

This is how we roll

The front window of our townhouse offers box seats to the Granville Park Lawn Bowling Club. Every spring, we watch various rituals unfold, from the greens-keeper's fussing over the precisely-leveled lawn to the measured watering of brown spots. The meticulous result is enjoyed primarily by earnest seniors in a variety of tournaments and social play. From time to time, though, we've noticed smaller, mixed-aged groups on the field engaged in more casual, laughter-infused tossing of the bowls. Bevvies are also in play – the impetus for a bit of research.

Turns out that the club is available for private parties. Only \$30 per person includes three hours of play, all equipment and onsite coaches – seriously the best deal in town! A few years ago (pre-covid), we threw an invitation out to family and friends, and counting on equal parts curiosity and what-the-hell-why-not, we recruited 16 people – perfect for four teams of four. We snagged a liquor license and threw some snacks on a couple picnic tables and were ready to roll.



Our three coaches – Carol, Pat and Jerome – demonstrated the basics of the game and stuck around to provide tips on tweaking our delivery so that by the end of the night, we were usually keeping our bowls on one field instead of two.

For everyone, this was a first. We didn't know what to expect. With its reputation for being a sport for not for the ages, but for the aged, there were more than a few seniors' jokes flying about to start. But then, a funny thing happened after the first 20 minutes... we started to enjoy ourselves. A lot. As one friend commented afterwards, *"We loved it! Who would have thought? The evening had such a lovely feeling to it. I will remember the chatter and laughter and long shadows across the grass and a sublime summer night. It couldn't have been better."*



There was indeed a lot of laughter as each of us focused on adjusting our Monty Python-worthy bowling forms. Unique styles prevailed: from wild sidearm hurls to various versions of the “lob-and-land” (to the dismay of our cringing coaches). We were poetry in motion: Shakespeare it wasn't.



One participant who's an avid curler commented, *"Once I saw the parallels to curling, I thought I had it figured out from a strategy perspective. But, much like my first impression of curling – it was both harder and more fun than I thought it would be!"*

On that final point, everyone's in agreement: lawn bowling is easy to learn, hard to master.

I couldn't help but chuckle at a phone conversation I overheard. Our firefighter friend was saying to a friend, *"I'm at lawn bowling. Really, I'm not kidding. It's actually fun."*

I think what he and the others really meant was *"surprisingly, it doesn't suck"*. It was so unsucky, in fact, that this has become an annual event for 30 or more friends and family.

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