

Pro Instruction: Wayne Webb • The Life of a Lane Inspector

BOWLING

Sept./Oct 1989

DIGEST

SLOW BOWLING

Why Today's Game Is Taking Forever



'That guy three lanes down looks ready to go. Guess I'll wait for him.'

Wasted: 45 seconds

'Man, I'm really starving. No one would mind if I hit the snack bar...'

Wasted: 7 minutes

'That air blower must not work; my hands feel sweaty again. Better dry them off one more time.'

Wasted: 15 seconds

'This ball isn't really clean. I'd better wipe it off again.'

Wasted: 40 seconds

'Now that I'm up here, this thumb grip feels funny. Cleaning it'll just take a second...'

Wasted: 15 seconds

'Is that 3-pin off line? A re-rack wouldn't hurt.'

Wasted: 1 minute

'I thought I tied my shoes on the bench. Oh well...'

Wasted: 10 seconds

'I gotta wait until I feel just right before shooting this spare...'

Wasted: 20 seconds

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Bill Spigner's **Bowling Clinic**

■ I am 30 years old, have been bowling in leagues for 12 years, and have a composite average of well over 200. Do you think those are good enough credentials to consider a professional bowling career? If so, what would be the best way to go about acquiring a sponsor?

Your average is more than enough to apply for membership in the PBA, but one of your biggest drawbacks is your age. Thirty years old is not normally a good age to start pursuing a bowling career. However, the great Earl Anthony started at about that age.

Going from league bowling to PBA tour bowling is a tremendous change, and very few players come out on tour and become successful right away. If you have a great deal of experience playing in top amateur tournaments and have participated in some PBA stops as a guest, your learning process could take a lot less time. Many times it will take a bowler from two to five years on the tour before he has learned enough to be able to make money bowling—and that's assuming he has the talent.

Some other factors to consider are your current home life and your career. Are you prepared to totally dedicate yourself to bowling? Can your home life and present career situation be put on hold while you pursue the PBA tour? Is your current career something you can return to comfortably if you can't make it as a pro bowler? Are you married? Do you have children? Remember, your family's needs have to be considered also.

In my opinion, it would be best for you to join the PBA and play in regional and national tournaments that come into your area for a year. This will give you an idea of what bowling on a professional level is like.

Becoming a professional bowler takes a lot of sacrifices, ability, persistence, dedication, and determination.

■ The bowling centers in our city changed to short oil in the 1988-89 season. My average dropped from 203 to 191 on the new conditions. I usually play a swing shot over the first arrow (5-8) and one of the main problems I've had is leaving the 7-10 split on pocket hits. Can you tell me what causes this short-oil double tap, and how to make the proper adjustments?

Leaving the 7-10 on pocket hits normally is not a double tap; the ball looks good, but many times isn't. Normally this split is left on a half-pocket hit, with the ball hooking in behind the headpin, sending the 5-pin in front of the 7-pin. Or the ball is hitting weak, and the 5-pin doesn't make it over to knock

down the 7-pin. Another reason may be that your ball speed is too slow, which can cause your ball to hit weakly.

If you are using the same equipment on the short oil you used on the long oil, your ball is probably grabbing the lane too soon, causing it to lose a lot of power by the time it reaches the pins. If this is the case, you should get a polished, medium-hardness urethane ball (80-82 hardness) with some form of positive weight balance.

■ I have heard that football players should not swim. This is supposedly due to the stretching of the wrong muscles, which could possibly lead to injury. I exercise and jog regularly; however, I don't know if the exercises I do are conducive to good bowling.

Is there a regimen of exercises you could recommend that will strengthen the proper muscles used in the sport of bowling?

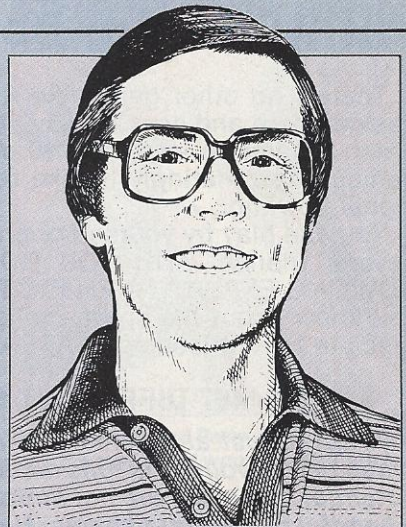
Basically an overall conditioning program is good. In your case, you already exercise regularly, and your body is probably used to the workout you do. If you have enough stamina to handle the number of games you are bowling, additional exercise is probably not necessary. If you were to start training much harder, your muscles might become too tight and could affect your game.

Working out for bowling varies with the individual. For example, Mark Roth has never done anything extra to help his bowling. On the other hand, Nelson Burton Jr. is into weight lifting, and Amleto Monacelli does a lot of running.

You have to learn what is right for you. Being in better physical shape can only enhance your talent, but exercise alone will not give you the talent to bowl well.

■ I am a 30-year-old lefthander and average about 190. I have an oval-shaped thumb, but I always seem to be losing my thumb out of the ball. I use a lot of rosin. Also, my thumbnail and the top right corner of my thumb are always sore. My ball is drilled with a round hole. I've learned how to make my thumb hole oval with tape, but I still seem to be losing my thumb. I know that in order to bowl well I must be relaxed in my grip and not squeeze the ball, but I can't seem to do this. What can I do?

It's good that you're learning to use tape to oval your thumb hole, and you might want to try one of the oval thumb-grips available. Even with a thumb-grip, keep your hole large enough so you can adjust the size with tape as your hand shrinks or swells. A slight squeeze is not always bad, but in your case, with the nail and top of your thumb



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constantly hurting, you are definitely squeezing too much. These areas hurt because the top of your thumb is catching the top of the hole as it's coming out.

Because you are squeezing the ball so hard, you're probably overmuscling your swing. This will affect the consistency and quality of your release. You don't want your hand to be totally relaxed; you want your hand and wrist to be in a firm position without your fingers gripping the walls of the holes. Your ball should hang on to your hand; you shouldn't hang on to the ball.

To teach yourself not to squeeze the ball, you'll first have to learn to feel at what stage of your swing you start squeezing it. Once you find this point you can practice not squeezing through this point, with the ultimate goal of having your whole swing squeeze-free. If after working on this you still find your ball won't stay on your hand, keep inserting tape until it will. Also, have your equipment checked out to make sure there isn't too much bevel on your thumb hole, excessive reverse pitch, or too short of a span. All of these can cause you to lose the ball.

Initially you might lose a little on your ball and feel out of control, but in the long run, having a loose swing without squeezing the ball and a firm hand position will be of great benefit and allow you to develop your game with less effort and more consistency. ●

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.