

## Buying New Bowls 101

When you've been well and truly bitten by the bowling bug, you may think it is time to buy your own set of bowls. It can be confusing trying to figure out which bowls are best for you and with new bowls costing in the region of \$600 your decision should not be made hastily. I hope this guide will help.

The four main manufacturers of quality lawn bowls are Henselite, Aero (both from Australia), Thomas Taylor (Scotland) and Drakes Pride (England)

<https://www.henselite.com.au>

<https://www.aerobowls.com>

<https://www.taylorbowls.com>

<https://www.drakespride.co.uk>

**Henselite** has a Canadian distributor based in Vancouver (Vince Mai). Vince has a small store inside the PIBC indoor bowling facility at Hillcrest Park near Queen Elizabeth Park. The indoor club is closed during the summer, so you'll need to make an appointment. You can call Vince at 778-868-3393. He has bowls, shoes and other bowling accessories in stock and if you have a specific order that he doesn't have in stock he can get it from the manufacturer.

**Taylor Bowls** are distributed in Canada by MVP Sports based in Cobourg, Ontario. Call Dan Milligan at 1-800-265-1687 Email:mvpsales@mvpsports.ca Visit <https://www.mvpsports.ca/index.php/products/product-catalog>

**Aero Bowls** are distributed in North American by Accurate Lawn Bowls based in California. Contact Howard: Cell (818) 625-1716 / Office (800)262-6106 /

[howard@accuratelawnbowls.com](mailto:howard@accuratelawnbowls.com) / [www.accuratelawnbowls.com](http://www.accuratelawnbowls.com)

You can also get Aero Bowls straight from the manufacturer. There is no particular cost saving by doing that but if you want a personalized logo that is always an option.

**Drakes Pride** does not have a North American distributor and it doesn't appear you can buy from them directly either. However, you could purchase Drakes Pride from one of the many UK stores that will ship to Canada. Here is one:

<https://www.bowlsworld.co.uk>

Note: Taylor and Drakes Pride also sell Crown Green bowls. Do not buy those. You need Flat Green bowls.

## How do I choose the right lawn bowl for me?

Well, not all lawn bowls are created equal. Some of them are designed to be 'narrow' and won't bend as much as bowls that are 'wide' and will have a considerable arc when bowled in ideal conditions. But there are many levels inbetween the

narrowest and the widest. Here in Canada we don't get the fast greens like they do in Australia, and many of the models produced are made specifically for fast greens. At the end of this article, I have listed some models that are popular with many of our club members.

This graphic is good to familiarise yourself with various bias options. When viewing the graphic, keep in mind everything above the Taylor Ace line are bowls better suited to fast greens that we rarely have, and indoor greens (which we do have at PIBC):

[https://www.newportharborlbc.com/uploads/3/1/4/3/31433169/bias\\_chart.pdf](https://www.newportharborlbc.com/uploads/3/1/4/3/31433169/bias_chart.pdf)

When you start to look around the websites of the lawn bowl manufacturers, you'll not only see many different colours to choose from, but you will read about different kind of grips, and terms like fast greens, slow greens, narrow bias, wide bias, smooth finish, big finish... it can be very confusing.

The first thing to do is find your size. That is best accomplished by trying out the club bowls until you find the size that feels comfortable to you. Not all bowl models come in every size however, especially the newer triple 000 or quad 0000 sizes.

You will notice that new bowls have a variety of grip options - indentations on the bowl to help you hang on to the bowl when delivering. It is a personal choice, but in my opinion they all help so there are no wrong choices.

It helps to understand green speed when selecting a set of bowls. If you rolled a bowl from tee to tee how long will it take to come to stop? Early in the season when the greens are a bit soft and the grass is longer it may take 9 to 10 seconds. This is called a slow, or heavy, green. You may hear experienced bowlers commenting "the greens are running slow today." When the greens are drier and the grass is shorter the greens here in Canada will increase to maybe 12 to 14 seconds. Under those conditions the bowls take longer to slow down and don't require as much energy to deliver. But that is still slow compared to Australian greens, or the greens at the local PIBC Indoor club which can be 17 seconds or more.

But how does this affect your choice of bowls? Well, green speed has a great effect on how much the bowls turn. Lawn bowls bend the more they slow down, so the longer it takes to slow down, the more they will bend.

Another consideration is what position do you see yourself playing? If you play lead, you have the luxury of bowling without a lot of bowls in your way, so a narrower bias bowl might be preferable. Someone in the vice or the skip position will be faced with a lot of bowls in his way, so a wider bowl will help him/her get around all the traffic in front of the jack.

Buying new lawn bowls is an expensive proposition. They typically cost around \$600. If you can find used bowls they will be considerably less depending on their

age. Don't be afraid to ask others what bowls they have, and if they like them. You might be surprised how many bowlers are less than enthusiastic about the bowls they use, maybe because the bowls get blamed when the problem may lie elsewhere!

Here is a list of bowls that are popular with our members and generally work well with the speed range of our greens:

Henselite Tiger or Tiger Pro  
Henselite Classic II

Aero Groove  
Aero Sonic

Taylor Ace  
Taylor International

Drakes Pride XP  
Drakes Pride Professional

- *Graham Mason*