

ACTIVITY: Bowls

INCLUSION 2024

Commonwealth Games in the Inclusive Sports Programme

BACKGROUND

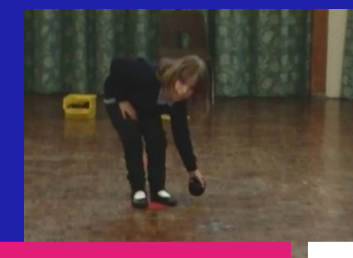
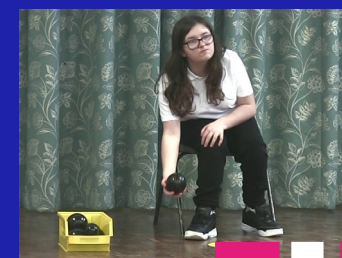
Bowls/lawn bowls has been part of the Commonwealth Games programme since 1930. Scotland and England top the overall medals table with 20 golds each. Bowls events for athletes who have disabilities began with events for vision impaired competitors in 1994 and thereafter for other impairment groups from 2002.

WHAT YOU NEED

- Official lawn or indoor bowls used to be made from a dense wood (they are still referred to as bowls 'woods'), but nowadays almost all are made from a hard plastic resin.
- However, many alternatives and substitute balls can be used (see **STEP** for ideas).
- Competitive bowls is played on a flat, outdoor grass or indoor carpet surface. But any suitable indoor or outdoor space can be used. NOTE that bowls using hard bowls or balls is not suitable for hard floor or outdoor concrete surfaces; the balls never stop rolling!

HOW TO PLAY

- Players try to get their bowls as close as possible to the target ball or 'jack'. They score a point for every bowl closer to the jack than their opponent.
- Bowls are shaped on one side to create a 'bias' which enables the player to roll the bowl on an inward or outward curved trajectory. So, for example, players can roll their bowls around those of their opponents towards the target jack.
- Bowls can be played between two opponents, in pairs (2 v 2), or triples (3 v 3). Players take turns to propel their bowls towards the jack.
- A game can be decided by:
 - one player or team reaching a specific score (say, 21);
 - or the player or team with the highest cumulative score after a certain number of 'ends' (when the jack is rolled).



THINK ABOUT

Should players always try to score points or is it better sometimes to block the opponent's bowls?

Use the **STEP** adaptation tool to ensure that players of all abilities can participate

SPACE

- The distance between where the players propel their balls/bowls and the target ball or jack can be varied depending on ability.
- Note that players do not have to play from the same start point.
- The game can be modified to fit into any space – even a table-top!

TASK

- Players can propel their bowls/balls in different ways – whatever works best for them. For example:
 - one hand underarm bowling action;
 - pushing or rolling using two hands;
 - pushing the bowl/ball using the foot (not kicking);
 - using a chute or gutter (see **Equipment** below).
- Positioning is very important; players should play from a stable, balanced seated or standing position.
- Challenge players by asking them to propel the bowl/ball in different ways; for example, using their non-dominant hand if they can.

EQUIPMENT

- Official lawn or indoor bowls can be very heavy; however, there are lots of alternatives, for example:
 - boccia balls; especially good as they do not roll too far before coming to a rest;
 - tennis or other light balls; use these on a carpeted surface or by spreading out a play canopy (parachute) as the playing surface; this slows the balls down (see image);
 - bean bags, either sliding them across the floor or a table-top or by using a tossing/throwing action.
- Some players can participate by rolling a ball down a gutter or chute towards the target jack.
- The target ball (jack) can be smaller – or larger – than players' bowls/balls.
- A string can be used to help a vision impaired player – stretch it from the jack back towards the player before each shot.

PEOPLE

- A partner or assistant can provide a verbal or sound cue from behind the jack to assist targeting by a vision impaired player.

CROSS-CURRICULAR LINKS

GEOMETRY/SHAPES

- After each 'end' has been completed, and before all the balls have been gathered in, players can spend some time trying to identify shapes and angles created by the random scattering or the bowls/balls.
- They can look for triangles, squares, diamond shapes and odd geometric shapes and perhaps even mark these using masking tape, string or chalk.

HISTORY

- As a project, students can explore the history and development of bowls and similar games.
- For example, there are records of lawn bowls-type games being played in 13th Century England. But boccia-type target games have been recorded since Roman times.

SAFETY

- Make sure that the playing area is kept clear at all times.
- Players must always play away from their position towards a clear playing space and never propel balls towards each other.
- Keep the area clear of clutter and encourage players to gather up the balls safely after each 'end'.