

# SETTING RENOVATION GOALS

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## Simply stated: renovation seeks to make new again

*in other words to reinstate or further improve the green such that a quality bowling surface is provided for the next season.*



Surveying to check levels.



Addressing a levels problem.

*You need a plan that clearly identifies the goals that need to be achieved during autumn and the off season. This article outlines how the Bowls New Zealand Greens Evaluation System can be a useful tool to establish renovation goals and priorities.*

### Setting renovation goals

When it comes to setting goals at renovation, sometimes it's very obvious what needs to be achieved, at other times, the goals are less obvious.

#### Step One

During the playing season listen to comments by bowlers on how the green plays. During February/March consider seeking active feedback as to how the playing quality of the greens can be further improved.

#### Step Two

With the player's information gathered, carry out an assessment of the green to verify

these issues using the Bowls New Zealand Greens Evaluation System. As you work through this procedure the following points will become apparent:

#### Section 1 – legal requirements

This will identify whether your green fulfils legal requirements with respect to the banks and ditches. Addressing issues with the ditch depth can be achieved comparatively easily at a reasonable cost. The other issues may be beyond the club's budget but at least the playing issues have been tabled and considered.

#### Section 2 – playing requirements

This will identify how well the green plays.

*Pace* - Has the green played unacceptably slow? (<15 seconds)

*Draw* - (Table 1) Where the draw is uneven, firstly consider the evenness of cover present on the green (Table 2). If you have

Table 1 - Bowls New Zealand Greens Evaluation System

Score	5 points	0 points
2.3 Draw N – S	The draw on both hands in the North – South direction is uniform.	The draw on one or both hands in the North – South direction is not uniform.
W – E	The draw on both hands in the West – East direction is uniform.	The draw on one or both hands in the West – East direction is not uniform.

Table 2 - Bowls New Zealand Greens Evaluation System

Score	5 points	3 points	0 points
3.1 Evenness of cover	Either: The turf cover is made up of one plant type Or: With mixed greens there are no individual patches greater than 300mm.	The green has a mixed cover with obvious patches and these patches are between 300 & 500mm.	The green has a mixed cover with obvious patches and these patches are greater than 500mm.

a uniform plant mixture, then the problem is likely due to poor surface levels. Surveying is recommended to identify the severity of the problem and the best solution.

Similarly, where the ditch hand is unplayable i.e. bowl runs off into ditch, firstly consider how high the green is above the plinth boards. Once the difference in height between the green's surface and the ditch exceed 10mm (approx) the risk of the green falling away to the ditch increases.

If this height difference is less than 10mm, the next step is to survey the green and check the levels of the outer 2.0-3.0m of the green.

*Ditch* – A holding ditch surface is essential for the game of bowls. If your green fails the testing procedure then different ditch options should be considered.

**Section 3 – green requirements**

This will identify key green keeping strategies/inputs that must be achieved.

Evenness of cover - (Table 2) Although mixed greens were deemed acceptable by bowlers, they were also considered more difficult to play on especially when distinct patches (>300mm diameter) are present. Renovation is an ideal time to improve the uniformity of plant cover. This may involve:

- Spraying out patches of weeds such as hydrocotyle or pratia
- Mixed starweed greens – raking additional seed into obvious dioica patches
- On maniototo greens spraying out larger patches of dioica ready for re-seeding with bulbils
- On mixed dioica greens, plugging or stolonising the distinct patches in order to provide a better blend over the green

*Bare areas* - If bare areas are present then this is the first essential requirement of providing a quality bowling surface for the following season. Any bare areas must be fully re-established before the next season to avoid on-going problems.

*Weed content* - (Table 3) If your green is scoring '3' or '0' then a weed control programme is required.

**Step Three - Setting priorities for the coming renovation**

As you work through this evaluation system there are some issues that are fundamental to the game of bowls that must be addressed.

**Priority 1**

**If the score 'for bare areas is '3' or '0'** then this must be the first priority to fix, i.e. re-establishing a complete cover.

**Priority 2**

**If the score for evenness of cover is '3' or '0'**, this will generally be the second priority, i.e. in order to provide a consistent playing surface, a uniform turf cover or an even mixture of plants is required.

**Priority 3**

Levels are generally the next priority. If you scored '0' for draw in either direction or for the ditch hand draw, then this would typically be the next most important goal. In addition, poor levels have an additional 'knock-on effect' in that they limit the ability to cut low, often result in cover loss (scalping), encourage some weeds (e.g. hydrocotyle) and can result in uneven growth due to varying moisture levels.

**Priority 4**

If green scored '0' for pace or green speed, inevitably there will be discontent from bowlers.

Common reasons for 'slow greens' are:

- Poor levels limiting your ability to cut low enough.
- Mixed or patchy turf cover.
- Excessive thatch.
- Excessive weeds (particularly grass, hydrocotyle, moss or pratia). If in your assessment weed content scored '0' or '3', then a weed control programme is required.
- Insufficient mowing frequency for the cotula species on the green.



**Resurfacing – one option for providing a uniform cover.**



**Spraying out weeds.**

*In summary, the Bowls New Zealand Greens Evaluation System is not only a useful tool to determine how well a green will play, i.e. its suitability for a particular level of play, but also it provides one mechanism for establishing renovation priorities. This process of setting and achieving priorities or goals is essential if playing quality is going to continue to improve.*

**Table 3 - Bowls New Zealand Greens Evaluation System**

Score	5 points	3 points	0 points
<b>3.3 Weed content</b>	<p><i>Either:</i> The green is completely free of weeds <i>Or:</i> There are less than 20 individual weeds and each weed does not exceed 20mm in diameter.</p>	<p>There are a few weeds present (i.e. 20-50 weed plants) and individual patches of weeds are no larger than 100mm in diameter.</p>	<p><i>Either:</i> There are a lot of weeds present (&gt;50 weeds) <i>Or:</i> Large patches (&gt;100mm diameter) of weeds are present.</p>