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angles and
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Bowling for seniors: How to roll in your golden years

BOWLING DIGEST

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Playing the Extremes

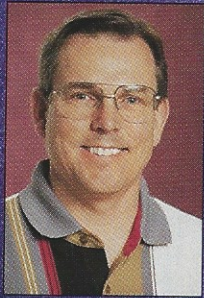
Parker Bohn III clues you in on the best ways to make drastic changes to your game when you need them most

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Get on the Right Track



Bowling Clinic

By BILL SPIGNER

■ *I can bowl right-handed or left-handed. My average is 199 and 194, respectively. When I'm bowling right-handed I have a high track, about one inch from my fingers and thumb hole. When I'm bowling left-handed my track is low, about three inches from the holes. I'm planning to buy two balls next year. Here's my question: I've been getting conflicting answers from several pro shop owners as to where the pin placement should be when I buy the balls. One says pin-out for high track; the other says pin-in for high track.*

I'm totally confused! What's the story here? Does it make a difference?

The pin placement does make a difference. One of the important parts of designing today's balls is track-flare management. The cores in today's balls are so strong, if the pin is in the wrong place relative to your track, the track can roll over the holes.

A high-track player should use pins that are at least two inches out, locating the pin close to the ring-finger area of the ball. This type of pin placement will push the track away from the finger holes. A pin-in ball drilled right over the label for a high-track player is in danger of hitting the holes. On the other hand, a low-track player can use pin-in balls easier.

■ *During the days of plastic and rubber balls, I threw a full-roller, blew out the 5-pin, and carried an average in the 180s. Then I switched to the recommended semi-roller about the time reactive resin urethane balls came out. Now I am leaving 5-pins, 5-6s or 5-10s (I am left-handed); my ball speed seems to be the same, but I'm losing almost 20 pins from my average. Any help would be appreciated.*

There are two possible causes for your lack of carry. One is that the ball is still sliding when it gets to the pocket, causing the ball to deflect too much. The other cause could be that your ball is rolling out.

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.



The ball above has the pin placed near the center of gravity (indicated by the yellow mark); the track goes over the holes. The ball at right is pin-out; the track is higher.

First let's look at the problem of the ball sliding too much. In this situation I have to assume your ball rotation is good and you are using a ball that is heavy enough to drive through the pins. With a good release you can use a ball as light as 14 pounds and not have trouble with the ball driving through the pocket and carrying the 5-pin on light hits.

Today, bowling centers use more oil than ever before because of the modern balls—these resin urethane balls burn up the oil on the lanes far faster than previous models did. With the amount of oil being used, if you are

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID DUROCHIK/BD

playing the wrong part of the lane, the chances of your ball getting into the proper roll to carry is greatly diminished. Many of today's oiling machines apply the oil to the lane in five-board strips. The least amount of oil will be applied to the first five boards, from the

gutter to the first arrow—usually between three to eight units of oil on these five boards. The next five boards, from the first arrow to the second arrow, get a little more oil, about eight to 15 units. A lot of oil will be applied from the second to the third arrow, and even more

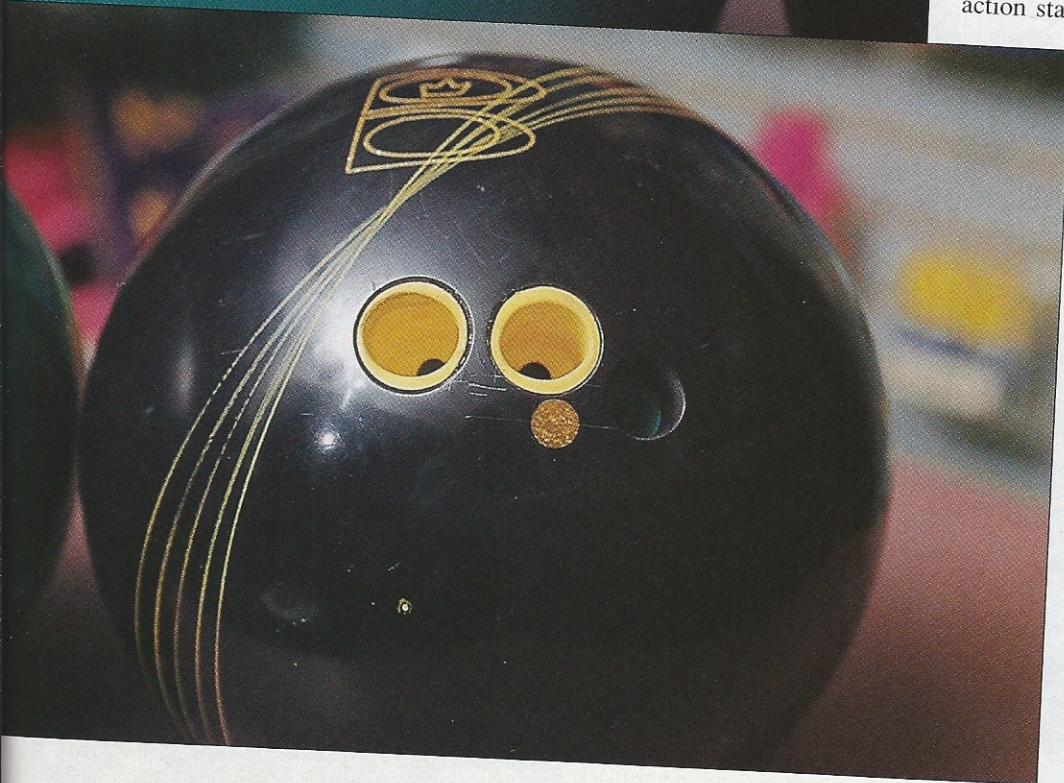
from the third to the fourth arrow. Most bowling centers will put a heavy amount of oil from the second arrow on the right to the second arrow on the left. This section of the lane can have as much as 50 to 70 units of oil. With this much oil in the middle, only the strongest of releases can get the ball to roll in the oil and finish on the back end.

Most of the time you can't see the oil on the lane, so you have to rely on your ball reaction to tell you how to play the lane. If the problem is that the ball is sliding too far before hooking, move your feet and target left to see if there is less oil there. If you find that the lane does not get drier as you move left, then you may need an equipment change.

A ball that slides too much is less of a problem than one that "rolls out," or loses all of its ability to hook and rolls through the pins going straight. The ball needs to go through three phases to be an effective weapon to strike: First, it needs to slide through the front section of the lane (the heads). Second, it needs to start hooking. Third, after hooking, it goes into its strongest roll. When all this occurs at the right time you'll have an effective strike ball. If the hooking action starts too early, the ball will roll early and can straighten out at the end, which causes roll-out. When the ball is rolled out it can't drive through the pocket well, especially from inside angles.

How do we cure roll-out? Let's assume that the bowling ball matches up well with your speed and the lane condition. In this situation you need to put more side roll on the ball to delay the hooking and rolling stages of the ball. This will help you get more angle into the pocket.

The second thing to consider is the ball itself. In this case we have to assume the lane conditions are OK and your release is good. If the ball is mis-



matched to the lane condition and your release, it can lose all of its side roll by the time it gets to the back end, which causes the ball to roll out. If you have an early-rolling type of ball and put an early-rolling drilling pattern in it but the lane condition calls for a different equipment selection, you're dead in the water.

To sum it up: Find a solution by (1) taking a good look at your release and the speed you roll the ball; (2) examining how you're playing the lane conditions; and (3) getting an evaluation of your ball—the type and the drilling pattern—to see whether it matches up well with your bowling style.

■ **What's the function of the row of dots between the foul line and the arrows? Nobody mentions them in books or tapes.**

The dots located about six feet out on the lane were designed for targeting. These dots are normally located on the 3-, 5-, 8-, 11-, and 14-boards. These dots don't line up with the pins, arrows, or approach dots—and frankly, because they don't, they are not used much. Most coaches would not recommend using these dots as your primary target.

You can use the dots effectively if your primary target is around the arrows and you draw an imaginary line back toward the close dots and use a double-targeting system. Try to get the ball to roll

over both targets along the line you want the ball to travel. But always use the area around the arrows for your adjustments because you can make more precise mathematical adjustments from that area of the lane.

■ **I am a lefthander with a problem. When I go into my backswing, I start to turn my wrist left and right until I am at my release point. I have tried a shorter backswing and moved up and back on**

The oil is lighter near the gutters, heavier toward the center.

the approach, all to no avail. I have also tried wrist devices to help my situation. Any advice you can give me will be greatly appreciated.

This is definitely something you want to straighten out. With the hand moving this much, it's very difficult to consistently get it into the right position at the release zone.

I recommend three things to work on, and all three are related. First, you want to make sure that you have a light grip on the ball. Second, your pushaway needs to be straight out toward your target. Third, you need to allow the ball to totally swing the arm from the shoulder and concentrate on keeping your palm and forearm facing your target throughout the swing.

If you discover that you have to grip the ball harder after you move it out into the swing, you will need to adjust the holes of the ball so you don't have to grip it so tightly. Gripping the ball like that is one of the biggest detriments to producing a free, consistent swing.

When you make these adjustments, you should get the feeling that you are doing nothing to the ball—and that's exactly what you want to feel to get a good free swing. This will take hard work and a lot of concentration, but it will definitely help in the long run. ●

