

**PRO TIPS!**

Complete Coverage for Bowlers and Fans

# BOWLING

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## DIGEST

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Don Carter*

*Bowling's  
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### The Well-Equipped Bowling Bag

What To Carry and Why

— plus —

A 10-Point Check List  
To Begin League Play

INTERVIEW:  
Mark Roth  
Blows Off  
Steam

LPBT Star  
Jeanne Maiden



**STEVE COOK**  
The Match I'll Never Forget

**SAM ZURICH**  
The PBA's Mr. Nice Guy



## Bill Spigner's **Bowling Clinic**

**Q.** I roll a full roller. I have been told that top weight is the most important with my roll. Others have told me thumb and side weights are the most important. What is best for my type of roll?

**A.** Positive weights are the most important to a full roller—side, finger, and top weights.

Full rollers have very little spin, so when the ball is released it grabs the lane very quickly. This causes the full roller to have less power when the ball reaches the pins.

Top weights in a full roller will help the ball get down the lane farther and roll harder in the back end. Finger and side weights will also help the ball slide down the lane farther, and these weights will also make the ball hook harder.

I would stay with positive weights and change balls with different surfaces to get different amounts of hook.

**Q.** I switched to a full fingertip grip with good results. I was bowling two to three times a week. If I only bowl once a week, will the fingertip be a good grip to stay with?

**A.** Since you have had good results using the fingertip, I would suggest you stay with it.

With a fingertip you'll get a better feel for the ball, because the most sensitive parts of your fingers are the tips.

One thing to watch for when bowling less is that your fingers won't swell up as much. So if you start having trouble hanging onto the ball, use tape in the back of the holes to make them smaller.

**Q.** In using the outside line I have to slow down the ball a great deal to get any hook. Am I doing something wrong??

**A.** Your problem is that you are not standing in the right place to play the first arrow. You must learn how much hook power you have so you can start in the right place.

When playing outside, it is necessary to line yourself up differently to play the same amount of hook. For instance, if you are playing the 10th board (second arrow) and standing on the 20th board, you are playing about a 10-board hook. I say 10 boards because you usually will lay the ball down about seven boards away from your ankle, so you have three boards out to the 10th board and then seven boards back to the pocket, which is on the 17th board. That gives you 10-board hook power.

Now, if you move to the fifth board (first

arrow) and move your feet only to the 15th board, you have increased the amount of hook you will need to get the ball back to the pocket from 10 boards to 15 boards because the first arrow is farther away from the pocket.

When moving on the lane, in order to maintain the same amount of hook power, every board you move your target means you must move your feet in the same direction two boards.

Make sure you're standing in the right place before you start making big changes in your shot.

**Q.** When practicing bowling is it better to keep score or not?

**A.** When practicing, I have always found it best not to keep score. You should concentrate on what you're trying to improve; keeping score will take your mind off what you're there for—to sharpen competition skills.

Even during competition your mind should not be on the score, but on making good bowling shots. Without good shots, good scores don't come.

Lastly, you might want to keep track of your mistakes when you're practicing, so that you can try to correct them.

**Q.** I was told by the man who drilled my ball that my fingers should go in first, then my thumb. I do the opposite—thumb first, then fingers. I tried putting the fingers in first, but I couldn't get my thumb all the way in. By putting my thumb in first, does it hurt my release?

**A.** Whatever way you put your hand in the ball is correct. If it feels good and you get a good grip on the ball, it's OK.

If you put your fingers in first and can't get your thumb all the way in, your span is too long.

Putting the thumb in first used to be very common 20 years ago, but today most people put their fingers in first. Two excellent bowlers on the pro tour—Joe Hutchinson and Tom Baker—put their thumb in the ball first.

**Q.** Tom Milton has an armband on his elbow. Where can I get one and what does it do?

**A.** The armband that Tom Milton wears is actually the sleeve of a wet suit used in skin and scuba diving.

He started wearing this a couple of years



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ago when he had a sore elbow. A friend recommended it to keep his elbow warm, which would help lessen the pain, and it worked well. He no longer needs it but keeps wearing it because he's used to the feel.

Milton's case is one where an injury helped him become a superstar. It forced him to take a shortened backswing and roll the ball more slowly. This helped him develop his unique shot, which is a slow, looping curve ball.

**Q.** How many bowling balls does a pro use in one year of bowling? And what do they do with them?

**A.** Many pros will drill on the average of one ball per week. We do this because of the ever changing lane conditions.

While out on tour you can't haul around 30 balls a week, so most of the time we give them away to kids, charities, or sometimes sell a few. We all save our favorites.

When bowling for a living, you can't hesitate to drill a new ball when you feel it's necessary. Sometimes we bowl in houses that track up balls fast. We will drill a new ball for each bowling session. This can mean six new balls in one week.

*Bill Spigner welcomes questions from readers. Mail your questions to: Bill Spigner, Bowling Digest, 1020 Church Street, Evanston, IL 60201.*