COMPETITION REGULATIONS

(approved by the County Executive October 2026)

It is the responsibility of all competitors to familiarise themselves with the Regulations below.

Any player failing to conform to any clause is liable to disqualification.

1. ALL COMPETITIONS

(a) All competitions shall be staged on an annual basis, confined to affiliated clubs and played under World Bowls Laws of the Sport of Bowls except where specifically varied by Bowls England under national conditions and/or the E.C.B.A. for domestic purposes as specified herein. All competitors must be bona fide members of affiliated clubs.

(b) Control of all competitions, except the Ashford Challenge Cup, shall be in the hands of the County Competition Secretary, assisted by Group and other Secretaries as determined by the Executive Council.

(c) A player shall not represent or allow his name to be submitted for more than county in any one season. Should a club cease to exist after the entry date the members may be permitted for one season only, to compete under the name of that club, irrespective of which club or clubs they have joined. A player moving clubs mid-season (within Essex) may continue to participate in the three group competitions (Ashford Cup, Wally Ball Trophy and Intergroup Knockout), providing he moves between clubs within the same Group. If he moves to a different group, he may not play in any group competitions for his new group if he has already played in any of the three group competitions. Furthermore, if he has played in any County Competitions from his initial club, he may not play in any County Competitions from his new club

(d) Players shall be responsible for their own competition entries. Entries shall be made via the Competition Portal, which may be accessed directly, or via the County Website. Fees will be paid by credit or debit card via the Competition Portal (no payment details will be stored on the Portal). Players without computer access should contact the Competition Secretary for advice regarding making entries. If, after having entered competitions, the player moves to a different club, the following shall apply. If the player notifies the Competition Secretary before the draw(s) are completed, he will be permitted to transfer his entries to his new club, on the confirmation of the new club secretary that he is a member. If the move is made after the draws have taken place, then the player must play the competition from the club/area/group as drawn. If his former club allows him to play on their green, then he may do so. If not, it is considered that his green is “not available” and rule 1(p) applies.

(e) Annually, in accordance with the total entries to be accommodated, the Competition Secretary on behalf of the Executive Council shall decide the tie venues, structure and composition of any grouping sections deemed desirable and necessary.

(f) All rounds of the Single Handed, Pairs, Triples and Fours championships shall be played on fixed dates as set out on the competition portal but they may be played earlier by mutual consent.

(g) All rounds up to the semi-final of the Two Wood Singles shall be played on the dates set

out in the draw on the Competition Portal, in accordance with (m) below.

(h) All rounds of the North and South Essex Fours shall be played on the fixed dates as set out on the Competition Portal but they may be played earlier by mutual consent.

(i) All rounds up to the semi-final of the Junior Singles shall be played no later than the dates set out in the draw on the Competition Portal, in accordance with (m) below.

(j) All rounds up to the semi-final of the Junior Pairs shall be played no later than the dates set out in the draw on the Competition Portal, in accordance with (m) below.

(k) All rounds up to the semi-final of the Senior Fours shall be played on fixed dates as set out on the competition portal but they may be played earlier by mutual consent.

(l) The rounds of the other competitions Benevolent, Unbadged Singles, Secretaries Singles, Double Fours and Shield shall be played no later than the dates set out in the draw on the Competition Portal, in accordance with (m) below. Inter Group Knock Out, Ashford Cup and Wally Ball Challenge Shield shall be played on the dates specified in the County Match Programme.

(m) The competitors appearing first in each round of the draw shall be the challenger. For an opening round match, the challenger must offer their opponent two eligible dates of play no later than 21 days in advance of the closing date of the round. For all subsequent rounds, the challenger must offer their opponent, within 48 hours of notification of their next opponent, two eligible dates of play. Ineligible dates are Sundays, Bank Holidays or the Saturday preceding, or Middleton Cup dates on which Essex are participating as specified in the County Match Programme (unless mutually agreed). The opposing competitor shall within 48 hours of receipt of a valid challenge accept either date. In the event of his not accepting either date the challenger shall be awarded the tie if claimed. In the event that the challenger does not comply with the 21 day / 48-hour rule (failing to offer eligible dates) then the opponent becomes the ‘challenger’ and must make all match arrangements within 48 hours and will be drawn at home. The offering of two different start times on a single date does not count as two dates.

(n) Extensions shall only be allowed at the discretion of the County Competition Secretary, when players are engaged in County Association, National matches or competitions and International matches or attending to the business of the Executive Council or Selection Committee. In team games, when only one player is unavailable, it is expected that a substitute will play. No ECBA Semi-Finals shall be played on the date arranged for the Semi-Finals and Final of the Middleton Cup if Essex is still in the competition.

(o) When a challenge is made offering dates in competitions referred to at (m) above and one or both dates offered clash with a team’s participation in National Championships or Competitions (final stages only, including rounds of last 16), then an additional date must be offered by the challengers, one for each clashing date. Disputes shall be adjudicated by the County Competition Secretary.

(p) All ties must be played on greens for which a validation certificate is in force. The greens, when tested, shall be deemed fit for competition play from week 20 of the standardised weeks of the year as shown in the Bowls England Handbook. Unless previously deemed unfit before

that date by representatives of the County Competition Secretary. The rounds prior to the quarter finals shall be played on the club green of the challenger. If the green of the challenger has not been passed for or is not available, the game shall be played on the green of the opponent if passed and available. If neither green has been passed fit or is not available the game shall be played on a neutral green to be mutually agreed upon, failing which the Officer conducting the competition shall determine the green on which the tie shall be played. In the rounds of the competition proper, all ties shall be played on the club green of the challenger unless the following applies and the ties shall be played on neutral greens.

Single Handed	Quarter-finals
Pairs	Quarter-finals
Triples	Quarter-finals
Fours	Quarter-finals
Senior Fours	Quarter-finals

(q) All ties shall commence at 6pm and not later than 6.30pm unless the County Competition Secretary shall determine otherwise. A competitor failing to appear shall be disqualified. Earlier starting times may be arranged by mutual consent, but a competitor failing to appear within 30 minutes of the starting time previously arranged shall be disqualified. Sides consisting of more than one four whose complete representation does not appear within 30 minutes of the time arranged for commencing play may proceed and complete the game, but in the defaulting four(s) the number of bowls shall be made up by the lead and second players playing three bowls each, but one fourth (25%) of the total shots scored by each four playing three men shall be deducted from the score at the end of the game. Fractions shall be taken into account in the final aggregate score. In the event of the defaulting four not competing, the game shall be awarded to their opponents if the tie be claimed by them.

(r) The onus of providing a marker in Single-Handed competitions shall fall upon the challenger except when games are arranged by the County Competition Secretary.

(s) On the completion of any match and at the latest by 23:00 on the day of the match the result must be submitted on the Competition Portal. In the case of a team game, entrants must enter the FULL NAMES (no nicknames) of ALL players who participated in the match, both winners and losers. It is therefore important that scorecards for the match are completed correctly (these to be retained until the competition is complete). Players who have registered themselves or have been registered (with an email address) by the Competition Secretary MUST submit results via the Competition Portal. Players who have no access to the Competition Portal, can submit results by telephone to either the Competition Secretary or the ECBA Media Officer. Failure to comply with this regulation may result in disqualification.

(t) In the event of the scores being equal when all ends have been played, an extra end or ends shall be played until a decision has been reached. The Manager/Captain in a side game or skips in a team game or opponents in a Singles shall toss a coin and the winner shall decide who shall play first. In the case of more than one extra end being required, the Managers/Captains or opponents shall again toss a coin, and the winner shall have the right to decide who shall play first. Extra ends shall be played from where the previous end was completed.

(u) In the event of adverse weather conditions stopping a competition match, play must be continued on the same green unless otherwise mutually agreed upon at the time of

abandonment. In Double Fours and Shield, should the game or games be completed on one green but not the other, the completed game or games must stand. In the case of Ashford Cup, Inter-Group Knockout and Wally Ball Challenge Shield, see relevant clauses below.

(v) The two skips shall be judges of all disputes and when they agree their decisions shall be final; if they cannot agree, the point shall be decided by an Umpire. Umpires shall be appointed at the discretion of the E.C.B.A. but where an umpire is not appointed, players must mutually agree a person to act as umpire.

(w) All protests appertaining to (a) the green etc., must be intimated before the commencement of the sixth end (match to be completed). The protestor on completion of the game shall inform the County Competition Secretary that a challenge has been intimated and inform the club that they should take necessary actions to attempt no changes to the green taking place within the next 24 hours allowing time for the County Competition Secretary to have the green independently retested, and (b) against a player within three days after the match. The club or competitor lodging the protest shall deposit with the Secretary of the Association the sum of £20.00 which may be forfeited or returned as the Executive Council may determine after considering and disposing of such protest. No protests shall be withdrawn except by leave of the County Competition Secretary. Protests must be lodged in duplicate.

(x) In a competition where Essex are granted two representatives at the Bowls England National Championships, the entrant appearing in the top of the ECBA draw will be submitted to Bowls England as our A entrant (see Competition Regulation 1 (dd)).

(y) The losing finalists of the above competitions shall qualify to represent Essex and compete in the Bowls England National Championships as our B entrant, subject to the necessary number of entries having been received. (see Competition Regulation 1 (dd)).

(z) All trophies shall be stored at a secure site determined by the Executive Council. They shall be made available at the Finals weekend and at a presentation function determined by the Executive Council to allow photographs to be taken with the winners.
The winners club shall be presented with a plaque indicating the year and title of the event.

(aa) No prizes shall be awarded to losing finalists in any competition with fewer than 100 entries, except at the discretion of the Executive Council.

(bb) Semi-finals and Finals will be played over a weekend with competitors expected to be available on both days as the schedules dictate. Regulation dress shall be worn except that during play, competitors may wear an approved club shirt providing that all members of the Side/Team are similarly dressed. During play the wearing of a tie shall be optional. Competitors may wear shorts providing they are of the Bowls England standard.

(cc) Coloured bowls discs shall be supplied and used during play as and when directed by the E.C.B.A.

(dd) County Honours
It is expected that players representing Essex at the Bowls England National Championships, display an Essex badge. Therefore, any unbadged player shall be awarded (at the players cost) a cloth badge prior to their participation at those Championships (subject to having played in all previous rounds, or at the discretion of the Executive Council).

In addition, a cloth badge or credits towards a cloth badge will be awarded as below:

Badge	Unbadged Singles	Winner/Runner-up
1 credit	Unbadged Singles	Semi-finalist
1 credit	Singles, 2-wood Singles, Pairs, Triples, Fours	4th place (if played)
1 credit	Senior Fours, Junior Pairs, Benevolent Singles	Finalist
2 credits	Benevolent Singles	Winner

(ee) The powers of the County Executive to deal with any matter not provided for in these Regulations shall in the first instance be delegated to the County Competition Secretary.

2. SINGLES

In addition to the Competition Regulations 1 herein the following shall apply. Each game shall consist of 21 shots, four bowls each player.

3. TWO WOOD SINGLES

In addition to the Competition Regulations 1 herein the following shall apply.
Each game shall consist of 21 ends – two bowls each player. In the event of the scores being equal when all ends have been played, an extra end or ends must be played until a decision is reached.
N.B. (A game can be terminated when it is impossible for a competitor to obtain a winning result in the ends remaining)

4. PAIRS

In addition to the Competition Regulations 1 herein the following shall apply.
(a) A player who has entered this competition and appears in the draw as the contact is not permitted to play, as a player or substitute, in another entry except at the discretion of the County Competition Secretary.
(b) The two players taking part in the first game shall constitute the pair and shall normally play together throughout the competition. One additional (and the same) player may, however, be used as a substitute at any time provided he has not already played in the competition. He may play in any position.
(c) Each game shall consist of 18 ends (two players with four bowls each). In the event of a tie an extra end or ends must be played, the points of this end to count in the final score.

5. TRIPLES

In addition to the Competition Regulations 1 herein the following shall apply.
(a) A player who has entered this competition and appears in the draw as a contact is not permitted to play, as a player or substitute, in another entry except at the discretion of the County Competition Secretary.
(b) The three players taking part in the first game shall constitute the triple and shall normally play together throughout the competition. One additional (and the same) player may, however, be used as a substitute at any time provided he has not already played in the competition. He may play in any position.
(c) Each game shall consist of 18 ends (three players with three bowls each). In the event of a tie an extra end or ends must be played, the points of this end to count in the final score.

6. FOURS

In addition to the Competition Regulations 1 herein the following shall apply.
(a) A player who has entered this competition and appears in the draw as the contact is not

permitted to play as a player or substitute, in another entry except at the discretion of the County Competition Secretary.
(b) The four players taking part in the first game shall constitute the team and shall normally play together throughout the competition. One additional (and the same) player may, however, be used as a substitute at any time provided he has not already played in the competition. He may play in any position.
(c) Each game shall consist of 18 ends (four players with two bowls each). In the event of a tie an extra end or ends must be played, the points of this end to could in the final score.

7. JUNIOR SINGLES
In addition to the Competition Regulations 1 herein the following shall apply.
(a) Every competitor must not have attained their 24th Birthday by 1st April in the year of the competition.
(b) Each game shall consist of 21 shots, four bowls each player.

8. JUNIOR PAIRS
In addition to the Competition Regulation 1 herein the following shall apply.
(a) Every competitor must not have attained their 24th Birthday by 1st April in the year of the competition.
(b) Players may be from different clubs so long as they are affiliated to and are a subscribing member of an ECBA club.
(c) A player who has entered this competition and appears in the draw as the contact is not permitted to play as a player or substitute in another entry except at the discretion of the County Competition Secretary.
(d) The Two players taking part in the first game shall constitute the team and shall normally play together throughout the competition. One additional (and the same) player may, however, be used as a substitute at any time provided he has not already played in the competition. He may play in any position.
(e) Each game shall consist of 18 ends, four bowls each player.

9. SENIOR FOURS
In addition to the Competition Regulation 1 herein the following shall apply.
(a) A player who has entered this competition and appears in the draw as the contact is not permitted to play as a player or substitute in another entry except at the discretion of the County Competition Secretary.
(b) The Four players taking part in the first game shall constitute the team and shall normally play together throughout the competition. One additional (and the same) player may, however, be used as a substitute at any time provided he has not already played in the competition. He may play in any position.
(c) Every player must have attained their 55th birthday by 1st April in the year of the competition.
(d) Each game shall consist of 18 ends (four players with two bowls each). In the event of a tie an extra end or ends must be played, the points of this end to count in the final score.

10. DOUBLE FOURS
In addition to the Competition Regulations 1 herein the following shall apply.
(a) There shall be no restriction to the number of entries allocated to a club. No player shall be included in more than one entry.
(b) Each game shall consist of 18 ends (eight players with two bowls each).
(c) One four shall play at home and the other four shall play away on the same day. Except

that in the final both fours shall play on the same green on the same day.
(d) An extra scoring end shall be played on the challengers green and the score on this additional end will be used only if the aggregate scores are level after 18 ends have been played. If the tie is played on one green, clubs shall nominate before the game commences the four which will play the extra end. These fours shall play each other throughout. No extra ends shall be played until both rinks have completed the required number of ends.
(e) A club shall have the option of substituting players and of altering the position of the players for the second or succeeding ties of the competition, provided they have not played in a winning or defeated entry.

11. SHIELD

In addition to the Competition Regulations 1 herein the following shall apply.
(a) There shall be no restrictions to the number of entries allocated to a club. No player shall be included in more than one entry.
(b) Each game shall consist of 18 ends (16 players with two bowls each).
(c) Two fours shall play at home and two fours shall play away on the same day, except in the final all fours shall play on the same green on the same day.
(d) On the challengers green, before the draw for rinks is made and the game commences, each club shall nominate a four which will play an extra end. These fours shall play against each other throughout on the same rink. The score on the extra end shall be used only if the aggregated scores both home and away are level after 18 ends have been completed. If the tie is played on one green the same procedure shall be followed except the extra end shall not be played until all rinks have completed 18 ends.
(e) A club shall have the option of substituting players and of altering the position of the players for the second or succeeding ties of the competition, provided they have not played in a winning or defeated entry.
(f) Where a side's complete representation does not appear within 30 minutes of the time arranged for commencing, play may proceed with three players and complete the game, but the defaulting four the number of bowls shall be made up by the lead and second players playing three bowls each, but one fourth of the total scored shall be deducted from the score at the end of the game. Fractions shall be taken into account in the final aggregate score.
(g) The winning club shall be presented with 20 commemorative badges.

12. NORTH ESSEX FOURS

In addition to the Competition Regulations 1 herein the following shall apply.
(a) Entry is restricted to fours from clubs in Groups 1, 2 and 3.
(b) A player who has entered this competition and appears in the draw as the contact is not permitted to play, as a player or substitute, in any other entry except at the discretion of the County Competition Secretary.
(c) The four players taking part in the first game shall constitute the four and shall normally play together throughout the competition. One additional (and the same) player however, be used as a substitute at any time provided he has not already played in the same competition under another entry. He may play in any position.
(d) Where a team's complete representation does not appear within 30 minutes of the time arranged for commencing, play may proceed with three players and complete the game, but the defaulting four the number of bowls shall be made up by the lead and second players playing three bowls each, but one fourth of the total shots scored shall be deducted from the score at the end of the game. Fractions shall be taken into account in the final aggregate score. The winners will take part in the Hood Cup Competition against the winners of the South Essex Fours.

(e) Each game shall consist of 18 ends (four players with two bowls each). In the event of a tie an extra end or ends must be played, the points of this end to count in the final score.

13. SOUTH ESSEX FOURS

In addition to the Competition Regulations 1 herein the following shall apply.

(a) Entry is restricted to fours from clubs in Groups 4, 5, 6, 8 and 9.

(b) A player who has entered this competition and appears in the draw as the contact is not permitted to play, as a player or substitute, in any other entry except at the discretion of the County Competition Secretary.

(c) The four players taking part in the first game shall constitute the four and shall normally play together throughout the competition. One additional (and the same) player however, be used as a substitute at any time provided he has not already played in the same competition under another entry. He may play in any position.

(d) Where a team's complete representation does not appear within 30 minutes of the time arranged for commencing, play may proceed with three players and complete the game, but the defaulting four the number of bowls shall be made up by the lead and second players playing three bowls each, but one fourth of the total shots scored shall be deducted from the score at the end of the game. Fractions shall be taken into account in the final aggregate score. The winners will take part in the Hood Cup competition against the winners of the North Essex Fours.

(e) Each game shall consist of 18 ends (four players with two bowls each). In the event of a tie an extra end or ends must be played, the points of this end to count in the final score.

14. UNBADGED SINGLES

In addition to the Competition Regulations 1 herein the following shall apply.

(a) Every competitor shall be unbadged on the 30th April in each year of the competition.

(b) Each game shall consist of 21 shots, four bowls each player.

15. SECRETARIES SINGLES

In addition to the Competition Regulations 1 herein the following shall apply.

(a) Entry is restricted to Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, Match Secretaries and Competition Secretaries past and present of affiliated clubs and the Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Competition Secretary, Group Secretaries, Group Assistant/Competition Secretaries past and present of the E.C.B.A.

(b) Each game shall consist of 21 shots, four bowls each player.

16. BENEVOLENT SINGLES

In addition to the Competition Regulations 1 herein the following shall apply.

(a) Each game shall consist of 21 shots, four bowls each player

17. INTER-GROUP KNOCKOUT

In addition to the Competition Regulation 1 herein the following shall apply.

(a) This shall be an Inter-Group knockout competition comprising sides of six teams of four players in each rink. Groups shall enter one team.

(b) The dates of the ties shall be decided by the Assistant Secretary in consultation with the County Competition Secretary and shall be included in the County Match Programme.

(c) All arrangements for the first round and semi-final shall be the responsibility of the first named Group in the draw, and shall be included in the County Match Programme. The final shall be played on a date and at a venue designated by the County Competition Secretary.

(d) In the event of the scores being equal at the conclusion of 18 ends an extra end or ends

shall be played by all six rinks simultaneously until there is a winner. The total number of shots of all six rinks will count on the extra end. The extra ends will commence within ten minutes following completion of the initial game.
(e) All score cards to be sent to the County Competition Secretary immediately after the match has been played.
(f) The winning Group shall hold the Inter-Group trophy for one year and shall be presented with 30 commemorative badges.
(g) Any player having taken part in this competition in the current season will be ineligible to play in the Wally Ball Shield and vice versa.
(h In the event of weather conditions stopping the match, if a total of 72 ends have been concluded the result will stand. If not play must be continued on the same green on an agreed date and notified to the County Competition Secretary.

18. WALLY BALL CHALLENGE SHIELD

In addition to Competition Regulation 1 herein the following shall apply.
(a) This shall be an Inter-Group competition comprising sides of four teams of four players in each rink.
(b) The eight County Groups shall be divided into two sections of four, all matches played on a six year rolling cycle.
(c) Group sides within each section shall play each other once, the winning Group side in each section shall play each other to decide the outright winner.
(d) The dates fixed by the County Competition Secretary in conjunction with the County Assistant Secretary and venues for the sectional games specified by the home Group. The date for the final game will be specified by the County Competition Secretary in conjunction with the County Assistant Secretary.
(e) The game shall consist of 18 ends. Scoring shall be on a points basis, two points being awarded for each four, making 8 in all per match. A win shall count two points and a tie one, in the event of a tie at the head of any table the winners shall be determined by the 'shot difference'. If there is still a tie the winner shall be the Group who has won the greatest number of ends in all matches played.
(f) The scoring system for the final remain the same as in the Group Stages, if at the end the Points and Shots are equal all rinks will play an extra end or ends until a result is reached.
(g) The winning Group shall hold the Wally Ball Challenge Shield for twelve months and shall be presented with 20 commemorative badges.
(h) Any player having taken part in the Wally Ball Shield in the current season will be ineligible to play in the Inter Group knock-out and vice versa.
(i) No player having played in the Middleton Cup Competition during the preceding season shall be allowed to participate in the Wally Ball Competition
(j) All score cards to be sent to the County Competition Secretary immediately after the game.
(k) In the event of weather conditions stopping the match, if a total of 48 ends have been concluded the result will stand. If not play must be continued on the same green on an agreed date in consultation with the County Competition Secretary.

19. ASHFORD GROUP UNBADGED CHALLENGE CUP

In addition to the Competition Regulations 1 herein the following shall apply.
(a) This shall be an Inter-Group competition comprising sides of six teams of four players picked from a squad of 30 whose names shall be notified to the Ashford Cup Secretary prior to the commencement of the competition. Although this is an Unbadged Competition (for players unbadged on 30th April in each year), each group is

permitted (at their own discretion) to include 6 players in their squad, who have been badged for less than three years. When badged players are included in the 24 players for a match, they are limited to one per rink and may not skip. In a case where illness, accident, or other serious cause could result in a Group being unable to field a full team of 24 players, at the discretion of the Ashford Cup Secretary, they can call on a player or players not in the initial squad.

(b) The eight County Groups shall be divided into two sections of four, all matches played on a six year rolling cycle.
(c) Group sides within each section shall play each other once, the winning Group side in each section shall play each other in a final to decide the outright winner.
(d) The dates fixed by the County Assistant Secretary and venues for the sectional games specified by the home Group. The date and venue for the final game will be specified by the County Assistant Secretary.
(e) The game shall consist of 18 ends. Scoring shall be on a points basis, two points being awarded for each four, making 12 in all per match. A win shall count two points and a tie one, in the event of a tie at the head of any table the winners shall be determined by the 'shot difference'. If there is still a tie the winner shall be the Group who has won the greatest number of ends in all matches played.
(f) The scoring system for the final will remain the same as in the Group Stages, if at the end the Points and Shots are equal all rinks will play an extra end or ends until a result is reached.
(g) The winning Group shall hold the Ashford Challenge Cup for twelve months and shall be presented with 30 commemorative badges.
(h) All score cards to be sent to the Assistant Secretary immediately after the game.
(i) In the event of weather conditions stopping the match, if a total of 72 ends have been concluded the result will stand. If not play must be continued on the same green on an agreed date in consultation with the Assistant Secretary.