



Questions answered

Unfortunately, this month I feel the need for a little rant to get a few things of my chest.

Events and communications in the last few months have made me wonder where this great sport of ours is heading. It seems in some quarters that respect, decorum and camaraderie has gone completely out of the window.

I question whether the game is actually moving forward or has got stuck in the dark ages.

You only have to read DRJ's Without Bias to realise that the modern-day game has, in some instances, gone pear shaped. We hit the tabloids in July after a 'punch up' in Sussex – any news is good news I guess.

Social media has been buzzing with queries, some of which defy belief and games are having to be replayed because players and officials don't know the rules. I guess this is not a new thing and

I suspect that the increased use of social media to promote our sport highlights even more how common some of these daft occurrences actually are.

Of more of a concern to me as an official is the apparent lack of respect amongst our own. In the good old days when progressing through the ranks of experience and appointment, there was encouragement and mentorship all the way.

It would appear now that it's a case of 'self-serving at the cost of all others'.

It hurts to hear of up and coming officials being disrespected behind their backs and not supported and encouraged. Or in one incident a governing body administrator allegedly being verbally abused in relation to the selection of an umpire. Is this a sign of the way the sport is heading?

Are we becoming more ruthless in our quests for success? I sincerely hope

Above: It is good practice to mark a toucher on two sides just in case it lands in the ditch on one of the chalk marks

Below: Two lines on a bowl

not and indeed I believe these are very isolated cases and I am really encouraged by the vibrancy of bowls on social media around the world.

We must remain positive and drive this sport forward to succeed and if we have to leave some cynics and those that have little respect for the game and each other behind then so be it. Rant over, let's move on to some queries that have popped up in the last couple of months.

Are we now becoming too politically correct for our own good? Well judging by a question that was raised on Facebook recently it would certainly seem so.

POLITICAL CORRECTNESS

"Can anyone tell me the rules on chalking a toucher, I have been told it is wrong now to use a cross and must be two lines only. Where are the rules to be found on this please?"

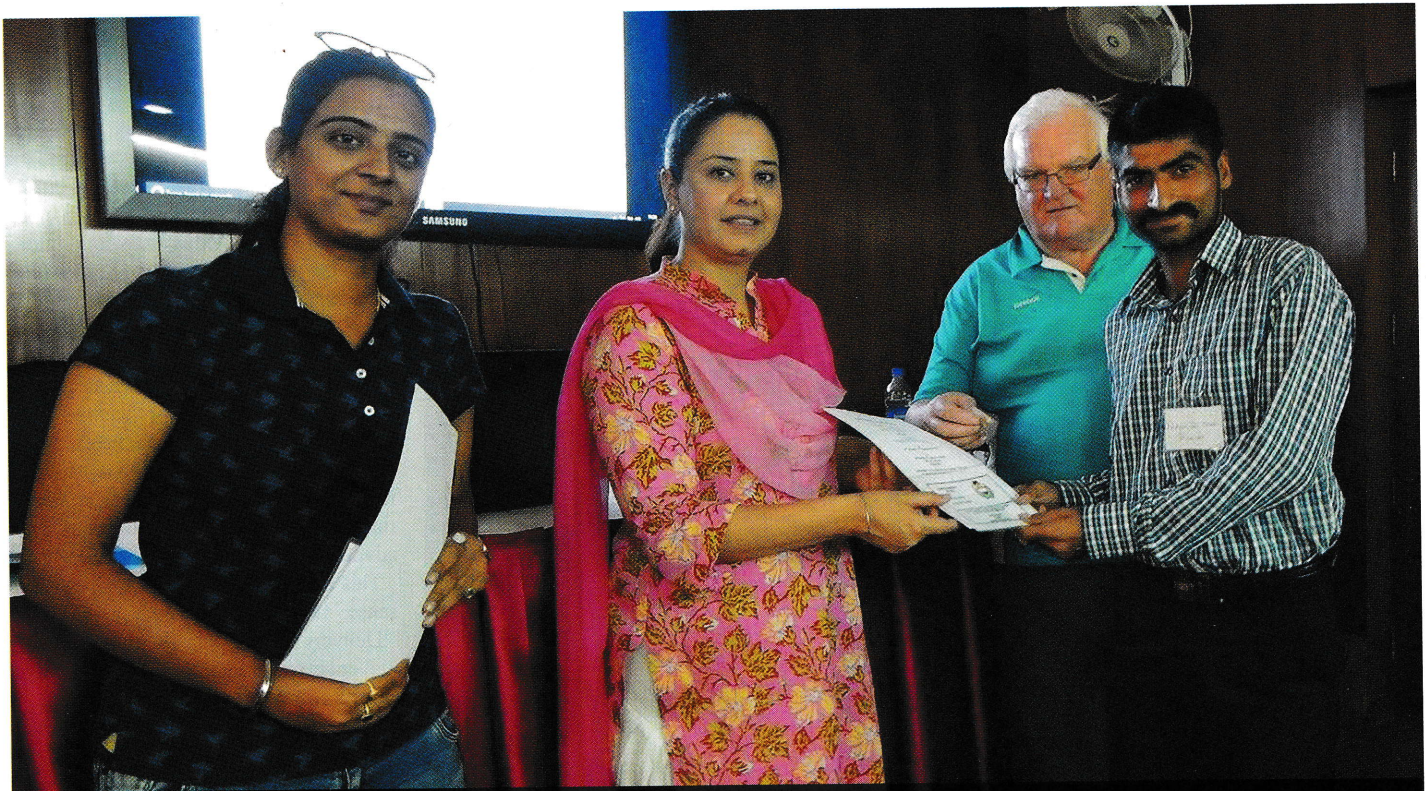
There is indeed a law that deals with marking touchers but it doesn't go into so much detail to specify what shape, size, quantity or colour the mark should be.

'Law 15.1 A toucher must be marked with chalk by a member of the team that delivered the bowl or the marker as soon as it comes to rest.'

It transpired during the discussion that there is a perception, not only at club level but international that 'It is considered not PC to mark with x (kiss) under safeguarding as it could send the wrong vibes'.

As I am sure you can imagine the discussion became quite protracted when this was intimated. So, good practice





NEW TECHNICAL OFFICIALS

Full encouragement was provided to the newest elite team of International Technical Officials and National Technical Officials from India.

Colleagues from Scotland, Ian Munro and Alastair Douglas, have visited India on a number of occasions to provide training, encouragement and support to these excellent officials. Having

worked with them at the 2010 Commonwealth Games in Delhi, I offer my Congratulations to Shubhra Kathuria, Jitender Tokas, Narender Malik, Nitin Vaswani and Paras Sharma for being commended by World Bowls as International Technical Official (ITOs). I am proud of what they have achieved and hope to see them working at World events in the near future.

would suggest that you place a chalk mark on opposite sides of the bowl so that if it does go in the ditch then at least one will be visible.

That is all that I would want to recommend. If you want to be flippant and write the date on the bowl because your lead rarely gets touchers then so be it. To suggest that a cross can be construed as inappropriate, in my opinion, is nonsense.

QUESTIONS IN SINGLES

Perhaps one of the longest discussions I have seen on any subject on social media, planted the question in my mind that perhaps the game is not progressing into the 21st century as rapidly as I first imagined. It was actually quite a sensible question but lead to a barrage of incredible responses with some of the world's top players throwing in their pennyworth.

"When marking in a singles match is "what is the situation" a valid question?" I have covered this topic in previous

articles back in 2013 and in some detail and the simple answer is yes, it is a valid question.

Is it specific enough for a marker to answer? Or should they simply ignore it? Well, I think it would be foolish to ignore it and not give an answer and it was clear from the discussion that the majority of players will be expecting to hear how many shots they are holding.

Purists argue that the question is not 'specific' and the law does not allow the marker to answer it.

They argue that the onus should fall on the player to ask the right question in order to get the answer they are looking for.

To avoid a lengthy dialogue between player and marker or, in the worst case, misleading a player to a point where they play a different shot, a simple summary of the number of shots held will suffice.

It was an interesting debate and did paint an enlightening picture of the differences in opinion on such simple topics.

DISPLACEMENT DURING MEASURING

Finally, I have some clarification to add to a question that was raised in the August issue relating to Displacement during Measurement. The question was from Margaret Mabbs and related to Law 38.4.1.

Without knowing Margaret's geographical location, I instinctively answered the question in relation to the latest version on the Laws of the Sport Crystal Mark edition. I received some follow up emails from colleagues in the East of England who play to the English Bowls Federation Laws. Law X5 in that code states "If, during a measure or before the result of an end is agreed upon, either jack or bowl(s) are disturbed by a player, the opponents may claim the number of shots in dispute."

So much sincere thanks to umpire colleagues, Colin Buck and Gordon Adams for highlighting this difference in law in the Federation code.

*Above:
Shubhra Kathuria (ITO),
President
Mam Sunaina Kumari,
Alastair Douglas and
Prabhjot Manro (NTO)
receiving his certificate.*

"We must remain positive and drive this sport forward to succeed and if we have to leave some cynics and those that have little respect for the game and each other behind then so be it."