

## Lawn Bowling Stereotyped in North America

Lawn Bowls has been stereotyped in North America as being an old person's (sorry, *seniors*) sport - old ladies and old men, wearing white outfits, playing a sedate outdoors summer pastime. A more accurate view is that it is a game for the young and that older people can also play, both outdoors and indoors. It is the *only* sport where people can compete equally regardless of age or sex. In top international play the players are getting progressively younger. This is because of the growing popularity of the sport among the young and the rigorous demands of the sport.

**Fitness** - You may ask what these demands may be. In a typical 3 game tournament, a player must walk between 2 and 5 miles, do over 250 knee bends, lift and deliver a 3 pound ball well over 1000 feet, with great accuracy, during the course of a hot summer day. In major events you can do this for several consecutive days. A good example of these demands is the 1998 Commonwealth Games in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. With temperatures reaching over 100 degrees F., players competed every day for over 2 weeks.

**Colour** has also arrived in the game. Matched Team Coloured shirts are now commonplace. While white trousers, skirts and shorts are still the general rule for tournament play, club games are very much casual dress in progressive clubs.

**Sponsorship** is also making inroads into the sport of indoor/outdoor bowls as more and more tournaments and top competitors are seeking and receiving substantial support. Exposure is ever increasing. In the UK and Australia, major Bowls events receive extensive live TV coverage on the BBC and ABC networks respectively. And live pay per view coverage is now available on the Internet. Well paid professionals are emerging in many countries where the sport has broad appeal.

Like soccer, lawn bowling has a low financial entry point, thus appealing to modern families. It's only a matter of time before bowls (lawn bowling) becomes a mainstream sport activity for the entire family as it is in Australia and the UK

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