

CHOOSING A BOWL

1. Choosing a bowl is a very personal decision and this brief note just outlines some of the factors you should consider. Always try a bowl before purchase!!!
2. In your first season it is perhaps best to obtain a second-hand set of woods to enable you to play for a while before incurring the expense of buying new woods. But be aware that there are a lot of big, heavy, wide bias woods offered for sale second-hand! Try before you buy!!
3. There are 5 main things to consider in your selection:
 - a. Size
 - b. Weight
 - c. Bias
 - d. Type of bias
 - e. Profile

SIZE

4. You will have tried various sizes during your coaching and you will therefore have a good idea of which size is best for you. Sizes range from 00 (smallest adult size) up to 6. One manufacturer (Aero) even offers half sizes. Size is the same across all manufactures. You should ensure that you can hold the bowl comfortably in your hand and are not liable to drop it.

WEIGHT

5. Bowls come in 2 basic weights, heavy and medium (Aero bowls are heavier than most and are classified by them as heavy and extra heavy). Which to go for is down to personal preference. You should try out both heavy and medium woods to see which feels better in your hand.
6. The difference between weights is relatively small; about 25g -60g (1 - 2oz) depending on size of bowl. Nowadays heavy woods are more common and some makes or types are only made in the heavy version. Coloured woods are generally heavy. Although there are some differences between heavy and medium woods of the same type this is relatively small. Heavy woods take slightly more effort to deliver at the same speed but roll on for a little longer (all due to momentum). Remember that across a 3 or 4 hour match a small difference in weight can affect your bowling arm or hand!
7. Note that weight, unlike size, varies across types and makes of bowls. So a heavy Thomas Taylor Blaze weighs 1235g about the same as their medium weight Lignoid model and 15g less than the heavy Lignoid model (all at size 0). The Drakes Pride Professional model (also size 0, heavy) comes in at 1280g. Aero size zeros are 1316g (heavy) and 1340g (extra heavy). These are small differences compared to the overall weight of the wood but something you should be aware of if weight is important to you.

BIAS

8. Bias here means how much green you have to give the wood for it to come back to the centre line. Some woods have a wide (or large) bias meaning you have to give them more green. Other woods have a narrow bias.

9. Unless you bowl in a back end position (i.e. position 3 or 4 in a rink) when you will need a wide bias to come round blocking woods, you can use either wide or narrow woods. It comes down to personal preference.
10. One complicating issue is if you intend to play indoors using the same set of woods. For this it is recommended not to have a bias wider than that of the Drakes Pride Professional woods.

TYPE OF BIAS

11. Type of bias refers to how the wood swings. Some woods have a uniform smooth curve in their bias, whereas in others the bias all comes towards the end of the delivery with the wood turning sharply at the end (this is often known as the “finish”). Thus woods which take the same width of green can have different ways in which the bias comes into effect. In general back end players do not like the smooth curve option as it is more difficult to bowl round blocking woods. Personal preference will determine what you go for.

PROFILE

12. This is something you will need to search for in the details of a wood as it is seldom mentioned. However a few manufacturers offer a thinner type of wood than can sit more easily in a small hand. If you imagine a wood sitting in your hand (in the cup grip) then a slim profile has less distance between your thumb and little finger.
13. Examples of such woods as specified by their manufacturer are (incl ‘indoor’ specified types):
 - a. Thomas Taylor Lazer, Blaze and LegacySL
 - b. Almark Slimline
 - c. Aero Profile

ADVICE

14. Your coach can offer you more advice if you need it.

ANNEXES

Annex 1. List of manufacturers and their range of woods (as copied from their websites)

Annex 2. Bias chart showing comparative biases between makes.

Sizes & Weights Guide							
Size	00	0	1	2	3	4	5
Diameter (mm)	116	118	121	122.5	124	125.5	127
Diameter (inches)	4 9/16	4 11/16	4 3/4	4 13/16	4 7/8	4 15/16	5
Medium Weight (grams)	1190	1220	1300	1350	1400	1460	1520
Medium Weight (lbs-ozs)	2-09	2-11	2-13 1/4	2-15 3/4	3-1 1/2	3-3 3/4	3-5 3/4
Heavy Weight (grams)	1215	1280	1350	1400	1460	1520	1580
Heavy Weight (lbs-ozs)	2-10 1/2	2-13 3/4	2-15 3/4	3-1 1/2	3-3 1/2	3-5 1/4	3-7 1/4

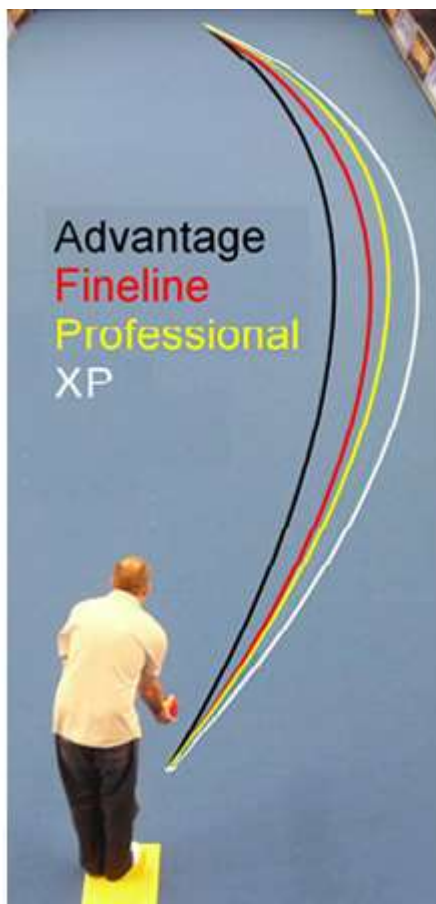
Taken from Drakes Pride Professional Bowl specification

ANNEX 1

NOTE all types of bowls are shown including those designed for indoor greens. Bowls for indoor greens are still legal for use outdoors.

DRAKES PRIDE

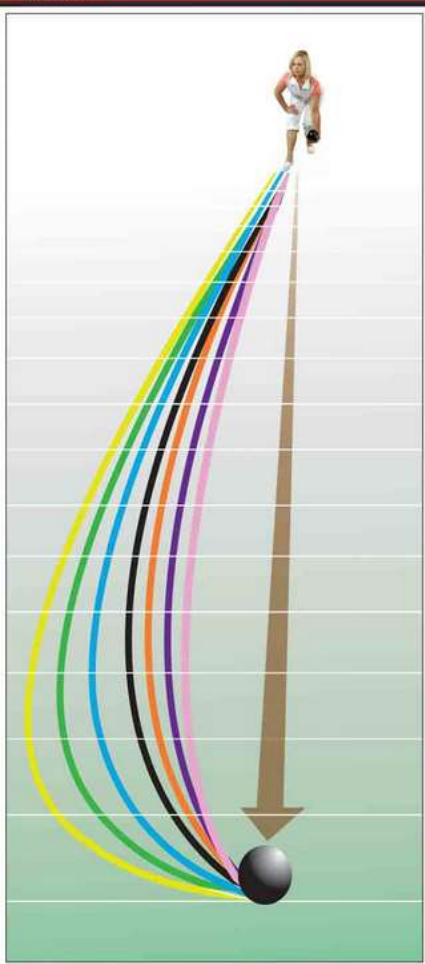
Advantage	a minimum bias bowl
Fineline	just slightly less bias than the medium bias Professional model and with a gentle curve to the jack
Professional	a medium bias bowl with a gradual and consistent finish to the delivery. This is a very popular all round bowl
XP	a bit wider bias than the Professional and with a later finish (swing)



THOMAS TAYLOR

Lazer	A slim profile bowl with a precision narrow bias. Designed for indoor and fast outdoor conditions, it features 'Progrip' as standard.
Vector VS	It remains perfect for fast surfaces and indoor greens, having a lenient, gentle draw to the jack with no hook at the end, making it ideal for front end bowlers. Narrow bias.
Blaze	The bowl has been designed with a slender diameter for a more comfortable fit in your hand, enhanced with a deep dimple grip (Premier Grip) ensuring a confident grasp to give a consistent draw and defining accuracy with every shot. An all purpose bowl, the bias runs between a Vector VS and the Ace models and has a distinct sweep as the bowl finishes its course to its target.
Ace	A slightly wider drawing arc than the Vector with no hook at the finish. The Ace is a dual purpose bowl, ideal for any rink position, indoors and out.
Legacy SL	The ideal model for the slimmer hand. Medium to wide bias with a controlled swing to the jack.
Lignoid	Predominantly an outdoor bowl with a wide draw, recommended for outdoor grass surfaces and short mat play.

Bias Chart



LAZER



A slim profile bowl. Precision narrow bias. Designed for indoor and fast outdoor conditions. Progrip as standard. Available in Black only.

VECTOR-VS



Narrow drawing arc with no hook at the finish. Recommended primarily for all indoor surfaces and artificial surfaces. Progrip as standard. Plain to order.

BLAZE



The draw is between the Vector VS and the Ace with a nice sweep at the end. Can be used for both indoor and outdoor surfaces. Premier Grip as standard. Plain to order.

ACE



Slightly wider drawing arc than the Vector VS with no hook at the finish. Recommended for all indoor and outdoor surfaces. Progrip as standard. Plain to order.

INTERNATIONAL



Similar to the Ace but with a stronger finish. Recommended for all indoor and outdoor surfaces. Crescent Grip as standard.

LEGACY SL



A neat slim profile bowl, for easier grip and control. Medium to wide bias with a controlled draw to the jack. Progrip as standard. Available in Black only.

LIGNOID

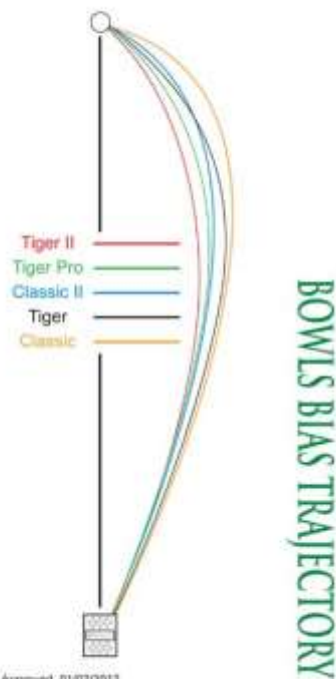


Predominantly an outdoor, grass surface or Short Mat bowl with a wide draw. The Lignoid retains a high quality finish at an extremely competitive price. Progrip as standard.

HENSELITE

All Henselite bowls come in heavy only

Tiger 11	The Tiger II is the narrowest drawing bowl in the Henselite UK range. It has a draw line just inside the Classic II, making it most suited to fast paced indoor surfaces. The ergo fit profile and series C grip will maximise comfort and add precision to every delivery.
Tiger Pro	The Tiger Pro is a great all year round bowl as it acts on both fast and slow paced surfaces. With a line between the Tiger and the Tiger II, the Tiger Pro is at home on a variety of green speeds and surfaces, from medium to fast outdoor greens to all indoor surfaces.
Classic II	The Classic II is manufactured to run straighter and finish with a less pronounced hook that its stable mate the Classic. The model is ideal for attacking difficult heads and is recommended for all UK indoor surfaces as well as fast paced outdoor surfaces.
Tiger	The Tiger is a full biased bowl making it ideal choice for both indoor and outdoor bowling. It is highly suited to second's, thirds and skips as they require a bowl that has a relatively strong finish to draw round short bowls.
Classic	The Classic model bowl has the traditional (i.e. wide!) bias which has stood the test of time wherever lawn bowls is played. The Classic remains the choice of bowlers who play on all types of greens and need, above all, a consistent even draw.



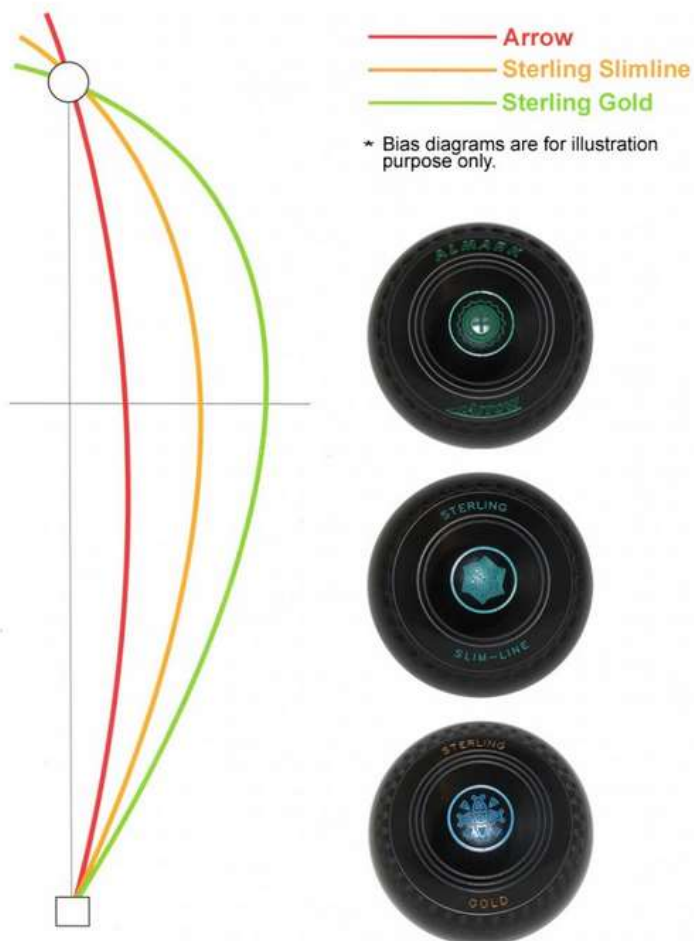
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This chart represents the comparative difference between each model of bowl and is a guide only. This chart is compiled as an average of testing in slow green and testing table conditions.

ALMARK

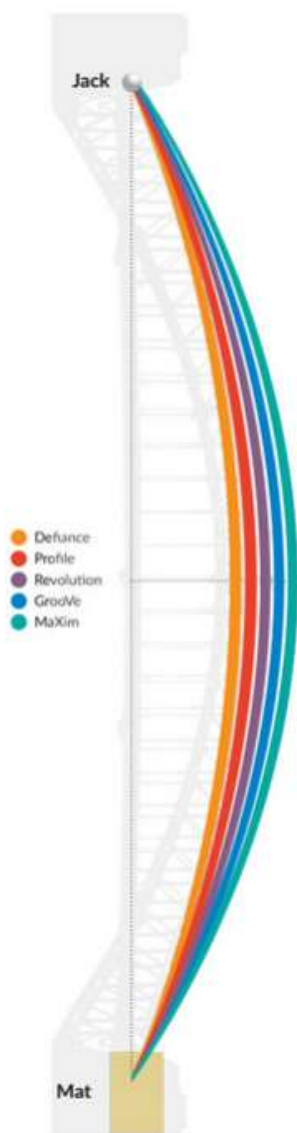
Sterling Slimline	Slimmer profile bowl designed with a mid-bias. Ideal for all surfaces and suitable for bowlers wanting to play the same set all year round
Almark Arrow	Designed for indoor and fast paced outdoor greens in mind. Although having a narrow bias line, the bowl offers a distinctive curve as the weight comes off the bowl. This allows the player to attempt a much wider variety in the type of shots they play when playing on the faster greens, allowing them to play with more confidence and peace of mind. The Almark Arrow can be used by all level of bowlers and is also well suited to indoors play.
Sterling Gold	Strongest bias bowl in the range. The bowl has a pronounced hook as the weight comes off the bowl, and is ideally suited for outdoor surfaces and slower paced indoor surfaces

Almark Bias Chart



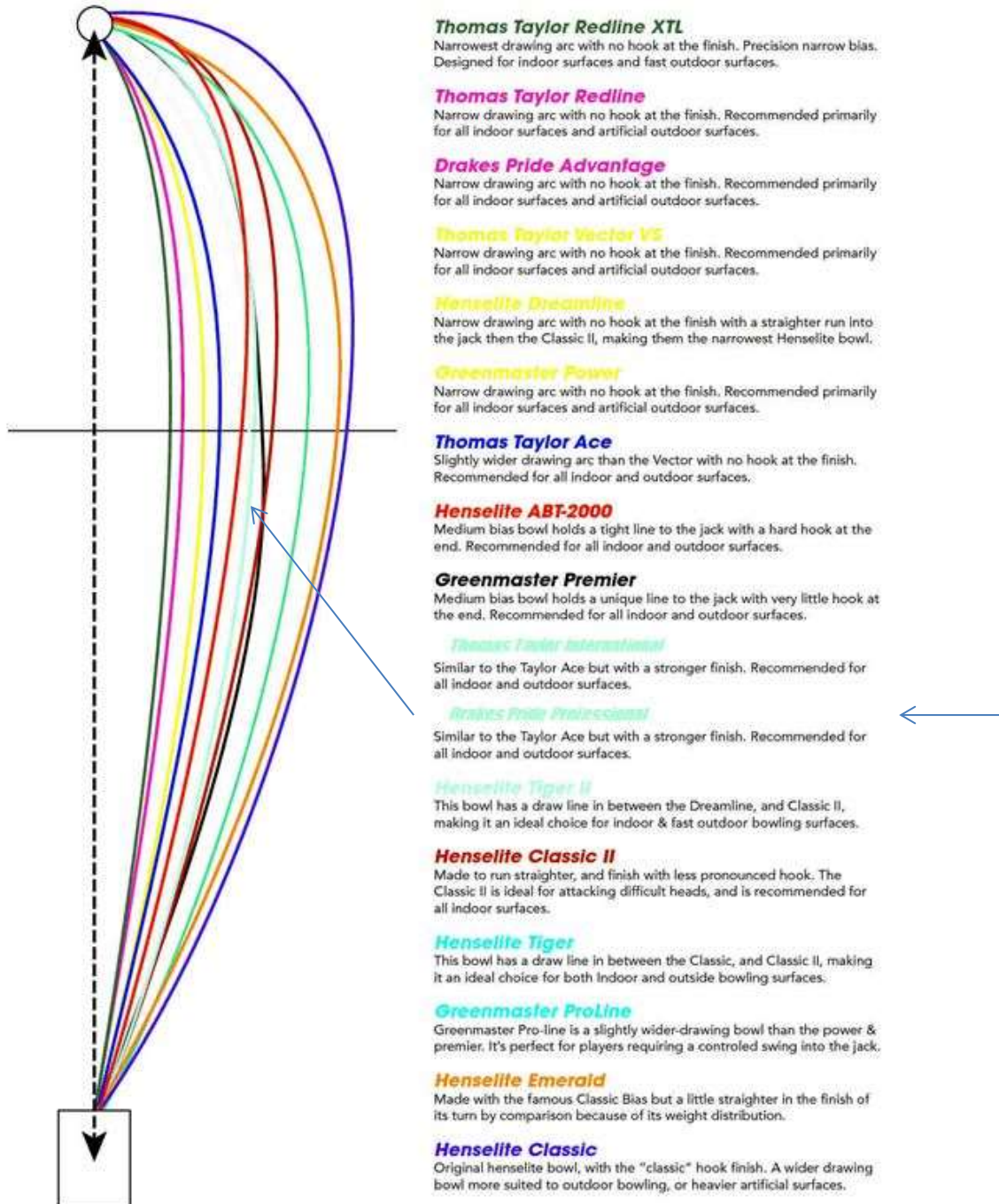
AERO BOWLS

Defiance	The Defiance is a narrow bias bowl and has been designed for bowlers who want a tighter line but with sufficient turn into the head. It is effective on faster indoor surfaces.
Profile	The Profile is suitable for use on all types of indoor greens. It is an ideal bowl for front end play on average paced surfaces but can be effectively used by all playing positions on faster surfaces. It is also designed to be slimmer in the hand
Revolution	The Revolution is a wider drawing bowl for indoor surfaces with more swing than the Profile. It is ideal for back end play indoors and can also be used outdoors for those who prefer a narrower bias bowl.
Groove	The Aero Groove is specifically designed to cope with all UK outdoor greens including uneven, tracky surfaces. It is a mid-bias, effectively all round bowl.
Maxim	The Aero Maxim is designed for very slow or bumpy outdoor greens. it is a wide swinging bowl and is particularly effective on difficult, heavy greens. It suits bowlers who simply desire a wide turning bowl and is proving popular in short mat.



ANNEX 2: COMPARATIVE BIAS CHART

This old chart is the only one I can find that compares biases across makes and types of bowls. It does not show all bowls types and it shows some old types than have been superseded. It is too old to show Aero bowls. The lines in the diagram should be used for comparative purposes only and not taken as showing the actual line the bowl will take. For indoor bowling (at WhiteknightsIBC) choose nothing wider than a Drakes Pride Professional



Note: caption lists bowls with narrowest bias at the top and widest bias at the bottom