

2015 in Review • Person of the Year • 32nd Annual Ball Guide

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The Show Must Go On

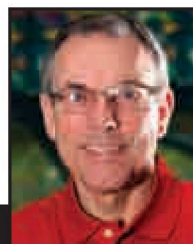
World Cup Defies Fear in Wake of Paris Attacks

51st QubicaAMF
World Cup champs,
Wu Siu Hong and
Clara Guerrero

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THE PRO APPROACH

BY BILL SPIGNER { billspigner@aol.com }



Why McEwan Lost a Step

DANIELLE McEWAN is one of bowling's brightest new pro stars, having enjoyed success not only in the new Professional Women's Bowling Association, but also against the men in Professional Bowlers Association events.

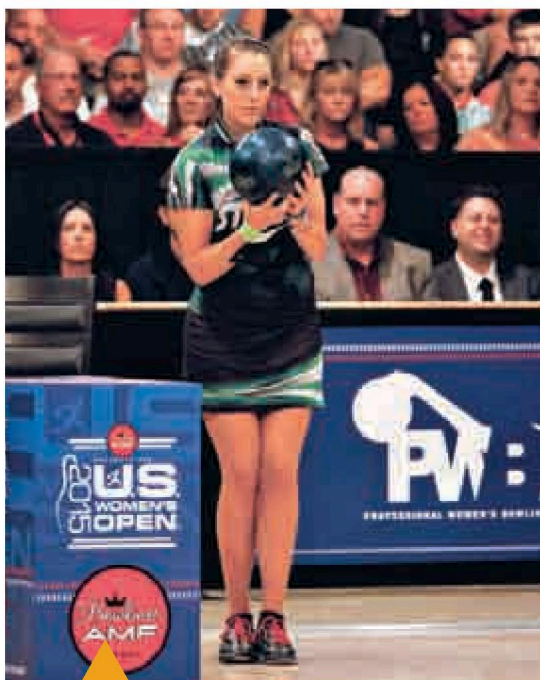
She was part of the winning Dead Money team in the PBA Team Challenge at the PBA Fall Classic in Las Vegas.

She also won a PBA Non-Champions Regional, which had a lot of high-caliber players in the field, in Vegas. She made

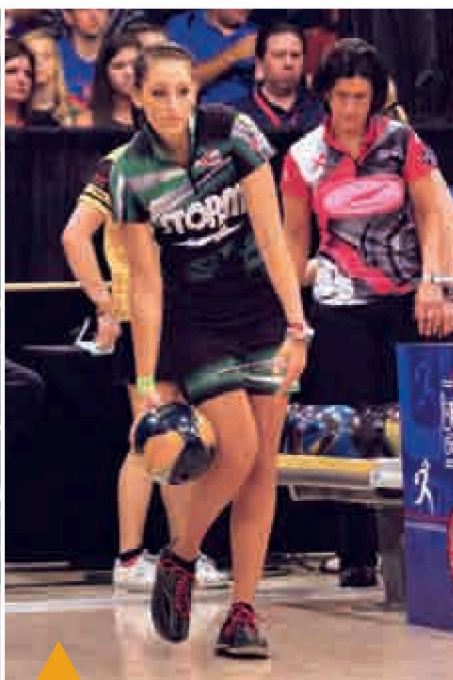
the top 24 in the brutal *men's* U.S. Open.

Those accomplishments have taken Danielle to another level on bowling's star spectrum, following four years as a Junior Team USA member, a current member of the adult Team USA, two times as a collegiate All-American and two times as the NCAA Bowler of the Year.

Danielle is a four-step player who used



Danielle's set up is very good for her unhinging ball start, with the ball close to the body and almost chin-high with no wrist cup. This set up will help her initiate her long, free swing. This would be a good set up for players that have difficulty getting a free swing and want to use the unhinging ball placement start.



This shows Danielle's late ball placement, the arm and ball passing the right knee as it is moving forward on the back swing. This is where not cupping the wrist will allow the ball to swing past her. If she had engaged the ball weight by cupping the wrist it would put her out of balance.



This is Danielle's late/leverage timing before the release. Her slide foot has stopped with the ball by her trail-leg knee. This is a good timing position to create the effortless power needed today. The key to this timing is to make sure you don't muscle the ball.

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to take five steps. In her win at the 2013 Team USA Trials, she was still using a five-step approach. Later that year in the U.S. Women's Open, she finished third using four steps.

I asked her why she changed from five to four when more bowlers change from four to five. She said she was having late timing issues, and at the recommendation of one of her coaches, Jim Kent (the father of her boyfriend, Marshall Kent), made the switch.

It was interesting that she made such a big change so soon after winning the Team USA individual championship. It made a big difference in her approach.

With the five-step approach, her first three steps were short. But those short steps didn't fit the length of her swing, and that affected her timing, even though she was successful with it.

With the four-step delivery, her steps lengthened, and that gives her more time for her swing on each step. The spacing of her steps with the four-step approach is very traditional, with the first step being the shortest (but not short), then getting progressively longer with each succeeding step.

A byproduct of the change is that her swing length has gotten a little longer and higher. Danielle says her game is always evolving, and looking at the differences from four years ago to today, it's easy to see that she has made some pretty big adjustments and refinements.

Danielle's stepfather, Rob Varone, taught her the basics of the game, and since then she has had lots of tutoring from many different coaches. She said all the Team USA and professional coaches "added more layers to my style along the way," building and expanding her game.

In today's game, you simply can't do it alone, especially at the highest skill levels. There are too many variables that you have to understand; it's no longer a matter of simply working on your form.

When Danielle took five steps, she held the ball waist-high, with her elbow in front of her hip and the ball away from the body with a lot of wrist cup. Today, she holds the ball a little more to the center of her body, the wrist flat, and

LESSON PLAN

DANIELLE MCEWAN has a really good pre-shot routine. While still off the approach, she'll line up to the shot she wants to play and visualize the path she wants the ball to travel down the lane. She then goes through a couple of half-swing rehearsals to get the feel of the beginning movement of the ball, the swing direction, and the release needed to project the ball down the lane in the direction she wants it to travel and with the ball rotation needed for the angle she is playing.

Danielle does this visual and physical rehearsal of the shot before picking up the ball. In this way, when she is mentally and physically ready to execute the shot, she can keep her brain quiet and let her body take over.

The mental checklist she goes through will vary from week to week, but she is always preparing for the upcoming shot before picking up the ball and setting up for her shot. Take a page out of Danielle's book, and develop a pre-shot routine so you are ready to make the best shot possible, too.

the ball just below chin high and close to her body.

On her first step, she doesn't move the ball, which in a four-step approach is considered a late start. On her second step, she starts moving the ball by unhinging her arm. Her bowling-side elbow stays in the same place it was in the stance, with no forward movement of the elbow or bowling-side shoulder. She has about 14 degrees of forward tilt at the end of step two.

The great thing she does after the unhinging start is how freely she lets the ball swing to the top. Her swing travels about 135 degrees on step three, which shows how free it is going back. Not cupping the wrist also helps a lot in creating the free backswing.

During step three, Danielle's forward

tilt increases slightly to 20 degrees.

Even though she doesn't have as much forward tilt as a lot of bowlers, her head stays over the toe of her leading foot on every step.

Many times, among players who have a more upright spine angle during the approach, the upper body tends to get stuck between the steps and doesn't move forward smoothly with each step. By having her head over the toe of the leading step at the completion of all of her steps, Danielle experiences a very smooth transfer of her upper body weight forward throughout the approach and finish.

Going into her last step, Danielle's swing is still going up until the left knee starts passing the right just as her slide is beginning. Then the swing stops and is ready to descend, which is as late as you would want the swing to be to avoid pulling the ball down.

As the ball starts down with the slide initiating, Danielle begins to descend into her deep knee bend and increase her forward spine tilt. When her arm gets perpendicular to the floor, her hand is right at her ankle and her spine tilt has increased to 45 degrees — a great release position.

Danielle's late/leverage timing is identical to Kelly Kulick's and Parker Bohn's on the last step, where the slide has stopped with ball back by her trail leg's knee. The forward momentum from the increase in her spine angle, deep knee bend and the descending angle that the ball is traveling to the release really speeds up her arm and hand to provide effortless speed.

Danielle's fingers are above the equator when the thumb exits. Because she is leaning into the shot, the fingers extend through the ball, creating enough time differential between the exit of the thumb and fingers to produce sufficient revolutions for an effective, powerful strike ball without a lot of hook.

The revs and speed she gets, coupled with the ability to change her axis rotation, enable her to play anywhere from the gutter to the fifth arrow, a range of play that is necessary to be a great all-around player.

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