



CIRCULAR

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No: 12/2019
Date: 24th September 2019
To: Zones, Districts & Clubs
Re: Bowls NSW – Open Gender for Registration & 2020 Association Events

The Bowls NSW Board of Directors has resolved that effective 1st October 2019, the requirement to be male in gender to register with Bowls NSW under the Bowls NSW Constitution and Regulations will be removed.

The removal of gender restriction will allow Member Clubs and Affiliated Sub-Clubs to register persons of any gender as an Individual Member or Registered Player with Bowls NSW and allow them to compete in Association Events.

In 2020, Bowls NSW Association events will be played as open gender, allowing all eligible registered players to enter and compete.

Please find attached with this Circular some Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) which provide more detail regarding this important decision that will greatly assist in the continued growth of the sport.

Greg Helm
Chief Executive Officer

FAQs – Bowls NSW Open Gender Registration and Events



1. Why is Bowls NSW opening its membership?

It is a key objective of Bowls NSW to grow the sport and to act in the best interests of the sport.

The Board views open membership as an opportunity to;

- Advance and promote inclusive practices within the sport.
- Increase the participation opportunities for females, especially working women and junior girls with regular competitions on weekends.
- Enable member clubs, particularly smaller regional clubs, to increase their participation in State Pennants and team events with the inclusion of female bowlers as eligible players.

2. What will it cost Clubs to register female members with Bowls NSW?

Under the current Annual Fee Structure, all clubs pay a fixed fee to affiliate with Bowls NSW.

Therefore, Bowls NSW will not charge any additional fees for Clubs to register individual female members in the 2019/20 and 2020/21 financial years.

It is anticipated that in 2022, the Bowls NSW Board in line with the delivery of the current strategic plan will review the fee structure to ensure a fair and equitable fee system for all Clubs and the Association.

3. Will individuals be required to pay an additional fee to the Club to register with Bowls NSW?

This will be determined by each club. Currently female bowlers pay an annual fee to be registered with Women's Bowls NSW, not with Bowls NSW.

Clubs may need to collect membership fees from individuals wishing to be registered with Bowls NSW to cover the cost of Club uniform or to contribute to the Club's operations expenses.

4. Why can't female bowlers currently play in Bowls NSW Association Events?

To be eligible to play in Association Events a person must be registered with Bowls NSW.

Under current Bowls NSW Regulations to be registered with Bowls NSW as an Individual Member or Registered Player, there is an eligibility requirement which states that a person must be 'identified as male in gender on their birth certificate'.

This reference in the Regulations is being deleted to remove this eligibility requirement.

5. Which Bowls NSW events will become open gender?

In 2020, all Bowls NSW Association events will become 'open gender' meaning that any person is able to enter and compete in events (that they are eligible to enter) regardless of gender.

Pending successful implementation in 2020 and demand, it is anticipated that from the 2021 bowls season, a suite of open and single gender events may be added to the calendar to provide equitable competition opportunities for all members.

Events such as the State Reserve Events will be open to all female members in 2020 as they will not hold a NSW Pennant Grading. Should a female player participate in State Pennants in 2020, they will be graded according to the Conditions of Play which will determine their eligibility for Reserve events in future years.

Eligibility requirements for NSW State Rookies Events will remain as those bowlers who have participated for 30 months or less. Clubs will be required to verify female members wishing to compete in the Rookies that they meet this criteria and ensure they have not been registered with any other bowls association for longer than 30 months.

Year	Open Gender/Mixed	Mens Only	Women's Only
2019	Club Challenge - Mixed	Club Challenge - Mens	Club Challenge – Women's Division
2020	State Championships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Open (S,P,T,F) - Junior (S,P,F) - Over 60s (S,P,T,F) - Reserves (S,P,T,F) State Pennants – (G1-G7) Club Challenge - Mixed Rookies Singles Rookies Pairs Over 40s Pairs	Club Challenge – Mens Champion of Champions	Club Challenge Women's Division
2021 and ongoing (*reviewed annually subject to change)	State Championships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Open - Junior - Over 60s - Reserves State Pennants Club Challenge - Mixed *Rookies Pairs *Over 40s Pairs	Champion of Champions Club Challenge - Mens *Rookies Singles *Rookies Pairs *Over 40s Pairs	Club Challenge - Women's *Rookies Singles *Rookies Pairs *Over 40s Pairs *Other events reviewed as required.

6. Will female bowlers registered with Bowls NSW still be able to play in Women's Bowls NSW Events?

Bowls NSW encourages female bowlers to continue to register and compete in Women's Bowls NSW events where possible in 2020, particularly in pathway events and representative events which will not be offered by Bowls NSW as single gender events.

Female bowlers registered with both Men's and Women's Associations should be aware that any pathway event which continues to National level may only be played in once in a bowls season – i.e. An individual registered with both Associations can only choose to play in one Club Championship Singles, State Singles, Pairs, Triples and Fours in a year as per Bowls Australia requirements.

7. Will female bowlers be eligible to be selected in representative sides?

As registered members of Bowls NSW, registered female members are eligible to be selected in any Bowls NSW representative side where they meet the selection criteria.

Bowls NSW however, will not be offering a separate female only representative pathway at Interzone or Interstate level in 2020.

Female representative sides remain under the control of Women's Bowls NSW and as such, any female player wishing to be selected in these sides will be required to fulfil the criteria as set down by Women's Bowls NSW.

8. Why don't the Men's and Women' Associations just unify?

There have been a number of meaningful attempts to amalgamate Bowls NSW and Women's Bowls NSW over the past decade, however these have not resulted in an agreeable merger of the two entities.

There continues to be collaboration between both Women's and Men's organisations in several areas including Coach Education and Junior Bowls and it is anticipated that this will continue.

Bowls NSW remains committed to working in the best interest of the sport and open to all discussions which advance or provide a better service to our members.

9. Uniform - what will women wear if they are playing in Bowls NSW State Pennant?

Ideally all players in a team or side should be similarly attired as per the Conditions of Play, however it is acknowledged that many Clubs do not have the same uniform for both women and men or have limited supply of uniforms to cater for new members.

Clubs with the capacity to supply 'Mens' uniforms to players (whether at a cost or for free) should do so for female members as they would for any newly registered male member.

Should any Club have difficulty providing playing uniforms for female members participating in Pennants, then approval can be sought to play in neutral uniform from the State Match Committee.

10. Can a female hold a position at Club, Zone or State Level of Bowls NSW?

Yes, any person registered with Bowls NSW has full member rights and privileges and can be elected to and hold any committee position as per the relevant constitution regardless of gender.

11. Does a Member Club need to change its Constitution or By Laws?

Any Mens Club or Sub-Club affiliated with Bowls NSW which has references in their Constitution or By-Laws which prevent female members being registered with them will be required to make amendments to accept all registrations to remain consistent with the Bowls NSW Constitution and Regulations.

12. What happens next?

Clubs will be able to submit Application for Registration forms for all genders from 1st October 2019.

The process which currently exists will not change and once registered, newly registered Bowling Members will appear on Club membership lists which can be downloaded from the Online Membership Facility through the Bowls NSW website.

If you require any further information please email the Bowls NSW Office using the Contact Us Form on the website www.bowlsnsw.com.au/contact