

## Membership & Marketing



Get it rolling!

### Tool 3

## How to set up a BUSINESS LEAGUE

**BOWLS**  
#1SPORT4LIFE

[WWW.1SPORT4LIFE.CO.ZA](http://WWW.1SPORT4LIFE.CO.ZA)



## 1. BACKGROUND:

A business league, while played on your club's green(s), is a separate entity to your club's normal affairs. These leagues are known by different names around the country, with "Barefoot Bowls" and "Casual League" being just two examples. The name used and the exact format is not important here, but the concept is essentially that of a tournament organized specifically for non club members.

When starting up a business league you need to be quite clear about what you wish to accomplish, the risks involved and the rewards you hope to reap. Business league bowlers play the game for very different reasons to most of your club members. They also do so at times when most of your normal bowlers would not be at the club. They look different, they act different and their needs are different. But if you get it right, these part-time bowlers can become the lifeblood of your club. Do your homework, set it up properly and your club will never look back.

## 2. ADVANTAGES AND BENEFITS TO YOUR CLUB:

### a. Revenue:

1. Entry fees per team at the start of each season.
2. Bar revenue every week.
3. Sale of food and snacks before, during and after games.
4. Advertising board sales.

### b. Team building within your club:

Running a successful business league is similar to running a tournament - there are key activities where you need capable and friendly people in charge. When selecting people for these tasks, it is vital that the whole team is focused on accommodating the business bowlers and making them feel at home in your club. This team will be your club's ambassadors during the running of the league and how they interact with the business bowlers will ensure the success or otherwise of your league.

1. A convener to ensure everything runs smoothly.
2. A competition secretary to handle score cards, update the rankings and email weekly results to teams.
3. Barmen who are prepared to work till late if necessary.
4. Kitchen staff to prepare snacks for hungry bowlers.
5. Braaimasters to braai wors / sosaties / steaks for sale.
6. "Officials" who can mediate, measure and explain basic rules.

### c. Publicity:

Because these bowlers represent a large cross-section of your town or suburb's business community, local newspapers are usually very eager to publish a story about your business league, with team photos to illustrate. Give them three: A pre-launch article with an invitation for teams to sign up; a launch article complete with smiling faces; and a prize-giving follow-up article. Add in regular Facebook

posts with weekly results and photos, plus links to the teams' own business websites and Facebook pages for even more publicity.

d. **Additional source of sponsorships:**

These players will represent a range of businesses and industries and often they can be made aware of areas where they can sponsor equipment or activities to their advantage. Just some ideas: scoreboards, floodlights, competition prizes or hampers, bowls bags for teams, outfits for club teams.

e. **Potential advertisers:**

If your club has advertising boards around the green(s), you will have a number of new potential advertisers just waiting to be asked.

f. **Potential new members:**

Treat them as potential members who just need to experience the sport to get them hooked on it. But do not pressure them to join your club! Have an open-door policy which explains the benefits of membership, but allows them to decide when and if they want to become members. If you offer them a good deal which makes sense to them, you can attract them into become members and serious bowlers. Conversely, if your club is not welcoming, your rules are too restrictive or the costs are too high, you will achieve the opposite. Ensure that every one of them gets an email or flyer containing your club's vital info. Also ensure that each team gets a thank you email and remind them that they are always welcome at your club.

g. **The foundation for a Youth Bowls program:**

Business leagues are THE most effective way of getting a youth bowls program started. Sign up teams comprising school teachers, because then you are marketing the sport to potential assistant coaches for your youth bowls program. Let them experience the sport, get them hooked, then let them market it to their learners!

### 3. DISADVANTAGES, DANGERS AND PITFALLS

It is wise to be aware of the possible danger areas ahead of time so that you can be proactive and avoid conflicts before they occur.

a. **Lack of discipline and basic etiquette:**

These part-time bowlers are there to firstly have fun, and secondly to socialize. They do not arrive with the primary objective of learning the game! You need to expect and prepare your club members for this. Focus on your major aims for the business league and keep reminding your team and other club members too. Having a crowd of newbies on the green is not an open invitation to start coaching them about bowls etiquette. If you have some players in your club who take bowls etiquette very seriously, involve them in your discussions and get their cooperation before there is a conflict. Stress the financial rewards of the business league and

how increased revenue for the club affects their annual subs.

**b. Allowing club members to play in business league teams:**

Allowing experienced club members to participate can be good and/or bad. It can help to get teams settled faster if one of the team knows how the game works. It can however be problematic if it leads to an imbalance in team strengths or if the experienced bowler(s) starts getting too etiquette-focused or too competitive and forgets that this is after all a fun-focused activity. One possibility is allowing ONE club member per team but that person may only play lead. You will need to ponder all the pro's and con's and make your own ruling.

**c. Alcohol usage:**

Business leaguers usually arrive at the game straight from work and want to de-stress. This often means a round or two of drinks before and after the game. It can also mean a round or two of drinks DURING the game. Discuss the pros and cons of this thoroughly with your committee during your planning and include your ruling on this in the competition rules. Generally, the norm is to allow drinks on the banks, but not ON the green. It is however obviously your club's decision where, when and how to allow alcohol.

#### **4. GETTING STARTED:**

- a. Get your club committee to approve the establishment of your business league in principle.
- b. Appoint the person who will be in charge of running it, then also appoint the rest of the team who will assist.
- c. Agree on the dates for your league. Which day of the week, what time and the duration.
- d. Agree on the formats, the scoring system and the conditions of play.
- e. Arrange for score cards.
- f. Customize and modify the attached set of rules to suit your club's needs.
- g. Customize and modify the attached invitation letter for sending / handing to businesses and schools. (Teachers are an excellent target group, as they can later facilitate school bowls programmes.)
- h. Customize and modify the attached pre-launch press release for sending to your local newspaper.
- i. Offer BL teams practice times and the use of club coaches.

## ABC Bowling Club Business League Information and Rules

1. Times of play: All games start at \_\_\_\_\_. Teams that have not arrived by \_\_\_\_\_ (*15 min later*) will forfeit the game and full points will be awarded to the other team.
2. Dress code: Flat-soled shoes or bare foot to prevent damage to the bowling green's surface. Teams are encouraged to wear matching clothes or to even have their own team shirts made.
3. Prize giving: [*Date, time, any special arrangements, eg. Braai.*]
4. Please help us keep the bowling grounds tidy. Use the bins and please take all glasses back to the bar.
5. **PLEASE DO NOT SIT ON THE BANKS. If you do, they could crumble and cause major challenges for our green keepers.**
6. **PLEASE DO NOT DRINK ON THE BOWLING GREEN.** [Drinking next to the green is permitted.]
7. **PLEASE NOTE THAT IT IS AGAINST THE LAW TO BRING YOUR OWN LIQUOR.**
8. [*Anything else you need to add.*]

## **ABC Bowling Club Business League Invitation**

Your company is invited to enter a team of FOUR players in the **ABC Bowling Club Business League** which will be played on six consecutive \_\_\_\_\_ evenings, starting on \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_:\_\_.

To ensure that your team has energy to keep going, boerewors rolls and other food will be available every night. For your convenience, drinks will also be sold alongside the greens. The bar will be open till late. (Kindly note that it is illegal to bring your own drinks.)

**Registration will take place before play on \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_:\_\_ at the club.** Entry fees can be paid at registration or be deposited into the Club's bank account: *[bank details here]*

The finals will be played on \_\_\_\_\_, followed by the prize giving and a braai.

We can guarantee fun for your whole team at only R600 per team! To give everyone a chance, teams are limited to only one team per company. Additional teams will be placed on a waiting list and will be entered if, by some unforeseen circumstance, a team has to withdraw.

All you need is four willing players, flat-soled shoes and lots of enthusiasm, team spirit and supporters. The ABC Bowling Club will supply the bowls and basic coaching (if required!).

For any information please contact XYZ on 0xx xxx xxxx or at [abc@yourclub.co.za](mailto:abc@yourclub.co.za)

We look forward to seeing you there!

Sample advertisement for local newspapers:

## ***Local businesses declare war!***

From Thursday \_\_\_\_\_ the greens at ABC Bowling Club will resemble a battlefield as local businesses face off against each other to decide once and for all just who are the "Kings and Queens of the Greens"!

Proving that bowls is not for sissies or old men dressed in white, ABC Bowling Club challenges all business in town to enter a mixed ladies and men's team willing to go to war for their company's honour. Teams are encouraged to design their own uniforms and wear their companies' names on their chests as they put their best bare foot forward and get those bowls rolling! To ensure that the fight is fair, a pre-game crash course is available to all teams. Bowls are also available at the club for the teams to ensure that they are adequately armed.

Suitable refreshments and sustenance will be available before, during and after all games to ensure that all warriors' throats are kept lubricated and their energy levels kept high.

Fun prizes will be awarded on the first evening for various categories, including the best war cry, the best dressed team, the scariest looking team and the most unlikely-looking team.

If your company has what it takes to field a team of four willing warriors, then contact \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ but hurry because only a limited number of teams can be accommodated!