

PRESIDENTS ANNUAL REPORT 2025/2026

The past season has once again been very busy with some very pleasing developments. The Central Otago Bowls Board was proactive in introducing a number of new initiatives to assist our associated clubs and their members.

Arguably, Maria Wallis's Year 1-2 programme, run over three Sundays in September, was the real highlight with over 60 individual bowlers attending one or more sessions. This resulted in a huge increase in the number of Year 1-5 bowlers playing in the Men's and Women's Junior Singles. The Men's numbers swelled from 14 in the previous season to 34!! A very pleasing outcome from the increase in numbers was that we were able to provide enough markers for the day to include representative players. We should all feel very proud of the overall achievement.

Overall, entries in our Centre events continue to climb which is very encouraging. This of course presents challenges for all of us so it is important the Central Otago Bowls Board is proactive in ensuring that load is shared with satisfactory and enjoyable outcomes for all.

Central Otago Bowls continues to lead the way in the country in terms of usage of BowlsHub. This is in no small way down to Pauline Seaton's determination and communication skillset. The BowlsHub live scoring has become a real hit which shows the genuine interest in our sport in the region. Men's Tournament Secretary, Ian Clouston, is also becoming an expert in this field and is doing a fabulous job both behind the scenes and on match days. BowlsHub has also become a powerful tool for Barbara Wilson, our Publicity Officer, in communicating results and happenings from within the Centre.

Thanks must go to our coaches and managers within our High-Performance programme. Whilst it is fair to say the results were mixed over the past season, I am confident that with time they will improve in the future. Pleasingly, Terry Scott (Men's Seniors), Carl Street (Women's programme) and Peter Dunne (Men's Development) are all continuing in their roles which provides stability and consistency in our programme. In addition, all are very proactive in looking at improving the programme through different initiatives. We should also not forget the performance of our combined Over 60's team which won their Southern 6 tournament in March on the back of an excellent performance by our women. Congratulations also to Carl Street who has been appointed as a Campaign Coach for the BlindJacks at their World Championships being held in Auckland in January.

We are very fortunate to have Pauline Seaton as Convenor of our Umpire's Association. Pauline has recently been reappointed to the BNZ Umpires Committee for another two years. As such, Pauline is one of only 6 people who report directly to Mark Cameron regarding all matters relating to Umpires nationally. Locally, Pauline has been proactive in having a mobile results app introduced meaning results and live-scoring can now be input into BowlsHub from umpire's phones. I congratulate Pauline on her recent appointments as an umpire at the highest level both here in New Zealand and overseas.

Whilst there are many reasons why we should feel pleased with happenings over the past season we would be naïve to think there are not significant challenges facing the sport in our region. This may be no different to many other sports and leisure activities but it is imperative we identify the main risks to bowls and work to address these. In my mind the continuous maintenance and retention of our greens and in particular our natural greens is an area we all need to focus on. My hat goes off to all our greenkeepers who strive behind the scenes to effect the perfect surface for all our bowlers.

Finally, I wish to signal that I will be stepping down as President at this year's AGM and from the Board. It is appropriate then that I sincerely thank my fellow Board members and our Season Officers for their efforts over the past year. It has been my pleasure to have worked alongside them and also to have served Central Otago Bowls over many seasons.

John Lochhead
President