

BowlsUSA

National Umpires Club

Policy & Procedures Manual

Revised: February 2015

Supersedes the July 2012 and all previous revisions.

I. The Club

A. Name: The Club shall be called the BowlsUSA National Umpires Club (NUC) and shall operate at all times under the jurisdiction of the BowlsUSA Council.

B. Structure and Operations: The structure and operations of the NUC shall be contained and described, as completely and clearly as possible, within the Policy and Procedures Manual (P&Ps).

C. The Purpose: The purpose of the NUC shall be:

1. To provide qualified umpires for all Tournaments played under the direct jurisdiction of BowlsUSA.
2. To form a pool of qualified umpires from which selection shall be made to cover other events held under the BowlsUSA Laws of the Sport of Bowls.
3. To consult with the BowlsUSA Council on the Laws of the Sport of Bowls and to offer amendments and additions to improve those laws.
4. To give guidance on the laws.
5. To provide examinations for applicants desiring to become National Umpires.

D. Membership in the NUC shall be automatically conferred upon all BowlsUSA National Umpires at the time of their certification and shall continue at the discretion of the National Umpire in Chief (NUIC). The decision of the NUIC shall be final.

E. The officers of the NUC shall be the National Umpire in Chief as Chairperson and the Head Division Umpires from each of the Divisions of BowlsUSA.

II. The National Umpire in Chief

A. Selection: The NUIC shall be appointed by the BowlsUSA Council. Normally the President will appoint a Nominating Committee of Council members to recommend a candidate. During their investigations, the Nominating Committee may poll the HDUs. If they do not, the HDUs may take a poll among themselves and submit their choice for NUIC at the Council's Annual Meeting.

1. Only the first term of a newly appointed NUIC shall be for five years.
2. After five years, his/her renewal may be in increments of one or more years, subject to mutual agreement of the NUIC and the Council.
3. Replacement of the NUIC by the Council for conduct not in the best interest of BowlsUSA may occur whenever conditions dictate.

B. Duties:

- 1. Appointments:** The NUIC shall appoint a Head Umpire for both men and women, or a Head Umpire for men and a Head Umpire for women, for each of the Divisions. The person selected must have his/her Home Club in the Division of their selection. This person shall have the title Head Division Umpire (HDU).
- 2. Replacements:** The NUIC shall replace a HDU for any one of the following reasons:
 - i. Resignation.
 - ii. His/her home club is not in the Division s/he was selected to represent.
 - iii. Failure to perform the duties of the position.
 - iv. Impropriety or improprieties as described in Section VI.
- 3. Testing:** The NUIC shall be responsible for:
 - i. preparing the written and oral tests required for National Umpire Certification; and
 - ii. final approval of umpire candidates based on tests and reports.
- 4. Reports:** The NUIC shall submit an annual report to the BowlsUSA Council in a timely manner for their Annual General Meeting.
- 5. Communications:** The National Umpire in Chief shall annually communicate to all the active National Umpires of progress made and any changes from the previous year.
- 6. Policies and Procedures Manual:** The P&Ps shall be authored and maintained as needed by the NUIC. Revisions shall be provided to the National Council in time for its next annual meeting.

III. Head Division Umpires

- A. Assignments:** The HDU shall ensure that National Umpires are available for tournaments held within the Division.
- B. Communication:** The HDU shall establish and maintain ongoing communication with the National Umpires under his/her jurisdiction, including the dissemination of material from the NUIC as appropriate.
- C. Testing:** The HDU shall examine and recommend umpire applicants for approval by the NUIC according to the established testing procedures.
- D. Assistants:** The Head Division Umpires may appoint one or more Assistant Head Division Umpire(s) to help provide or conduct HDU services and obligations within a Division. Such appointments must have the prior approval of the National Umpire in Chief.

IV. Umpire Tests and Related Procedures

- A. To become** a National Umpire, the applicant must be a member in good standing of BowlsUSA. The applicant initiates the process by contacting his/her HDU or the NUIC who, in turn, will contact and inform the HDU.
- B. Materials Provided:** applicants shall be provided with:
 1. An application form explaining the testing process and requiring their promise, if they are successful, to be willing to serve whenever possible;
 2. The Umpire's Code of Conduct;

3. The written test;
4. Comprehensive written instructions for the written test.
5. The current NUC Policy and Procedures Manual.

C. Test: The standard test for all first-time applicants in all Divisions includes three parts, as follows:

1. Written: A 25-question open book written test with a passing score of 84% is required. The National Umpire in Chief will create the written tests. New written tests or individual questions will be created as needed, and always when new editions of the Laws of the Sport of Bowls (“LOTSOBs” or “Laws”) are issued. Completed tests shall be sent by the HDU or the candidate to the NUIC who shall correct them. Each question shall require a two, three, four or five-part answer. Four points shall be awarded for each completely correct answer. A varying number of points, at the discretion of the NUIC, may be deducted, depending on which parts are wrong.

2. Practical: The practical consists of a field test requiring the measuring of several different situations which must be conducted to the satisfaction of the Head Division Umpire. Competency with inside calipers and moving the tip of string and metal measures both side to side as well as up and down are critical skills for the candidate to be judged upon.

3. Oral: The NUIC shall provide HDUs with 10 standard questions to be used in the oral exam. The purpose of the Oral is for the HDU, on behalf of the NUC, to demonstrate *how much they don't* know and how much *they will need to learn* before they will be a "wise and experienced" umpire.

a. The Oral exam is not designed to provide candidates with another opportunity to demonstrate how much s/he knows and how well qualified s/he is. Rather, it is hoped that the Oral questions are so difficult that the candidate has trouble answering them. Reasons: securing a passing grade on an open book test is not a watershed event. If candidates are unable to answer many of the ten oral questions, this will hopefully stimulate the new ump to commit to a long-term self-study program to become increasingly familiar with the Laws. The candidate needs to understand that there is much more to the job, and to the LOTSOBs, than they have mastered so far.

b. The process of giving the Oral exam is also intended to stimulate an extensive conversation between the candidate and the HDU about real life umpiring situations and issues, and to provide the HDU with an opportunity to interject interesting tournament related anecdotes and tell how they were handled. This friendly and informative dialogue is intended to establish an open, collegial, and respectful relationship between HDUs and their new umpire while concurrently convincing the candidate that ongoing study of the LOTSOBs is a necessary and continuing requirement of excellent umpiring.

4. Results: Tests, results and recommendations from HDUs must be submitted to the NUIC.

- a. Applicants who achieve a passing score may be informed by the HDU of their score and which questions they missed, provided the applicant pledges that they will not communicate information about the exam questions to any other person.
- b. Applicants who fail the exam, at the total discretion of the NUIC, may be allowed a “second chance” to answer questions s/he missed on the first attempt. Such opportunities shall have a brief time limit and the correct answers may be added to their previous score and may result in a passing score.

D. National Umpire Recertification

1. Normally a National Umpire whose term is expiring will be offered the opportunity to recertify for another five-year term by the NUIC. The decision to make that offer or not shall be made by the NUIC and shall be final.

2. The renewing umpire must thereafter notify the NUIC that s/he wants to take the recertification test.

3. **The NUIC will** send documents explaining the renewal process, a copy of the Umpires Code of Conduct, the current Policy and Procedures Manual (if needed,), and an application which includes the renewing umpire's agreement to serve whenever possible.
4. **The 10-question written test** will be provided to the umpire by the NUIC.
5. **When completed**, the renewing umpire shall return it, and, if they haven't done so already, the completed and signed renewal application and agreement to the NUIC.
6. **Each question** of the recertification test will require a two, three, four or five-part answer, i.e., Page #, Law # and letter. Ten points will be given for each question answered correctly, and a varying number of points will be deducted for each part wrong. The minimum score to earn a pass is 80%.
7. **The NUIC will contact** recertification candidates and their HDU with the results of their tests.
8. A **"second chance"** to answer questions missed on the first attempt may be offered at the discretion of the NUIC. Such opportunities shall have a brief time limit and the correct answers may be added to their previous score in hopes that the result will be a passing score. Reference: Section C 4 B above.

V. National Umpires

- A. Term:** Candidates approved as a National Umpire are certified for a five-year term unless revoked by the NUIC per Section I-C or for an impropriety or improprieties as described in Section VI.
- B. Credentials:** New National Umpires shall receive a National Umpire's Club pin and a membership card expiring on December 31st of the fifth year (inclusive) after it was awarded. For example, the term of an umpire first certified anytime during 2007 will expire on December 31, 2011.
- C. Duties:** National Umpires shall work as umpires whenever assigned by the Head Divisional Umpire unless it is impossible for them to do so. This is particularly important at all Division-sponsored events. They shall also assist, as requested, with the examining of umpire candidates.
- D. Equipment:** All National Umpires on duty, i.e., when assigned to be the umpire of a tournament, shall be expected to carry the following:
 1. The latest edition of the Laws of the Sport of Bowls.
 2. A standard, approved measure.
 3. A measure suitable for measuring distances up to 25 feet.
 4. Inside calipers.
 5. A set of feeler gauges.
 6. Wedges for supporting jacks and leaning bowls.
 7. A measure for distances up to 88 feet (27 meters).

VI. Improprieties:

- A. Overview.** Although rare, it is not impossible that an umpire may comport him/herself, or be accused of comporting him/herself, in a manner that brings discredit to the NUC or BowlsUSA. Such instances must be acknowledged and investigated so that a just and proper response may be made.
- B. Failure to adequately perform the duties of a HDU, AHDU or a NU** as described in Article I C may be grounds for action described in Article I D; II B 2; and/or VI D 2 c.
- C. Comportment inappropriate for a USLBA umpire.** Inasmuch as umpires are correctly perceived as role models for appropriate behavior, both on and off the green, umpires are expected to maintain their behavior at a "higher standard." Failure to appropriately comport themselves either on or off the green shall be grounds for action as described in Article I D and/or Article VI, D, 2 c.

D. Allegations of Impropriety. If the NUIC becomes aware of any allegation(s) of impropriety, made by any BowlsUSA member against a HDU or NU, the NUIC or his designee shall make a preliminary investigation of such allegation(s).

1. Preliminary Investigation. If a preliminary investigation shows that the allegation(s) were either unfounded, unsubstantiated, or do (does) not justify any further action; such allegations may be considered dismissed. If the allegation(s) was (were) apparently accurate and further investigation or action may be justified, the NUIC may appoint an Investigation Committee.

2. The Investigation Committee members may include the NUIC and should include the jurisdictional HDU if possible. Other objective and dependable umpires, not to exceed a total of four members, including the Chair, may also be appointed.

a. Duties: The Investigation Committee shall investigate the incident as completely as possible, interviewing as many involved persons as possible, and, if warranted, shall schedule and conduct a hearing. All allegations shall be provided to the accused at least two weeks prior to the hearing. The accused may respond in writing or in person to all allegations. If the accused responds in person to the hearing, s/he may bring a friend or advisor with him/her.

b. Findings. At the conclusion of that hearing, the Investigation Committee shall report its findings and recommendation(s), in writing, to the NUIC, stating either that the allegation(s) do not justify further action; or that the allegation(s) is/are substantiated and that some course of action shall be recommended.

c. Action. Within time, but not to exceed 30 days, the NUIC will notify the accused of the action that will be taken. The effective dates, if any, of such penalty will be communicated at that time. Such action may be:

- i) Warning;
- ii) Probation;
- iii) Temporary suspension of National Umpire certification; or
- iv) Revocation of National Umpire certification.

d. Finality. In all matters regarding improprieties, the ruling of the National Umpire in Chief will be final.

VII. Tournament Requirements

Umpires serving at a venue that is hosting a Division- or BowlsUSA-sponsored event shall determine that the following equipment is available:

- A.** The latest edition of the Laws of the Sport of Bowls.
- B.** A mirror for checking line bowls or jacks, OR a Boundary scope OR a portable retractable line and a square (preferably with a leveling bubble).
- C.** A tape measure at least 88 feet (27 meters) long.

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