

Bowlers Journal

JUNE 2008 • \$3.95 • www.bowlersjournal.com

INTERNATIONAL

CHRIS WHO?

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1913-2008

THE PRO APPROACH

BY BILL SPIGNER { bills@bowlersjournal.com }



Chris Loschetter Has the Game to Win Often on the PBA Tour

CHRIS LOSCHETTER HAS BEEN an exempt player for three years. He has not yet won a title, but he also has never been in jeopardy of losing his exempt status since leading the 2005 PBA Tour Trials.

Chris started bowling at age 10 when his uncle took him to the lanes during the summer, as games were priced at a bargain basement rate of 25 cents per. From that day on, Chris was hooked. He averaged an impressive 145 in his first season. When he turned 13, he'd spend most summer afternoons at the bowling center, rolling some 15 games a day — and this continued until he went to college.

He shot his first 300 game before his 14th birthday, and averaged over 200 for the first time (209) and had his first 800 series when he was 16.

I first saw Chris at the Junior Gold tournament in Orlando. He really stood out, possessing excellent mechanics with power. Chris went on from there to make Junior Team USA in 2000 and 2001.

Chris eventually stopped playing other sports to concentrate on bowling. He attended college and graduated from Florida State with a Bachelor's degree in Business Management. During his college years, he said he did a lot of experimenting with releases, lane play and other performance-related techniques. It's very important for any athlete to explore their

game and to continue adding to the things they can do. You have to push yourself to the limits of your ability to play the game at its highest level.



On the second step of his delivery, Loschetter places the ball in front of his body, a method that helps keep his shoulders in perfect position.

Today, Chris is a 5-step stroker who has a lot of range in his game. I would classify him as a "modern day stroker." He has great timing. His ball placement would be a model to follow. I use the term "ball placement" instead of pushaway for the initial

starting movement of Chris's motion because he places the ball out in front of him on the second step. The great coach and author (and *BJI* columnist) Tom Kouros coined the term in his *Par Bowling* books. With a pushaway, the player actually pushes the ball away from the body. Some still use this method for starting the ball in motion, but more and more bowlers now place the ball out in front of them to start the swing.

From the stance to the end of the ball placement, Chris's shoulders do not move with the movement of the ball. In getting the ball in motion, the arms should extend to the point that the ball will enter the swing — without the bowling shoulder moving forward and ahead of the opposite shoulder. The bowling shoulder should remain slightly behind and lower than the non-bowling shoulder so the body can position itself to allow the arm and ball to swing under the shoulder on the backswing. When Chris's second step is done, the arms are extended away from the body as far as they are going to be. At this point, the body weight has transferred to the

right foot, the left hand has left the ball, and the ball is now ready to carry the arm freely to the top of the swing.

My comment about Chris being a "modern day stroker" is based on the fact that he has the timing of a stroker and the power positions of a high-rev player. His shoulders are slightly open at the top of the swing, his arm bends from the elbow on the downswing, his swing tucks inside on the way down when his arm bends, and he unloads at the release from the shoulder down through the hand. These power positions allow Chris to play any part of the lane and create the right ball rotation to play multiple angles. He, like Pete Weber ("The Pro Approach," May), is working on going straighter. It's not easy for a player whose swing tucks inside from the top of the swing down to play as straight as the Dukes and the Williamses of pro bowling.

Chris says his favorite Tour pattern is the Viper. It's oiled to 37 feet and allows him to play between the 7 and 12 boards on fresh oil. Chris uses a pin under the middle finger with the CG kicked out; it's normally a ball out of the box, and not a very strong ball. He says he's able to use his normal release and rotation on this pattern,



Chris Loschetter used his "modern day stroker" style to finish third at the toughest test in pro bowling: the U.S. Open.

and can play right for most of the block and bowl well. But he can run into trouble when the other players move in too quickly; then he has to follow the lead of the pack.

Chris may have a new favorite pattern based upon his great performance at the 2008 U.S. Open, the most demanding tournament in the world. He finished third, losing a heart-breaker to eventual champion Norm Duke, 267-245 — two

it out on Tour, I practiced every day and never thought [about doing] otherwise. Achieving your goals isn't easy, but if you are going to try and become a bowler on the PBA Tour, make sure you put everything into it and that you have something to fall back on. I found it easier to make it on Tour knowing I had a degree from college, and I hope other youth bowlers who want to make it professionally consider

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magnificently bowled games with so much on the line.

"I would tell anyone thinking of a career in professional bowling to make sure you attend college first," Chris advises. "I went through Junior Gold and college bowling, and I made a lot of great friends and contacts during that time. Some people think they can come right out and try bowling on Tour, but it's not that simple. It takes years to develop your game.

"Figure out a plan for yourself and take it one step at a time," he adds. "Focus on where you are going and how you want to get there, and don't deviate from the plan. I see too many people that want to achieve their dreams without putting the work in. When I was trying to make

getting their degree, also."

Chris will be entering his fourth straight year as an exempt player after finishing the 2007-08 season ranked eighth in points and 14th in average with 218. Although he hasn't won yet, his steady performances are incredibly important to being able to survive on Tour.

Chris has the mental and physical game maturity of a 10-year veteran, so I don't expect him to remain without a title much longer.

Bill Spigner is a three-time PBA champion, eight-time PBA Regional champ, Gold level coach, former head teaching pro for Professional Bowling Camps and long-time pro shop operator. Visit his Web site at billspigner.com.