

# Mates delivering lawn bowls with social end

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Lawn bowls is no longer a sport reserved for senior citizens.

This summer people from all age groups are getting involved in the sport as part of the Mates In Bowls social summer league. And you don't need the traditional pristine white outfit to take part.

For this social league anything goes — as long as you wear clothes of some sort. You just have to avoid damaging the green (a perfectly manicured patch of lawn) by wearing flat soled shoes like jandals, or go barefoot, Suzanne Meek of the Arawa Bowling Club said.

"It's a social summer league targeting people who haven't played lawn bowls before," Mary Solomon, local co-ordinator of Mates In Bowls and vice-president of Rotorua East Bowling club said.

"Unfortunately in the past the media always showed bowlers as very elderly people and women in long dresses. Now we wear shorts and three-quarter pants. The sport is not like it used to be," she said.

"We even have a team of secondary schoolgirls and they are very competitive."

This Bowls New Zealand initiative introduces newcomers to the game in a really relaxed atmosphere, she said.

Participants play in teams of three for just over an hour on Thursday nights throughout November and the bowls are provided by the clubs.

Adrian Hodge of the Destination Rotorua Tourism Marketing team is taking part in the Mates In Bowls tournament along with his colleagues James Fitzgerald and Craig Hammond.

"We're coming into summer now and it's nice to get out after work one night a week. It's very social," said Mr Hodge.

"It is exciting. And it's harder than people think."

He added that even though his team hadn't won a game yet they would be keen to take part next year too.

"I think it'll be an annual thing - if they have it in November again next year - we're all out there sporting our mos for Movember. It's good for camaraderie in the office."

'... we wear shorts and three-quarter pants. [Bowls] is not like it used to be, '

MARY SOLOMON, MATES IN BOWLS CO-ORDINATOR



**BOWLING BUDDIES:** Rotorua's James Fitzgerald delivers a bowl watched by friends Adrian Hodge, background left, and Craig Hammond during the Mates In Bowls social summer league.

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