

(Left) Lawn bowling at the Parade Grounds of Prospect Park (New York City) circa 1919.  
(Right) Canadian national champion, Tim Mason.

## Lawn Bowling: it isn't just your Grandad's game anymore!

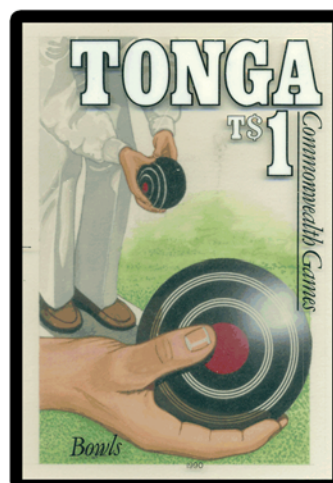
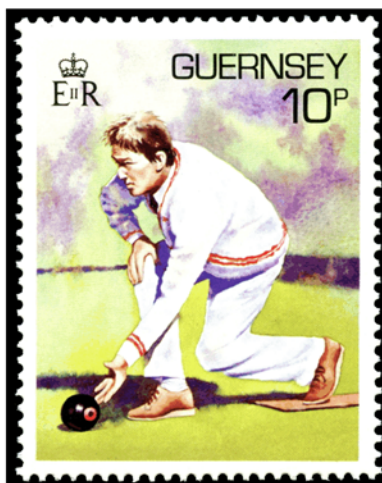
by Patricia Loehr

When lawn bowling originated in England and Scotland it was known as "bowles." Scots made it a national sport in the 1500s and have nurtured it to become popular in many countries. Lawn bowling began in America about 1690 and preceded bowling at pins. In 1915 the American Lawn Bowling Association began in Buffalo, New York.

The game is played either outside or indoors on a green about 120 feet square and divided into rinks. The entire green is surrounded by a ditch. Each rink is 20 feet wide and 120 feet long. Greens are grass that is maintained to an even carpet-like surface.

Only flat sole shoes are permitted on a lawn bowling green. Equipment to play are bowls, rectangular mats, and a small white ball referred to as a "jack." Bowls vary in size and weight, however each set of four are the same in size and weight. To allow for lawn bowls to curve when rolled they are flattened on one side and built out on the other. That unbalance of the bowl is known as "bias."

Lawn bowling is played by opposing sides of singles, pairs, triples or fours. Play in one direction is an "end." In singles play, the game is determined when a side has 21 points. Pairs, triples and fours are determined by most total points after a predetermined length of time or playing an agreed upon number of ends. Number of bowls for each player





is decided before play begins to a maximum of four. For example, in pairs or triples each player might play four or three bowls.

To begin play, a mat is placed at the start end. Then a side sets the jack for distance by rolling it from the mat toward the other end of the rink. The jack is centered and must be a minimum distance from the ditch. The jack becomes the target and bowlers from each side alternate rolling a bowl from the mat to the jack. The bias of the bowl allows it to curve from either a forehand or backhand roll. After all bowls are played, the bowl closest to the jack scores 1 point. Additional points can be scored for each bowl closer to the jack than the closest opponent bowl. There are other variations of play and scoring.

The First World Lawn Bowls Championship was held in Sydney, Australia in October of 1966 with

sixteen countries participating. Lawn bowling has been a sport in the Commonwealth Games since their beginning in 1930. In 2010 Guernsey celebrated its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary participating in the Common-

wealth Games with a set of six sport stamps one of which depicts lawn bowling (above).

