

The Leads Role and Requirements

1. Understand the etiquette requirements of a being a lead and the laws of the game. Practice using a measure particularly if you are leading in a pair's game.
2. Place the mat each end in a position your skip, or you and your skip, agree will suit your team. Do not alter that until told to do so by the skip.
3. Be able to roll the jack to the length the skip decides will best suit the team. The accuracy of the length of the jack is important. Your accuracy in this can give your team control and the advantage in the game. Poor control often hands the advantage to your opponents giving them the chance to change tactics.
4. The object of the lead is to get more bowls closer to the jack than your opponent. Concentrate on getting your bowls close to the jack as this dictates the way your skip can start building a safe and well-constructed head.
5. While a front toucher is a good start to an end, remember it is better to have two close bowls than one sitting on the jack and the other metres away.
6. Two close bowls are all that are needed from the lead. Avoid loose winger bowls and short bowls....behind the jack bowls can still get the head as the jack moves in a game.
7. Do not try to knock/take out an opponent's bowls – you are not playing a game of singles against your opponent.
8. Play your bowls on one side of the rink – forehand one way, backhand the other. Then your bowls should require the same width of draw and the same weight. Decide with your skip after the roll-up ends which side of the rink may be better to play. Generally, it is better to play the narrower side of the rink as the margin of error is less. Do not change hands unless directed by your skip.
9. Play to the conditions. Watch for any weather changes that may affect green conditions.
10. On a heavy green, play to trail the jack up to 600 mm –'hunt the jack'.
11. On a fast green, play wider than you think and think about the weight to use before you take up your bowling stance.
12. Learn to judge how short or long a bowl is from the jack.
13. Be confident in playing either hand when asked. This can only come from regular practice and a sound well-balanced delivery.
14. Learn how to switch on your concentration before you step on the mat. Say a word or two to yourself like 'My turn' or 'Relax' to turn you on just before you step on the mat. Do not be led into idle discussion during the game.

List prepared by Doug Cole, Australian but edited.