LEAGUE, TOURNAMENT AND ASSOCIATION FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS CONCERNING RULES ON RETURN TO PLAY AND THE CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

Public health directives over coronavirus (COVID-19) are evolving rapidly. Bowling centres have begun to re-open, however the timing, restrictions and requirements for centres to re-open differ amongst the respective States and Territories.

TBA has prepared this document to assist centres, members, leagues and tournament promoters with various options to assist with the return of our sport.

LEAGUES
Limitations on the number of people inside a Centre at any one time have been imposed by most Governments and vary in each State and Territory. This will result in many issues facing bowling centres and will require flexibility to allow leagues to return to continue their involvement with the sport.

*Leagues, together with centre management must determine the future of all leagues in a centre, including the number of bowlers wishing to return, revisions to previous schedules, creation of new schedules, payment of prize funds and how the league will reform based on the numbers of people permitted in a centre at any one time.*

To assist in the reformation of leagues, TBA are permitting the following rules to be waived until September 30, 2020. Further consideration will be given after that date. If a centre chooses to adopt any of the waived rules, they must be willing to accept the responsibility for the control and management of the leagues resumption.

RULE 321 SERIES - HOW BOWLED
A natural (two adjoining) pair of lanes will be used in each game of league play. Teams scheduled to bowl against each other must be in direct competition on adjacent lanes, and will then and there oppose each other, unless a forfeit or deferred/postponed or pre-bowled game is granted.

The first game of a series will be started on the scheduled lane with succeeding games starting on alternating lanes of the pair.

WAIVER
A game can be played on a single lane, without the need to alternate. All TBA awards including high score awards will be honoured during this period.
RULE 322  ORDER OF BOWLING
All members of the contesting teams will successively and in regular order bowl one frame on one lane and for the next frame change and use the other lane of the pair, alternating each frame until the end of the game, save for any bonus balls resulting from a strike or spare in the tenth frame, which will be bowled on the same lane as the tenth frame.

Every frame must be completed at the time the bowler is bowling in their regular order, with tenth frame bonus balls being completed before the next player bowls.

In matches other than singles competition, the anchor player must have bowled the first ball of the frame before the lead-off player commences the next frame, unless league rules say otherwise. When any question arises as to which bowler should bowl first or when two bowlers are in corresponding positions, it will be incumbent upon the bowler on the right to so bowl.

A bowler who has to leave early, may, with the permission of both Captains, complete the game bowling frames on alternate lanes with one of the opposing players, providing the match has progressed up to the fifth frame of the third game.

WAIVER
A game can be played on a single lane, without the need to alternate. A game can also be played on a pair of lanes for one team of 4 or 5 persons (one team per pair).

Q: Can a league compete at different times or days to accommodate the schedule changes?
A: Yes. Bowling at different times or days is acceptable and will be considered one scheduled league session.

Q: Can a 4 or 5 person team league complete with the current COVID social distance restrictions?
A: Yes.
A 4 man team can compete with using the social distance practices (1.5m apart) with two players on each lane (4 persons per pair of lanes). For example, if Teams 5 & 9 are scheduled to play on lanes 1 & 2, this would change to utilising 2 adjoining pairs whereby team 5 being assigned a pair of lanes, 1 & 2 and their opponents team 9 would be assigned an adjoining pair 3 & 4. All names in the team need to be posted on the same lane, for example Team 5 lineup would be listed on lane 1 etc. In this example the lead player does not have to wait till the last player has bowled their first ball, they may bowl on the next lane when ready.

The return to play for bigger leagues (4 and 5 person teams) could also be arranged for half the league to pre-bowl at another time but prior to the next scheduled match.

It is the responsibility of the Centre management and the league to determine the future of all leagues in a centre, including the number of bowlers wishing to return, revisions to previous schedules, creation of new schedules, payment of prize funds and how the league will reform based on the numbers of people permitted in a centre at any one time.
Q: I bowl in a league for people with a disability and we have carers that attend with some of our bowlers. What can we do to return to play?

A: Strict compliance with the maximum number of patrons allowed in the centres is the responsibility of the bowling centre, so the first step is to talk with your bowling centre. Groups that come in together can bowl on the same lanes, but there should be no more than 3 people on a lane.

So if there was 15 in the league, you’d use lanes 1-5 with 3 people on each lane. Then if possible, the centre would leave a one lane gap to the next group. Using this example, the other group would bowl on Lane 7. If the centre is full people all lanes can be used however there must be strictly no more than 3 bowlers per lane who must social distance and stay at least 1.5m apart from one another.

The safety of participants must come first. If a carer or parent normally accompanies a participant, they must continue to attend. If the attendance of parents and carers together with those bowling exceeds the maximum number of participants permitted by government restrictions alternative arrangements for the league or group must be made. Importantly, you will need to liaise with your local centre to determine if a parent or carer’s attendance will be included in the number of participants allowed in accordance with State/Territory and Federal guidelines.

Q: Can a league or tournament adapt the schedule to accommodate social distancing?

A: Yes. Centres, tournament management or the league management (officers and team captains) may make scheduling changes to comply with government restrictions.

Q: Can the league or tournament set a schedule so there are open lanes between teams?

A: Yes, this would be acceptable. We suggest you work with bowling centre management before deciding how to schedule teams.

There are many options available for larger leagues including delaying the return of the league until restrictions are lifted, splitting league sessions, pre and post bowling options to reduce the number of bowlers in the centre at the same time.
RULE 311(a) PRE-BOWLING, NOT REVISABLE (refer to Rule 334 for further information)
Each league should decide whether to allow or prohibit pre bowling in their league. If a league allows pre bowling, bowlers are not permitted to have any undated pre-bowled scores. A pre-bowl, once approved, must be used for the match it was applied for. Unless a league sets a maximum number, bowlers can have any number of dated pre-bowls, as long as each series is dated for a particular match in the schedule. Having pre-bowled a scheduled series, a player may not play with their League on the date of that scheduled match.

AVERAGES/HANDICAPS existing at the date the score was used in the league are to be used.
TBA SPECIAL SCORE RECOGNITION/AWARDS – Special Score Awards defined in Rule 402 will not be recognised nor will those awards be available for any special scores bowled in pre bowled or deferred/postponed matches.

POST BOWLING: Post bowling (bowling a scheduled match after the scheduled date) by individuals or a team is not permitted in any form.

WAIVER
Any games completed as a dated pre-bowl before the shutdown can be re-dated to any future date decided by the bowler once the league resumes competition. If a centre decides to allow and control it, post bowling by individuals or groups will be permitted.

During the waiver period, TBA High Score awards will be recognised in all competition completed as pre bowling, post bowling and phantom leagues, providing a print out of the score sheet accompanies the application and a letter from the centre manager certifying any changes made on the score sheet are true and correct. If an application is received with a score sheet showing any score corrections that are not certified in writing by the centre manager the award will not be honoured.

Q: If the league bowls separate days or times, will high game awards be recognised?
A: High Scores bowled during any revised league times will be recognised because these are considered the same match.

RULE 601, in part:
Cleaning
Approved cleaners may be used to clean the surface of the ball before or after a session of play, provided:
1. They do not affect the hardness of the ball.
2. They are totally removed from the surface of the ball before delivery of the ball.
3. They are not used during a series or session of continuous games. (Refer Rule 602.2)

Any ball that does not conform to any of these provisions may not be used in TBA competition.

4. Approved Ball cleaners are listed on the following link. In Australian competition, products listed on the link as “Approved Anytime” are only approved before or after a session of play:

5. Products shown on this link are totally prohibited at any time:
RULE 602 BALL SURFACES ALTERATIONS
1. Unless rule 602(2) applies, altering the surface of a bowling ball by the application of any substance, liquid or abrasive, including Abralon or any other abrasive pads or the use of a recognised ball cleaning or polishing machine or ball spinner during a series or session of continuous games is prohibited. Refer to Rule 128 for the definition of a session of games. A ball may be wiped with a clean cloth or towel at any time. Penalties apply – Refer Offence No. 511.

2. In the event any foreign substance like grease, oil, rubber or similar from the machinery or equipment in the Centre is discovered on the surface of a ball in play it may be removed with an approved ball cleaner by the Tournament Director, League Management, Centre staff or a person or persons authorised by them.

3. Use of Abralon Pads - The surfacing of bowling balls using abralon pads or any other product in the player’s area at any time is prohibited. This rule is not limited to during competition. If a competition offers a ball surfacing table for this purpose it must be used.

4. All balls in a player’s possession will be deemed to be used during a series or session of continuous games

WAIVER
The sections of the above rules regarding the application of any substance during competition have been waived. TBA will permit to use of isopropyl alcohol at any time during competition to clean a ball – no other approved cleaners will be allowed during competition.

Q: Since COVID-19 remains on hard surfaces, can bowling balls be cleaned during play?

A: Yes. TBA has made an exception to the rule that restricts the use of liquid cleaners to clean the outer surface of the bowling ball during a session of play. During the waiver period, bowlers will be allowed to use isopropyl alcohol (rubbing alcohol) to clean their bowling balls during competition. The exception applies only to isopropyl alcohol – no other approved cleaners will be allowed during competition.

TOURNAMENTS
If and when government regulations permit bowling centres to conduct tournaments, promotors must contact the TBA Office once the centre advises the event can be accommodated.

Organisations operating under their own Constitutions with their own governance structures should, in conjunction with all centres that may be involved, discuss whether a return to their previous event format is possible and explore suitable options going forward.

JUNIOR LEAGUES
Any junior leagues operating in 2020 must be wound up by the end of the year if the league contains juniors who will age out at the end of this year.

BALANCE HOLES
All the rules defined in Chapter 6 that are due to come into play on August 1st concerning Balance Holes will still come into effect on that date.