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BOWLING DIGEST

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- The Bowling Clinic By Bill Spigner



Bill Spigner's Bowling Clinic

■ I am having difficulty hitting my target. My fingers seem to turn around the ball and inside my target line, causing me to miss the spot by approximately two boards. I bought a lighter ball and this did not help.

It is common for most people to miss their target to the left. For many people it is usually about two boards, but some people may miss by more. Your target is right of your eye (righthander, opposite for lefties), so you are actually seeing the right edge of the ball hitting your target, and not the center of the ball.

Provided there is not a physical problem causing you to miss to the left of your target, I would suggest that you look two boards to the right of what you are trying to hit. Example: if playing the second arrow, which is the 10th board, you will want to look at the 8th board.

■ In all the articles on weights and balances I have read, they say a ball should be drilled according to where your ball track is. My question is: If a bowler has a half-dozen different ways of delivering the ball for different lane conditions, and these different ways would change the ball track, what's the best way to have the ball drilled? Is there such a thing as a drilling that would best suit an all-purpose ball?

If a player changes his hand position and roll on his ball often, the best weight to put into the ball is zero weight—no top, side, finger, thumb, negative side, or bottom weight. If you put weight combinations in your ball to complement your type of roll, and you change your roll, these weights could have an undesirable effect on your changed roll. It could make the ball wobble, snap too hard, or roll too early.

■ I use a Columbia Yellow Dot and a Dick Weber 5-Star. I prefer the Yellow Dot because it gives me the best action and scores. I am considering purchasing a urethane ball. What is the advantage to the urethane over the two balls I currently use. Is it true that the urethane ball is harder to control?

A urethane ball would be a good addition to the equipment you are now using. The 5-Star is a hard rubber ball good for extremely dry lanes. The Yellow Dot is good for lightly oiled to dry lanes, and the urethane would be a good ball for medium to oily lanes.

The urethane ball is not more difficult to control than any other ball, provided it is used at the right time. If the lanes are hooking a lot the urethane will be hard to control because it hooks more than your

other balls. If the lanes are very oily, the 5-Star would be hard to control because it won't hook enough. It's very important to use the ball that the lane conditions tell you to use.

■ I am a 13-year-old boy who throws a hook and averages 145. I'm having trouble getting strikes on good balls. I put the ball right into the pocket and leave the 5-7, 5-10, or just the 5. The lanes are fairly oily and I use a Brunswick Crown Jewel, which weighs 14 pounds. What can I do?

The type of ball you are using is a hard plastic (85 on the D-scale), which is best suited for hooking lanes. I would suggest getting a soft ball with a hardness of about 78. If you are strong enough you might want to consider getting a ball one pound heavier. And if you are using a conventional grip, you might want to try a relaxed fingertip grip.

■ I am 15 years old, bowl about 20 games a week, and also lift weights three times a week. One day I lifted and bowled seven games the same day and averaged 186. An hour after I got home, while eating dinner, my thighs tightened and bulged and I couldn't walk. I'm sure it's related to my lifting and my getting low to the lane when I release my ball. Do you think I should limit my weightlifting or stop altogether?

I would not recommend stopping your weightlifting, but I'd design a program that would enhance your bowling. If you are lifting to add bulk, it won't be beneficial to your bowling. If you are lifting for strength, endurance, and flexibility, it will help your bowling.

Many of today's professional bowlers train during the offseason and many train during the season. The PBA tour is very grinding, so you need endurance and strength, which weight training can provide.

■ I have questions on the use of sandpaper on a bowling ball. Can you sand the ball in any way? Is it illegal? I understand that it is illegal, but others say it's legal.

The sanding of bowling balls is legal according to the ABC, WIBC, and PBA. The ABC has no written rule about sanding the ball, but at their annual championships they allow you to sand a ball, provided you sand the whole ball uniformly. You cannot put grooves in the ball or put any foreign substance on the surface of the ball, such as rosin, pro grip, tape, etc.

The PBA allows you to sand the ball any way you want, provided you don't put



Bill Spigner is in his 11th year on the PBA Tour. He holds three national PBA championships and seven regional PBA titles. He is also a head teaching pro and instructor at PBC Bowling Camps.

grooves in the track area or put foreign substances on the surface. Last summer the PBA tournament committee passed a rule requiring that pros only sand their ball before the start of competition. Once they start, they cannot alter the surface of the ball in any way, and that includes polishing.

The PBA adopted its new rule for two reasons. First of all, a sanded ball is very rough and it can actually damage the lane surface. Second, a sanded ball will take a lot of oil from the lane and change the lane condition much faster than normal.

The reason players sand their ball is to rough up the ball's surface to make it grab the lane. The sanding of bowling balls is not new. It's been done on the pro tour for the last 10 to 12 years. When sanding started, it was primarily used to take the shine off highly polished balls. But today, some players sand their ball on every shot to make it hook more on tight lanes. Because today's urethane balls are so porous, sanding them removes the oil from the "pores" and helps maintain the balls' hooking characteristics.

Sanding a ball during competition is like letting a baseball pitcher use sandpaper on the ball when he pitches—it causes the ball to overreact and do things it isn't supposed to do. There are enough types of bowling balls on the market today to cover all conditions without having to resort to sanding. I hope the ABC will soon adopt a sanding rule similar to the PBA's.

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.