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Staunton Parks and Recreation's Irish Road Bowling

General Information

Staunton Parks and Recreation's annual Irish Road Bowling event will take place on **Saturday March 16, 2024 from 9:30am – 12:30pm at Montgomery Hall Park**. Pre-registered teams will be notified ahead of the event of their start time as this will ensure proper spacing and smooth flow for everyone. Teams or individuals may also register the day of the event at the registration table at the top of Montgomery Hall Park (while supplies last). Those teams who register the day of the event will need to wait until pre-registered teams have started, so please be patient. Parking will be at the lower part of Montgomery Hall Park around the Irene Givens Admin building and next to the lower ball fields. Participants will be able to catch a shuttle to the top of the hill where registration and play begins. Once teams are at the top of the hill, there will be a check-in/information table and teams will get the necessary items to begin play. Teams, as you near completion of bowling and approach the finish line; there will be a staff member on hand to discuss the finish line rules with you. This is an important area for the game as the finish line roll will help determine the winners and tie breakers. Teams want to approach the end with consideration of this. If you have any questions about this event, please call the Staunton Parks and Recreation office at **(540) 332-3945**.

Cost: (Includes team entry fee and one road bowl)

4 person team- \$30

3 person team- \$25

In the Country of Ireland

Irish road bowling has been played in the Irish countryside since the 1600s. Its origins are unclear-perhaps it was brought to the Emerald Isle from England by weavers in the new textile industry, or perhaps from Holland by the troops of William of Orange, or maybe it began when Irish patriots robbed small English cannonballs and rolled them home by light of a full moon. Irish troops traditionally have played road bowling wherever they were stationed around the world.

Road bowling has a passionate following primarily in County Armagh in the North, where it is called bullets or long bullets, and in the South, mostly in County Cork, where it is called road bowling. The two regions independently developed distinct and very different hurling styles.

-Information courtesy of Dave Powell with West Virginia Irish Road Bowling



Wear your best St. Patrick's day outfit!

The Game

- **The ball**- “bowl” or “bullet”- A 28 ounce iron and steel cannonball the size of a tennis ball is rolled down a country road to a finish line. The team with the fewest shots to the finish line wins.
- **The start**- A chalk line is drawn across the road. The thrower stands behind this line, and his/her teammates (called road showers) go at least 20 to 30 yards down the road to show the desired path of the bowl. They stand like human croquet wickets, feet apart, straddling the “perfect path” to be taken to achieve maximum distance. Note: this is optional, intended for those experienced players. You do not have to stand in the path of the roll; you are there to advise the roller and chase the bowl when it goes off the road. Remember this is a 28 ounce iron ball you do not want to get hit by it.
- **The grip**- The bowl should be held in a **C** formed by the thumb and the index and/or middle fingers. The bowl should be thrown from the fingers, not from the palm of the hand.
- **The throw**- The bowler should back up 10 – 15 yards and take a running start to gain momentum to the throwing line. For many, however, taking two or three steps is sufficient. The thrower runs to the throwing mark and whirls the bowl underhand before stepping over the mark. The bowl may fly through the air a few yards before striking the pavement. You do not have to immediately roll it into the pavement. The bowl will hit the road with heavy topspin, rolling exactly on the path your teammates, the road showers, have pre-planned for glory.
- **The shot**- Wherever the bowl leaves the road surface, the bowl is taken directly to that point and a chalk mark is made. The next throw is taken from behind that mark by the next teammate in rotation, and so on to the finish line. It is customary to write the cumulative shot count on the road under each mark. (*Note: this is a house rule change due to this particular road course and the long downhill stretch. Normally the next shot is taken from where the ball stops and moved to the nearest point on the road from there.)
- **The finish**- The final shot to the finish line should be thrown as far as possible past the line. If two or more players or teams have an equal number of shots crossing the finish line, the winner is decided by which shot goes the farthest distance past the finish line.

-Information courtesy of Dave Powell with West Virginia Irish Road Bowling

Safety

It is everybody's responsibility to play this game safely and to make sure that all participants are aware of the thrower and the bowl. It is the responsibility of the thrower to ensure that everyone in the road ahead is facing him/her and paying attention. It is the responsibility of the teams to allow for those teams playing in front of them to play out to a safe distance before their next roll. Do not be shy about shouting out "Rolling!" before throwing. When the bowl goes off the side of the road please be careful when looking for it. This particular course at Montgomery Hall will be difficult and there are woods and drop-offs on the side of the road at the top of Montgomery Hall Park. It is important that your road showers and teammates keep a close watch of where the bowl goes off the road and into the weeds, woods, and leaves. If you lose your bowl then there will be extras on hand at the registration table for purchase or deposit. NEVER stop the bowl with your foot or hand; sore toes, ankles, and hands will result.

Road Bowl or Bullet - 28 oz. cannonball

- Road bowls can be purchased for \$10 dollars apiece or you may provide a \$10 deposit and return your bowl when your team completes the course on the day of the event.
- The bowls we provide on the day of the event will be brightly painted so that you may find them easier when they travel off the road.

