



# Introduction to Lawn bowls



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Lawn Bowls is a target sport played on a flat surface (grass, synthetic grass or carpet). Similar in concept to the Italian game of Bocce or the French game Petanque, the main distinguishing features are how the bowl is delivered, the playing surface and that the bowl is biased.

Bowls is played on a simple premise. Once the target known as the 'jack' has been rolled – each player delivers a set number of bowls depending on the format of the game. Players/ teams take turns in bowling.

A shot is scored for every bowl that rests closer to the jack than any of your opponents bowls (once all bowls have been delivered). After each 'end'

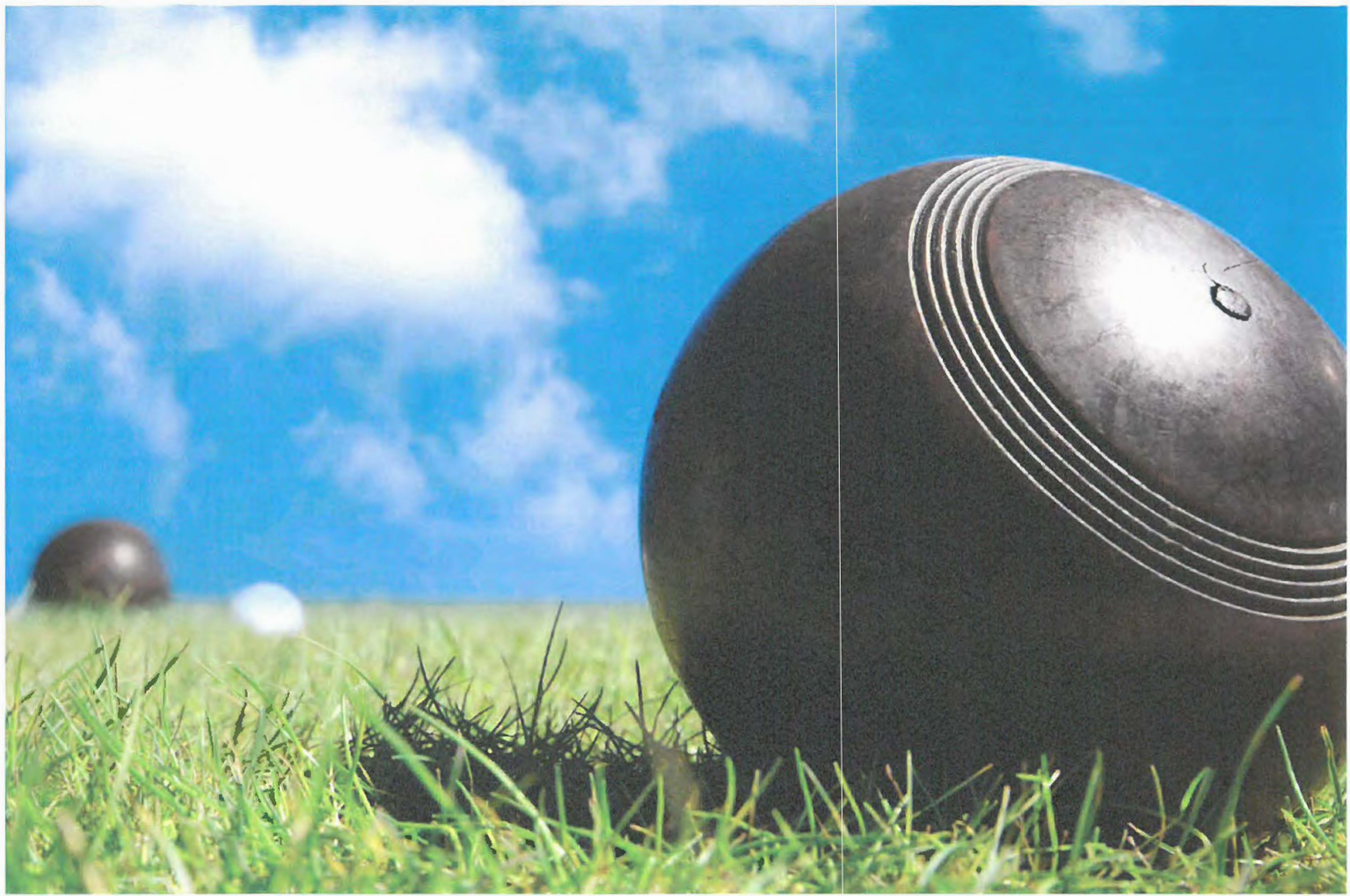
(when all players have bowled), players then bowl back in the opposite direction. A game can be a set number of ends, or played to other various formats.

## **Bowls' broad appeal**

'Bowls is a game for people of all ages and abilities from young children to older adults. It is all embracing. It can be played and enjoyed at a number of levels where the varying needs and aspirations of individuals can ALL be satisfied

Bowls can be played on equal terms by almost anyone. It does not require special strength or athletic ability. You can be any size or shape and most persons with disability can play bowls with able bodied athletes.





Whether it be social bowls, friendly club play, competitions and tournaments, or international match play there will always be the opportunity to experience and savour a host of enjoyable moments.

These will be shared by a vast cross section of bowlers who fully subscribe to the game's unwritten code of strong camaraderie off the green and good sportsmanship on it.'

### **A worldwide game**

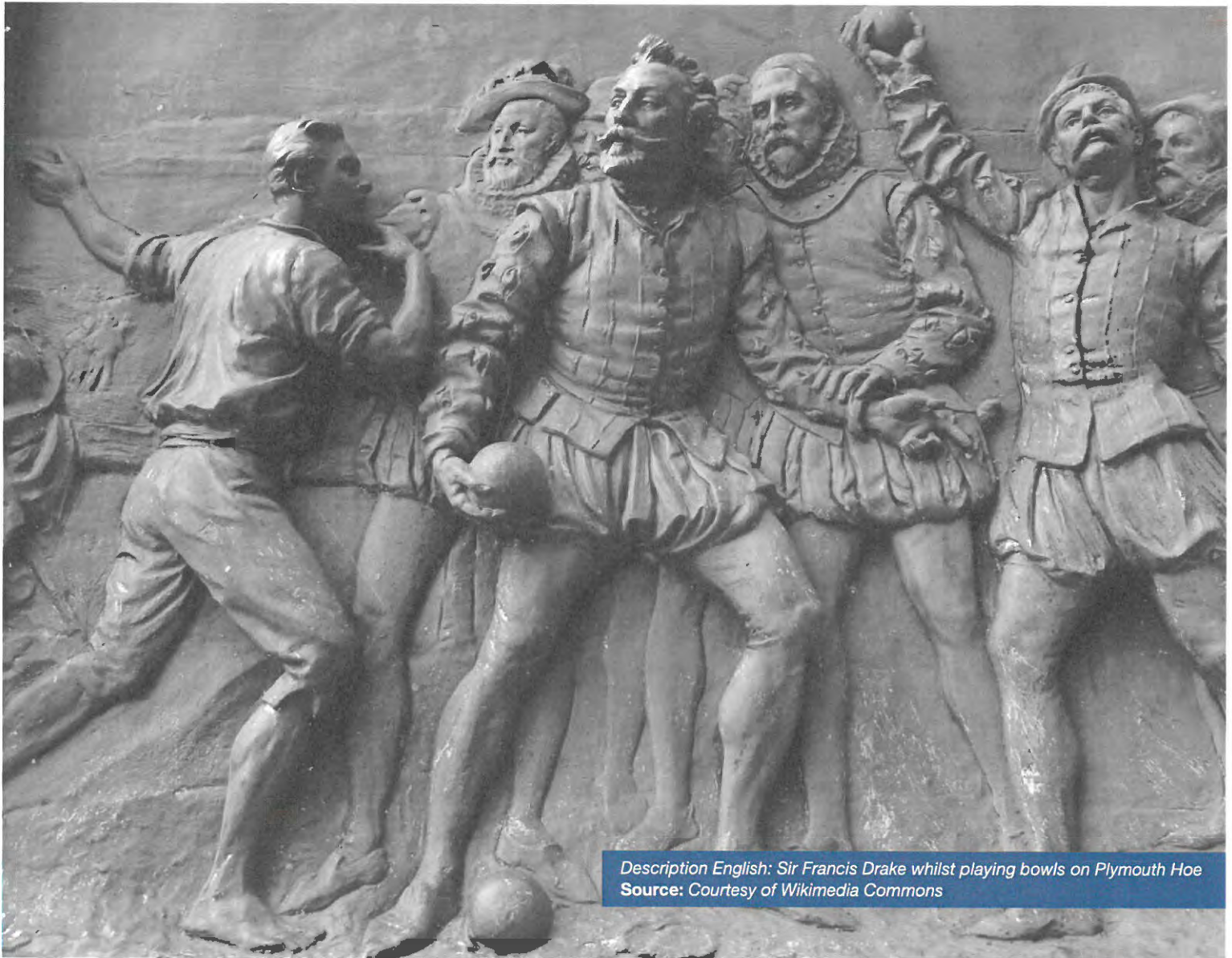
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Most Commonwealth nations play bowls and the sport has been part of the Commonwealth Games since 1930.

# THE HISTORY OF LAWN BOWLS

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*Description English: Sir Francis Drake whilst playing bowls on Plymouth Hoe*  
**Source:** Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons



*Perhaps the most famous historical game took place in 1588, with legend claiming that Sir Francis Drake insisted on finishing a game of bowls at Plymouth even as the invading Spanish Armada approached.*

There are numerous theories regarding the origin of the sport, however archaeological findings from Egypt suggest a sport with biased stone balls was played close to 7000 years ago. A variation of the sport, which later came to be known as 'bocce', was popular in Rome in the days of Julius Caesar. The spread of the Roman Empire may explain the early introduction of the game to much of Europe, while other variations of the game were gradually appearing across the globe, from China to Polynesia.

The oldest surviving bowling club is in Southampton (England) and dates back to 1299, and as the game grew in popularity in the 14th Century, the respective kings of France and England banned the sport as it was seen to be distracting people from the militarily-critical practice of archery. The sport is referenced in no less than three of William Shakespeare's plays, at a time when it was almost exclusively played by nobleman and punishment was enforced when commoners were caught playing amongst themselves.

The preferred style of play at the time was 'crown bowls', perhaps a reference to the popularity of the sport amongst the royals. The game was played on an uneven grass surface until the flat-green game was developed in Scotland

where it found a welcome home. The Scots also developed a formal code of laws, the essence of which still form many of the current rules and regulations.

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As the British colonised much of the world, so did the sport of lawn bowls spread: to Australia, Canada and the United States amongst others. Although the sport has never reached great heights in the United States, George Washington's father Augustus was a keen competitor and is believed to have commenced construction of a bowling green in 1732, the year of George's birth.

In the late 1800s, national bowling associations were being established across the globe. The Royal Victorian Bowling Association (Australia) was formed in 1880, while the Scottish Bowling Association came into existence in 1892.

Today there are more than 55 member National Authorities in 51 Member Nations, with the prestigious World Bowls Championships taking place every 4 years.