

BOWLING BALLS & GRIPS SPECIAL SECTION

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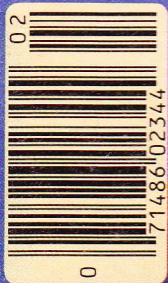
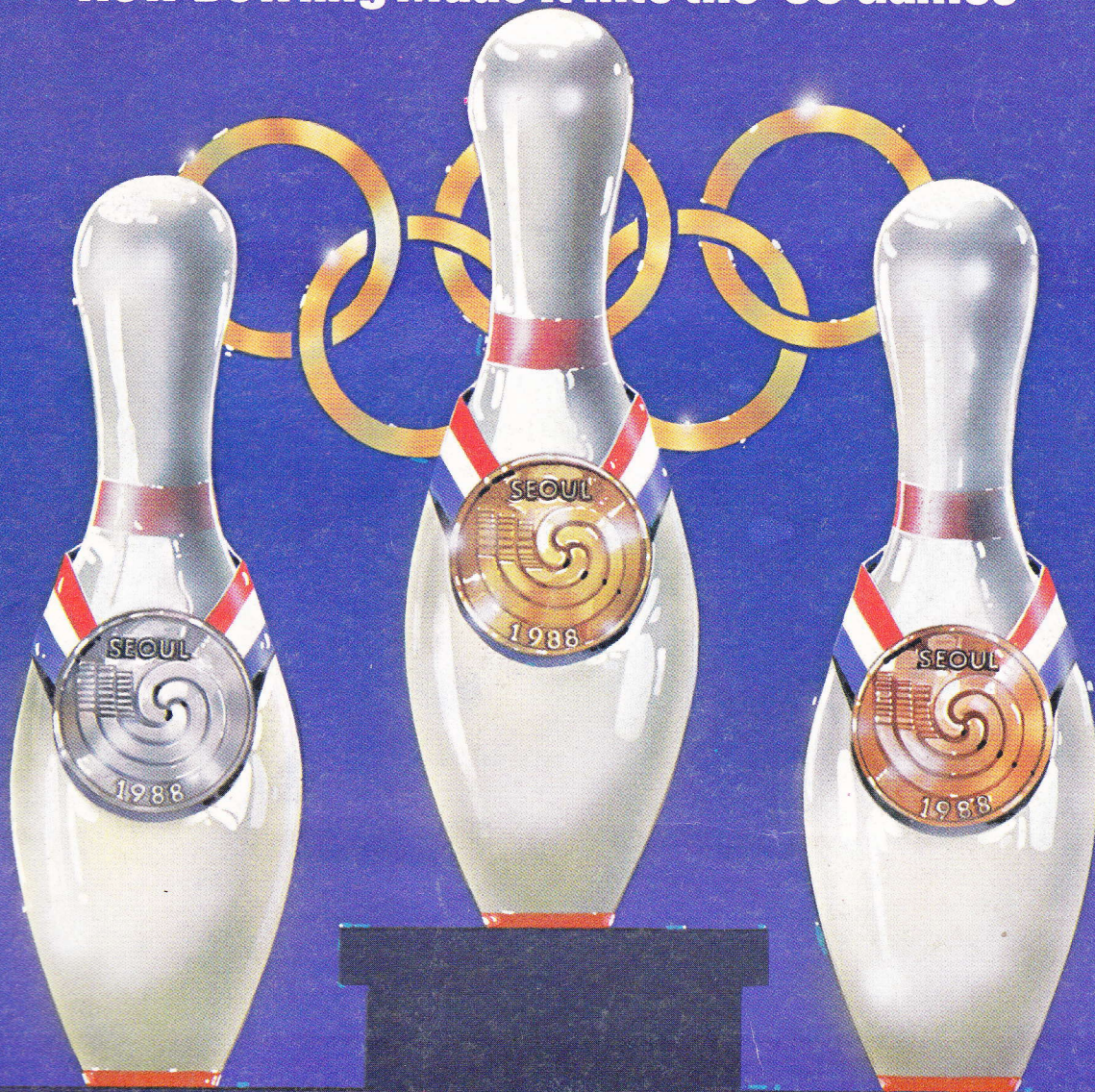
BOWLING

DIGEST

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Olympic Glory

How Bowling Made It Into the '88 Games



Bill Spigner's **Bowling Clinic**

■ I have a 189 average and use a Columbia Yellow Dot. My track is a semi-roller. My ideal lane conditions are when I can stand on the 18th board on the approach and roll over the 12th board at the arrows. I have a problem on oily lanes or after the lanes break down—my ball has a tendency not to finish and I leave a lot of 5-pins and 5-7 splits. Should I move inside or outside?

When I move inside—stand at 20 and roll over 15—the line has a tendency to get too fine without much room for error. If I move outside—stand on 16 or 17 and play 12—it feels like I'm throwing at an angle at the headpin, and it makes me pull the ball and walk off balance.

Am I making the right adjustments? The opposite happens on dry lanes, where my ball hooks too much.

The ball you are currently using is a soft polyester that's good on light oil, but one ball is no longer enough to cover a wide variety of lane conditions. I would recommend getting a soft, porous urethane ball for the oily lane conditions and a hard plastic or rubber ball for the dry lanes. Make sure you go to a pro who can see you bowl and help you along in selecting the right ball with the right weight balance for you.

The next thing you need to do is redesign your adjustment system. It's important to move laterally across the lane and approach in a way that you don't get your swing and body out of line with your target on the lane. Standing on 18 and looking at 12 is an extremely tight line to play, and by moving your feet a little to the right the line becomes too restrictive. This will cause you to lose your leverage and hinder your release, unless you walk left during your approach to compensate for your visual lineup. If you stand on 18 on the approach, slide on 18 at the foul line, hit 12 at the arrows, and hit the pocket, you are rolling five to six boards of hook (the pocket is the 17th to 18th board depending on the "power" of the ball). Every board you move your feet on the approach and keep your target the same, there will be a three-board difference of where the ball will end up at the back end on an evenly oiled lane. So if you move only your feet two boards right (standing 16, playing 12), you are now playing a line that requires you to roll a perfectly straight ball in order to hit the pocket.

The average person with a decent game will lay the ball down on the lane six-to-seven boards (six-to-seven inches) from his ankle, while the top pros are about five-to-six boards from the ankle. The lay-down point of the ball is half the width of the ball (a

ball is 8½ inches wide) plus the distance from the outside edge of the ball to the ankle. With your 16-12 lineup, your ball lay-down point is right of your target. This type of lineup is fine to play for left side spares, but not for a strike line from that part of the lane.

I would recommend you change your line—stand on 20 to play 12 as a starting point. If the ball isn't hooking enough, start moving right with your feet and target. For example, if you left the 2-4-5 spare, move your feet to 18 and play 11 on your next shot. If you left the 1-2-4-8 spare, move your feet to 16 and play 10. If you're high on the headpin and leave the 4-6 split, I would move to 24 and play 14.

With these adjustments you are moving your feet two boards for every one board you move your target, in the same direction. You can move across the whole lane in this two-to-one ratio until you find a place to get your ball to the pocket. You might be moving more than two and one at a time, but keep your adjustments at a two-to-one ratio (eight and four, six and three, etc.). After you have found the pocket you can start making finer adjustments.

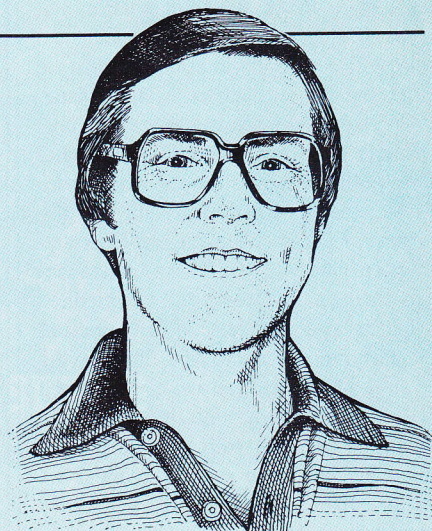
For an experiment to help you find your strike line and oil pattern, make your target on the lane half the board number you are standing on—stand 10 look at 5, stand 20 look at 10, stand 28 look at 14, etc. Start off playing the extreme outside line, and with each succeeding shot move 2-1 to the left. Take about 10 shots to get a sampling of each section of the lane. As you are doing this, watch what the ball is doing on the lane and chart it. After you have completed this test you should have a good idea of the characteristics of the lane, which will enable you to figure out where to play.

You should always have a starting point on the approach for each board on the lane so that you can make logical adjustments.

Figuring out where the best place to play your strike line is the key to higher scores. Don't tie yourself up trying to play one part of the lane.

■ A lot of people criticize me for ending up about a foot behind the foul line. Is there anything wrong with that?

It is best to end up a couple of inches behind the foul line, but there have been many top players who end up a foot or more behind the foul line. Teata Semiz, one of the PBA's all-time leading money winners and a top player in PBA senior events, has always ended up 12 to 18 inches behind the foul line. Ron Woollet, who had a great amateur record before trying the pro tour in the late



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1970s, used to end up about a yard behind the foul line.

The biggest drawback to ending too far from the foul line is that the ball has to travel a greater distance before it strikes the pins. One reason to end up farther back is that it allows the ball to have more time to roll. This might be especially helpful on oily lanes.

If you are comfortable and feel it is not hurting your game, don't worry about it.

■ I am using an LT-48 that feels good, but I can't get any feeling on my ring finger. The feeling is all on my middle finger, which is very callused, but it doesn't hurt or bother me. I have tried a few different things, but I still get no feeling on my ring finger.

Ideally you would want a light callus on each finger because it would mean you are getting equal amounts of lift out of both of your fingers. The problem, as it appears to me, may be that the middle-finger span is a little too long and the ring-finger span a little short.

Fingers do not have to be heavily callused in order to get enough lift for an effective ball. Nor do you need to get that burning sensation when you roll the ball to indicate to yourself that you're getting enough lift. Too often, players worry too much about lift rather than about getting the right rotation on the ball.

Bill Spigner welcomes questions from readers and will answer as many as possible in this column. Mail your questions to: Bill Spigner, Bowling Digest, 1020 Church Street, Evanston, IL 60201.