

The Essential Guide to Marking a Singles Match

Why the Marker Matters

A good marker can make a significant difference to the quality and smooth running of a singles match. The role requires concentration, consistency, impartiality and a good knowledge of the Laws of the Sport.

A marker is there to assist both players fairly, ensuring the game is played correctly while providing accurate information when requested.

Before the Match

Arrive Prepared

Bring only the equipment you need:

- ✓ Chalk spray
- ✓ Wedges
- ✓ Measuring device(s)
- ✓ Pen
- ✓ Coin for the toss
- ✓ Scorecard

Being organised from the start helps create a professional and efficient atmosphere.

The Coin Toss

The marker may carry out the coin toss, with the challenger calling heads or tails but the players will quite often do this.

Before Play

Check that the players are happy for you to chalk touchers straight away.

Positioning and Etiquette

Centre the Mat Correctly

At each end, stand near the rink marker and guide the player so the mat is correctly centred.

Maintain a Consistent Position

Stand about 2 metres behind and 1 metre to the side of the jack, using the same position throughout the match. Do not approach the head unless you need to mark a toucher or answer a question. You should then return to your standing position.

Stay Focused

A marker should never:

- ✗ Sit at the end of the rink
- ✗ Chat with spectators during play
- ✗ Become distracted from the game

Your attention should remain on the match at all times.

Trial Ends

When the jack is delivered during trial ends:

- Ask the player whether they wish the jack to remain where it comes to rest.
- If preferred, move it to a longer or shorter length.
- Centre the jack – move it with your hands, not your feet.
- As bowls come to rest, advise the player how far short or long they are.
- Remove bowls to the back of the rink once information has been given.

Checking Jack Length

The marker is responsible for ensuring the jack is a legal distance from the mat.

Remember:

- The minimum distance between the front of the mat and the front edge of the jack is **23 metres**.
- The mat should be a minimum of **2 metres** from the ditch.
- If there is doubt, use the long measure from the umpire's kit or shed.
- Players may assist by anchoring the measure at the mat end using their foot.

If the Jack Is Short

The jack is returned to the players

- The opposing player re-casts the jack.
- If that player also casts short or puts the jack in the ditch then:
- The jack is then placed on the maximum ("T") mark using the 2 metre stick.
- The first player can place the mat where they wish (up to the maximum mark).

Using the 2 Metre Stick

When placing the jack on the T mark:

- ✓ Place the front edge of the jack level with the edge of the stick.
- ✗ Do not place it at the end of the stick.

Short Bowl

If a bowl is delivered short and is less than 14 metres from the front of the mat, measured in a straight line from the mat to the front of the bowl, it must be removed from the rink.

Communicating During Play

Players may ask questions while they have possession of the rink.

Good Examples

When asked:

"What is the situation?"

Provide factual information about the head.

Be Accurate

If a player asks if they are holding shot and they actually hold two, tell them they are holding two shots.

If you are uncertain, say:

"It's close"

"That will need a measure"

Never guess. It is always better to be cautious than to provide incorrect information.

Measuring

The marker should only measure when requested by a player.

Before measuring:

- Check that nothing can fall from your pockets.
- Ensure neither the jack nor any bowl is accidentally disturbed.
- Use wedges to secure bowls.
- Use a string or metal measure.
- Use calipers if the bowls are too close to use a measure

Accuracy and care are essential.

Touchers and Ditch Bowls

Touchers

Any bowl that touches the jack during its first original course of play must be chalked immediately.

Tip: Chalk both sides of the bowl so the mark remains visible if it enters the ditch.

When a Touched Bowl Enters the Ditch

A touched bowl remains **live** and must stay in the ditch. Put a red or yellow marker on the bank to indicate the position of the live bowl. If the jack goes into the ditch as well, put a white marker on the bank to indicate its position.

Non-Touchers

Any bowl that enters the ditch without having touched the jack must be removed and placed on the bank.

Dead End or Tied End

A dead end is where the jack goes out of play (out of the boundary of the rink) and the end should be replayed from the original end or by agreement of the players to stay at the finished end. The player who bowled first should bowl first again.

A tied end is where two bowls cannot be separated to establish who has shot, i.e. they measure the same distance apart. The marker records the end with no score on either side. A tied end can also occur if there are no bowls left on the rink (with no touchers in the ditch).

At the Completion of Each End

Don't leave the head too early.

Remain at the head until both players have agreed the result.

Falling or Leaning Bowls

When the last bowl has come to rest and there is a leaning or falling bowl in the head, including the last one

🕒 You must wait 30 seconds before wedging or measuring it.

Recording the Score

Once agreement has been reached:

1. Record the score.

2. Update the scorecard.
3. Update the scoreboard.

Do this after every end.

End of the Match

When the game finishes:

- ✓ Complete the scorecard
- ✓ Obtain signatures from both players
- ✓ Ensure the winner retains the card

The Golden Rules for Markers

Be:

- Professional
- Consistent
- Impartial
- Accurate
- Attentive

Never:

- Distract the players
- Give incorrect information
- Leave the head before agreement
- Lose concentration

A well-trained marker contributes enormously to the enjoyment, fairness and smooth running of a singles match.

Key Message

The best markers are almost unnoticed. They quietly ensure the game is played correctly, provide clear information when asked, and allow the players to focus entirely on their bowls.