

# GREEN KEEPERS

## WHAT TOP BOWLERS WANT FROM A GREEN

*By Maurice Symes (Greenkeeper)*

*I played at the top level of the sport for 30 years from 1986 through to 2006. I have played in some 10 different countries and on approximately 20 different surfaces including artificial and indoor carpets. With the above mentioned experience I am in a position to offer a bowlers perspective of what greens personnel need to prepare for the needs of most bowlers.*

Of the greens I have played on throughout the World, I firmly believe that the greens in Canterbury Region and greens in Queensland are by far on average the best in the World. It has been stated by many International players I have spoken with World wide that New Zealand greens are the best, mainly due to the consistency in which the greens are prepared. Greens in the South Island are in general superior to those of the North Island due to both climatic and soil conditions.

Starting my bowling career at the Hawera Park Bowling Club in Taranaki where I spent my first twelve years.

My next 15 years playing was at the Johnsonville Bowling Club where for three years I was involved in greenkeeping and green renovations. The last Eleven years have been in Canterbury where greenkeeping has now become part of my life as well as playing, coaching and administering our great game.

I firmly believe that if greens are prepared with a general consistency of green cover there would be no contentious issues with top bowlers. The inability of being able to finish the bowl to the centre line of the rink and inconsistent cover that get top players frustrated. It is for those reasons alone greens become difficult to play for the person who thinks about line,

### *In Summary:*

1. Top bowlers only ever ask for consistency in the preparation of greens, the same texture all over without fast and slow patches caused by heavy growth in a particular area or by the lack of growth in other areas of the green.
2. Green speeds of 15 to 18 seconds are the standard set throughout the country.
3. Runoff into ditches is eliminated each year at renovation time.
4. Backboards have taper back so that there is no rebounding of bowls or kitty back onto the green.
5. Ditch composition to be pebbles, sand or grass so that bowls and kitty does not run away too far from its entry point.
6. The plinth board is level or just below green to stop kitty's lifting out over the top of the ditch and flying anywhere.
7. Rink set out movement is so that from day to day you do not get tracking from having to run over footmarks etc. Maybe changing playing direction each day would be better than shifting rinks from between 18" to 3ft and playing in the same direction daily.

To all green keepers I can sympathise with some of your frustrations as a green keeper. There are as many green keepers in your club as there are members, so you will always get the best advice!!

What I have tried to do is give you my personal thoughts of what TOP BOWLERS WANT FROM A GREEN.