing across (perpendicular to) the direction to play.
- Do not iron the greens or rinks during the lunch break or prior to an afternoon game if the bowlers have already played on the green in the morning.



### **3.7 Fertiliser**

If the leaf is still 'soft' as often occurs at the start of the season and following humid weather/rain, or you just want a harder wearing surface, an application of potassium and or iron sulphate 3-5 days prior to the event will both harden the leaf and can provide a little extra speed.

Where you have weak areas, following the event, consider spot treating with a foliar fertiliser to improve density and surface consistency for future events during the season.

### **3.8 Irrigation**

Avoid heavy watering of the green within 2 – 3 days of the tournament. In the peak of summer some water will likely be required. However if green is given a good watering 3 – 4 days out you should only need a light watering 1 – 2 rotations of sprinklers (in most situations) the night prior to play. Just keep a good eye on the forecast

Following the event give the green a good deep watering.

With starweed greens, the same rules apply. However if you are 'drying' down the green, be careful not to take it too far, i.e. as starweed starts to experience moisture stress, the leaves tend to curl upwards, giving rise to a bobbly and potentially slower surface.

### **3.9 Rink Movement**

Moving rinks is an important management tool to prevent damage to the ends. Ideally you will not have to move rinks on the day of the tournament. However if you do need to move the rinks during a tournament, the general preference from bowlers is to change the direction of play. Similarly for 2 – 3 day tournaments aim to change the direction of play for each day of the tournament.

### **3.10 Disease**

If the tournament is going to last for 2 – 3 days and the weather is favourable for disease (warm, humid conditions) consider preventatively spraying for disease 2 – 3 days prior to the event.

### **3.11 Player Etiquette (how players can help to look after the green)**

- Try & avoid dumping the bowl.
- Regularly vary mat and jack position.
- Do stand at the head unless needed.
- Put bowls back in the bags especially at lunch time during hot weather.
- Don't leave mats out in the sun at lunch time.



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