

Player Roles in Team Bowls



Every player has a part to play. Understanding roles helps teams communicate better, make smarter decisions and perform with confidence.



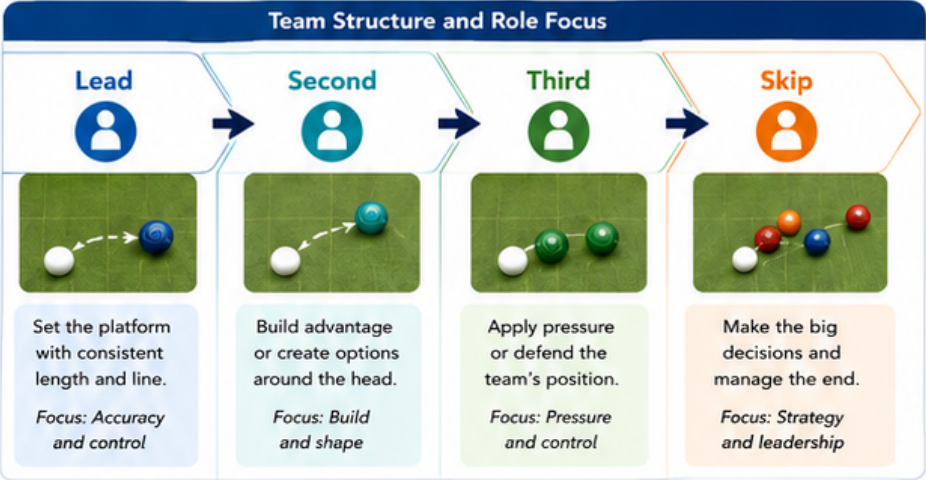
Why It Matters

Clear roles reduce confusion and improve decision-making.

When every player understands their focus and works together, the team can play with purpose and adaptability.

Roles are not about hierarchy — they are about shared responsibility.

Great teams support each other, communicate openly and adjust as conditions and game situations change.



How the Team Works Together



Communication

Share observations and intent clearly at each role.



Tactical Awareness

Understand the head, score, conditions and risks.



Team Outcome

Good structure and trust lead to better decisions and stronger results.

Role Comparison

Role	Typical Focus	Core Contribution	Helpful Communication
Lead	Establish a reliable line and length. Set a stable platform.	Creates a base. Puts the jack where the team wants it.	"Line looks good." "Happy to this length."
Second	Add to the head or shape the game. Create scoring opportunities.	Builds advantage. Opens options for the team.	"I'll build this side." "Let's hold this area."
Third	Apply pressure or restrict opponents. Support the team plan.	Creates pressure. Protects the team's position.	"I'll attack here." "We'll tighten this end."
Skip	Make the key decisions. Manage the end and the team.	Sets the strategy. Reads the game. Leads the team.	"Play the plan." "Good end — reset."

Practical Example

You are leading, mid-end. The jack is near the ditch.

	Situation	What each role aims to do	Example call or observation
	Opponents have 2 bowls near the jack.	Draw in with a steady weight to remove their advantage.	"Drawing in on their back bowl."
	Head is open on the left.	Build on the left to create scoring potential.	"I'll add to the left." "Short and heavy."
	Opponents have one shot.	Play to remove their shot or leave them awkward.	"I'll sit shot." "Take their angle."
	End is close. Score could swing.	Assess score and risk. Choose the best play for the team.	"Hold the count." "Play the safe option."

Common Mistakes / Things to Watch

- Speaking out of order:** unclear messages cause confusion.
- Not sharing observations:** useful information stays silent.
- Ignoring the score:** focusing on the bowl, not the big picture.
- Playing your own game:** not aligning with the team plan.
- Over-directing:** too much instruction can reduce ownership.
- Lack of support:** not backing team-mates after a mistake.
- No reset:** not reviewing after an end or a change in conditions.



Try This

Before your next match or practice:

- Agree a simple team plan and role focus.
- Use short, clear calls and observations.
- Check in after each end: "What worked? What's next?"
- Rotate roles in practice to build understanding.
- Finish with a positive reset for the next end.



Summary / Key Takeaway

Strong teams understand roles, communicate clearly, and adapt together. When each player knows their focus and supports the plan, everyone performs better — and the team wins more ends.

**Clear roles. Open communication.
Shared purpose. Better bowls.**



Related Public Resource

Explore more in this series:

- How to Read a Head
- Communication in Bowls
- Tactics: Attack and Defence
- Improving Consistency

Visit your club or association website to access these free resources.