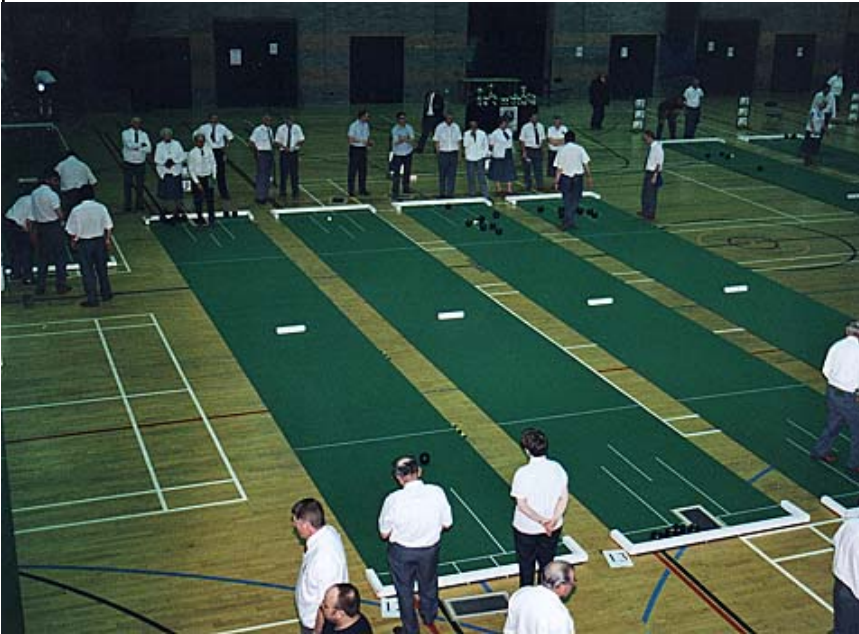


SHORT MAT BOWLS



Very often, there is insufficient space for several full-size bowls strips indoors. For that reason, a second popular indoor variant called Short Mat Bowls, has become established wherever lawn bowling is popular. It is really a miniaturised version of the outdoor game enabling it to be played more easily indoors while keeping as many of the features as possible. It is played on a mat measuring 40-45 x 6 feet with full-size bowls, the mat being easily rolled up and put away for convenience. There is a "ditch" but this is simply an area marked at the end of the mat with white fenders and to compensate for the shorter distance an intimidating block is placed in the centre of the mat. This makes it impossible for a bowler to aim a fast

straight bowl at the jack area - all bowls must use the bias to curl around the block to their target.

The short mat bowls game was first played in South Wales by two South Africans who came to work in the area. They had played bowls outdoors in South Africa and, perhaps due to the poor climate and the long close season in this country, they began to play a simulation of the outdoor game on a strip of carpet in a church hall. Some time later, they moved to Northern Ireland and took the new game with them. Rules and conditions of play were drawn up and the game soon became well established in the Province. It was introduced into England by Irish expatriates, but development was slow until the 1980's when its potential as a low cost sport for people of all ages was realised. The English Short Mat Bowling Association (ESMBA) was formed in 1984, and is now the governing body of the sport in England. Thanks to the [Cornwall County Short Mat Bowling Association](#) for this information.

Here is a summary of the primary differences between the mother game and Short Mat Bowls:

- Short Mat Bowls is, of course, played on a mat indoors. The mat is 12.2m min - 13.75m max long and 1.83m wide. (40-45 feet long by 6 feet wide)
- Short Mat Bowls has centre block which is 0.38m long (15 inches) which must not be touched by a bowl. This prevents high force shots being played.
- In Short Mat, a bowl must pass over the "dead line" or else it is removed from play.
- The Short Mat Jack is positioned on a central line. The Short Mat Jack is heavier than either a Lawn Bowls or an Indoor Bowls Jack.

The ditch of Lawn Bowls is simulated by wooden fenders that surround the rear of the mat.

Short Mat is very popular on Vancouver Island, where the Oak Bay and Sidney Lawn Bowling Clubs have an extensive daily winter schedule, which includes all the clubs within their area. These 2 clubs are the only ones with enough indoor space. Perhaps you can piggyback on this idea in your own area. If no club has enough space, use any hall or rec centre. Just roll out the carpet(s). The Oak Bay club has even produced its own set of rules, which seem to please all players.