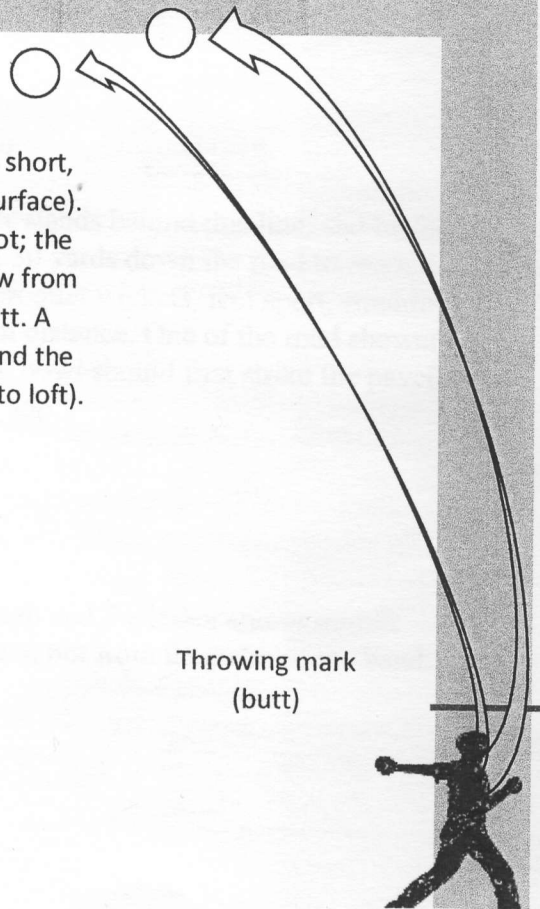


Bowl rolls through grass,
touches road surface.
This is a good shot.
Mark a new butt, and take
the next shot.

ROAD

Dead Bowl (bowl falls short,
does not touch road surface).
This counts as one shot; the
next player must throw from
behind the same butt. A
player may bowl around the
corner (does not have to loft).

Throwing mark
(butt)



Bowl flies through the air over the road,
does not touch the road surface.
This is a good shot.
Mark a new butt, and take the next shot.

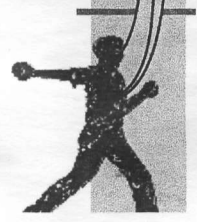
An intersection
or sharp curve
is a "corner."



Bowl flies through the air
and strikes the road.
This is a good shot.
Mark a new butt, and take
the next shot

IRISH LOFT

Throwing mark
(butt)



The Throw

The bowler should back up 10 to 15 yards and take a running start to gain momentum to the throwing line (the *butt*). For many people, however, taking two or three steps is sufficient.

As the thrower runs to the throwing mark, in the Northern or County Armagh style, he extends the arm and bowl behind him as he runs. At the throwing mark the arm is snapped forward by arching the back and shoulders, releasing the bowl underhand before stepping over the mark.

In the Southern or County Cork style, as the thrower runs to the mark, the arm and bowl are lifted up and back, then whirled downward into an underhand throw, releasing the bowl before stepping over the mark.

The bowl should fly through the air a few yards before striking the sop, rather than being thrown immediately into the road surface. The bowl, striking on or near the sop, will then grab the road with heavy topspin, rolling on exactly between the legs of the teammates, the road showers, following its pre-planned path to glory.

Topspin is imparted as the bowl comes off the tip of the index and/or middle fingers. Remember, throw from the fingers not from the palm of the hand.

Although the bowl should be released before the thrower steps over the line (i.e., before "breaking butt"), this rule is not strictly enforced in casual matches.

Safety

It is the responsibility of the thrower to ensure that everyone in the road ahead is facing him/her and paying attention. Do not be shy about shouting out "Rolling!" before throwing. It is the responsibility of the thrower's teammates, the road showers, to "Clear the Way!" (*Faugh a Ballach!*) of all spectators for a safe distance (at least 50 yards) in front of the thrower before every shot.

The Shot

From wherever the bowl stops, not from where it leaves the road surface, the bowl is taken directly to the nearest point on the road. A chalk mark is made at that point, and the next throw is taken from behind that mark by the next teammate in rotation, and so on to the finish line. It is customary to write the cumulative shot count on the road under each mark.

The Irish Loft

Over sharp curves or where two roads intersect (a *corner*), the bowl may be thrown through the air (*lofted*) over the corner rather than rolled around it. The loft must strike the road surface or pass over the road. If the loft fails to reach the road, it is a *dead bowl* and counts as one shot. The next throw, however, must be taken from the same mark. The next thrower may choose either to again attempt the loft or to bowl around the corner.

It is the responsibility of the thrower and his/her teammates to be absolutely certain the landing area of the Irish loft is clear of all spectators before lofting.

Today paved roads are used for road bowling courses, although in olden days dirt roads commonly were used. If unpaved, the road should be hard-packed.

The Finish

The final shot to the finish line should be thrown as far as possible past the line. If two or more players or teams have an equal number of shots crossing the finish line, the winner is decided by which shot goes the farthest distance past the finish line. A long "run-out" straightaway beyond the finish line should be available.

Irish Bowling Tips in General

stroke A smooth Irish bowling "stroke" imparting accuracy and topspin often gains more distance than a more powerful but less accurate throw.

bowling a curve A shot can be played around the outer edge of a curve, but often it is more effective to shoot deep into the curve and let the bowl's momentum bring it back out. It is important to get through most curves in only two shots. The first shot, into the curve, must "get sight," i.e., allow the next thrower a clear shot out of the curve.

lost bowls Often beginners' throws outpace the relatively inexperienced road showers who must chase and spot the bowl for the thrower. Watch carefully where the last weed moved, or the exact spot where the bowl plunged into the stream. Then leap in gleefully and plunge those arms into the weeds or mud! If all else fails, bring along a metal detector. Real Irishmen never lose their bowls!

stopping the bullet Never stop the bullet with your foot. Use a jacket, a piece of cloth or rug, or a garbage can lid. Sore toes and ankles, or worse, will surely result if you stick your toe out.