

Membership & Marketing



Get it rolling!

Tool 4

How to set up a SCHOOLS PROGRAMME

BOWLS
#1SPORT4LIFE

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1. Introduction

Before rushing out to recruit lots of young players to get young feet onto your greens and into your club, take the time to consider all the factors which can either guarantee success and sustainability or land you in a very difficult situation. Young players, especially a busload full of enthusiastic and energetic young potential bowlers can become a heavy responsibility for a club to carry if you have not prepared for their unique needs. It is also true that if you have planned and carefully rolled out a school's programme, your club will be very much the better for it as they will bring vital energy into your club and take your sport into the future.

2. Why start a schools programme?

- a. It will introduce many new bowlers to our sport.
- b. It will lower the average age of your club dramatically!
- c. It will bring amazing new energy into your club.
- d. It will make an immediate positive change to the demographic profile of your club, your district and even the national bowls profile in terms of gender, age and race. This is vital for the survival of our sport and your own bowling club too.

3. Factors to consider before starting a schools programme

- a. Which school(s) would be most suitable in terms of their size, location, availability of other competing school sports and demographic makeup?
- b. Who will run the programme in your club? It must be someone with the time and the interest to get very involved, as the demands will be substantial.
- c. Teaching young players, especially a large group of new players presents unique challenges as their needs are different. Club coaches will not be able to cope with those very different needs. They need to be part of the planning process so that they can manage the programme through providing mentorship for the teacher assistant coaches, rather than trying to do all the coaching themselves. This is the only way to ensure a SUSTAINABLE schools programme.
- d. The responsibility for arranging the training sessions and the hands-on coaching should be handled by assistant coaches. Ideally these assistant coaches should be teachers from the participating schools, as they:
 1. know the individual children and their circumstances;
 2. will be the liaison between the club and the schools; and

3. they will be able to arrange the school transport to get the children to the club for practices and games. (Vital!)
- e. You therefore need to first market bowls to the TEACHERS and get them interested in the sport and then you let THEM market it to their learners. If you get buy-in from the teachers, half the battle is won. Make use of the 2016 U19 and U25 Inter Districts video available from your district office to show them just what young bowlers can achieve.
- f. Enlist the support of your district and find out what other clubs in your area are doing. Young bowlers will soon outgrow just practicing every week and will want to play against other clubs. Within a year you will need to enter them in inter schools and / or inter club competitions to keep them growing, especially the more-talented and competitive ones.

4. The SIX vital steps

- a. The member (or two preferably) tasked to run the project should be dedicated, focused, committed and if possible, have no other club responsibilities.
- b. Get buy-in from your whole club.
- c. Invite the teachers from your target school(s) to have a team-building day at your club.
- d. If possible, then get the teachers to enter teams in your next business league.
- e. Liaise with the DSCC to run an Assistant Coach training programme for interested teachers. (This takes just four afternoons.)
- f. Get the teachers to do the rest, under the guidance of your club coach(es).

5. The steps in more detail

- a. Identify individuals who are good with children to run the program. They should be able to focus their full attention on this and not have to carry other club responsibilities.
- b. Discuss the project at club management level and get buy-in from all if possible.
- c. Explain it to your club members and be prepared for negative views such as "Our subs pay for the greens and now we must let children use them free of charge." Or: "Why should we subsidise the youth?" Stress that the introduction of youngster to bowls is what will keep THEIR sport alive. Be prepared to have that same

conversation with many of your club members!

- d. Select a school(s). If you have teachers in your club, use their contacts and assistance.
- e. Make an appointment with the head of the school.
- f. Explain to the head the unique character of bowls and how it can be a fantastic team-building exercise. Utilise the "What is Lawn Bowls" infographic in your presentation.
- g. Invite the teachers to your club and arrange a team-building day for them with the assistance of your club coach(es). Get them hooked on bowls as a sport!
- h. After the team-building, get the teachers to enter teams in your club's business league. (Ensure that the organizers of your business league understand the importance of this and enlist their aid.)
- i. Show the teachers the 2016 U19 and U25 Inter Districts video and explain why bowls is the ideal sport for their school.
- j. Select candidates for assistant coach training and organize a training programme for them in collaboration with your DSCC.
- k. Get the coaches and potential assistant coaches together and plan the programme roll-out in detail.
- l. Once the assistant coaches have begun their training, let them start recruiting potential young players at their school(s).
- m. Get your coaches, their new assistants and the eager young bowlers on the green and let the children start rolling!
- n. Accept and plan for the provision of smaller bowls, club attire and shoes for any young bowlers not able to provide their own.
- o. Remember that the final goal of the project is to get children to one day become full club members.

6. Resources and advice:

- a. The 2016 U19 and U25 Inter Districts video supplied on the memory stick in the Marketing Toolkit. It is also available on YouTube and from your district office. This video is perfect for showing to headmasters and teachers.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=sakXIMbsS5A

- b. District Standing Committee for Coaching. (DSCC)
- c. National Coaches' forum.
- d. District Standing Committee – M&M.
- e. Bowls South Africa website www.bowlssa.co.za
- f. National Standing Committee M&M. mandm@bowlssa.co.za

This document was based on experience gained in Eden district, particularly at the George Bowling Club where the first Assistant Coach training courses were presented in 2016. We are particularly grateful to Johan Havenga and Hilton Prins for their pioneering efforts in this field.