

Bill Spigner's
Bowling Clinic

THE KEYS
YOUR
GAME
NOT
YOUR
GEAR

Fix your footwork: Five easy steps to success

BOWLING DIGEST

February 1995

A Really Big Show

*Stadium TV finals may
thrust bowling into the
pro sports spotlight,*

*but will enough fans
come out to make the
venture pay off?*

ALSO: Parker
Bohn III on making
the jump to the next level
■ Jeri Edwards' formula for
the proper delivery ■ Regional
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■ An exclusive interview with John Mazza

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■ I am 12 years old and a member of the youth league at our local bowling center. I'm right-handed and roll a straight ball, and I've noticed many of the bowlers who roll a hook ball use a reactive resin ball. Since I'm a straight-ball bowler, will a reactive resin ball work as well for me as for the hook-ball bowlers?

Today's high-performance reactive resin balls could add some pins to your average even with a straight ball, but the biggest boost could come from developing a hook for your strike ball. To be able to roll strikes consistently, your ball must be able to drive through the pocket and hit the 5-pin. A ball that enters the pocket straight deflects too much and doesn't carry.

If you're using a hard plastic ball, you already could be getting some turn on it, but because the ball won't grip the lane, it won't hook enough. The reactive resin ball, being made of a soft urethane, will grip the lane better and could help you develop a hook.

For higher scores, a hook for the strike ball is a must. However, I highly recommend that you develop or maintain a good straight ball for spares—it's much less complicated.

■ I have been trying to find a book on exercises for bowling, with no success. Do you know of any? If not, what should I do to get stronger for bowling?

I'm not aware of any book that has been specifically written for getting physically fit for bowling, though many bowling books have a section about exercising for bowling.

An overall training program that includes cardiovascular, strength, and flexibility work is the best way to go. Everyone has different needs. Steve Fehr, ABC Hall-of-Famer and current ABC Masters champion, works out regularly on Nautilus equipment. PBA star Amleto Monacelli does a lot of running and stretching. Seven-time PBA champion Tom Baker has been big on calisthenics throughout his long career. For many years ABC and PBA Hall-of-Famer Nelson Burton Jr. has been into weight training to increase his strength.

The key is to find what's right for you to give you the strength and endurance

to bowl to the best of your ability. If I were to pick out one area that would be the most important to keep in great shape, it would be your legs. They give you leverage, and that's one of the big keys to good shot-making.

■ I need answers to two questions. First, how do I keep the "gunk" off my Nitro R while I'm bowling? The ball works great until it starts picking up lane, pit, and ball-return residue. Second, if I concentrate on getting my left foot in proper position at the foul line, I frequently come around the ball, and if I think about my hand position and arm swing, I often fail to get my left foot in proper position for good leverage. What should I do?

Reactive resin balls pick up dirt like no other ball ever has. A number of ball cleaners are legal to use while you're bowling. Check your local pro shops to see what they have.

If the dirt problem is severe, notify the management of the bowling center about the lane that is having the problem. This will give the center a chance to fix the problem. Many times the management doesn't know a problem exists because the bowlers only complain among themselves and not to the people who can fix it.

For your sliding foot problem, I would recommend you not worry about where your foot is, or the direction it's facing. It's more important for you to have a good release and be able to project your ball down the lane along the path you want it to travel. The position of your sliding foot is a product of the position the rest of your body is in. Your hips and shoulders greatly affect the direction your foot will face.

For example, if your hips and shoulders are open when you roll the ball, your toe will be pointed to the right if you're right-handed and left if you're left-handed. If your shoulder closes during your release, your foot could point left if you're right-handed and right if you're left-handed. In addition, the way your body is built can affect the direction your toe points—and you can't fight your bone structure.

■ I am 55 years old and am going to buy a new ball. Most, if not all, of the pros



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seem to be using reactive resin balls. The remarks made by the professional commentators on both the men's and women's tours suggest that you must keep your speed up when using balls made of this material. I don't want to have to throw hard to be successful with a new ball. What do you suggest?

I recommend buying a reactive resin ball. True, you'll need to keep your speed up with these balls, but it doesn't mean you have to throw extremely hard. Besides, no matter what type of ball you use, it's important to have consistent speed and roll your ball at a comfortable, firm speed for your style.

I also would recommend that you consider going down a pound in weight, because a lighter ball will make it easier for you to keep your speed up. Today more pro bowlers than ever before are using 15-pound balls, because a lighter ball allows them to get more revolutions and keep their speed up more easily.

Describe the lane conditions you're playing to your local pro and roll a few demonstration shots. The pro will be able to suggest the right ball for your needs. ●

Bill Spigner welcomes questions from readers and will answer as many as possible in this column. Mail your questions to: Bill Spigner, Bowling Digest, 990 Grove Street, Evanston, IL 60201.