



Running Away With it!

I HAVE received the following question via e-mail from Angela Barker:

Clarification please on powers of the umpire or marker when a bowler runs up the rink after his bowl, so that when his bowl comes to rest he is still several yards up the rink – or even a yard or two.

35.2 states as soon as each bowl comes to rest, possession transfers to opposing player.

If there is evidence of the opponent now preparing to bowl on the mat being annoyed or distracted, then 35.3 presumably operates.

However, if there is no sign of annoyance to the opponent, even when they are delayed bowling their bowl for a few seconds, should the umpire ignore it? Whilst the umpire has powers and could declare the bowl dead, if the bowler on the mat is not being annoyed, should the umpire keep quiet?

And what if the other members of the opposing team are being annoyed? As they are in the same team, but not the player on the mat, should their annoyance be ignored, or should the offending player be warned on the basis that possession passes to the whole team and not just the member on the mat? When this occurs it is not usually "distraction" or being interfered with but more usually "annoyance."

Thank you Angela for your question. Before I attempt to answer it I think it would be beneficial to look at the law that covers this area. I note that you have referred to Law 35.2, so I can only assume that you are playing under the World Bowls Laws of the Sport Crystal Mark Edition (yellow book).

Law 35 Possession of the rink.

35.1 Possession of the rink will belong to the player or team whose bowl is being played.

35.2 As soon as each bowl comes to rest, possession of the rink will transfer to the opposing player or team after allowing time for marking a toucher as soon as it comes to rest.

35.3 If the umpire, either by their own observation or on appeal by one of the skips or opponents in singles, decides that the players in possession of the rink are being interfered with, annoyed or distracted in any way by their opponents,

35.3.1 the first time this happens the umpire should:

35.3.1.1 warn the offending player, while the skip is present; and

35.3.1.2 tell the manager or the coach, if they are present, that the player has received a warning.

35.3.2 on each occasion after this, the umpire should have the bowl last played by the offending player or team declared dead. If that bowl has disturbed the head, the opponent should choose whether to:

35.3.2.1 replace the head

35.3.2.2 leave the head as altered; or

35.3.2.3 declare the end dead

The power of the umpire is clearly stated in the law – after having given a warning he or she can have the bowl last played by the offending player DECLARED DEAD.

You also ask if the umpire could take action if the player on the mat is not being annoyed. In many cases the player on the mat is being distracted but does not wish to make a fuss and gets on with it.

The law states that: "If the umpire, either by their own observation or on appeal..." so you do not have to wait until a complaint is made, you can take action against the player!

I would suggest that if the matter is drawn to your attention by one of the skips or opponent in singles that you thank them for bringing it to your attention and you then study the player 'named' discreetly and witness the offence being committed before you take action. If you do not see an offence being committed or you do not agree that the player is committing an offence go back and tell the person who raised the matter.

Again, you are correct in stating that possession of the rink passes to the whole team and not just the player on the mat, so if any member of the team is being annoyed or distracted you can warn the player distracting them. However, I would suggest that the law is designed more for the player who is waiting on the mat to bowl. To give you an example: In a fours game the two leads A & B are bowling, lead A follows his second bowl up the green and is only half way up the rink when his bowl comes to rest and lead B is waiting on the mat to bowl his second bowl. Lead B makes

no complaint and just gets on with bowling his second bowl. However, lead B's second man, who is standing behind the mat observing play complains that he has been annoyed by lead A standing half way up the rink of play.

In my opinion it would look a little silly if the umpire took action when the person who should have been annoyed or distracted i.e. lead B has not made a complaint.

Finally, Law 56 'The Umpire's Duties' states the following:

56.2.5 The umpire should make sure that all aspects of play are in line with the Laws of the Sport of Bowls.

So, if the umpire sees a breach of the law, they are bound by the laws of the sport to take action.

For those readers who are playing under the World Indoor Bowls Council Laws of the Sport of Indoor Bowls you can find this law on page 29 Law 41 'Possession of the Rink.' Although worded differently it means the same.

FINALLY, A question for you the readers and/or bowls manufacturers. I recently attended the Welsh Indoor Bowls Association Warner Leisure Hotels Welsh Champion of Champions at Bodelwyddan Castle, North Wales and was asked the following question by Malcolm Slater, one of the hard working (he paid me to say that) staff at the bowls centre.

"In crown green bowls the bias on the bowl is marked by a slight indentation so that you can feel the bias with your thumb. Why don't they do the same with flat green bowls?"

I was unable to give the answer. In fact, until I was shown, I did not know that a crown green bowl did have an indentation. Help please.



**For the best
in clothing,
footwear & bags**

www.emsmorn.com
New colour brochure & stockist 01494 793939