

12.10 Pre-Match Practice

12.10.1 Home Side

The Home Side is permitted to practice between 90 minutes and 60 minutes of the match starting time.

12.10.2 Away Side

The Away Side is permitted to practice between 60 minutes and 30 minutes of the match starting time.

Either side is permitted to practice prior to these times, following permission from the Host venue.

12.11 Player Movement

12.11.1 Rink Changes

Player positions within a rink may be changed once during the match, with notification to the opposing team before the commencement of the next end.

13. Open Pennant

13.1 Eligibility

Open to all Bowls NSW Limited registered members who have a current NSW declared club, with a club membership category permitting participation in Association events.

Any player transferring from a Club outside of New South Wales after the State Match Committee has allocated grades to their new Declared Club for the 2025/26 season will not have a further Interstate Clearance issued until after 30 June 2025.

13.2 Competition Grades

13.2.1 Number of Grades

- (i) The Bowls NSW Open State Pennant competition comprises Platinum Pennant and seven grades.
- (ii) Platinum is a higher grade than Grade 1 Pennant and is covered under a separate Conditions of Play. ([Refer Section 12](#))
- (iii) Grade 1 is the next 'highest' grade of pennant, through to grade 7 the 'lowest'. All definitions in these Conditions of Play of higher and lower grades refer to this convention.

13.2.2 Sides

Each pennant side shall comprise three (3) teams of four (4) players. A total of twelve (12) players per side.

13.2.3 Entries

- (i) For 2025/26 Open Pennant, clubs shall be allocated to grades based on the performance of their sides in the 2024/25 Bowls NSW Open State Pennant competition.
- (ii) Clubs may enter additional sides based on the number of eligible players available.
- (iii) Clubs may apply for the preferred grades for those additional sides; however, allocation to a grade will be determined by the Region within their pennant submission, based on creating equitable competitions throughout all grades, for final approval by State Match Committee.

13.2.4 Elevation of Sides

- (i) All 2024/25 Region and State Winners of Open Pennant Grades 2 to 7 shall be elevated to the next highest grade, irrespective of whether that Club has a side already entered in that higher grade.
- (ii) Clubs winning sections within a grade in a Region's Open Pennant competitions may also be elevated, irrespective of whether that Club has a side already entered in that higher grade.

13.2.5 Regression of Sides

- (i) Clubs finishing last in grades 1 to 6 in the 2024/25 season within a Region may be regressed, irrespective of whether that Club has a side already entered in that lower grade.
- (ii) Clubs finishing last in a section of grades 1 to 6 in the 2024/25 season may also be regressed, irrespective of whether that Club has a side already entered in that lower grade.

13.2.6 Request for Elevation, Regression or Withdrawal

A club may submit a written request for sides to be elevated from a grade, regressed from a grade, retained in a grade, or withdrawn from a grade in variation of the allocation they have been given.

Any such application shall be based on an increase or decrease of the number of players eligible for those grades (Bowlslink transfers), or by providing a list of unavailable players.

Where a club's application to regress or withdraw a side is based on players being unavailable for Open Pennant in the 2025/26 season, the application must include a list of unavailable players and their previous season gradings. In assessing the application, the State Match Committee may restrict any or all of the nominated players from participating in any lower-grade Open Pennant match during the season.

13.3 Competition Format

Regions must detail the number of sectional rounds of each grade's competition and the format of any post sectional play within their Region Pennant Submission.

13.3.1 Duration of Matches

Each match shall consist of sixty-three ends in total (21 ends per rink) in fours format.

13.3.2 Playing Days

- (i) Regions must not start their 2025/26 Bowls NSW Open State pennant competition prior to 1 February 2026 unless approved by State Match Committee.
- (ii) Region competitions must be completed no later than 31 May 2026.
- (iii) Regions must list dates of play, including all dates provisionally set aside to be used for any deferred games, on the entry form.
- (iv) Regions must schedule all rounds of play on weekend dates.
- (v) Dates and/or start times can be re-scheduled with mutual agreement between both participating clubs, by submitting a [Match Start Variation Application](#) to the Region Match Committee.

13.4 Method of Scoring.

13.4.1 Allocation of Points

All NSW Open State pennant sectional and/or round robin matches will be:

Side Win:	7 points (the side scoring the greatest aggregate of shots)
Side Tie (Draw):	3.5 points (both sides scoring the same shots aggregate)
Side Loss:	0 points (the side scoring the least aggregate of shots)
Team Win:	1 point (one point for each team that wins – i.e. rink win)
Team Tie (Draw):	0.5 points (0.5 points for each team that has a drawn rink)
Team Loss:	0 points
Total points per match:	10 points

13.4.2 Byes

Where a bye occurs, there will be no points allocated.

13.5 Player Eligibility

Any player who does not have an “N” grading (refer [clause 13.5.2](#)) is eligible to play in sectional matches during the season in any grade, regardless of their previous season grading, except as provided within this clause.

A player is eligible to participate in more than one match in any round (Platinum to grade 7), including if the matches are scheduled on the same day, provided that they play in the lower grade match first, and are graded equal to or lower than the second match to be played in the same round.

Any player who plays the required number of Platinum Pennant matches to be graded in the previous season, will hold an N1 grading for the 2025/26 season.

13.5.1 Players changing declared club

A maximum of three (3) players who change their declared club after the State Match Committee has allocated grades to their new declared club for the 2025/26 season will be

eligible to play more than two grades below their previous season grading in their new club's next highest grade.

13.5.2 Previous Season Winners - 'N' graded players

Any player graded in a side winning a State Pennant in grades 2-7 in 2024/25 shall be graded as 'N_' one grade higher than the grade they won. State winners of grade 1 shall be recorded as N1.

Any player graded in a side winning a Region pennant in 2024/25 shall be graded as "N_" in that Grade.

Players with a "N_" grading are not eligible to play in any grade lower than that grading, unless provided in the clauses below:

- (i) A club may select a maximum of three (3) "N_" graded players to play in their club's next-lowest grade during the entire 2025/26 season, without submitting a player regrade application. This applies to each of the club's Region or State winning sides from the 2024/25 season.
- (ii) In exceptional circumstances, Bowls NSW may grant applications for a higher number of N-variations of eligibility. Such applications must be made using the [Application for Player Regrade](#) form, which must be sent to the Region for endorsement prior to being sent to State Match Committee for approval.
- (iii) Any player granted a regrade will have an 'R_' reference ID certification added in Bowlslink for the 2025/26 season.
- (iv) Applications for variation of N-graded players' eligibility may not be granted for clubs with an excess of players graded higher than the regrade being sought and could result in the club being elevated to an appropriate grade.

13.5.3 Eligibility for Post Sectional

- (i) When a side qualifies for post sectional rounds (at Region or State level), any player whose previous season grading is in that grade or lower will be eligible for post-sectional play.
- (ii) A player with a higher previous season grading will only be eligible to play in a post-sectional match if they played more than 50% of this season's matches in that grade, or a lower grade.

13.5.4 Penalties for using an Ineligible Player

A side fielding an ineligible player shall forfeit the match to their opponents (refer [clause 11.11](#)).

13.6 Graded at end of Sectional Play

Players who play more than 50% of total available sectional matches (across all grades) will become graded at the end of the sectional rounds according to the grade in which they played the most matches. The calculation of the 50% threshold is taken from the grade the player participated in that has the most sectional matches.

If a player has played an equal number of matches in multiple grades, they will be graded in the highest of those grades.

Any player who does not play more than 50% of matches during the current season will retain their previous season grading.

Byes do not count towards a player's grading.

13.7 Recording Player's Gradings.

Each player's previous season grade shall be recorded on Bowlslink as a certification.

The certification states the grade in which the player was graded at the conclusion of their previous Open Pennant season.

In addition, any previous season winner (N_ grading) or player with a regrade restriction (R_ grading) will have a reference ID recorded in Bowlslink to show their "N_" or "R_" grade status.

Bowls NSW updates gradings and certifications on Bowlslink at the end of each pennant season.

13.8 State Finals

The Bowls NSW State Open Pennant Finals are scheduled to be played 21-23 August 2026.

13.8.1 State Pennant Qualifiers

Region winners shall qualify for State Finals in Grades 1-7.

Should a Region not have a winner in any Grade, the State Match Committee will offer additional places (to ensure sixteen sides competing) to Regions in preference order based on the percentage of sides in that grade per number of clubs in that Region.

13.8.2 State Finals Draw

- (i) State Finals will be sectional play followed by knockout finals.
- (ii) Clubs will be required to enter their teams into Bowlslink by the date provided in the Bowls NSW season calendar. Bowls NSW will then utilise the Team Shuffle function to determine the team opponents for each round.
- (iii) If two sides are drawn to play each other in the knockout stages of the finals and those two sides have already played each other in sectional play, the Controlling Body will alter the rink draw to ensure the same teams do not play each other.

13.8.3 State Awards

- (i) Winners and runners up pennant flags will be awarded to clubs.
- (ii) Winners and runners up medallions will be awarded to players participating in the final. An additional two (2) medallions (for each of the winners & runners up) will be available for presentation to reserves who were eligible to play.
- (iii) Winners & runners up medallions will also be awarded to the side manager and coach of sides participating in the final.

13.8.4 Bowls NSW Open State Pennant Flags

Grade 1: Union Jack Blue with White letters

Grade 2: Red with White letters

Grade 3:	White with Royal Blue letters
Grade 4:	Green with White letters
Grade 5:	Gold with Green letters
Grade 6:	Airforce Blue (Sky Blue) with White letters
Grade 7:	Brown with White letters

14. Women's Pennant

14.1 Eligibility

Open to all Bowls NSW Limited registered members who are female and have a current NSW declared club.

14.2 Competition Divisions

14.2.1 Number of Divisions:

The NSW Women's pennant competition comprises four (4) divisions.

14.2.2 Sides

Each pennant side shall comprise two (2) teams of four (4) players. A total of eight (8) players per side.

14.2.3 Entries

- (i) For 2025/26 women's pennant, clubs shall be allocated to divisions based on the performance of their sides in the 2024/25 Bowls NSW women's pennant competition.
- (ii) Clubs may enter additional sides based on the number of eligible players available.
- (iii) Clubs may apply for the preferred divisions for those additional sides; however, allocation to a division will be determined by the Region within their pennant submission, based on creating equitable competitions throughout all divisions, for final approval by the State Match Committee.

14.2.4 Elevation of Sides

- (i) All 2024/25 Region winners of women's pennant divisions 2 to 4 shall be elevated to the next highest division, irrespective of whether that club has a side already entered in that higher division.
- (ii) Clubs winning sections within a division in a Region women's pennant competition may also be elevated, irrespective of whether that club has a side already entered in that higher division.