



David Klooz and Mary McHoull play on the lawn bowling green when the season opened in June, for the first time since 2019. (Photo supplied)

Lawn bowling club resumes limited play

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The Local

The NOTL Lawn Bowling Club has opened for the season, but with some confusion over what would be available, as the Community Centre remains closed.

Past President Paul McHoull says they've lost some members — people have moved or passed away

— and some are hesitant to come out given the restrictions, and lack of facilities.

But they have had a few new members sign up, and by Monday were up to 50 people interested in playing this season. It's a far cry from the usual 70, 80 or more of past seasons, but not bad for a pandemic summer with restrictions on the number of people

allowed on the bowling green, and no room at the Community Centre for socializing.

McHoull was not even sure until he got to the Community Centre on Monday morning whether there would be washrooms available — fortunately, there were.

He can schedule up to 24 people to play at a time, half the normal number of 48 if all the greens are used.

And the protocols are “mind-boggling,” with bowlers unable to touch the jack or the mat, he says, and lots of sanitizing.

“We're all trying to be as safe as possible, and most people are vaccinated or double vaccinated,” he says.

There is no room to make a pot of tea, although members can bring snacks of their own.

“But you don't want to be bringing tea or drinks if you don't have a washroom,” he says.

While there is a little shade on the bowling

green, there is nowhere for members to meet and chat before or after playing, and they miss the opportunity to cool off inside. “It's certainly not a normal situation.”

Weather is always a key factor, but even more so this season with no indoor space. It's been hot and humid, as it was Monday, and McHoull says he looks at the weather forecasts and sends out emails to members, offering them available times when the conditions are best, and asking if they want to sign up. He tends to look at morning or evening time slots, before it gets too hot.

Members might prefer to bowl in the evening, when the temperature is more bearable, but there would be no Community Centre staff on hand to even open a washroom for them, he says.

The Centre is closed to the public, and is expected to be until at least August, and maybe the end of the

summer, says McHoull. But there are staff there in the day for the kids' summer camps, using the Mori Room, which in the past has been available for the lawn bowlers.

“Kids are a priority, and that's understandable, with the school situation and lack of contact with their friends.”

Opening day for the bowlers was June 18, when it was raining lightly. “People were keen to get out, like with the golf course,” but it's been complicated.

“We are operating out of the equipment shed on the green,” he says.

When the rain stopped, “four brave souls went out and played the first game since October 2019.”

Last year, the club had to remain closed for the season.

Its traditional May opening had to be cancelled, with the Community Centre completely closed, and eventually, after Zoom

meetings and much discussion, the decision was made to “suspend the season.”

The risks of opening far outweighed the need to open, the executive decided, and there would have been no social interaction with other members.

“We were hoping we might be able to open in September, but then the second wave hit,” says McHoull.

Toward the end of this summer, as the province moves forward, hopefully there will be higher capacities of players permitted on the green, and some indoor space for club members to socialize, he adds.

For more information visit <http://notlbowl.ca>

