

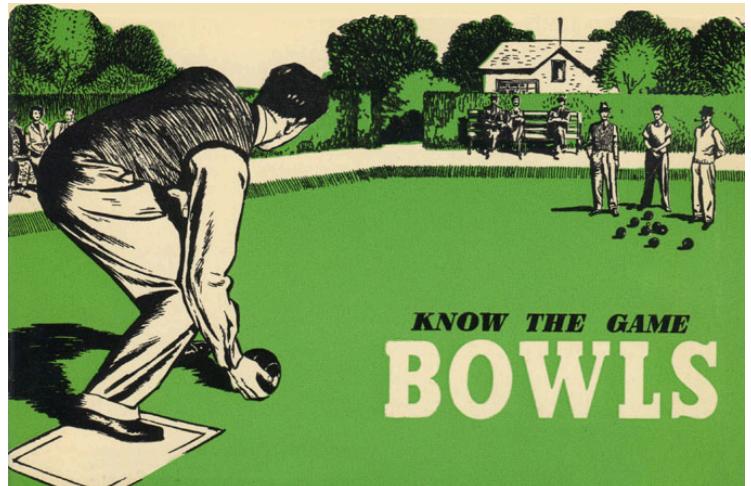
# The History of Lawn Bowling (Bowls) in America

The sport of lawn bowling can trace its North American beginnings to the 17th Century when English Colonists brought the game to the new land. A bowling green was built at Williamsburg VA in 1632, and the game is still played there today on a beautiful green behind the Williamsburg Inn. A Colonel Hoomes built a green on his estate at what is now Bowling Green VA in 1670. Many other of the new states named a town after this ancient sport played in England since the 12th Century.

The bowling green you see today in New York City's Central Park was preceded by many others, the first being a green built by the British in 1664 when they took over the city and named it New York. That first green was erected on the parade ground of Fort Amsterdam, where today the U.S. Custom House sits.

In 1732, George Washington's father put in a green at Mount Vernon, and in that same year a bowling green was established in Battery Park in New York City.

But lawn bowling faded in the early United States of America after the American Revolution (1775-1782) when newly-independent citizens began to take an increasingly dim view of the customs and games of their former governors. The sport virtually disappeared in this country for almost a century until Scottish immigrants revived it in the late 19th Century. They started lawn bowls clubs in New York state, New Jersey and Connecticut, beginning in 1879, and other new clubs soon followed.



By World War I, the spread of lawn bowling and clubs from coast to coast led to the founding of the American Lawn Bowls Association in 1915. Bowlers from Buffalo, Brooklyn and Boston met at the Lafayette Hotel in Buffalo on July 27 that year to form the sport's first national U.S. association. Dr. Frank W. McGuire of Buffalo was its first president.

Played exclusively and then mostly by men in its early days, lawn bowls has attracted many women players in recent decades. When Alf Anderson was president of ALBA in 1966-68, he suggested that a women's lawn bowls association ought to be formed. That idea was energized in 1969 by the formation abroad of the International Women's Bowling Board with its requirement that members had to be authorized national associations.

So in the next year the American Women's Lawn Bowls Association was created with Dorothy Mumma of Riverside CA as its first president. The initiative for formation of the new organization came from the California State Women's Lawn Bowls Association which voted to "go national" at a meeting in Arcadia CA on Feb. 21, 1970. Before the end of that year, five of the six divisions of ALBA (the Southwest, Pacific Inter-Mountain, Northwest, Central and East) had joined the new AWLBA, and the Southeast Division joined in 1971. When the South Central division was created in 1989, it also became a constituent division of both ALBA and AWLBA.

The two national associations, one for men lawn bowlers and the other for women, governed lawn bowls in this country for 30 years until 2000, when they merged into the United States Lawn Bowls Association. Today USLBA governs the game for both men and women and is working to perpetuate and improve lawn bowls for future generations.