

**MARSHALL HOLMAN:**  
**BOWLING'S**  
**BAD BOY**  
**GROWS UP**

**Jeri Edwards' "Inside Angle": It's time to hit the gym**

# **BOWLING**

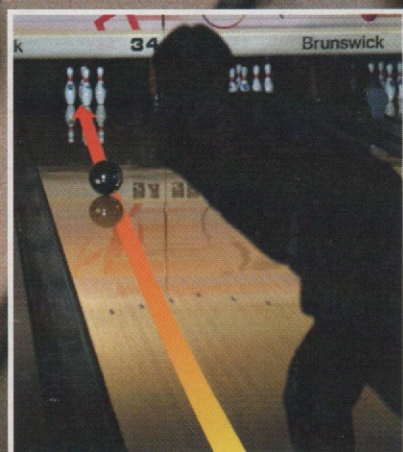
## **DIGEST**

*Parker Bohn III shows you* **HOW TO**

# **Make Spares**

**CONSISTENTLY**

*by finding and  
adjusting to  
the oil on  
the lanes*



February 1996

U.S. \$3.75 • Canada \$4.60  
Special Offer  
U.S. \$3.50 • Canada \$3.95

**Plus:** John Jowdy on the release  
and follow-through ● Can bowling  
survive on TV? ● Arena bowling:  
The cheers—and the questions



# Timing Is Everything to

■ *I am currently averaging between 185 and 190, and I have been unable to break through to a higher level. My problem seems to be the natural power I have when I deliver the ball, which doesn't allow my ball to turn or get any revolutions. I am a very good spare shooter; I just don't get strikes.*

*I have moved up on the approach to try to slow down and give my ball a chance to work, but it hasn't made any difference. Should I go to a three-step approach? I've been trying this on my own and my timing seems to be off. Also, is there any wrist position you could recommend for a three-step approach?*

I would not recommend going to a three-step approach. As you have found, it's very difficult to coordinate your swing with your legs for good timing. With a three-step approach, your swing must move very fast to get in time with your feet, and that fast-moving swing makes it difficult for you to develop good hand action and feel.

Some bowlers take three steps because of a physical problem; others develop their game with three steps not knowing they are taking fewer than the recommended four or five steps. If you do decide to take three steps, it's very important to get your timing right.

To help get your swing coordinated with your steps, you'll need to start your pushaway at the right time: Before beginning your first step, move your ball out for your swing to start. When you've completed your first step, your arm should at least be perpendicular to the floor. By the end of the second step, your ball should reach or be close to the top of your swing, and on Step 3 your ball should move forward into the release zone.

Normally, a three-step bowler is better off with a relatively short swing. A shorter swing

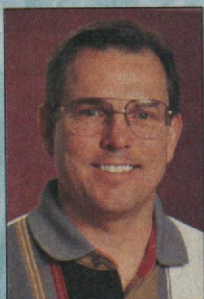
---

*Need help with your game? Bill Spigner welcomes questions from readers. Mail your questions to: Bowling Clinic, Bowling Digest, 990 Grove Street, Evanston, IL 60201.*

doesn't have to travel so fast, and the bowler has a better feel.

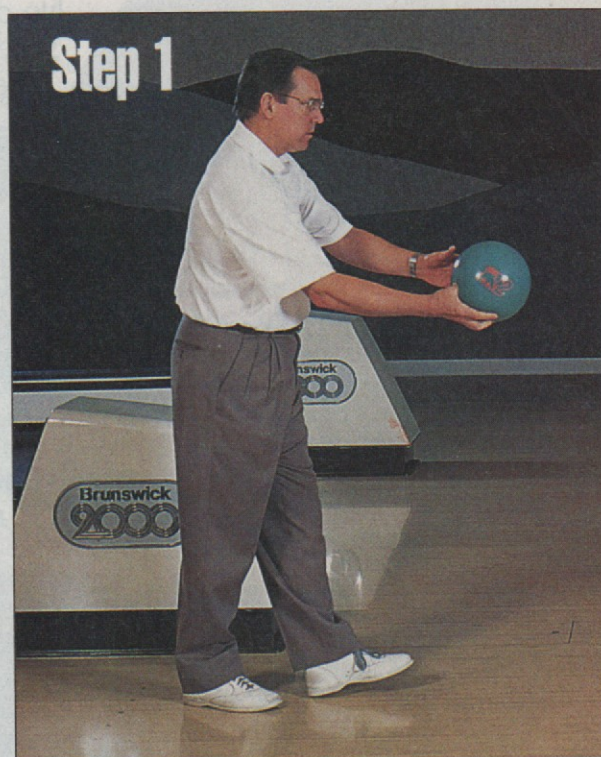
As for wrist position, a slightly closed hand with a straight wrist will work. Because of the timing involved with a three-step approach, you should keep your hand action simple.

■ *In May our team bowled in the ABC Tournament at Reno's new National Bowling Stadium. Not knowing anything about bowling on a synthetic surface, two of us traveled 180 miles round-trip to another center to practice on synthetic lanes in preparation for Reno. Satisfied with what the surface would give us,*



## Bowling Clinic

By BILL SPIGNER



*we went to Reno with confidence in our game. In the team event I was the only one out of 10 men who had a good series—and I was 10 pins under my 190 average.*

*The next day was a disaster in the singles and doubles events. I usually need to slide to within three inches of the foul line, and in Reno I couldn't get closer than 10 inches. My sliding foot stuck repeatedly, I stumbled over the foul line twice, and I had to catch my ball in mid-air once to start again. My shoes have*

# Three-Steppers

*buckskin soles, but I kept sticking on the approach. I bowled like a beginner, even though I have 40 years of experience. What do I do in a case like this? Will the next ABC Tournament, in Salt Lake City, be played on synthetic lanes?*

Yes, the ABC will install synthetic lanes in Salt Lake City—and at every ABC event in the foreseeable future.

Now for the tough part of your question: There are two issues you had problems with. One was the tacky approaches, and the other was the lane condition.

The problem with the approaches not

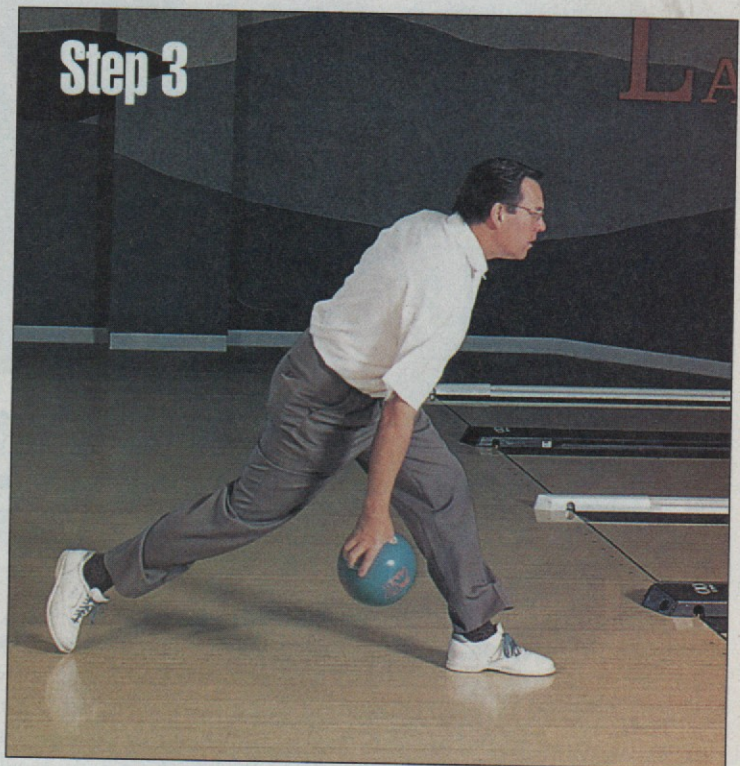
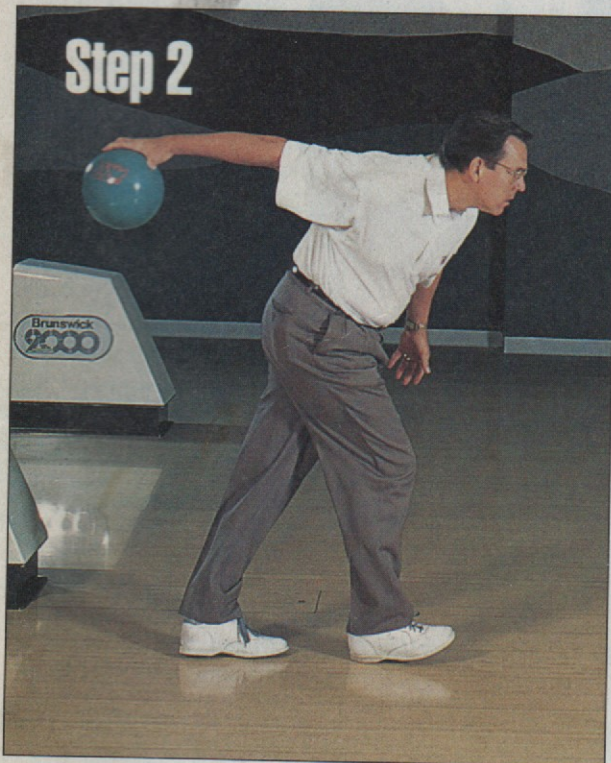
Carpeting in the bowlers area cleans off the soles and heels of the shoes so much that it reduces the slide. If you start rubbing your shoes on the carpet to try and clean them off, it will actually rough the heels slightly, causing them to grab more and reduce your slide. It's very unusual for bowling centers to put carpeting in the bowlers area, and in future ABC Tournaments—except those in Reno—you will not see carpeting in the bowlers area.

Normally, the approaches at ABC Tournaments are very easy to slide on,

approach a little farther up, shorten your steps, and play for less slide. It would be a good idea to practice approaches of different length, so that the next time you hit a condition that affects your slide you are more knowledgeable about how to adjust to it. It's very important that you don't let the approaches affect your swing and release. No matter what happens with your slide, let your arm swing through freely.

Your other problem was with the lane conditions. The primary playing area and scoring levels on any surface are

**In a three-step approach, your arm should be perpendicular to the floor at the end of your first step, at the top of your backswing by the end of your second step, and into the release zone during your third and final step.**



sliding as freely as synthetic approaches normally do was not the fault of the surface. In the bowlers area at Reno, carpet was installed instead of painted plywood—which the ABC normally uses—because the ABC was not in charge of building this permanent facility. In the past, all other ABC Tournament sites were temporary bowling centers built in convention halls. After an event, the bowling facility would be dismantled.

and one hopes that Reno will remove the carpeting for future ABC Tournaments. Until then, I wouldn't recommend rubbing your feet on or walking around too much on the carpeted area. I even walked on the side of my sliding foot whenever I was on the carpeted area in Reno, so my sole and heel wouldn't get too clean.

When you're having problems like this with approaches, you can start your

dictated greatly by the oiling pattern. The ABC Tournament strips and oils the lanes three times a day. They use a blend in the oil across the width of the lane, with more oil in the middle of the lane from the 10th board on the right to the 10th board on the left, and less oil applied to the outside of the 10-boards.

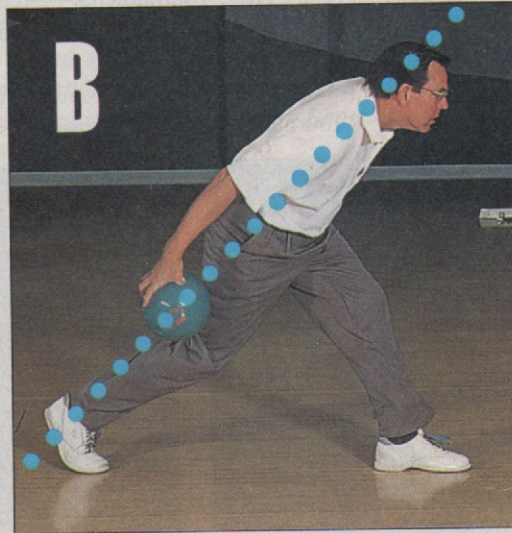
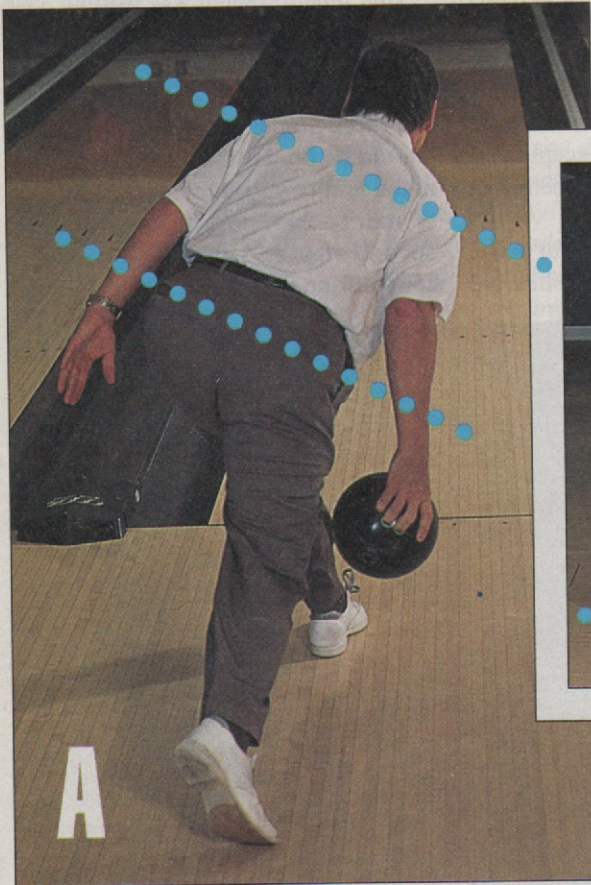
The major difference is that there are no dry areas across the width of the lane, as there are under many house

conditions. At the ABC Tournament, if you bowl immediately after they oil the lanes, the best place to play is somewhere around the second arrow, with a forward roll on the ball. As the lanes change, move more inside and turn the ball more, or use different equipment.

If you are not bowling the first shift after an oiling, it's important to watch where the bowlers on your pair are playing the lanes on the shift before

*between a 190 and a 195 average. My question is about my fifth step: As I start forward with my left leg and my ball starts down into my forward swing, at what point should my right leg move left to get out of the way of my ball?*

*Right now, I plant my left leg without a slide—not by intent—though I have felt a small slide occasionally. Sometimes my right leg is straight back as a trailer; at other times it will be left, and sometimes I have to step to the right to keep my balance. I don't do anything with any consistency. What should I do?*



**To clear your back leg [A], tilt your body, with your shoulders parallel to your hips. When the ball passes your thigh on the downswing [B], your back leg should be as straight as it gets.**

yours. Since there is no definable shot that comes with the oil, where a track develops in the oil is determined by where the bowlers are playing. Start off playing the lanes in this track to have your best chance of scoring, but keep in mind that you'll constantly be adjusting as the games progress.

Don't get soured on the ABC Tournament because of your unfortunate experiences in Reno. I have bowled in 28 ABC events and look forward to them every year. Every bowler should experience it at least once.

**■ I am right-handed, bowl twice a week, use a five-step approach, and carry**

Your right leg needs to clear out of the way of your downswing to let your arm and ball swing under your head at the point of release. Your leg starts to move out of the way when your ball reaches about waist level on your downswing. This can vary slightly with swing height, swing plane, and timing. Generally, when the ball is at waist level your leg starts its move; by the time the ball reaches your thigh, your leg is completely out of the way. If your leg doesn't clear, you can have balance and accuracy problems.

As the leg starts its move out of the way, it also serves the important function of helping to push your upper body

forward with the last step. As your left leg moves into your last step, your right leg starts to straighten out, pushing your body forward with your sliding leg and helping to keep your body balanced over your sliding leg. From a side view, when your arm and ball become parallel to your thigh, the right leg should be as straight as it's going get. Your leg doesn't have to be totally straight; it just has to have completed the job of pushing your upper body forward to the proper position for balance and leverage.

Many players who have trouble clearing their leg have the problem because they are trying to get knee-bend by having their right knee drop toward the floor on their downswing. This causes their body weight to shift back and increases the plane of their downswing. Maximum bend at both knees should happen as the left leg is passing the right leg on the last step. At this time, the right leg starts to straighten, keeping the upper body balanced over the sliding leg. Once the right leg has done this, it can clear out to the left before the arm and ball reach the right thigh.

You also must consider the angle of your hips and shoulders when the ball clears your left leg on the downswing. Your hips and shoulders should not be parallel to the floor, but parallel to each other—tilted to the right, with your right shoulder lower than your left one. To achieve this angle, set up in the stance with your right shoulder slightly lower than your left, and maintain this position throughout the approach and finish. This will make it easier for your leg to move out of the way and allow your arm and ball to swing under your head at the release. ●

*BILL SPIGNER has won three national and seven regional PBA titles. He is co-owner of Hawthorn Lanes in Vernon Hills, Ill., and is a former Pro Bowling Camps head teaching professional.*