



# **VISUALLY IMPAIRED BOWLS ENGLAND**

**[www.vibowlsengland.co.uk](http://www.vibowlsengland.co.uk)**

## **Permissible Aids for Players with a Visual Impairment (VI), playing in 'Otherwise Sighted' Games in England.**

**This is Domestic Guidance and does NOT require any changes to World Bowls Laws of the Sport**

World Bowls Laws of the Sport of Bowls, Crystal Mark, Fourth Edition states:

**41.3:** Players who are classified partially sighted or blind by their National Governing Body for partially sighted and blind bowlers can use any form of assistance necessary (including having an assistant with them, and having a white, breakable string placed on the surface of the green, along the centre line of the rink) to allow them to take part in the sport of bowls, as long as the assistance is approved by the Governing Body for partially sighted and blind bowlers in the country in which the player is playing.

**41.4** The person assisting a partially sighted or blind bowler will not be breaking law 13.2 or law 45.3 if the assistant:

- 41.4.1 repeats the skip's instructions to the player;
- 41.4.2 helps to direct the player; or
- 41.4.3 tells the player where the jack or a bowl came to rest."

**This Guidance provides an expansion on the above Law in England, in respect of Visually Impaired (VI) players, playing in 'Otherwise Sighted' games, at Club, County or National level. N.B. Different conditions apply for 'All-VI Games'.**



*English Indoor Bowling Association Ltd and Bowls England  
fully endorse this Guidance*



### **Definitions:**

1. Any person, who is registered with their Local Authority as being blind or partially sighted, is regarded as being 'classified' in the context of 41.3 above. It is the responsibility of the VI player to provide such Registration or recognised Sight Classification Certificate from Visually Impaired Bowls England, if required.
2. 'Otherwise Sighted' games are defined as those in which VI players are playing with, and against, sighted players.
3. 'All-VI Games' are defined as those in which all players are visually impaired.

**Within the context of ‘any form of assistance necessary’ in 41.3 above, any and/or all of the following aids are approved for use for visually impaired players in ‘otherwise sighted games’ in England:**

1. Having an Assistant with them on the green. This person might also be referred to as a Helper or Director. The Assistant may carry out any duties required of a player playing in any particular position (Ref. Law 40), other than actually delivering the jack or bowls. In addition, the Assistant is responsible for ensuring that the VI player complies with Laws regarding position on, and possession of, the rink.
2. The Assistant can advise the player on the shot to be attempted and direct the player as to the line to be taken (for example, by the placing of a foot on the delivery line). Direction can take place in front of (up to 5 metres from the mat line), or behind, the player. Any bowl hitting the Assistant (or any other aids) will be declared ‘dead’ and removed from the rink of play. Ref Law 37.2
3. A thin, white, breakable string may be placed on the surface of the green, along the centre line of the rink. In addition, ‘pins’ (or ‘dots’ on an indoor green) may be placed on the string at 2m and 25m from the front and rear ditches, to assist in description of the jack length. A white or coloured strip (maximum size 30cm x 10cm) may be placed under the string – but only when the VI player is in possession of the rink (i.e. MUST be removed after delivery).
4. Bowls may have a ‘dimple’ in the small circle on the bias side of the bowl to assist in the correct alignment of the bowl in the hand. Such ‘dimple’ may only be created by a licensed tester.
5. A white jack may be used.
6. A ‘V’-shaped notch may be cut into the centre of the front and rear edges of the mat in order to assist in the placement of the mat on the centre-line. VI players may provide their own regulation mats, thus adapted.
7. The Skip may call out the distance of the centred, delivered jack to the VI player. Should the jack be displaced during play, the new jack position may be similarly described in relation to length and distance off the centreline.
8. As each bowl comes to rest, and at the request of the VI player, its position may be described, using the ‘clock’ system, from the head. Possession of the rink will not transfer to the opposing player / team until such information has been given/received.
9. A VI player is entitled to use a monocular or binoculars, on or off the mat, to assess the head or to follow the progress of bowls up the green.
10. Any VI player (or Assistant) who has additional needs shall be entitled to use any aids approved for use by players with such needs. In particular (and for example), a VI player (or Assistant) who is hard of hearing, may use ‘walkie talkie’ communication devices with a team member at the head. Ref. Law 41 – Disabilities.