

JOHN JOWDY: WHICH PLAYERS HAS URETHANE HELPED?

BOWLING

DIGEST®

Sport Bowling: Pro
(Roger Dalkin) and
con (Johnny Petraglia)

Parker Bohn
tells you how
to start up
in your fall
league

Our 2000-01 College
Bowlers of the Year

Roller Derby

Bill Spigner traces
the ball tracks of the
full-roller, the spinner, and
the versatile semi-roller

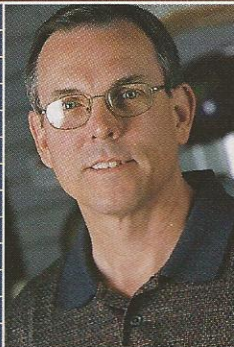
The Match I'll
Never Forget:
Wendy Macpherson

Jeri Edwards'
look at bowling balls

August 2001
www.centurysports.net

U.S. & CANADA \$5.99



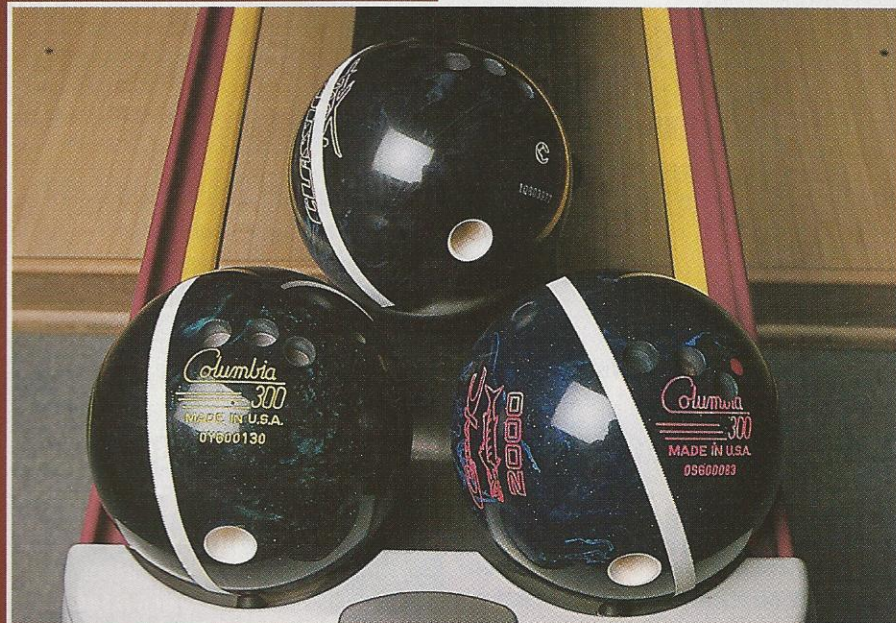


For Versatility, Choose the Semi-Roller

By **BILL SPIGNER**

Need some help with your game? Bill Spigner welcomes questions from readers. Mail them to: Bowling Clinic, Bowling Digest, 990 Grove Street, Evanston, IL 60201.

Clockwise from top: A spinner's 12 o'clock ball track, a full-roller's 3 o'clock ball track, and a semi-roller's 9 o'clock ball track.



■ **What's the difference between a full-roller and a semi-roller? Does the ball roll come from a stroker or an end-over-end shot?**

The full-roller track rolls between the thumb and finger holes and is 27 inches in diameter, which is the full circumference of the ball. This track runs through the center of the ball with little or no tilt and very little side roll. This type of track is caused by the bowler having the hand in a closed position at the top of the swing. Therefore, when the thumb is released, the fingers are at about 3 or 4 o'clock (8 to 9 o'clock for lefthanders). The bowler actually rotates the fingers clockwise to about 5 o'clock (7 o'clock for lefthanders), producing the track between the finger and thumb holes. A full-roller is not a very effective ball roll for getting strikes; without side roll and axis tilt, you cannot get enough angle of entry into the pocket to carry. Also, because of the rotation, you can't move

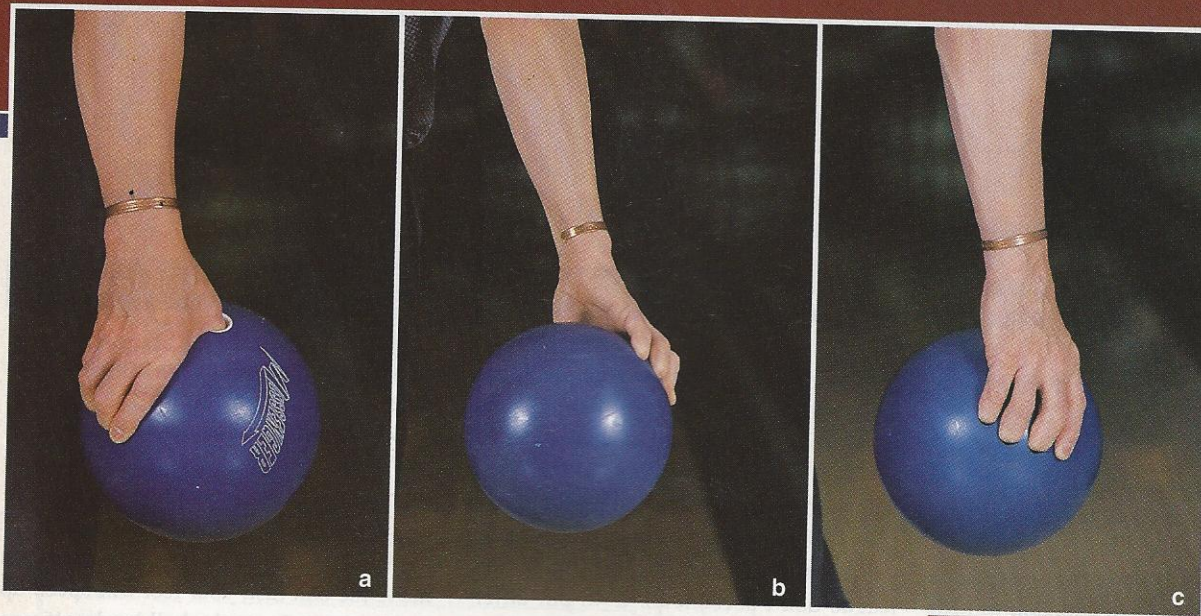
inside and create as big an area as the semi-roller when the track opens up.

The semi-roller track is the easiest one to achieve, one that tracks outside the thumb and finger holes within one to two inches of the thumb hole; each rotation of the ball covers about 23 inches. To achieve this roll, the hand is placed behind the ball, slightly open at the top of the swing. As the thumb is released, the fingers rotate in a slight counter-clockwise rotation. The hand remains behind the ball, but the ball comes off the hand toward the inside of the hand. This helps produce the axis tilt and side roll that is vital to an effective strike ball.

One other type of ball track is the spinner. The ball track for the spinner is way outside the thumb and finger holes, three to five inches from the thumb hole and a track diameter of 18 inches or less. The hand opening at the top of the swing, with the fingers at about 8 or 9 o'clock, creates this type of roll, with the fingers rotating to about 3 o'clock at release. A spinner is a tough track to use where you are trying to get the right amount of side roll and axis tilt, especially when you're trying to roll on a lot of different lane conditions. On very oily lanes, a spinner will spin too much and not break early enough to be effective.

The most versatile type of ball roll is the semi-roller. Most top-level players roll this type of shot. But just having this type of track does not mean your ball will have the revolutions and hook that's needed for an effective strike ball—you also need the right amount of lift and turn for enough action.

■ **I'm 73 with an average of 162 in a senior league. I throw a stroker with my**



thumb at 2 o'clock and rotate at release to 12 o'clock. For the strike ball, I generally stand with the inside of my left foot anywhere from the 21st to the 26th board, and my target is anywhere from the 7th to the 12th board. My games are pretty inconsistent. I can throw a 150, a 200, and then a 130 in any order depending on lane conditions. I need to make more spares. I use only one ball. How do I throw a straight ball to make spares? And once I develop my straight ball, where do I stand and aim?

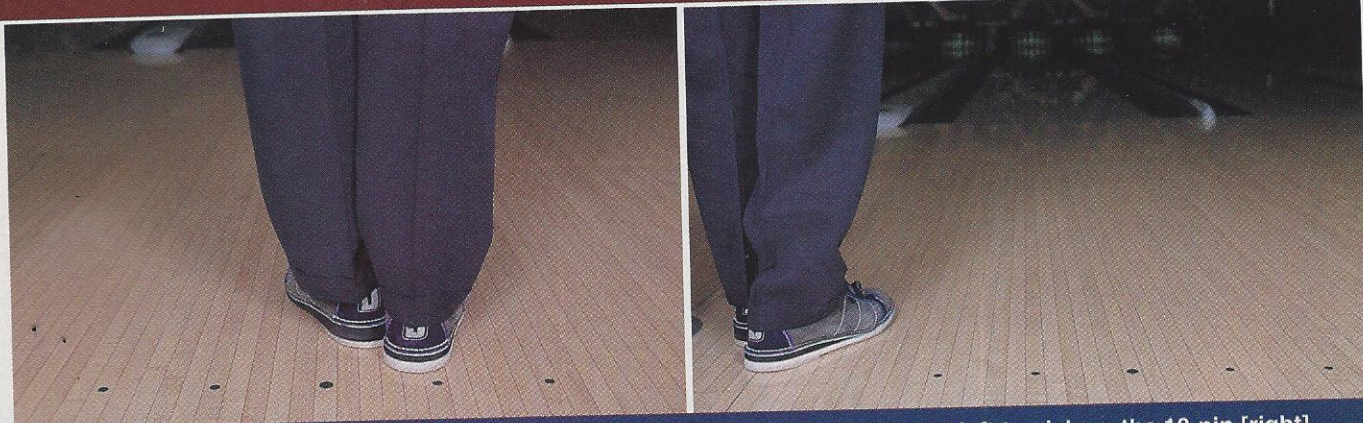
I have one recommendation for your release. You have your thumb at 2 o'clock and turn it to 12 o'clock. The problem with this is your hand is open, and if you don't generate enough armswing speed, you actually have to slow your hand down to try and turn the ball. Try starting with your thumb at about 10 o'clock and concentrate on your hand not opening during the swing. Keep your fingers at about 5 o'clock. When the thumb starts to release because you don't have to turn to the release position, you can concentrate on accelerating your armswing to get more speed on the ball. This will make the ball feel lighter—you will have fewer

moving parts—and your scores will be better simply because it will take less effort to throw the ball.

For your spare shooting, get a hard plastic ball. Throwing the ball straight takes lane conditions out of play. There are many different methods of spare making. Becoming a really good spare shooter is very difficult, every bit as difficult as playing your strike ball right, especially if you are a tournament bowler. If you're bowling in just one house, you want to keep your spare play as simple as possible. Using a hard spare ball will cut the hook down. Start off using the middle arrow for all your single-pin spares.

First, find out where you would stand to make the 7- and 10-pin. Finding your starting points for these two pins helps you develop your strategy for any other spare. For example, if you find you have to stand on the 20-board and look at the 4th (middle) arrow to make the 7-pin, that is your base of operations for the left side. To make the 4-pin, move your feet two boards left to the 22nd board, and for the 2-pin, move two more boards to the 24th board. Now do the same thing for the 10-pin. Once you find the best spot to make the 10-pin,

An open hand at the top of the swing—with the fingers at 8 or 9 o'clock—characterizes the spinner backswing [a]. The full-roller backswing [b] features a closed hand at the top of the swing. A hand behind the ball, slightly opened at the top of the swing, characterizes a semi-roller backswing [c].



If you focus on the 4th arrow when shooting at the 7-pin [left], shift all the way left to pick up the 10-pin [right].

move your feet two boards left for the 6-pin, and two more boards for the 3-pin. Learning how to pick up these six key pins will unlock the door toward making many other spares. These are your key pins for all spare play; for example, if you leave the 3-10, you need to get the ball to where the 6-pin is.

This method is just an example to help you start designing a general spare-shooting system. You will have to do some tweaking to fine-tune your personal system. For example, there are spares you have to hook the ball at to have the best chance of making. It would take an article as long as this entire magazine to cover every spare shot and the adjustments that have to be made when bowling on a variety of different oiling patterns. That's why throwing the ball straight for most spares is the easiest approach to making spares.

■ *I have been questioning my abilities lately. In one league, I am averaging 210. In others, my average ranges from 170 to 180. In each league, the conditions are almost identical. In the league where I average 210, I don't know many people, but I have many friends in the other two. Are my problems due to pressure? Should I consult a sports psychologist?*

A 40-pin average range is a lot. I would have to think the lane conditions are different. The problem is you are not playing the lanes right in the two leagues where your average is a lot lower.

For example, if you are playing the second arrow in all your leagues and the oil line is on the 10-board in one house and on

the 5-board in the other two, you will have a great difference in your average. The house with the 10-board oil line is perfect for your second-arrow shot. In the house with the 5-board oil line, you would have to play the first arrow to be lined up correctly.

Pressure and knowing people in your league don't account for a 40-pin difference in average, so I don't think seeing a sports psychologist is the answer. Find a good instructor and get some lessons on reading your ball reaction and how to line up and play different parts of the lane. You have showed you can strike and spare enough to have a high average—now you have to learn how to do it in a variety of lane conditions and situations.

Having a 10- to 20-pin difference in average is not uncommon today because of the variety of lane conditions. In some circumstances, it's more important to play the lane conditions than it is to make good shots. By learning more about the playing conditions—the oiling patterns, lane surface, and bowling balls—you will be on your way to more consistent, higher scores.

■ *What would you suggest for someone with a deformation in the collarbone? Every time I throw my bowling ball, it's either too fast or too slow, and I never hit my mark. The ball always goes Jersey.*

As far as your collarbone goes, I have no recommendation. I'm not a doctor, and I don't know the problems you are having with it. If it doesn't hurt, you're OK. If it does hurt, see a doctor and have a bowling instructor look at your game.

For your speed-control problem, you have to look at the start of your delivery. The beginning of the approach is what sets the tone for what happens during the approach. Pay close attention to the push-away. You want the starting movement of the ball to be the same each time. If you move the ball fast, your feet will speed up and you can throw the ball harder. If you move the ball slow, you will walk slower and your ball will be slower. By controlling your armswing tempo, you can control the speed of your steps and your timing. Concentrating on the beginning movement of the ball will develop the consistency you need.

To correct your tendency to cross over on your first ball, concentrate on your shoulders. Your shoulders need to be perpendicular to your target line as the ball comes off your hand. You are probably closing your shoulders early, which will pull the armswing inside your target. Most bowlers think their hand pulls the ball, but it's normally the shoulders that pull the armswing and hand inside your target. You should overexaggerate keeping the shoulders open. If the ball starts to miss the headpin, you know your shoulders might be too open and you need to be somewhere in-between.

Most bowlers hit inside of the target they are looking at. If you want to hit the 10th board, move your eyes to the 8th board. The combination of the shoulders being aligned right to the direction you want the ball to travel and the eyes being in the right place will help you get the ball to travel the direction you want it to. ●