

ch #03 WOODS

ver: 25/10/26

This chapter tells you how woods are made.

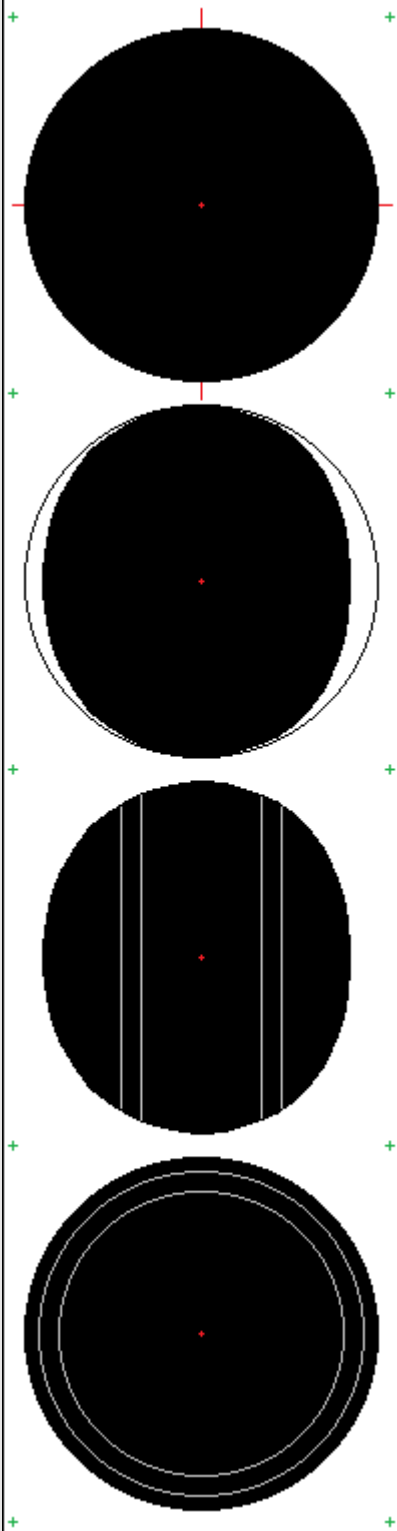
During match play, bowlers throw jacks and bowls. Years ago, the bowls were called "woods" because they were made of wood. They are now made of plastic.

The majority of bowlers use the word "bowls". I don't like the word "bowl" because it has several meanings and is used as a noun and a verb. You can easily say silly things like "bowl a bowl". When you GOOGLE search, "bowls" gives you loads of stuff about fruit bowls, soup bowls ornamental bowls whatever.

If woods are made of plastic, why are they not referred to as plastics ?

No idea. Daft init.

FIG 101



AT THE FACTORY

NOTE

Drawn large scale so you can see the details.

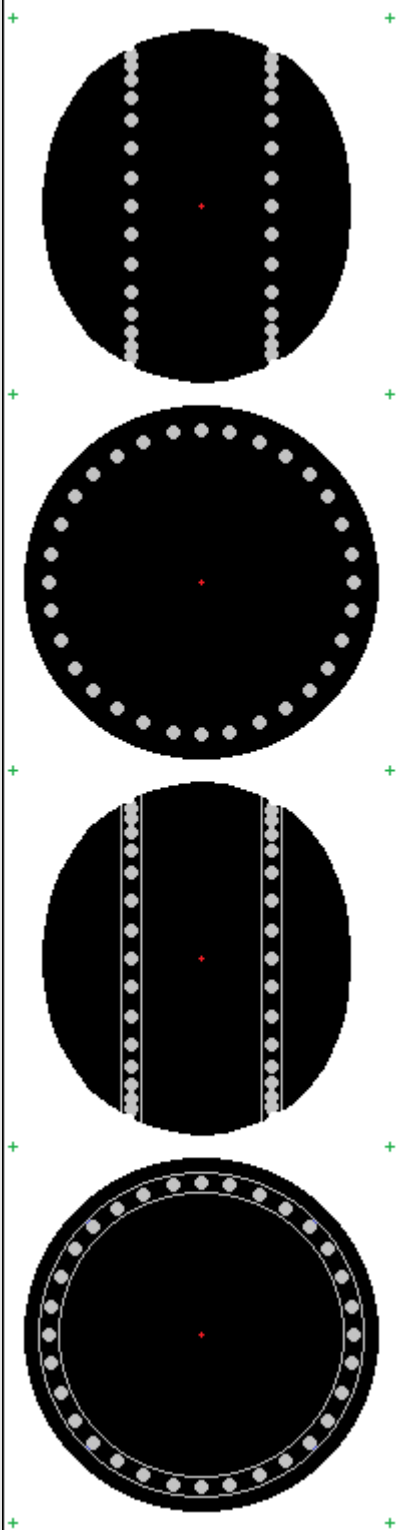
A **wood** starts as powdered plastic which is pressure-moulded into a sphere called a **blank**.

The blank is reduced on opposite sides by a computer-controlled lathe. One side has slightly more material removed than the other so the wood has a **heavy side** and a **light side**.

Some woods have thin grooves cut parallel to the vertical axis to help you grip the wood at the correct angle.

side view

FIG 102



DIMPLES

Some woods have a ring of **dimples** aka a **dimple ring**, **dimple grip** instead of grooves.

NOTE

The size, shape and depth of the dimples varies between sets of woods.

Some woods have grooves and dimples.

What is the purpose of dimples ?

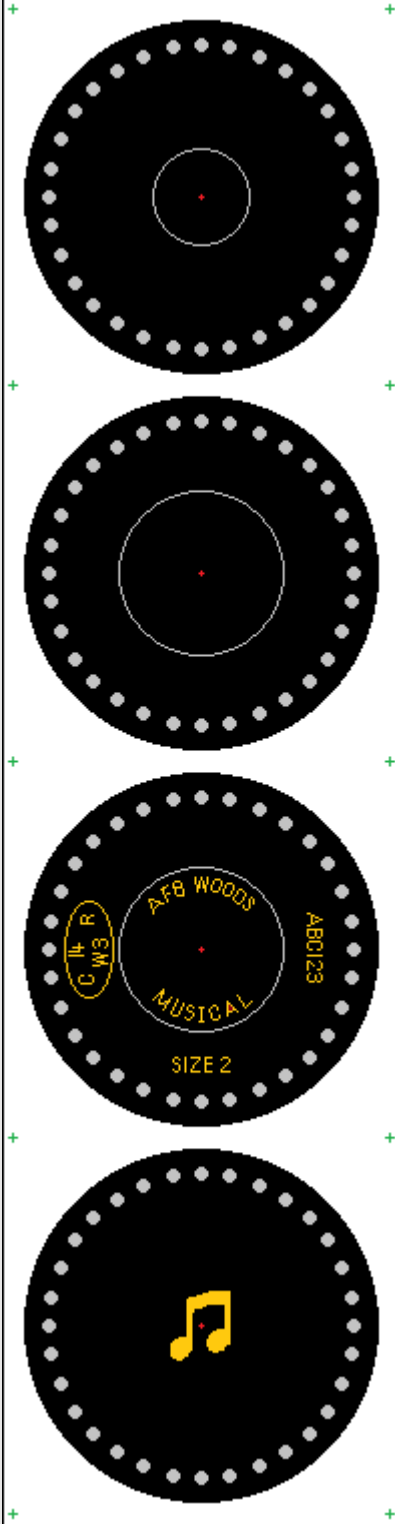
Most manufacturers say the dimples improve your grip especially when the grass is wet or your hands are sweaty.

I read one article that says dimples help keep the wood stable in cross winds.

Another article says dimples are no use whatsoever except they give the bowler confidence.

Woods with no dimples are called **plain grip** or **plain**.

FIG 103



IDENTIFICATION CIRCLES

Identification circles aka Identification rings aka ID circles are engraved on each side

A small circle identifies the heavy side.

A larger circle identifies the light side.

Information is painted on the light side.

eg:

AFB WOODS ... manufacturer

MUSICAL the model

SIZE 2 the size

WS the weight

14 made in 2014

R registered

(may be used in important competitions for 10yrs after manufacture)

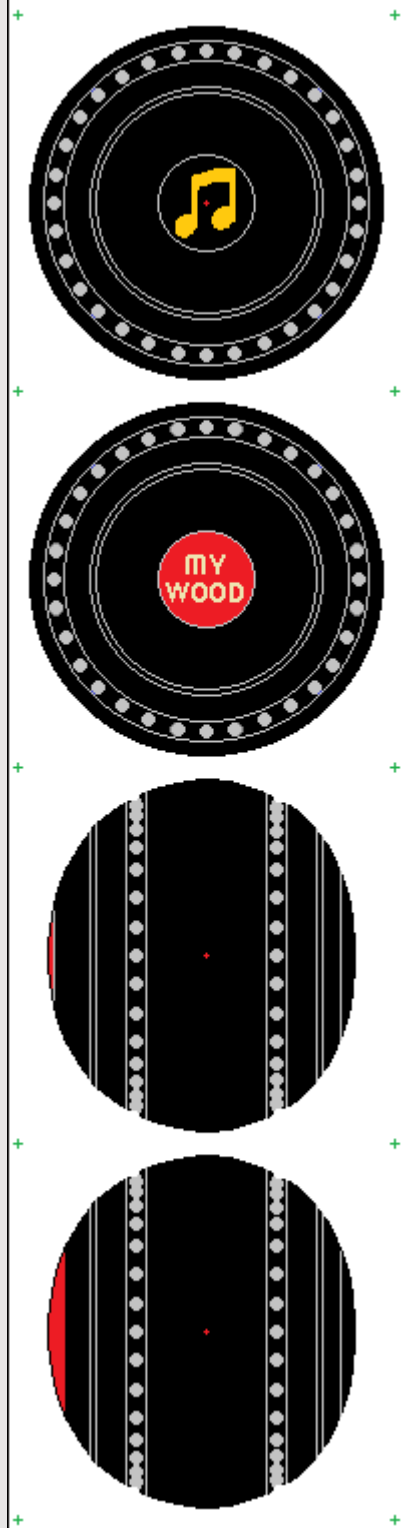
C made in Croydon

ABC123 serial number

(unique to every set of four woods)

An emblem might be painted on the heavy side to identify the model/collection.

FIG 104



MORE RINGS

Most woods have more engraved rings which I think are just for appearance.

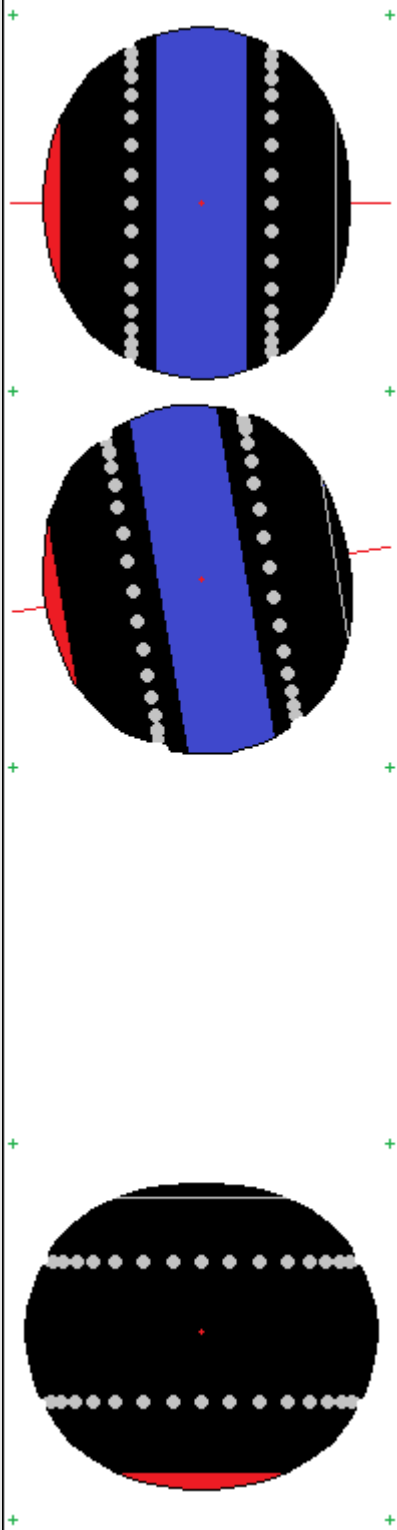
To make it easier to identify the owner or team during a match, some bowlers stick a **label** on the heavy side. The heavy side is therefore also referred to as the **label side**.

I use a red label for drawings.

It's difficult to see the label in a side view.

To make it easier to identify the heavy side on my drawings, I enlarge the label.

FIG 105



THE RUNNING WOOD

Drawing1 shows the **running strip** aka **running band** aka **running surface**.

When a wood is thrown correctly the centre of the running strip is in contact with the green.

As it slows, the wood tilts towards the heavy side. The running strip remains in contact with the green until the wood falls over at approx 18° . Typically (but not always) the wood falls onto its heavy side.

NOTE

The running strip is normally the same colour as the rest of the wood.

<-- A wood at rest on its heavy side.

FIG 106



TILTING & SKEWING

tilting is when the running strip is not vertical.

We say the wood is **tilted**.

<-- A wood that lands tilted towards the bias will curve earlier than a wood that lands straight and will appear to have greater bias.



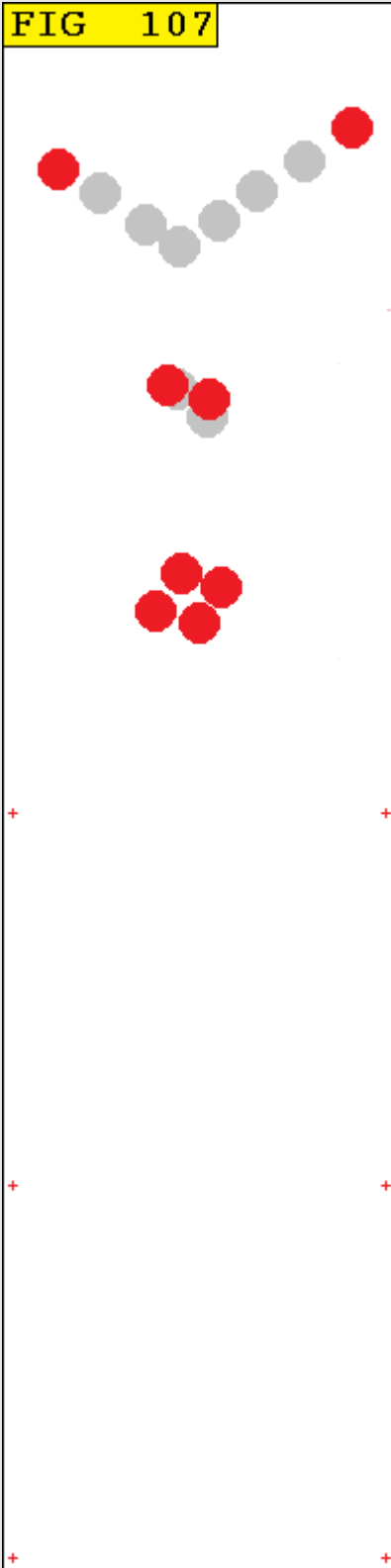
<-- A wood that lands tilted away from the bias will curve later and will appear to have narrower bias. This is because the tilt delays the effect of the heavy side.



<-- A wood that is **skewed**.

The running strip is sideways to the direction thrown. This causes the wood to **wobble** aka **cobble** ie **wobbling cobbling** which reduces speed and affects the path. The wood behaves like it's running over cobble stones.

FIG 107



KISSING & CUDDLING

When a running wood hits a stationary wood and the woods move away from each other, we say **kiss and part**.

When two woods come to rest very close to each other, we say **kiss and cuddle**.

When four woods come to rest very close to each other, we say **kiss and huddle**. The woods have formed a **huddle**.

BUYING WOODS

The club will probably have a set of **knock-about**s that you can use for a few weeks.

You will then be expected to provide your own.

In 2024, a set of new woods cost between £350 and £450. I bought pre-owned for £40.

Ask a knowledgeable bowler for advice.

If you were daft enough to ask me this is what I would say:

BIAS

There are three categories of bias.

Narrow is for indoors (carpet).

Heavy aka **wide** is for outdoors (grass).

Medium is for indoors and outdoors.

I prefer narrow because medium strays into the adjacent lane (or ditch if I play in an outside lane). If I played both indoors and outdoors I might choose medium.

WEIGHT

There are three weight categories.

Junior for children.

Medium aka **Standard**.

Heavy.

I prefer medium because they feel more comfortable. If I played outdoors, I would choose heavy because extra momentum is required on grass. If I played competitive, I might choose heavy because they are not displaced so far when hit.

SIZE

There are five size categories.

junior for age 5-12(?)

small for small hands.

0, 1, 2

extra small for age 12-16 or very small or weak hands

They are indicated by 0000, 000, 00.

standard

1, 2, 3, 4, 5

large for gorillas

6 (no longer manufactured?)

I prefer 00 because anything larger makes my thumb uncomfortable.

NOTE

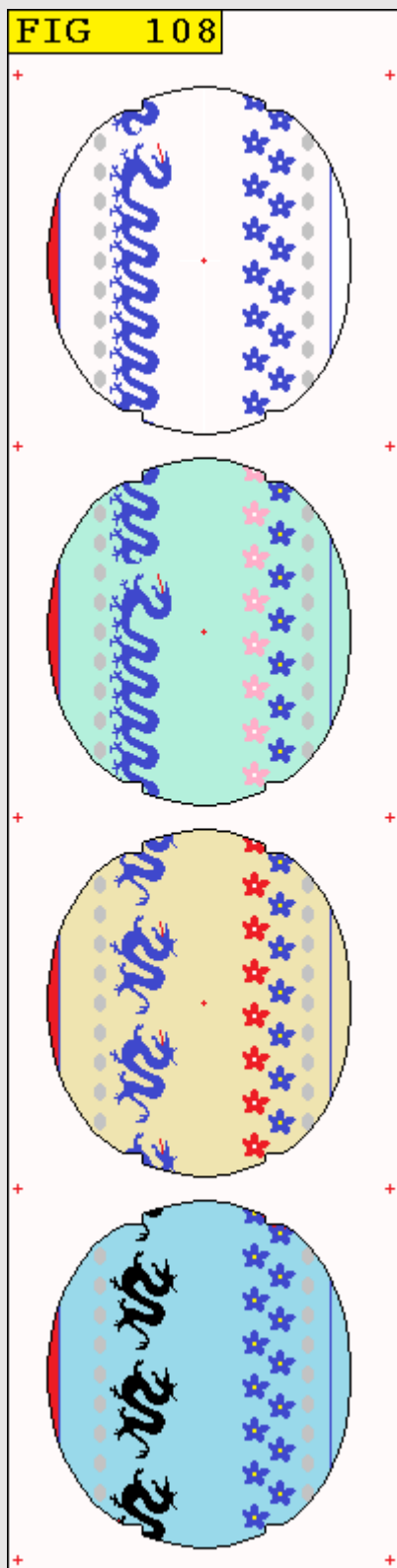
Woods vary in density - so larger are not necessarily heavier.

DIMPLES

There are various types of dimples.

I prefer no dimples (known as plain grip).

FIG 108



ORNAMENTAL WOODS

If you like far Eastern stuff, you might fancy a set of porcelain woods made for Emperor Hongwu. Ming Dynasty 1368-1644. Current value 50million\$.

WARNING

There are thousands of cheap fakes. The genuine originals have "Made in China" printed on them.

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