



**BOWLS**  
ACT



## Finals – Week 1 Preview

The home & away season has come and gone and it's finals time! Remarkably every club remains in contention to win a flag and with nine clubs hosting finals this weekend Bowls ACT members will be out in force on the greens and in support of their clubs.

This edition we look ahead at the finals match-ups and attempt to gaze into the crystal ball with some light hearted predictions which could be about as good as my footy tipping. Wish me luck!!

**Nick Hind – Bowls ACT Executive Officer**

### Grade 1

The final four look to be as robust as we have seen for many years with clubs as strong as Queanbeyan RSL Memorial & Tuggeranong Vikings watching on, both clubs can be proud of their efforts and I'm sure it won't be long until we see them back in the finals.

#### **Minor Semi:**

The minor semi-final pits Canberra BC up against Queanbeyan Bowls Club in a match-up worthy of a Grand Final. Scott Dagwell and Flynn O'Shaughnessy are the key players here, Dagwell ranked second on the overall skips ladder, while pathway Jackaroo O'Shaughnessy ranks third. Both men will be key to victory as no other skip in the match has better than 50% winning record.

**Prediction:** Canberra look classy but Queanbeyan have home ground and have been more consistent all year. Stingers win by 6.

#### **Major Semi:**

The major semi-final sees 2022 champions Belconnen at home to the Weston Creek side which had one of the hottest starts imaginable, but has cooled as we've moved into Autumn. Ian Whybrow has turned back the clock to be the champion Skip in 2023 and will be hoping to continue his great season with a win here though Shane Murton in only 7 games has the second best shot differential in the top grade.

**Prediction:** Weston Creek had the fewest shots scored against them in the regular season and that defence will be the difference to secure an upset away from home and booking a berth in the GF. Creekers by 10



## Grade 2

Norths, Queanbeyan, Belconnen & Weston Creek will be watching from the sidelines but all clubs will take some positives from a very competitive 2023 campaign.

### **Minor Semi:**

The minor semi-final has 2022 Grade 2 Champions Canberra take on the 2022 Grade 3 Champions Crookwell in a fascinating contest. Crookwell have had a very settled side in 2023 and have produced very consistent results. No stars, no flashy wins, but good grinding performances. Canberra have been a bit more hot & cold but their home record is excellent and did defeat Crookwell comfortably in the only previous meeting this season. Matt Styles is also having a fantastic season, 8 from 8 as skip in the grade with the Mixed Pairs Gold Medallist wondering what he has to do to get a shot in the 1s!!

**Prediction:** Home ground record makes Canberra the favourites here and I'll have them to continue in their title defence by 14 shots.

### **Major Semi:**

Goulburn Railway will be hosting the Major semi-final after the club topped the ladder again and will look to go one better than their runner-up efforts last year. Strong across the park and with an imposing +118 differential on the season it is hard to find a weakness with the NSW club who were winners in the only regular season game against Yass. That was in round three and a lot has happened since then and the Yass side have been HOT lately. Winners of their past four games by a combined margin of +82 the side is looking settled and playing well. Garry Penyu also has the best record of any player in Grade 2 and has played both as skip and third, look for him to have a big influence in the result.

**Prediction:** Goulburn Railway at home will have a big supporter base enjoying some of the very fairly priced refreshments and might be enough to get them over the line. Goulburn Railway to win by 5 ~~shooters~~ shots.



### Grade 3

Queanbeyan RSL Memorial and Canberra Bowling Club will be watching from the sidelines but did their clubs great credit across the season.

#### **Minor Semi:**

Yowani will be home to Canberra North with the two north side clubs both genuine chances to win the whole show. Yowani have had great performances from all their women in the grade with Jill Hargreaves, Margaret Mills and Annette Mitchell all having fantastic seasons alongside skip Trevor Hegan. The previous encounters were split between the two sides, Norths claiming victory by 18 in Round 1 at home before Yowani took the win at home by 15 in Round 6. Norths away record is a concern, only winning two games away this season.

**Prediction:** Norths will fight hard but the big trip up Northbourne Ave might take just enough out of them. Yowani by 3.

#### **Major Semi:**

Vikings finished the season with a flourish, undefeated since March 26 with wins against every team in the grade since that date. Vikings also have the two top players in the Grade, with Darrin Beauchamp & Dave Harris leading the player ladder. Team stability has been an issue though, with 19 players used across the season the club will need to settle on their best combinations. The same can be said for Queanbeyan, using 23 players to get to the finals, but they have some good ones in there with Darryl Peters the highest ranked skip for the Campbell St club. The away side has won both previous encounters, Vikings by a solitary shot at Queanbeyan while the table were turned with the Stingers getting the points at Tuggeranong by 8.

**Prediction:** Vikings form line is irresistible but Queanbeyan have showed they can match it with them. I'm calling it a draw with Vikings winning on extra ends.





## Grade 4

We thank the members of Yowani & Belconnen for their efforts during the season, I'm sure all will be out in force to cheer on club-mates through the finals.

### **Minor Semi:**

2022 Grade 5 champions Crookwell will host Vikings with the NSW club showing they are up to the test of Grade 4, compiling a solid season with Anthony Gay's performances a highlight. At home the club have had mixed success on the year but have carried the day in both battles against Vikings so far. For Tuggeranong they will be relying on grit and graft if they are to turn around the previous results and can be buoyed by some good wins late in the season, the round 8 victory over Yass a standout.

**Prediction:** Crookwell too strong at home and will make it three from three against a Vikings side which will compete for a lot of the game but end up just short. Crookwell by 12.

### **Major Semi:**

Weston Creek have had a largely dominant season with eight wins to the clubs credit and a whopping +189 margin on the year, a Round 1 loss to Yowani & defeat in Round 9 at Yass the only blemishes on an outstanding season. The Hogan name has been prominent for the Creekers; Jess, Paul & Kevin all up the pointy end of the player ladder. For Yass the club comes in with an equal eight wins to set this game up as a true blockbuster. Jamie Bush has been the pick of the Yass skips and will want to carry the momentum gained at the end of the season.

**Prediction:** While Yass were victorious in the previous encounter a return to the home greens at the Labor club will be the difference in this one. Weston Creek by 9.



## Grade 5

Queanbeyan and Belconnen miss out in a Grade 5 race that went down to the final weekend, both sides giving a good account of themselves and going close to progressing.

### **Minor Semi:**

Canberra will host Vikings in what shapes to be a quality contest between two evenly matched sides. The Forrest club have done enough when they win but have been subject to a few big defeats which sees the clubs for & against at a concerning -54 on the regular season, much of which came in the round 9 loss at Vikings but the Canberra players will be buoyed by their Round 4 victory at home. For Tuggeranong Brendan Spaven & Sally Winter have two of the best records in the grade and will be looked upon to continue their good form if Vikings are to take victory.

**Prediction:** Vikings won in a canter in Round 9 and despite the Cobras winning at home earlier in the year the Vikings will be full of confidence. It'll be closer than last time but Vikings prevail by 11.

### **Major Semi:**

Goulburn Railway started the season like a freight train (get it??) winning their first four by big margins before meeting eventual minor premiers Bungendore in Round 5 and suffering a one shot defeat. The Goulburn club only has one win on the road this season, but know they can compete with the Bungendore side. Fiona Fleming must be credited for her great season as a second for the club, finishing the season as the clubs best on the player ladder. Bungendore have plenty of representation on the same player ladder, the two Anthony's, Maher & McCudden, leading the way among some very capable players for the Bungendore club which has lost only once this season.

**Prediction:** Goulburn Railway look to have more upside, having smashed several teams in the season, but have also got recent history against them in the only contest of the season against the Bungendore team which has looked the form team in the grade. Bungendore to sneak home by 2 shots.



## Grade 6

Canberra North & Weston Creek make way after both clubs were in the hunt until the very end. Norths can feel most unlucky, having missing out on finals by a single rink win.

### **Minor Semi:**

Vikings host Queanbeyan RSL Memorial with two of the regions premier clubs looking to progress after middling seasons. Vikings finished with a record of five wins and five losses but claiming four of those wins at home will give them confidence, as will their victory over RSL at home in Round 3. Jim Quick has been the pick of the skips for the Vikings, but has plenty of good help with Sandra Richards sharing an equally good record as third. Queanbeyan RSL will be looking at their most recent game in which the club took all rinks at home against Tuggeranong as proof that they have the capability. Abbey Boardman has only had a few starts for the club but is undefeated and could be a secret weapon as QRSL have some excellent juniors who are developing into real talents.

**Prediction:** Vikings strong home record gives the club an advantage, but Queanbeyan RSL are really going to want to get to the Grand Final and give themselves a chance at winning a flag at their own club on Grand Final weekend. Queanbeyan RSL by 5 shots.

### **Major Semi:**

Queanbeyan have quickly established themselves as the dominant club in the grade with seven wins and a perfect home record. The Canham/McConnell back-end partnership has been outstanding for the grade six side and both young fellas will be looked upon to deliver at this key stage of the season. Yass have split the games against the Queanbeyan so far in 2023 and little separates the clubs records across the home & away season. Yass have been very stingy in all grades in 2023 and were best in the grade with fewest shots against, this defence could be key to victory against the QBC side which scored the most shots in the grade.

**Prediction:** Immovable object or irresistible force?? Queanbeyan at home are hard to pass up and normally I'd say they are a lock, but something tells me Yass will pull a rabbit out of their hats. Yass by 6



## Grade 7

Yowani and Bungendore miss out here, but both clubs can be proud of their efforts for different reasons with Grade 7 providing so many opportunities for players to develop their skills.

### **Minor Semi:**

Vikings host Yass after the NSW club was dropped to fourth place following an eligibility breach. A reminder to all clubs to be careful with selections. While it is good news for Vikings in that they have moved into third I'm not sure I'd like to play against Yass, with the club taking the outcome in the right spirit but now extra motivated to progress. Vikings claimed victory over Yass in Round 2 but the NSW club has been very good in the second half of the season to only drop one game. The Stephen Seears rink for Vikings has been the best in the grade, claiming 9 wins over the year while Megan Bush has been dominant for Yass, with a +76 margin in only 7 games played.

**Prediction:** Who knows what might happen here?? I have no confidence in tipping either side so will go with the home team but would not be surprised with any result. Vikings by 10

### **Major Semi:**

This shapes as a classic in the history between the two local rivals. Goulburn Railway have been superb in this grade over the whole season, only blotting their copybook against Crookwell in Round 8. Railway seem to have plenty of ability to win the tight games with two heart-stopping one shot victories this season. Edith Rice has been the clubs best at third on the player ladder and will be looked upon to continue the brilliance into the finals. Crookwell can be rightfully proud of their season, the club competing in finals in all grades entered and looking a real chance in this grade. Peter Flint has shown the way to have the best record of any Crookwell skip and delivered the knockout blow in the most recent encounter between the two clubs, claiming a seven shot win in the Round 8 contest.

**Prediction:** The smart money is on Goulburn, but I've never been accused of that! I'll take Crookwell in a 4 shot upset.

If you have any photos or stories to share from the weekends games send them through to [exec@bowlsact.org.au](mailto:exec@bowlsact.org.au) and I'll be sure to give you a shoutout!!

Best wishes and great bowls!!

