

Getting your kids started in the game • Bowling's first 900 series

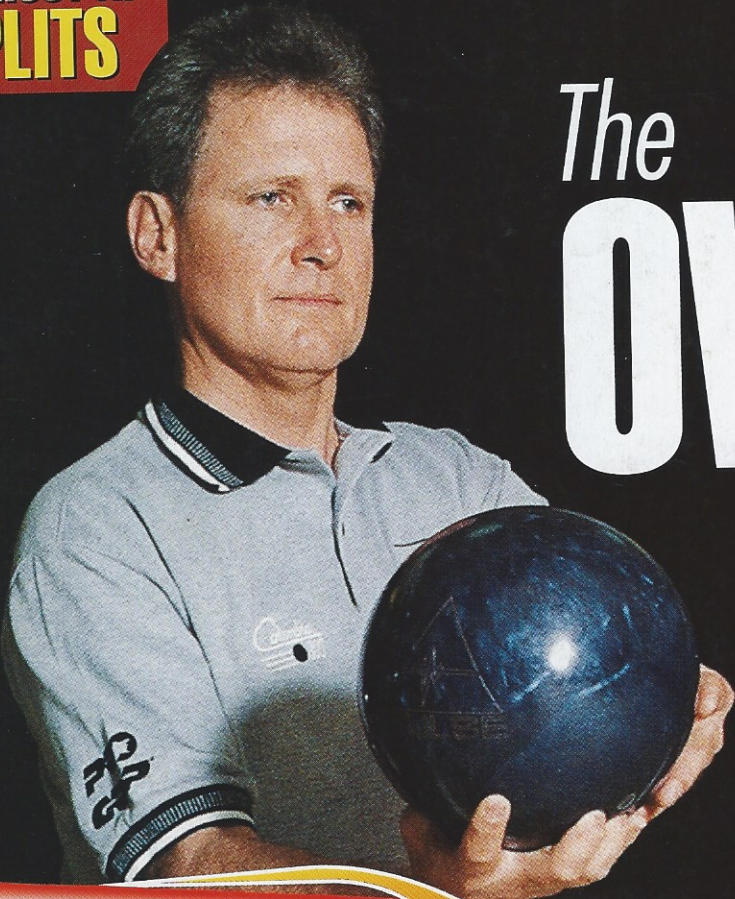
A PRO'S APPROACH

WHEN AND HOW TO SHOOT AT SPLITS

# BOWLING DIGEST

June 1997

# The OVER/UNDER System



PBA Hall-of-Famer David Ozio shows how placing an imaginary bar in the pushaway and at the release makes you a more consistent shot-maker



\$3.99

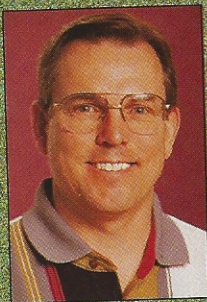


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# Relief May Be a Matter

■ *I'm a right-handed bowler with a fingertip grip and a stroker-type release. Twelve years ago I changed from a full-roller to a semi-roller, and I've had a finger problem off and on ever since. Three or four times during the course of a league night or practice, I release the ball only to feel like I hit my middle fingernail with a hammer. Often, the lingering pain causes me to favor the finger for a frame or two. I've tried throwing the ball with and without a wrist support, I've used grips, I've tried a stretched span and a relaxed span, and I've tried using various middle-finger pitches and angles—all to no avail. What should I do?*



## Bowling Clinic

By BILL SPIGNER

Your problem is not very common, but it's something I've seen and heard about a number of times. The problem occurs when the top of your finger hits the wall of the finger hole at the release, and your fingernail catches on the grip. This happens because your fingertips are contracting to the center of your palm while trying to lift the ball—it's very much like forming a fist. With finger grips, the nail actually can dig into the grip because the grip is soft. When this happens, the nail catches and gets pulled away from the finger.

There are a few possible solutions to your problem. The first thing you should do is trim your nails as short as possible, which may keep your nail from hanging on the grip when you lift the ball. If this doesn't work, remove the grip from the middle-finger hole, then plug it and redrill it (you can leave the grip in the ring-finger hole). Without the grip, your fingernail will have a better chance to slide across the surface of the hole. Either way, keep your nails trimmed short.

The third thing to try is changing your release. Instead of pulling the tips of your fingers into the palm of your hand, do the opposite. As your thumb comes out of the ball, think of extending the tips of your fingers out toward your target, or

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*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.*



**Curling your fingers toward your palm in the release [above] can cause middle-finger pain. Try extending them toward your target.**

toward the pins. This is guaranteed to keep your nail from catching the wall of the hole on the way out. This is also a very effective way of working your fingers, if your fingers are under the ball when your thumb is ready to come out. PBA superstar Pete Weber extends his fingers open and down the lane, and he uses finger inserts. Brian Voss, on the other hand, doesn't use inserts because they cause his fingers to hang in the holes too long for his game.

The last thing to try is wearing a glove that

PHOTOGRAPHY BY KATHLEEN ECONOMOU/BD



# r of Opening Up

covers your fingers. There are players who do this with success. However, the problem with many gloves is you lose some feel for the release.

■ **Is it legal for a bowler to switch bowling hands in the same frame or game? For instance, if a left-handed bowler leaves a 7-pin, can he attempt the conversion with his right hand?**

In ABC- or WIBC-sanctioned competition, it is illegal to change hands in the middle of a game. You can, however, change if you have an injury and a majority of the board of directors of the league votes to allow you to change hands. You will then establish a different average

with your opposite hand. In

tournaments, if you're

injured and

can't con-

tinue,

the

tournament director must decide whether you'll be allowed to continue in the event bowling with your opposite hand.

You *can* bowl in two different leagues, bowling one right-handed and the other left-handed. However, you have to let it be known what you're doing, and remember: You'll be establishing separate averages. You need to do this for the reporting of averages to your local association, which keeps track of averages for handicapping purposes; its concern is keeping people from falsifying their averages to gain an unfair advantage.

In scratch tournaments such as PBA or LPBT events and megabucks events, it doesn't matter what hand you bowl with. Some players will attempt a certain spare with the opposite hand when that's the only way to make it. But on the pro tours, if a player switches hands in protest of lane conditions, he or she can be fined for "conduct unbecoming of a professional."

PBA Hall-of-Famer Mark Roth bowls right-handed but is an accomplished left-handed bowler. He probably could average over 200 with his weaker hand, and he's rolled a perfect game left-handed. Roth has the same style with both hands—watching him bowl as a lefty is like watching him in a mirror.

■ **I'm a left-handed semi-roller with a fingertip grip. Recently I had a ball drilled leverage-weight; it's a pin-out at 2½" and has a seven-inch weight hole. The track has gotten way too high on the ball, catching the finger and thumb holes. Do I need a different weight hole? If so, what modifications must I make?**

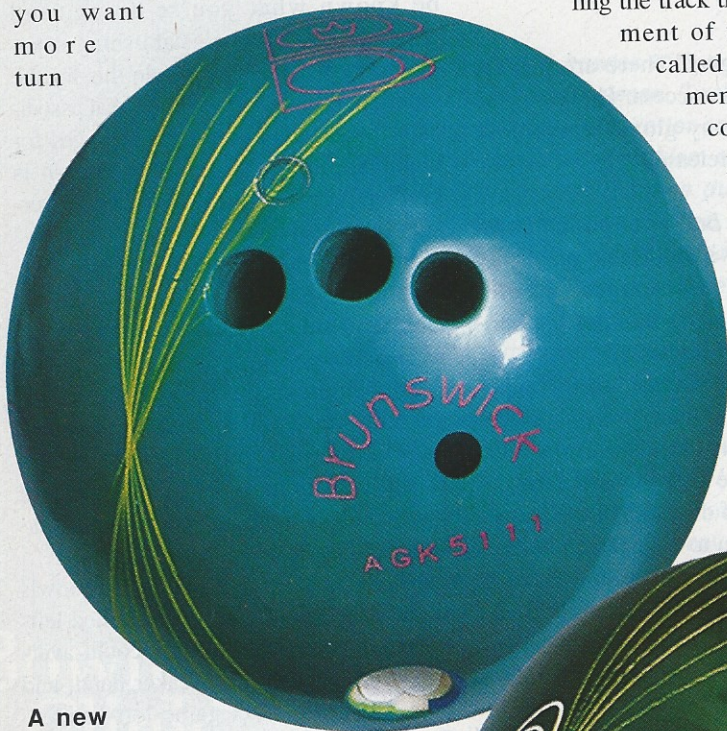
Changing the position of the weight hole could move the track, but in your situation—tracking over the fingers and thumb hole—there's a good chance that it won't get the track off both holes. Still, changing the position of the weight hole is one of three things I would consider trying. The other two are either adjusting your release or relocating the pin currently in your ball.

The first thing I would try is a change





in your release to lower the track. It's possible that you've changed your release, causing the ball to track over the holes. Think of your thumb releasing early and your fingers rotating to the side of the ball—you want more turn



**A new pin position will change the rotation on your ball and eliminate tracking over the finger holes, which decreases your control by decreasing the amount of ball surface in contact with the lane.**

and less lift, with a smoother, earlier release.

If the release experiment doesn't work, plug up the weight hole and have it moved. Your pro shop operator will have to determine the proper size and location of the hole—and before that, he or she should advise you whether moving the hole will even work.

If both experiments don't work, I recommend plugging and redrilling the ball. Move the pin closer to the ring finger; have it placed to the side of the ring finger, or even behind it. With the pin placed in a high position, your track should move away from the holes. With today's high-performance balls, the narrow point of the track—referred to as the

“bow tie”—will be about three to five inches from the pin. With the high pin placement, the bow tie can move behind the fingers, helping keep the track off the holes.

What we're talking about is controlling the track through the placement of the pin; this is called “track management.” You need to consult with your pro on this. It's very important for the ball to be set up right for your track. When drilling a high-performance ball, there must be a partner-



ship between the pro shop technician and the player. It may take a couple of different drillings to get what's best for you.

■ **My average has dropped from 201 to 176 using reactive balls—I can't seem to stand far enough left or throw the ball hard enough to hold any kind of**

**line. Recently I decided to try a ball I found years ago in a thrift shop, before urethane balls were even invented. It's called the Apollo Black Wolf, and it has to be either plastic or rubber. (Both of my local pro shop operators had never even heard of it.) Since I started to use this ball, my average has begun to climb. I'm curious to know more about this ball that I picked up for \$5.**

The ball you're talking about is probably a hard rubber ball; there have been very few black plastic balls. Take the ball to one of the better pro shops in your area—I'm sure the pro will be able to look at the ball and tell you the material it's made of.

The old hard rubber balls were easy to control; with the lane conditions you're playing on, a ball of this type may be easier to control than other equipment is. On dry, spotty, tough lane conditions, the hard rubber ball is still good. The Peterson Classic, one of the top tournaments in the Midwest, has lane conditions like this, and the rubber ball is one of the most popular types used in this event.

Take a look at the equipment other bowlers are using on this condition. If you find that a majority of the better bowlers are using reactive resin and scoring well, you should take a look at your game. You may be putting too much emphasis on what ball you're using.

A lot of bowlers overemphasize a big hook as the key to success, which to some degree is a false assumption; you need enough hook so the ball can take out the 5-pin on a variety of lane conditions, but the hook should be no larger than you can control and alter slightly to play the lanes. However, while using “underpowered” equipment is an asset at times, in the long run the high-power resin balls will dominate. ●