



# **BOWLING LEAGUE OF IRELAND**

**Instituted 1927**

## **COMPETITION RULES**

## UPDATE HISTORY from April 2014

Updated 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2016

See minutes of the SGM of 6<sup>th</sup> April 2016 for details of changes.

Updated 1<sup>st</sup> December 2015 to reflect changes at AGM 2015. Includes splitting the Constitution & Competition Rules into 2 documents.

Updated 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2015

See minutes of the SGM of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 for details of changes.

Updated 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2014

See minutes of the AGM of 27<sup>th</sup> November 2014 for details of changes.

Updated 29<sup>th</sup> August 2014

Rule 25 amended to reflect motion passed at the SGM on the 27<sup>th</sup> of August 2014

Updated 10<sup>th</sup> April 2014

Arising out of an automated comparison of the 2013 and 2014 yearbooks a number of errors were found and these have now been corrected. These errors occurred in the following sections

- Rule 4 management
- Rule 10 Development Fund
- Rule 13 Appeals and Protests
- Cullen Cup
- O'D Cup
- Shott Cup

Updated 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2014

Rule 4 Management and Rule 12 Attire amended to reflect motions passed at SGM on the 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2014.

## COMPETITION RULES

**Rule 1:** The competitions of the Bowling League of Ireland are open to all male bona fide members of affiliated clubs and a player can represent one club only in any year unless with the express permission of the Council.

**Rule 2:** The sides of affiliated clubs whose headquarters are not more than 80 kilometres from the GPO in Dublin shall be formed into divisions by the council who shall have power to divide the division into sections. Further divisions may be set up that involve clubs whose headquarters are more than 80 kilometres from the G. P. O. Dublin.

**Rule 3:** It shall be the duty of the Honorary League Secretary and the Honorary Competitions Secretary to prepare and submit to the council each year for approval (1) a list of league and cup fixtures (2) a list of dates for each round of the various knockout competitions.

All knockout competition draws shall be made by the Honorary League or Honorary Competition Secretary and two other members of the Executive who shall fix the venues of all games unless otherwise provided by the rules.

An entry fee of €10 shall apply for each cup competition. No money is to be sent with the entry, the Honorary Treasurer will then invoice each club with the competition fees and the affiliation fess, which must be paid as per Constitution Clause 9.

**Rule 4:** No club shall be allowed to enter more than one side in each division, **with the exception of divisions 5 and 6**, except where a division is divided into two or more sections when it shall be one side in each section. Where a club enters teams in more than one section of a divided league, players that play on a team in one section are ineligible to play for any other of their teams entered in other sections of the same league.

**Rule 5:** At least two weeks before the first league fixture in any year each club must return by email to the Honorary League Secretary and Honorary Competitions Secretary a full list of the names, addresses, and if available, telephone numbers and email addresses of members entitled to play for the club.

The name, address, and if available, telephone number and email address of any member joining after that date must be returned in writing to the honorary Competitions secretary and the Honorary League Secretary before such member takes part in any competition or league match. A fine of €100 will be levied on clubs failing to meet deadline stated in this rule.

**Rule 6:** Entries to the BLI championships must be on the official entry forms, which must be emailed to the Honorary Competition Secretary not later than 5.00pm on the closing date as notified on the official entry form. Any entry that is not on the official form will not be accepted. All names for each competition must be stated and be clearly legible.

Any entry that has A.N. Other as a player will be void. The fee for each player shall be €7.00 unless otherwise changed by Council at an annual general or special meeting. No money is to be sent with the entry form. The Honorary Competition Secretary shall send the Honorary Treasurer the number of entries for each club within 4 days of the closing date, The Honorary Treasurer will then invoice each club with the competition fees and the affiliation fess, which must be paid as per Constitution Clause 9.

That all BLI Championship fixtures, in each round of the various Singles, Pairs, Triples and Fours Competitions be shown on the Irish Lawn bowls Website in a playdown sheet format but not including the semi-final stage.

**Rule 7:** “Before the 1st April each club must return on an Excel spreadsheet to the Honorary League Secretary and Honorary Competition Secretary the names of twelve players to be registered in respect of each of the sides entered by it in Division 1 and 2, as well as 8 players in Division 3, and 8 players in Division 4 where the club has a side entered in Division 5 and 6 players in Vets 1 as well as 6 players in Vets 2 where the club has a side entered in Vets 3. A fine of €100 will be levied on clubs failing to meet the deadline stated in this rule.”

**Rule 8:** The Council during the playing season shall examine the lists of registered players returned by the clubs and if any player is found to be unacceptable shall require his club to register another player in his place.

**Rule 9:** Clubs wishing to alter their lists of registered players must notify the Honorary League secretary in writing stating the reason for the change. Alterations in the list shall be effective on receipt of an email from the Honorary League Secretary approving the change.

**Rule 10:** The Honorary League Secretary shall ensure that a list of all registered players is posted on the BLI website not later than 1st May in any year and shall ensure the website is updated with any subsequent alterations.

**Rule 11:** Any club playing a member ineligible under these competition rules and requirements shall, in the case of a cup match forfeit the tie or, in a league match the points at stake in the match to their opponents. For both cup and league matches, in addition to the above, a fine of €100 will be levied. The Honorary League Secretary shall notify both the offending club and their opponents of any forfeiture incurred under this rule within 28 days of the match in which the offence occurred. Any allegation or complaint by a club that an ineligible member has been played must be received in writing by the Honorary League Secretary within 14 days of the alleged offence.

**Rule 12:** Players registered in Division 1 shall not be eligible to play in any junior championship competition. They shall also be ineligible to play in Divisions 2, 3, 4 and 5 and the cup competitions associated with these leagues.

Players registered in Division 2 shall not be eligible to play in any BLI junior championship competition. They shall also be ineligible to play in Divisions 3, 4 and 5 and the cup competitions associated with these leagues.

Players registered in Division 3 shall not be eligible to play in Divisions 4 and 5 nor the competition for the Shott Cup but shall be eligible to play in all other junior competitions. The names of 8 players to be registered in respect of its side in Division 4 shall not be eligible to play in Division 5.

Players who have played 2 or more games in division 1, 2 or 3 shall be ineligible to play in Division 6

**Rule 13:** Players, who have played 5 matches in either Division 1 or Division 2, or a combination of 5 matches in both divisions, shall no longer be eligible to play in Junior BLI Championship Competitions in that season.

Players, who have played 7 matches in either Division 1 or Division 2, or a combination of 7 matches in both divisions, shall no longer be eligible to play in divisions 4 and 5 and the Shott Cup in that season.

A Player who has played no more than two league matches for a team in a division higher or a combination of higher divisions than the team he normally plays for may play in one cup match associated with the higher division without being barred from playing in a lower level cup competition. A player who has not played in a higher division is also allowed to play in one cup match associated with the higher division without being barred from playing in a lower level cup competition.

Any player who is an original entrant in or plays in the Marper Cup, Boyd Cup, Baird Cup or Sixsmith Cup is ineligible to play in the Nassau Cup, Tyler Cup, Bowling League of Ireland Cup, and Mecredy Cup.

Players who only play in Division 4 and 5 may enter the Marper, Boyd, Baird, Sixsmith and Shott cups.

Clubs may nominate 2 unregistered players who will be exempt from the 7 match rule for League matches only. The names of the players to be submitted at the same time as the list of registered players. Once nominated, the exempted players may not be changed during the season, unless authorised by the Council due to exceptional circumstances.

**Rule 14:** League matches can be postponed only when either side is on the same day engaged in an IBA Challenge Cup game, have 2 registered players from that team engaged in a BLI selection, National Championship, British Isles Championship, international competition or international practice or by mutual agreement in the event of the death of a member or if the green is unfit for play by reason of inclement weather or otherwise unplayable, of which notification to their opponents shall be given by the club invoking this rule then the postponed game shall be played on Tuesday of the following week or earlier if mutually agreed. Selectors of teams involved appointed under Constitution rule 10, the President, Honorary Secretary and Umpires shall be included in the number needed for a postponement if they are registered players on the team seeking the postponement. This rule shall apply up to and including the first Tuesday in August, thereafter to the end of the season the game shall be played on Tuesday of the following week or earlier if mutually agreed but with the number of ends reduced to 18. Open Challenge, Crumlin Cup, O'D Cup and Shott Cup matches can be postponed for the same reasons in which event a new date shall be fixed by the Council or Executive Committee.

For the purpose of this rule the week is deemed to commence on Sunday.

Clubs seeking a postponement because they have 2 registered players from that team engaged in a BLI selection, National Championship, British Isles Championship, international competition or international practice must give 7 days written notice of their intention to the League Secretary.

**Rule 15:** In the event of a game commenced being stopped as per the Laws of the Game, the game must be completed no later than fourteen days from the date of stoppage or as decided by the Council or Executive Committee as appropriate. If the clubs concerned cannot agree a mutually agreeable date, then the Council shall fix a date for the match to be played and their decision shall be final. If either or both clubs fails to turn up to play on the date fixed by Council, then they will have deemed to have given a walkover and a fine of €100 will be imposed on the club who fails to turn up or on both clubs if both fail to turn up.

**Rule 16:** Official scorecards in respect of all league and Cup matches shall be signed by the captains of each side playing on the day and it shall be the responsibility of the winning captain to post the card in time to reach the League Secretary within four working days from the date on which the match was played. The Honorary League Secretary has the authority to impose a €25 fine on clubs where a master card is not returned within the set time or not filled out correctly.

In the event of a drawn game the home side shall have the responsibility for posting the card. It is the responsibility for both captains to text the result of all league and cup matches to the webmaster, within 30 minutes of the match finishing.

**Rule 17: Daytime matches** shall start at 2.30pm except where two matches are scheduled for the same green on the same day. In this case the lower division match shall start at 10.30am.

**Veterans matches** which shall start at 11.00am.

**Evening matches** shall start at 6.30pm except before the second Monday of May and after the first Monday in August evening matches will start at 6.00pm due to lack of light

A league match may be brought forward by mutual agreement and written confirmation of such agreement shall be sent by the appropriate Team Captain and/or secretary of each club to the League Secretary or in his absence an Officer of the BLI. If no such correspondence is received it is presumed that the match is to be played as scheduled and whichever team does not attend is considered to have conceded a walkover.

An extension may be granted by the Council at its discretion. Such requests must be in writing and shall only be considered at a full council meeting, to be held before the scheduled fixture date.

**Rule 18:** All matches must commence not later than fifteen minutes after the time fixed and if not so commenced the match may be awarded to the competitor/s ready to commence play at the prescribed time. A match commenced on one green cannot be resumed on another green except by mutual consent.

**Rule 19:** If a team concedes a walkover, their opponent shall be awarded full match points. In the case of a Cup match the tie will be awarded to the opponent.

**Rule 20:** If a club has to give a walkover in a league match, then such walkover must be in the lowest division i.e., the higher league fixtures must be fulfilled first.

A club which teams give a walkover or withdraw from a league or cup match shall be required to provide written explanation to the Honorary League Secretary. For league matches, should such explanation be deemed to be unacceptable by the council they shall be deducted match points relevant to their divisions per walkover, effective for the following season.

For cup matches, should such explanation be deemed to be unacceptable by the council they shall be fined €100 and the club shall not be eligible to compete in that cup competition in the following year.

**Rule 21:** Clubs undertaking tours/holidays are required to seek permission from the council in writing and not to undertake such a tour/holiday before the 3rd Saturday in June in any year except with written permission from the council.

**Rule 22:** An arrangement to agree one shot on the first two ends in lieu of trial ends is not in accordance with the Laws of the Game. Teams who adopt this practice will be penalized by the loss of points or disqualification.

**Rule 23:** Teams shall not forfeit home advantage without prior approval of the Honorary League Secretary.

**Rule 24:** Clubs shall submit to the League Secretary before 1st February, their entries for league and cup competitions for that calendar years season. After that date, clubs that withdraw teams from league or cup competitions shall be required to submit a written explanation to the Honorary League Secretary for review. Should no explanation be received, or should the Council deem the explanation to be unacceptable, the offending club shall also be fined €200.

**Rule 25:** League, cup and championship matches shall take precedence over domestic competitions and tournaments. Any club wishing to host an open tournament in the following season shall submit their request to the Honorary Secretary in writing at least two weeks before the January council meeting, for council's approval, at the January council meeting. Requests for open tournaments will not be considered at any other time.

**Rule 26:** Umpires may be appointed by the Council for any match and they shall perform their duties in accordance with the laws of The World Bowls Board.

The captains in a side's game and the skips in a team game must ensure that all the laws of the World Bowls Board are strictly adhered to during a game.

**Rule 27:** The first drawn of each two in any round of the Singles, Pairs, Triple's, Four's and Senior Fours competitions shall be the challenger and shall, with the exception of the semi-finals and finals which shall be played on neutral greens except the council shall otherwise decide, have choice of green and rinks will be decided by draw from prior bookings.

In the case of a singles match the home player shall provide a marker. In the event of no rink being booked or available or in the case of a singles match no marker has been provided, the tie shall be awarded to the opponent. In all cases league matches will take precedence on rinks designated by the club. Where designated rinks are not in consecutive order in a league or cup match, no other game shall be played on intervening rinks.

Once the draw for rinks has taken place the rink settings cannot be changed

The challenger shall arrange with the opponent for the playing of the match drawn on or before the closing date fixed for the round. If for any reason no such arrangement has been made the match shall be played on the green of the challenger at 6.30pm on the closing date and if either fails to appear the match shall be awarded to the other, and if both fail to appear both shall be eliminated from the competition.

If the green is unfit for play by reason of inclement weather or otherwise unplayable, then the match must be played within four days, a subsequent postponement must be played within two days and the result of the match telephoned to the Honorary Competitions Secretary on the same evening of it being played.

Score cards giving results of all matches together with the names of all the participants must be kept by the winners until after the following round in case of a dispute. Results shall be emailed / texted to the Honorary Competitions Secretary not later than three days following the match. The email / text shall contain competition name, match number, all player's names and substitutes if used.

If the email / text is not received by the Honorary Competitions Secretary within three days of the match being played (or in the case of a match being postponed due to the green being unplayable, the result not having been telephoned in), then the match will have been deemed not to have taken place and both sides will be eliminated from the competition.

The semi-finals and finals shall be played on a green on which the Council shall decide two years in advance at the first meeting after the AGM. In the year 2014 council will decide on the green for 2015 and 2016. Greens will only be considered on receipt of a written request from the club secretary. When deciding on the location for the championships council should give consideration to alternating between a grass and synthetic green each year.

**Rule 28:** The Senior and Junior Singles shall be first to 21 shots. The Senior Pairs and Senior Fours shall be played to 21 ends. Senior and Junior Triples shall be played to 18 ends. The Junior Pairs and Junior Fours shall be played to 18 ends. The Senior Fours is played to 21 ends and is confined to players who have reached the age of 55 on the first of April in the year that they enter the competition. A player who plays in the Senior Fours can play in Junior BLI Competitions and the Shott Cup, provided they have not played in the Marper, Boyd, Baird and Sixsmith, or are registered players in Division 1 or 2. The Railway Union Cup is played to 21 shots and is confined to players who are under 25 on the 1<sup>st</sup> April in the year that they enter the competition. The Bank of Ireland Insurance and Investment Cup is played to 21 shots and is confined to players who are under 18 on the 1<sup>st</sup> April in the year that they enter the competition.

**Rule 29:** Members of each club may make their own arrangements with reference to the formation of Fours, Pairs and Triples but any entry not containing the required number of names to complete a pair, Triple, or Fours will be void. The entry shall constitute the original players. Before the start of the first round should one entrant in the Pairs, Triples or Fours competition be forced to withdraw through illness or other unforeseen circumstances which would prevent him from taking part in the competition, another member of the club who has not entered or played in the competition may be nominated and automatically becomes the original entrant for the competition. In Singles, Pairs, Triples and Fours, the player who has withdrawn shall no longer be considered an original entrant and may act as a substitute as defined in rule 30. Such nomination with full details must be received in writing by the Honorary Competition Secretary not later than the closing date of the first round of the competition.

**Rule 30:** Not more than one player may be used as a substitute in Pairs, Triples and Fours. The player acting as substitute must not already have entered nor played in the competition in which he is to act as substitute. The original player must be reinstated for subsequent games if he so desires. The same substitute must be used for any Fours, Triples or Pairs if again required.

**Rule 31:** All cups and trophies for the League, Cup, BLI Championships and the Bowler of the Year trophy, are the property of the BLI and shall be brought to the June Council meeting each year for cleaning and restoration.

Cups that have been presented to the winners of the BLI Championships of that year shall be returned to the BLI no later than the September Council Meeting each year to be engraved.



All other cups and trophies shall be brought to the September Council Meeting each year to be engraved.

They shall be presented at the Annual Dinner to the relevant winner, who shall sign for their safekeeping and return in the same condition that they received them. Any damage or loss occurred will be the responsibility of the club that received them.

**Rule 32:** All outstanding fines and monies must be paid on or before the next council meeting after the fine has been imposed. Failure to do so will result in the team involved being barred from competing in any league or cup competition resulting in loss of points in the league or concession of a walkover in a cup.

## **LEAGUE FORMAT**

All Division or section shall have a maximum of 10 sides

Division 1 shall play for Stephens Cup  
Division 2 shall play for the Trophies (irl) Cup  
Division 3 shall play for the Cullen Cup  
Division 4 shall play for the Cooper Cup  
Division 5 shall play for the Cassoni Cup  
Division 6 shall play for the Division 6 Cup

In Division 1, 2 and 3 Four fours shall form a side, in Division 4 and 5 three fours shall form a side and Division 6 two fours shall form a side each side shall play every other side in the division twice, once at home and once away, subject to any exceptions the council may make.

In division 1 and 2, 21 ends will be played whereas in all other divisions 18 ends will be played.

Matches shall be decided on the aggregate number of shots scored by the respective side. 3 points shall be awarded the winning side in Divisions 1 to 5 as well as the Southern League and 2 point in Vets 1 to 3 with the points divided by two in a drawn match. One point for each winning rink on each side and 0.5 points for each side in a drawn rink. Both captains must sign a master result card for each match played and must mark on the card the points claimed for the match.

The side finishing with the highest number of points on the completion of the league shall be deemed the winner. In the event that two or more teams end up with an equal number of points then the team with the highest number of match points shall be declared the winner. Where match points for teams are equal the team with the highest shot difference (total shots for minus total shots against throughout the league) shall be declared the winner. Should these figures be equal then the team that has scored the highest number of shots in the league shall be declared the winner. This process shall also be used to decide upon the last place team.

In Divisions 1, 2, 3 and 4 the side finishing in the last place shall be relegated to the next lowest division subject to the proviso that either the winner or second placed teams in the lower division be eligible for and seek promotion. In Divisions 2, 3, 4 and 5 the side finishing first shall be promoted to the next highest division subject to the proviso that their club has not got a side already in that division. In the event of the winning side not being able to be promoted or declining promotion. The side finishing second shall be promoted subject to the foregoing condition

Where it will not cause the total number of teams in Division 5 or 6 to exceed 10, a club may have two sides. In Division 5 but where a second side is entered 12 players must be registered for that

side. Once a player plays for one side as an original player or a substitute he shall be also deemed to be registered for that side and may not play for any other side in Division 5.

If there are 10 teams in division 5 or 6 and a club that does not already have a team in division 5 or 6 requests to join then if there is one or more clubs with 2 teams in that division the lowest placed such team will be removed in order to create a place for the requesting team. In no circumstances may the total number of teams exceed 10.

There shall be no relegation from Division 5 and no promotion nor relegation from Division 6.

### **VETERANS LEAGUE**

Confined to members over 55 on April 1st. Two fours shall form a side. 18 ends shall be played.

The League shall consist of the required number Divisions such that each Division has between 8 and 10 teams, depending upon entries received.

The winner of the Veterans League will be the top team in Division 1, as decided by the provisos for the Stephen's Cup, and will receive the Veteran's League trophy. Promotion and relegation will be in effect also as prescribed for the Stephen's Cup. Trophies and medals will be awarded for Divisions 2 and 3 in the same manner as all other BLI divisions.

### **RON SHELLARD TROPHY - SOUTHERN LEAGUE**

The league shall be played between clubs outside Dublin and in the Southern part of the country. Three fours shall form a side and 18 ends shall be played. The matches shall be played on a Sunday and will commence at 2.00pm.

### **GENERAL**

The Council shall have the power to divide any of the foregoing divisions in to two or more sections, to decide in what manner such sections shall be played. A playoff between section winners shall take place at a neutral venue to decide the winner of any division. The decision on allocation shall be made at the August Council meeting.

Clubs must accept responsibility for all trophies won by their members.

### **CUP FORMAT**

#### **OPEN CHALLENGE CUP**

##### **Competition for league sides on knockout principle**

Four fours shall be played by each side and matches shall be decided on the aggregate number of shots scored over 21 ends.

In all rounds up to but not including the semi-finals, the first side drawn shall have choice of green. The semi-finals will be played on greens fixed by Council. A player may play on only one side in this competition except as permitted under Rule 13, second paragraph.

### **CRUMLIN CUP**

A Cup side shall consist of four fours and open challenge cup rule shall apply. Registered Senior Division 1 players and players who have played in the Open Challenge Cup are ineligible to play in the Crumlin Cup in the same season, except as permitted under Rule 13, second paragraph

### **O'D CUP**

A side shall consist of four fours and Open Challenge Cup rules shall apply except that 18 end's to be played. Registered Senior Division 1 and Division 2 players and players who have played in the Open Challenge Cup and Crumlin Cup are ineligible to play in the O'D Cup in the same season, except as permitted under Rule 13, second paragraph

### **SHOTT CUP**

A side shall consist of three fours and Open Challenge Cup rules shall apply except that 18 ends to be played Registered Senior Division 1, Division 2 and Division 3 players and players who have played in the Open Challenge Cup, Crumlin Cup and O'D Cup are ineligible to play in the Shott Cup in the same season, except as permitted under Rule 13, second paragraph

### **GENERAL**

In all rounds up to but not including the semi-finals, the first side drawn shall have choice of green. The semi-finals and finals will be played on greens fixed by Council. Where a grass and synthetic club are due to meet a draw will be made and first drawn will be allocated a green with a similar surface to their home green

A player may play on only one side in this competition except as permitted under Rule 13

### **BOWLING LEAGUE OF IRELAND CHAMPIONSHIPS**

**Marper Cup** – Singles.

**Boyd Cup** – Pairs

**Baird Cup** – Triples

**Sixsmith Cup** – Fours

**Nassau Cup** – Junior Singles

**Tyler Cup** – Junior Pairs

**Bowling League of Ireland Cup** – Junior Triples

**Mecredy Cup** – Junior Fours

**O'Leary Cup** – Over 55

**Railway Union Cup** – Under 25 Singles

**Bank of Ireland Insurance and Investment cup** – Under 18 Singles

A previous winner or a substitute who receives a winner's medal (at his own expense) of a junior BLI competition shall not be allowed to enter that competition for a period of three years. A winner of any of the Senior Competitions with the exception of the Senior Fours may not enter any of the four junior competitions for a period of five years.

For each of the competitions the winners receive a trophy and a winner's medal and losing finalists receive a runner's up medal.