

A PRO'S
APPROACH

HOW TO
ATTACK
CLUSTER
SPARES

Bill Spigner on maintaining your balance in the slide

BOWLING

DIGEST

April 1997

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Always Take a Balanc

■ *I've been getting to the foul line too fast, which is causing me to rush into my slide. In doing this, I often jam my sliding foot and throw myself off balance. What should I do to make my approach better so I can slide and come through the ball cleanly?*

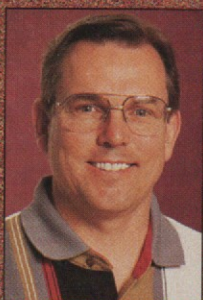
The first part of your problem—getting to the line too fast—can be traced back to the beginning of your approach. Much of what happens during the approach is determined by how you start. The speed of your steps is determined by the placement of the ball: If you move the ball into the swing too soon, your steps will speed up to try to catch up with your swing. If you move the ball a little slower or a little later, your feet will wait for the ball.

In your case, you want to move the ball out slowly on your “key step”: the first step of a four-step approach and the second step of a five-step approach. Keep the movement of the ball consistent from shot to shot. By doing this, you’ll have the same approach speed on each shot.

Your other problem—falling off balance and not sliding properly—occurs when your upper body is not centered correctly over your lower body. One of the most important things for you to work on for balance and slide is to position your shoulders properly over the knee of your sliding leg. The easiest way to do this is to keep your shoulders directly over your sliding knee entering your last step. Maintain this same relationship between your sliding leg and your upper body when you finish the shot off. By doing this, your foot will enter the last step parallel to the floor, allowing your foot to land flat, which will help you slide. Also, your upper body will be balanced over your sliding leg properly, which will help you maintain balance. When your shoulders are too far forward, you can lose your balance because your upper-body weight is ahead of your knee.

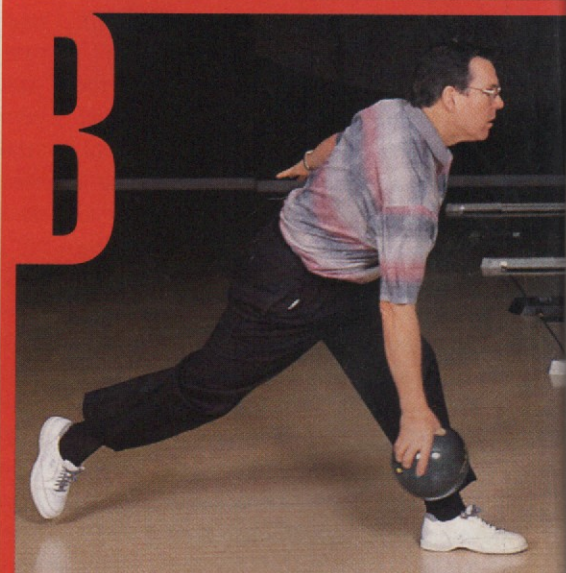
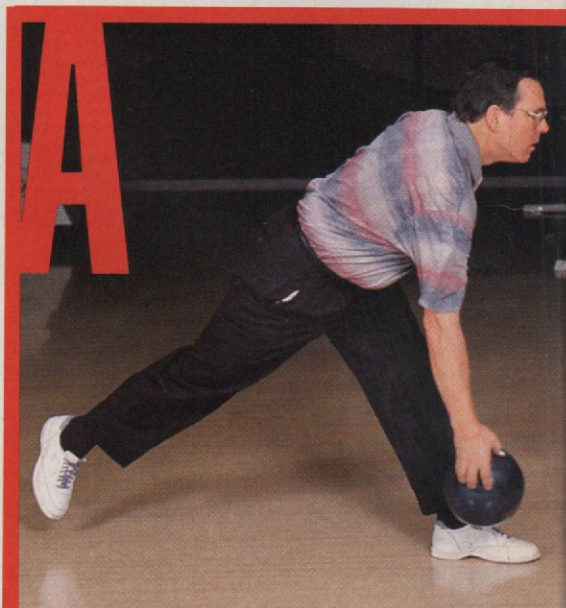
One more thing to think about: Be sure to allow your arm to swing freely all the way

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



Bowling Clinic

By BILL SPIGNER

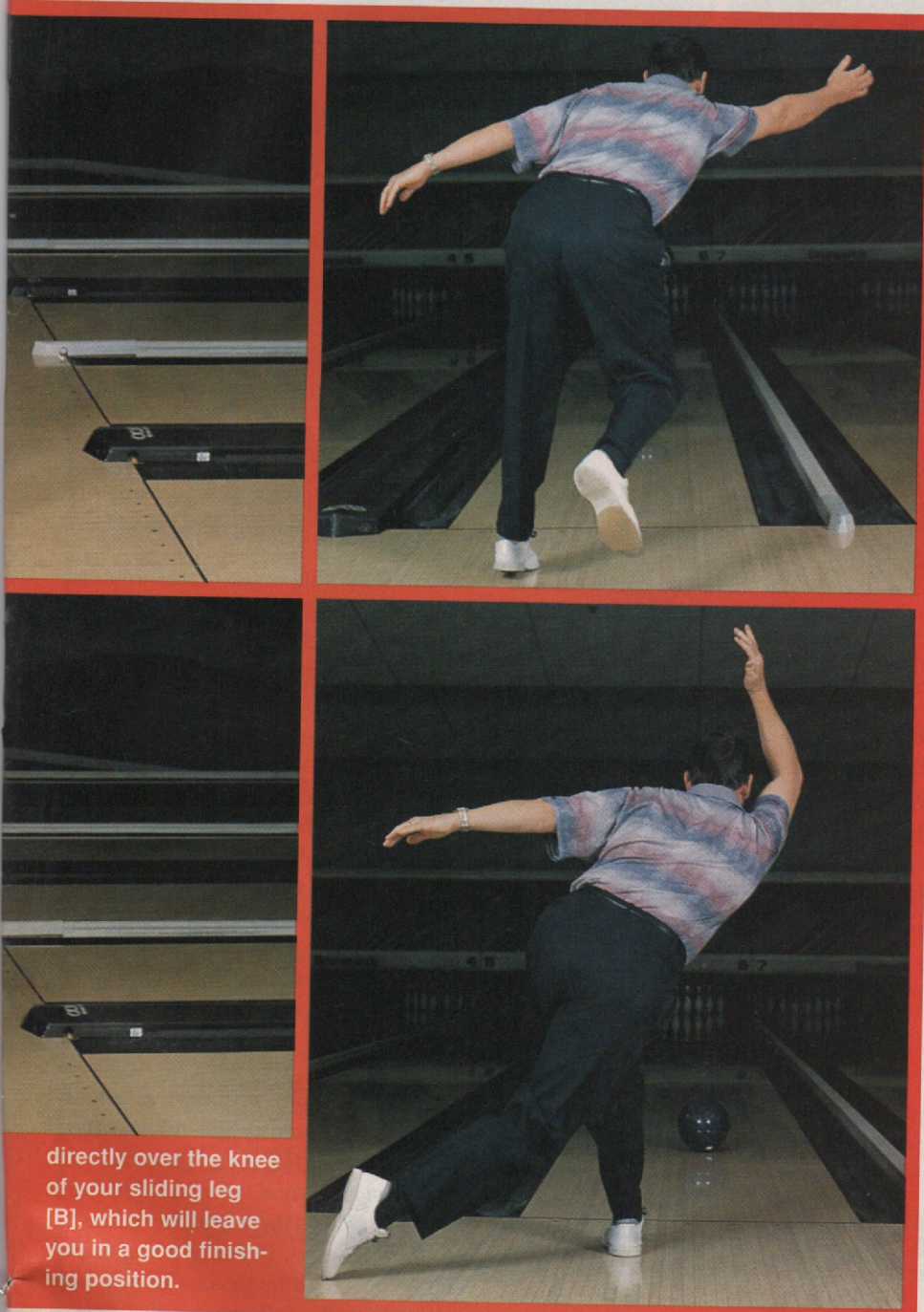


If your shoulders are too far forward as you enter your slide in the release zone [A], you'll likely lose your balance at the foul line, and your follow-through will suffer. Your shoulders should be

through the release, which will keep your shoulders from rotating closed.

■ *Recently a bowler from my league team rolled a strike. Then our league secretary*

ed Approach



walked over from at least four lanes away and said there had been a pin missing from the rack. No one, including the members of the team we were playing, saw any pin down. The league

secretary said the frame had to be bowled over. What's the rule on this?

Your league secretary was correct. ABC Rule 8 states: "When a dead ball is called, the delivery does not count. The

pins standing when the dead ball occurred must be respotted, and the player allowed to rebowl that delivery." Rule 8a describes what constitutes a dead ball in your situation; it states: "After a delivery, attention is immediately called to the fact that one or more pins were missing from the setup."

For the bowler rolling the ball, it's difficult to notice if the 5-, 8-, or 9-pin is missing from a full rack, because he's looking straight at the pins. The 5, 8, and 9 are located directly behind other pins; when one of those pins is missing from a full rack, it's much more easily seen from a side angle.

Most bowlers don't know a lot about the ABC/WIBC General Playing Rules; decisions often are based on opinion, not fact. Any time a situation occurs that is out of the ordinary, you should immediately refer to the rule book. All league officers should have a rule book in their bowling bag—and if they don't have one, the bowling center certainly should.

Like the old saying goes, ignorance of the law is no excuse. If no rule book is available, take a provisional shot or make a temporary decision, with everyone agreeing that the correct decision will be rendered when you can consult the rules.

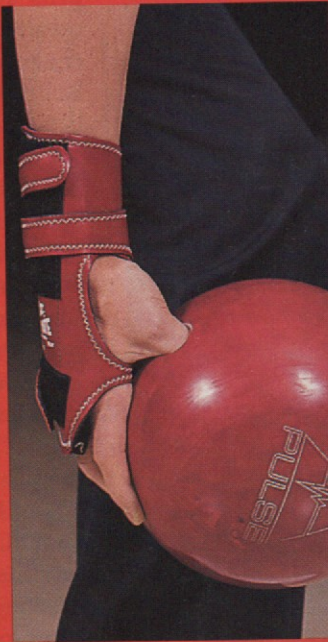
■ ***On every pro bowling telecast, I see a majority of the players using some kind of device to steady their wrist or hand. Do you recommend that all bowlers use wrist supports? If so, which types are most beneficial?***

Some of the players you see using the wrist devices are using them simply because they are being paid to endorse that product. But there are also a great deal of professional bowlers who wear wrist devices to help their shot-making. Wearing some sort of wrist device is of great benefit to a lot of bowlers.

There are three pro tours currently: the PBA tour, the PBA Senior tour, and the LPBT. Of the three pro tours, the number of bowlers using wrist devices varies; the women's pros wear them the most, followed by the Senior tour members, then the men from the regular tour. The type of wrist devices worn on each tour also varies. On the women's tour, players



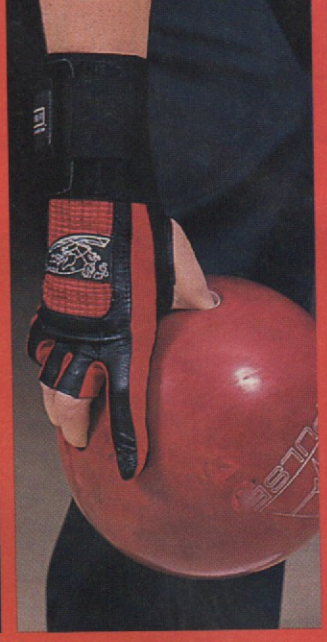
The traditional type of wrist device gives you all the support you need in your wrist.



Some have an extension that keeps your fingers from bending back as your thumb exits the ball.



Those who don't have the strength to lift and turn the ball may need one with an index-finger extension.



A traditional band with a glove attached can give you a better feel for your hand and the ball.

wear more of the "exotic" wrist devices. Many wear them to help get more revolutions and turn on the ball because they lack the physical strength to do it themselves. The same applies on the men's Senior tour, but to a smaller degree.

Wrist bands were originally designed to help bowlers keep their wrist in a steady position while releasing the ball. It's important to keep the wrist straight until the thumb comes out of the ball, so you can lift and turn the ball with your fingers, and today's wrist devices still are designed to help you do this. However, from the original idea of using a device just to keep the wrist straight has come numerous other types of devices. Many of today's exotic wrist devices help bowlers put revolutions and turn on a ball that they can't create themselves because of timing problems and/or a lack of strength. Some of these modern wrist bands are like wearing a cast.

I would put the wrist devices in four categories. The first is the traditional wrist device that supports only your wrist. This type of wrist band is the most popular type overall, and it certainly is the type a bowler would normally buy when he or she first finds out that there

are devices out there you can wear that will help steady your wrist for a better release.

The second type of wrist device is one that supports your wrist but also has an extension that protrudes out over the first knuckles of your fingers. The extension keeps your fingers from bending back as your thumb comes out of the ball. The net result for some bowlers is additional lift to the ball, which produces more revolutions.

The third type of wrist device has an extension that goes over your index finger to raise and support that finger; it not only helps produce more lift, but it also helps turn the ball. This type of device is most popular with bowlers who don't have the strength or timing to lift and turn a heavy ball.

The fourth type of wrist device is one that has the traditional type of wrist band, but with a glove attached to it. This product helps support your wrist, and the glove gives you the feel of your hand being in better contact with the ball.

There is one new twist to all of these wrist devices: Manufacturers are now making them adjustable. You can set the devices to change the angle at which you

want to hold your wrist. Some you can change from slightly cupped (to get more revs) to bent back (to take some revs off the ball); with others, you can alter the manner in which you cock your wrist, to change the amount of turn you put on the ball. Some new wrist devices even allow you to do both.

Now comes the hard part: choosing a device that will best serve your needs. I recommend that most bowlers use a simple wrist support. Once you have progressed in your game to the point where you just can't get the action on your ball that you need to compete, then it may be time to try one of the modern exotic devices.

For some people, wrist devices are just a shortcut to getting the release they want. *It's still far more important to understand the fundamentals of playing the game.* Know why you are going to put the device on. If you're going to put on one of the exotic devices to help you with your strike ball, what is that device going to do to your spare shooting?

Many pro shops will allow you to try a few shots with a wrist device on. A good idea is to have your pro watch you and recommend what would be right for you. ●