



Part golf, part bocce, part bowling...all fun!

Irish Road Bowling has been popular in Ireland for over 300 years. Historians are not clear as to its true origins, but it is believed to be invented by Irish soldiers who used the most readily available playing piece—the cannonball.

The rules are simple - hurl a small 28 oz. cannonball along a two mile country road. The toss is similar to bowling, and players must throw underhanded. But scoring is more akin to golf. Teams of four will compete against other teams to see who can cross the finish line in the fewest number of throws.

Rules of Play

We are using “American” rules that allow for teams of four. Traditional Irish Road Bowling—or long bullets—is an individual sport.

The Start:

The thrower marks his or her start point with a chalk line and stands behind this line. The thrower’s team mates (called the “showers”) stand 20-30 yards down the road to mark the desired path of the bowl and alert spectators and other players that the bowl is coming.

The Grip:

Players should grip the bowl with the thumb and index and/or middle finger. The bowl should be thrown from the fingers, not from the palm.

The Throw:

Experienced bowlers will take a running start and release the bowl at the start line. Novice players find that taking two or three steps is sufficient. The bowl should fly through the air for a few yards before striking the road surface. Don’t cross your chalk line and “break the butt.”

The Shot:

From wherever the bowl stops—not where it leaves the road surface—is where it is taken directly to the nearest point on the road. Mark the “butt” so the next player can throw from that point. At least one foot must be on the road surface for a legal throw.

The Finish:

After your team’s last shot, turn in your score card *and your bowl*.

Irish Loft:

Over tight, inside curves, the bowl may be thrown through the air (lofted). The bowl must strike the road OR pass over it. If your lofted bowl does not reach the road, it counts as one shot, and your next throw must be taken from the original spot.



Play Safe and Play Smart

It is your responsibility as a player to make sure that everyone ahead of you on the road is facing you. NEVER throw your bullet to a person's back. Do not be shy about yelling "Rolling!" or "Clear the way!" or "Faugh a ballagh!" Never stop the bullet with your foot or hand. Those really are cannonballs and they were designed for mortal combat. Be careful out there!



Terms to Know

Bowl or Bullet - the small 28 oz. cannonball

Butt - the throwing mark on the road. To step over the mark before releasing the bowl is to "break butt."

Craic - fun or good time

Faugh a Ballagh! - Clear the Way! A traditional Irish battle cry

Kitter-Paw - a left-handed thrower

Stroke - a smooth Irish stroke with accuracy and topspin will gain more distance than a clumsy powerful throw

Stylish Bowler - a bowler with a smooth well-coordinated delivery

Feeling Creative?

Pre-register and pick up your commemorative t-shirts and bowl at the Onondaga Lake Park office. Feel free to decorate your bowl any way you want. Keep in mind you'll be using this bowl in the tournament. The team with the best decorated bowl will win a prize!

Day of the Event

Registration begins at 9:30 am at the **Saw Mill Creek Shelter in the Willow Bay section of the park**. Teams will begin play at 10:00 am. Make it easier on your tired muscles at the end of the day... plan to park one car at the start and one at the finish point. Please note: All team members must participate in order to be eligible for prizes. Arrive onsite early enough to register, cheer on other teams, and enjoy the fun.

Onondaga County Parks places a top priority on the safe and legal use of alcoholic beverages. No person under 21 may possess or consume alcoholic beverages in the park.

**Any questions, call (315) 453-6712 or
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