

Bill Spigner's  
Bowling Clinic

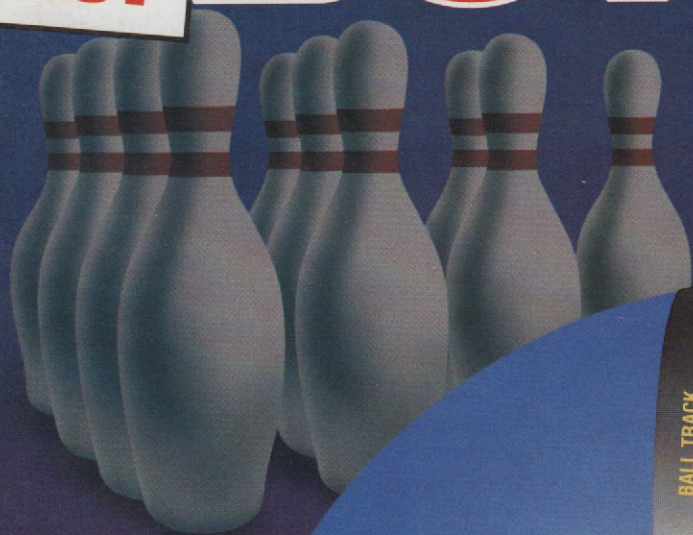
Jeri Edwards on winning practice techniques

FIND THE  
OIL PATTERN  
FAST

# BOWLING

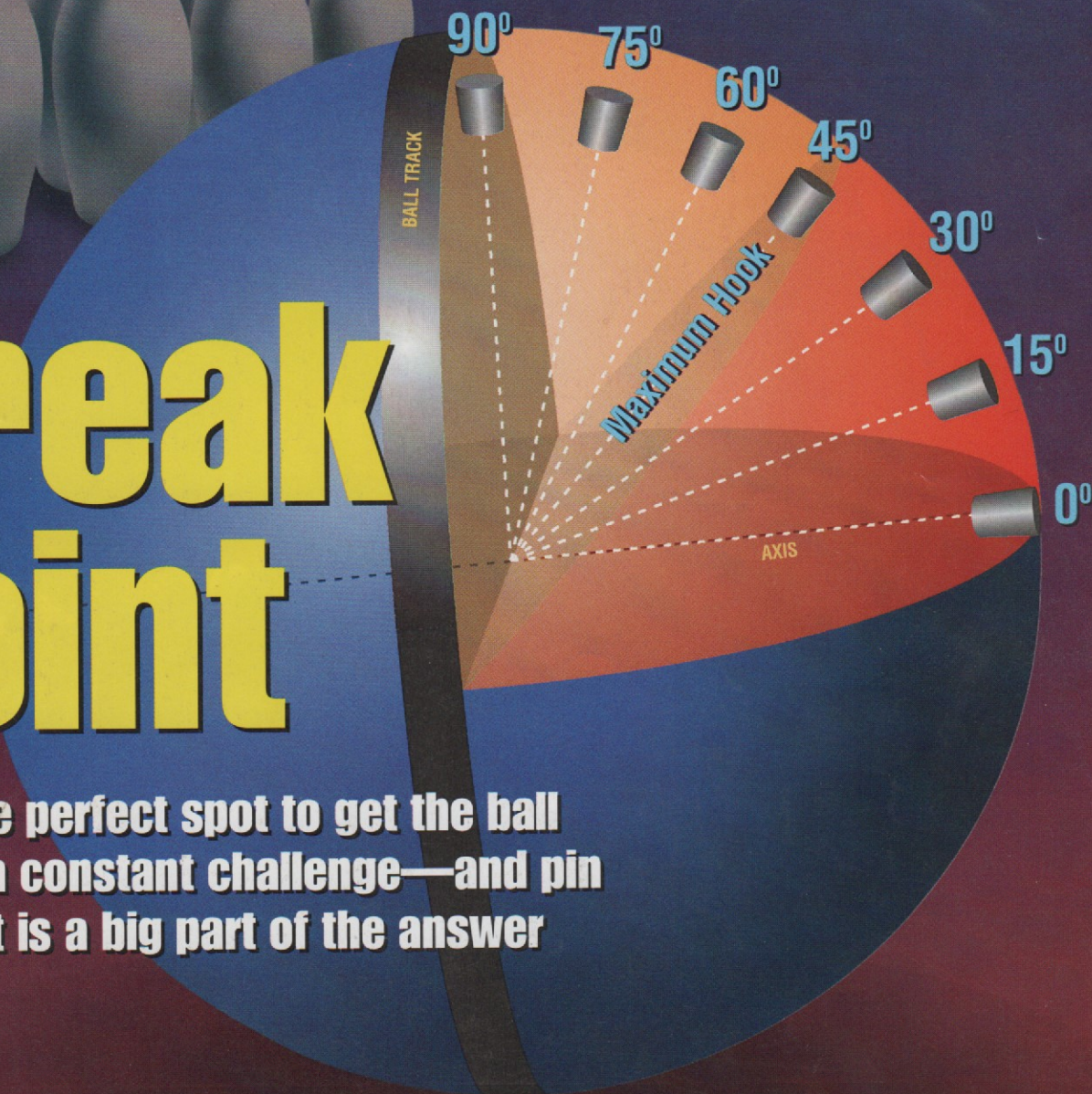
## DIGEST

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# Break Point

Finding the perfect spot to get the ball rolling is a constant challenge—and pin placement is a big part of the answer



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■ In our league there is confusion about the word "abrasives," especially as it applies to ABC Rule 19, which states: "Altering the surface of a bowling ball during competition is prohibited. All bowling balls so altered must be removed from play." This would imply that the use of sandpaper, files, or other methods to mar the ball's surface would be illegal. Am I breaking ABC Rule 19 if I use a Scotch-Brite pad on my bowling ball during competition? And what liquids are allowable under this rule?

The use of a Scotch-Brite pad during competition is illegal. These pads are abrasive and will alter the surface of the ball. You can, however, use certain liquids during competition for cleaning. Among those that are legal are water and isopropyl alcohol. Also, pro shops sell ball cleaners that are legal to use, and on the package it will state if the product is legal to use during ABC-sanctioned competition.

■ What's the quickest way to determine the oiling pattern on the lanes?

The easiest way is to throw some shots around the first, second, and third arrows. As you do this, pay attention to the overall reaction of the ball. Notice how far the ball slides down the lane before hooking, and how hard the ball hooks.

For example, say your first shot is played over the first arrow, and the ball hooks a lot and does so very quickly; then your second shot over the second arrow slides long with very little hook. If so, you'll know there is a big difference between the two areas of the lane. In this case, somewhere between the first and second arrows is the right place to play your strike ball.

Of course, it's not always that simple. The key is to see how far the ball slides down the lane and how much it hooks on the back end. You need to determine the cross-lane pattern and length of the oil to help you play the right part of the lane. You're looking for the area of the lane that allows you to miss a little and still hit the pocket.

One way to eliminate some of the trial and error is to watch other bowlers. If you are bowling in a tournament, you can watch the squad before yours,

paying closest attention to the bowlers on the pair that you'll be on. The important thing about your pair is that if all the bowlers are playing on the same line, they're burning a ball track in the oil. In this situation you'll want to play either in their track or on the inside edge of their track.

If multiple lines are being played and the players are scoring well from all areas, your decision will be to try and play the area of the lane you're most comfortable playing. The key is to have an open mind. Lane conditions change quickly today because of the new bowling balls, and you really need to stay focused on your ball reaction, always anticipating making moves as the game progresses.

■ I am a 198-average bowler. I can't release the ball without the track hitting my thumb hole and bouncing. I've had my two main balls, an Aqua Marine Quantum and a Piranha, redrilled. I've tried various hand positions and gloves. Nothing has worked. How can I keep the track off my thumb hole?

I would recommend you drill out one of today's high-flare-potential balls. I suggest a ball that is leverage-weighted with the pin at 12 o'clock. Ask your pro shop operator to start with a ball that has the pin about two inches out, with about three ounces of top weight. This type of drilling may require a balance hole to remove excess side weight. If so, drill this hole eight or nine inches from the center of your grip. This type of drilling will flare your ball track away from your thumb hole.

Another thing you may want to try is to release your thumb earlier. Tracking over the thumb hole often is caused by a late thumb release. At first you may feel like you're losing the ball to get your thumb out fast enough, but eventually you'll adjust.

■ I'm a 189-average bowler, but I could be much better if I could pick up a 10-pin. I've tried everything—moving far to the left, throwing a slow backup ball, hard speed from the fourth arrow—and still I'm inconsistent. I can't throw a straight ball anymore after throwing the hook for so long. I have



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heard about "deadening" the ball or positioning your fingers differently to cut down on the hook. What should I do?

It's important for you to "dead" the ball to get the 10-pin, and it's also important to roll a straighter shot for most of your spares. You don't want to roll a backup ball because that release is too different from a hook release, but taking most of the hook out of your spare shot would help to make your spare shooting more consistent.

There are a number of things you might do to flatten out your ball. One would be to bend your wrist back so when you release your ball your hand is on top of it, which will kill your lift. In conjunction with this, concentrate on not turning the ball and not trying to throw it harder. If you try to increase your speed your tendency will be to lift harder. Once you have perfected rolling your ball without lift and turn, you can work on learning to add more speed.

I also would recommend you target closer to the third arrow for the 10-pin. For most people, it's too difficult to hit the fourth arrow and still get the ball to the right corner. ●

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.