

WITNEY TOWN BOWLS CLUB

CLUB-COMPETITION RULES - 2026

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GENERAL CLUB COMPETITION RULES

Eligibility

Eligibility for competitions in 2026 will, once again, be conditional on club friendlies played during 2025.

To be eligible to enter the club competitions (excluding the men’s and ladies 4 wood singles¹) members must have made themselves available for, but not necessarily to play in, at least 3 home and 3 away club friendly games during the previous outdoor season. The away games exclude Witney Mills and West Witney BC matches and do not include any Men’s, Ladies’ West Ox, County or National League games.

The Club Committee reserves the right to declare members eligible if they were unable to enter previous season’s friendlies due to exceptional circumstances (or joined the club during the previous summer season).

Entry Fee and Rink Fees

Entry fees are £1 per person per event. Rink fees of £1 per person are payable for each match after the first round, excluding the final, and these fees will be collected after all the rounds have been completed. Rink fees will not be applied to games that are conceded. However, the associated walkover must be clearly indicated by players in the Club Competition folder in the clubhouse.

¹ This exclusion is to ensure that all club members have an opportunity to represent the club in County Champion of Champions.

The Challenger

The Challenger, the first named player, is responsible for arranging the date/time for each round, within 2 weeks following from the first day of the competition and 1 week of subsequent rounds. The Challenger shall offer 3 sets of dates/times, 1 of which shall be a weekend. If this procedure is not adhered to the person being challenged shall become the Alternative Challenge (see below). The Challenger shall also book the rink, and in the case of a singles match, the marker, offering the opponent(s) a minimum of 3 rinks, where 3 rinks or more are available.

The Alternative Challenger shall have 1 week to take similar action to the original Challenger. The original Challenger must accept one of the 3 dates offered or forfeit the match.

All games must be completed by the Play-By date for the round. If the above procedure is adhered to but a play date is not set to be before or on the Play-By date then the player/team declining the offered dates shall forfeit the match.

Selecting a Rink

The Challenger shall select three rinks from those available. The three rink numbers will be placed in a bag and the opposition shall select the rink to be used from the bag.

Seeded Players

Only the Ladies and Men's Singles competitions will have 4 seeded players who will not, if possible, be placed in any preliminary round. Seeds 1 and 4 will be in the top half of the draw and seeds 2 and 3 in the bottom. Seeds will be chosen by the Selection Committee.

Handicaps

Handicaps are set by the Selection Committee.

Disputes

Must be referred to the Club Committee via the Competitions Secretary.

Substitutions

In pairs or team games, substitutes must be referred to and agreed by Club Committee via the Competitions Secretary.

Stoppage of Play

If, for any reason, play stops after 10 ends have been played then the position at that time shall count. If for any reason play stops and less than 10 ends have been played and there is insufficient time to rearrange the game before the date shown on the competition list, the match will be decided by the Competition Secretary after tossing a coin.

Failure or Lateness to Appear

Any competitor or team who fails to appear with 15 minutes of the time fixed for starting shall forfeit the game.

Dress Codes

Players - Dress is club shirts and navy blues for all rounds, including the final.

Markers - For all singles games, including finals, markers should be dressed in navy blues with a white or club shirt.

Score Cards

Score cards must show the competition name and the names of all players. In the case of singles competitions both players must sign the completed score cards. In the case of pairs competitions both skips must sign the score cards. Signed cards must be deposited in the box in the clubhouse.

Competition Finals

Competition entrants must be available to play on at least two of the Club Finals Days: **Friday 28th, Saturday 29th and Sunday 30th August 2026.**

SPECIFIC RULES OF PLAY FOR EACH COMPETITION

For each specific competition the rules shown in the following table must be observed.

Members should note, in particular, the special rules applying to the Club Championship, Handicap and Points competitions.

Apart from the above rules, Bowls England Rules shall apply.

COMPETITION NAME	PARTICIPANTS	WOODS PER PLAYER	ENDS	FIRST TO	NOTES
MIXED					
Club Champion	Mixed	4	<i>See below</i>		
Pairs	Mixed	4	18	-	Pairs are not drawn. If score is equal after 18 ends then an extra end will be played and the pair with the bowl nearest the jack is declared the winners.
LADIES					
Handicap Singles	Ladies	4	-	See Notes	Both players start on zero. The winner is the first to reach 21 shots as reduced/increased by their handicap. This means a player on +3 must reach 24 shots and a player on -4 has to reach 17 shots.
Never Won Singles	Ladies	4	-	21	This is a competition for anyone who has not been champion in a 4-wood singles competition in WTBC.
Points Singles	Ladies	4	-	76	On each end, the wood nearest the jack scores 4 points, the second nearest 3 points, the third nearest 2 points and fourth nearest 1 point If the scores are level at 75 points each then deciding ends will be played until there is a winner.
Singles	Ladies	4	-	21	A seeded player is placed in each of the 4 quarters of the draw (see above).

COMPETITION NAME	PARTICIPANTS	WOODS PER PLAYER	ENDS	FIRST TO	NOTES
2-Wood Singles	Ladies	2	21	-	If the scores are equal after 21 ends then an extra end shall be played with the player nearest the jack declared the winner.
Pairs	Ladies	4	18	-	Pairs are not drawn. If the scores are equal after 18 ends then an extra end is played and the pair with the bowl nearest the jack is declared the winner.
MEN					
Handicap Singles	Men	4	-	See Notes	The winner is the first to reach 21 shots as reduced/increased by their handicap. This means a player on +3 must reach 24 shots and a player on -4 has to reach 17 shots.
Never Won Singles	Men	4	-	21	This is a competition for anyone who has not been champion in a 4-wood singles competition in WTBC.
Points Singles	Men	4	-	76	On each end the wood nearest the jack scores 4 points, the second nearest 3 points, the third nearest 2 points and fourth nearest 1 point If the scores are level at 75 points each then deciding ends will be played until there is a winner.
Singles	Men	4	-	21	A seeded player is placed in each of the 4 quarters of the draw (see above).
2-Wood Singles	Men	2	21	-	If the scores are equal after 21 ends then an extra end shall be played with the player nearest the jack declared the winner.

COMPETITION NAME	PARTICIPANTS	WOODS PER PLAYER	ENDS	FIRST TO	NOTES
Pairs	Men	4	18	-	The Bryan Buckingham Cup - Pairs are not drawn. If the scores are equal after 18 ends then an extra end is played and the pair with the bowl nearest the jack is declared the winner.

Club Champion²

The match consists of TWO sets of 9 ends each. The winner will be the player who wins both sets, or wins one set and draws the other. A coin is tossed to decide control of the mat, the control of the mat alternates for each set.

If after two sets have been played there is a draw then a THREE-end tie-break will be played. A coin will be tossed to decide control of the mat for the first tie-break end. After the first tie-break end, control of the mat then alternates irrespective of who wins each end. In the tie-break the player who has the bowl nearest the jack wins the end and the player who wins TWO ends is the winner.

This singles competition is not seeded.

² This competition commenced in 2007. The trophy was donated by Mike Jones.

APPENDIX A – ONE-DAY COMPETITIONS 2026

Derek Eeles Trophy³

Format

The Derek Eeles Trophy is traditionally the first of our summer one-day competitions for Witney Town members only. As such, new members and new bowlers will find it a good way to meet and play against more experienced players. This year it is being played on the afternoon of Bank Holiday **Monday 4th May 2026** starting **at 1:00 p.m.**

This is a 3-wood mixed triples event for 12 teams, so a maximum of 36 members can play. Players are allocated as leads, 2s and skips then drawn into teams.

Each team plays 3 rounds of 40 minutes. Teams will be in 2 groups with the winner of each group then playing a final. The format may be changed depending on the number of entries.

The finishing time will be approximately 5:30 – 6:00 p.m. Light refreshments will be provided.

The entry fee is £3.50.

Rules

- The event is 3-wood triples.
- Players will be drawn into teams for the afternoon.
- Teams will be drawn into 2 groups of 6 teams. Each team will play 3 rounds of 40 minutes each.
- Teams will toss for the mat, winner of the toss may choose to keep or give away the mat.
- Jacks may be set before the opening bell; do not set the jack after the closing bell.
- There will be a count of only 1 shot on the first 2 ends of the first match of the day.
- The winner of the group is the team with the highest total aggregate number of shots. In the event of a tie within the group the winner will be decided by – result between the teams; then number of games won; then number of ends won; then by the toss of a coin.
- Nos. 1 and 2 must not leave the mat end until all their bowls have been delivered; skips should leave the head together and may not visit the head.
- If the jack is knocked out of play and the end declared dead, 2 shots and the mat shall be conceded to the opposing team. The end counts.
- The order of play within the team may alter from round to round but may not alter during a round.
- The final between the 2 Group winners will be of 6 ends.
- In all other respects Bowls England rules will apply.
- Dress code: navy blues.

³ Derek Eeles: This competition commenced in 1993.

Willet Plate⁴

Format

This event will be played on the afternoon of **Sunday 5th July 2026** starting at **1:00 p.m.**

It is a 2-wood triples event for a 12 teams.

Light refreshments will be provided. The entry fee is £4.00 (£3.00 for refreshments only).

Rules

- The event is 2-wood triples event for all Witney Town members.
- The event is limited to 12 teams.
- The teams will be drawn and placed into 2 groups.
- All teams will play 3 rounds of 40 minutes each.
- There will be 1 shot to count on the first 2 ends of the day only.
- Teams will toss for the mat, winner of the toss may choose to keep or give away the mat.
- Nos. 1 and 2 must not leave the mat end until all their bowls have been delivered and skips must not visit the head.
- If the jack is knocked out of play and the end declared dead, 2 shots and the mat shall be conceded to the opposing team. The end counts.
- The order of play within the team may alter from round to round but may not alter during a round.
- Two points will be awarded for a win and one point for a draw.
- The winners of the groups will be decided on points scored. In the event of two or more teams in a group having the same number of points the Group Winners will be:
 - The team with the highest shot difference. Then, if still tying
 - The team with the most ends won. Then, if still tying
 - The team with the most shots scored. Then, if still tying
 - The toss of a coin.
- The final will be of 8 ends between: Winner of Group 1 v Winner of Group 2.
- In all other respects Bowls England rules will apply.
- Dress code: navy blues.
- The format may be changed depending on the number of entries.

⁴ Archie Willet: This competition commenced in 1994.

Derek Adams Memorial Trophy⁵

Format

This event will be played on Bank Holiday **Monday 31st August 2026** starting at **1:00 p.m.**

It is a 3-wood triples event where individual scores decide the winner. Players and playing positions are drawn each round.

Light refreshments will be provided. The entry fee is £4.00 (£3.00 for refreshments only).

Rules

- Open to all WTBC members.
- 3-wood triples.
- Every player in each round will pick out from the bag. Obey the position you are given to play according to the disk drawn. The disk will also indicate the rink and the team colour you are with.
- If a blank is drawn, sit out and score 6. From then on you draw before the blanks are reintroduced.
- Each round will be timed at 40 minutes with a 10 minute break between rounds.
- Set the first jack but do not bowl the first wood until the starting bell. Do not set a jack after the finishing bell.
- Each player is responsible for his or her own scores. Whatever your team scores is your score. At the end of each round, please tell the event supervisor your score.
- There are no trial ends.
- Skips may not visit the head.
- Jack off the side of the rink will be counted as two shots away.
- At the end of the event the individual scores will be totalled. A single wood will be played to settle a draw; the jack being set by a third party.
- Apart from the above, Bowls England rules apply.
- Dress code: navy blues.
- The format may be changed depending on the number of entries.

⁵ Derek Adams: This competition commenced in 2012. The trophy was provided by Derek's wife, Sue.

Yardstick Competition

Format

This event is normally a 3-wood triples competition that has been designed to encourage all our new members to try an afternoon of competitive bowls.

The entry fee is £3.50 per player.

Refreshments will be tea and biscuits provided during the course of the afternoon.

This event will be played on the afternoon of **Sunday 6th September 2026** starting at **1:00 p.m.**

Typical Rules

- Open to ALL WTBC members.
- 3-wood triples.
- Players will be drawn into teams for the afternoon. Each team, within one of two Groups, will have 3 timed matches of 40 minutes. Teams can change their order of play for each round but may not change it during the round.
- When the jack is delivered it is centred and the starting position marked by a coin. **If the jack is moved during the end, it is returned to its original position.** When the end is completed, all woods within 1 yard of the jack will count as a point.
- Teams will toss for the mat on the first end. The winners of the toss may choose to keep or give away the mat.
- Straight-in. No trial ends or “1 shot ends”.
- Nos. 1 and 2 must not leave the mat end until all their bowls have been delivered and skips must not visit the head.
- If the jack is knocked out of play 5 points shots shall be awarded to the opposing team.
- The winners of the Groups will be the teams with the highest total aggregate number of **points**. In the event of a tie within a Group the winner will be decided by the result between those teams, failing that a 1 end shoot-out between the teams with 1 wood per player.
- The day concludes with a 6-end final between the two group winners.
- Dresscode: navy blue.
- In all other respects Bowls England rules will apply.
- The format may be changed depending on the number of entries.

Australian Pairs Competition

Format

This event is a 4-wood pairs competition in a slightly unusual format. The primary objective is, as ever, having fun. A secondary aim of the game is to develop and improve lead and skip skills. There are no designated Lead and Skip roles in this game, instead each drawn pair will decide who will play “A” and who will play “B”. The choice isn't important as each bowler will in turn set the mat, bowl the jack, read the head and measure at the conclusion of an end.

The entry fee is £3.50 per player.

Refreshments will be tea and biscuits provided during the course of the afternoon.

This event will be played on the afternoon of **Sunday 7th June 2026** starting at **1:00 p.m.**

Rules

- 4-wood pairs.
- Players will be drawn into pairs for the afternoon. Each pair, within one of two Groups, will have 3 timed matches of 40 minutes.
- There is no visiting the head.
- Straight-in, i.e. no trial ends or “One shot ends”.
- Jack off the side of the rink will be counted as two shots away.
- The playing procedure is as follows:
 - A toss of the coin to decide possession of mat.
 - **1st End** - “A1” player bowls the jack and first of their woods.
 - Opposing “A2” player bowls their first wood.
 - “A1” player bowls second wood, opposing “A2” player bowls second wood.
 - Change ends.
 - “B1” player bowls all 4 woods, alternating with opposing “B2” player.
 - Change ends.
 - “A1” player bowls remaining 2 woods, alternating with opposing “A2” player.
 - Measuring takes place as normal by the players at the head.
 - **2nd End**, players roles are reversed.
 - “B” players bowls 2 woods - change ends.
 - “A” players bowls 4 woods – change ends.
 - “B” players bowls remaining 2 woods.
 - Measure as normal.
- Play continues in this fashion until the bell is sounded after 40 minutes. If a jack is not set when the bell rings then the game is over. If the jack has been set then that end proceeds to a conclusion.

- The winners of the Groups will be the teams with the highest total aggregate number of **points**. In the event of a tie within a Group the winner will be decided by the result between those teams, failing that a 1 end shoot-out between the teams with 1 wood per player.
- The day concludes with a 6-end final between the two group winners.
- Dresscode: navy blue.
- In all other respects Bowls England rules will apply.
- The format may be changed depending on the number of entries.

APPENDIX B – FRIDAY EVENING PAIRS LEAGUE RULES 2026

(Also known as the Halls Cup⁶)

- This 4-wood mixed pairs KO competition will be played on **Friday evenings**.
- Teams enter as a pair i.e. they are not drawn.
- The rink fee is £2.00 per pair per round.
- All matches are to **start at 6:00 p.m.**
- The competition is limited to 10 pairs and the following format may be modified if a full entry level is not achieved.
- Pairs will be divided into two groups, within which each pair will play other pairs in the group once.
- Each match is over 10 ends, no trial ends, with 2 points for a win and 1 point for a draw.
- Skips may not visit the head.
- If a jack is moved off a side of the rink then it is 2 shots away and the end counts.
- If conditions become unplayable during a match then the score will stand if at least 6 ends have been completed.
- A substitute may be allowed but only on the grounds of illness or county competitions.
- Match dates during 2026 are expected to be as follows:
 - **Friday 26th June**, Round 1
 - **Friday 3rd July**, Round 2
 - **Friday 17th July**, Round 3
 - **Friday 24th July**, Round 4
 - **Friday 31st July**, (Contingency day for delayed games)
 - **Friday 21st August**, Semi-Finals
- Semi-finals will be between the winner of Group A and the runner-up of Group B, and vice-versa.
- Positions in a group will be decided according to the following hierarchy:
 - Number of points, then
 - Number of wins, then
 - Results between the 2 teams, then
 - Shot difference, then
 - Shots won, then
 - Ends won, then
 - The toss of a coin.
- The final will be played during the club Finals Weekend on **Friday 28th, Saturday 29th and Sunday 30th August 2026**.
- Apart from the above rules, Bowls England Rules shall apply.
- Dress code: navy blues.

⁶ Halls Cup: This competition commenced in 1992.

APPENDIX C – SHORT MAT PAIRS COMPETITION RULES 2026/7

- This is a competition for 12 pairs teams to be played with 3 woods.
- The 12 teams will be divided into 2 groups of 6. Each team will play the other 5 teams in their group.
- Teams may alter their order of play between rounds, but not during a round.
- A final will be played between the winners of the two groups.
- Each match will be of 6 ends.
- Set the first jack but do not bowl the first wood until the starting bell. There are no trial ends. For all rounds, all shots count.
- Skips may not visit the head at any time and should leave the head together.
- If the jack leaves the side of the rink it will be counted as 3 shots away and the end counts.
- The match result will be 2 points for a win, and 1 point for a draw.
- Positions in a group will be decided according to the following hierarchy:
 - Number of points, then
 - Shot difference, then
 - The result between those teams
- Apart from the above, ESMBA⁷ rules apply.
- The match fee is £3.50 per person. This includes the cost of one hot drink.
- Players should bring their own lunch.
- Competition dates during the 2026/7 indoor season are:
 - **Sunday TBD November 2026. Arrive at 9:30 for 10:00 a.m.**
 - **Sunday TBD January 2027. Arrive at 9:30 for 10:00 a.m.**
 - **Sunday TBD February. Arrive at 9:30 for 10:00 a.m.**
- Dress code: navy blues.
- The format may be changed depending on the number of entries.

⁷ England Short Mat Bowling Association

APPENDIX D – SHORT MAT SINGLES KO COMPETITION⁸ RULES 2026/7

This **knock-out** competition is open for entries from ALL Witney Town Bowls Club members.

- Takes place over the 2026/7 winter short mat season, with defined “play-by” dates for each round and a final in March/April 2027.
- The draw will be random.
- The Challenger is the first name listed in the draw for a game.
- The Challenger books a session in the Rink Folder and arranges a marker.
- The Challenger is NOT booking a particular rink by his/her entry in the Rink Folder.
- This club competition takes priority over any informal roll-ups taking place in the same session.
- On arrival, the rink is drawn at random from those available.
- "Available" rinks include any that are being used by others for roll-ups.
- If necessary, roll-up games are expected to move to another mat.
- This is a 4-wood singles competition.
- Played as the first to 21 shots, plus 2 trial ends.
- Players may visit the head at any time. Please don't dawdle.
- A jack off the side of the rink counts as 2 shots away and the end counts.
- Signed cards must be pinned to the Competitions notice board and the result emailed to Competitions Secretary by the winner.
- Rink fees of £2 per person are payable for each match, excluding the final. These fees will be collected after all the rounds have been completed.
- Dresscode: navy blues.
- Apart from the above, ESMBA rules apply.

⁸ This competition commenced during the 2025/26 winter.

APPENDIX E – TUESDAY TURN UP AND PLAY LEAGUE

Tuesday Turn Up and Play (TAP) League will start in May.

The Tuesday morning roll-up will continue to be run as an informal triples league on a “turn up and play” basis. The score of your team is recorded and players carry that score forward as an individual to the following weeks. The player with the highest cumulative total from their best 8 scores wins the trophy.

There is no need to play every week.