

PARKER BOHN III ON USING INSERTS AND TAPE

# BOWLING

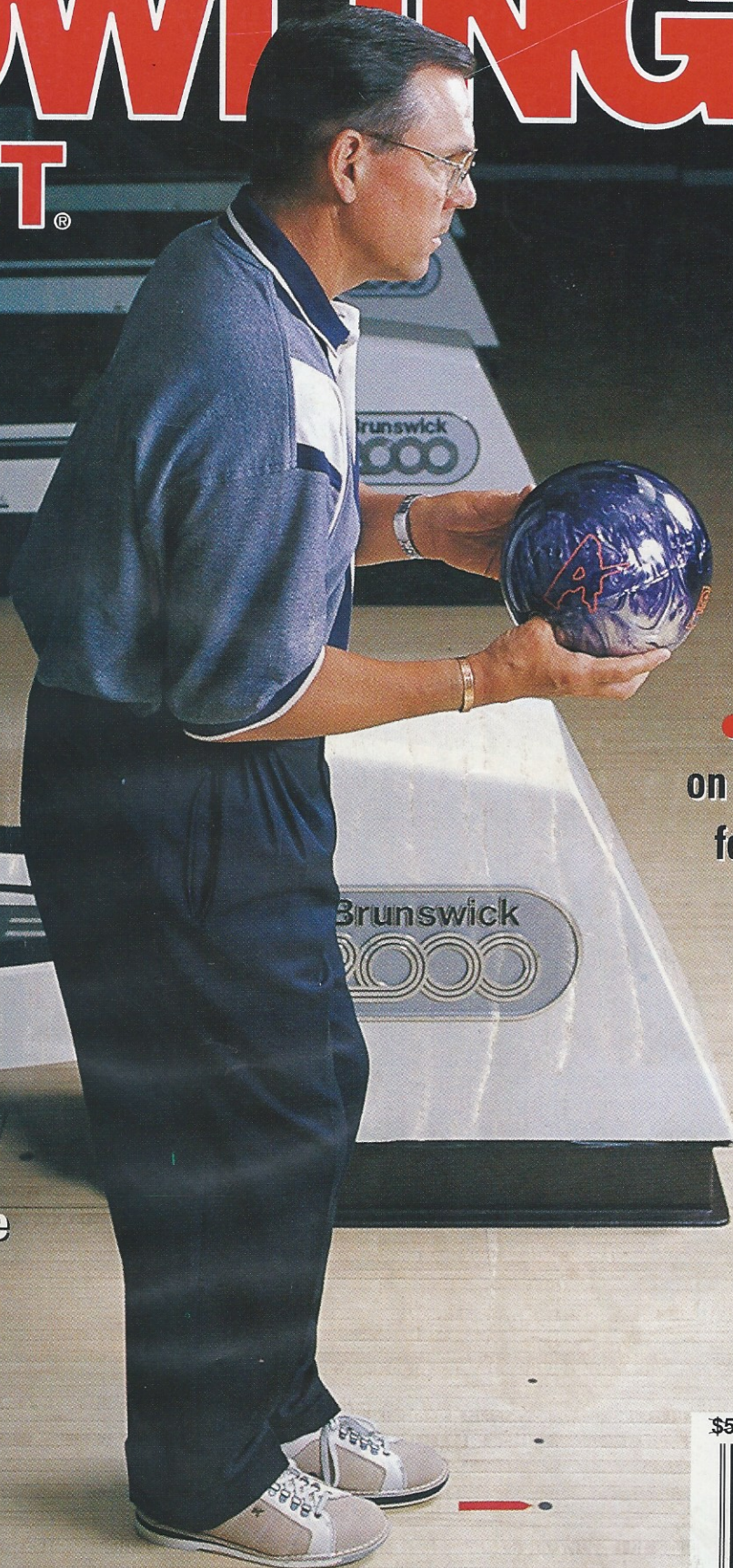
## DIGEST

October 1998

THE  
**COACH'S  
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LET YOUR  
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### How to Set Up in Your Stance

Bill Spigner  
gives you tips  
on aligning  
your feet for the  
best and most  
consistent shot



**PLUS**

- Jeri Edwards on techniques for female bowlers
- The PBA's Class of '98 speaks out
- A look at brackets competition

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# Your Start Sets Up Yo

■ *I took instruction from a pro bowler who showed me how to stand with my feet on the approach. I am a right-handed bowler, and he told me to stand with the center of the toe of my left shoe on the board I want to stand on. My question is this: I've seen and read different books that say to use the inside or outside edge of your shoe. Please, what is the right way?*

There is no right or wrong way to pick out what board to start your delivery from. The important things are whether you can set up consistently on the board you want to start on, and whether it's easy for you to see where you want to stand. Another consideration is whether the way you set the feet in your starting position allows you to form a good athletic stance.

The recommended way to pick out the board you stand on is to use the inside edge of your sliding foot as your guide. Doing this enables you to check your starting and ending position better. For example, if you have the inside edge of your sliding foot on the 20th board in your stance, and you end up in your finished position with the inside edge of your sliding foot on the same board, you know you started and ended in the same place. By lining up this way you can monitor your walk pattern.

Lining up with the inside edge of your sliding foot also makes it easier to get your body in the proper setup to deliver the ball. A good setup starts with your sliding foot positioned on the board you are going to stand on, parallel to the boards. Next, you bring your other foot up next to your setup foot; the toe of this foot should be positioned three to five inches behind the toe of the sliding foot, in a slightly staggered position. (Many people will point the toe of this foot slightly outward for comfort. Not everybody can stand comfortably with both feet facing straight ahead.)

When your feet are in position, you want to set your ball in your starting position. Once the

ball is set, you need to tilt your spine forward about five to 10 degrees, flex your knees slightly, and put most of your weight on the foot opposite the one you're going to take your first step with. It's important that you be in a good, relaxed, athletic stance to start your approach.

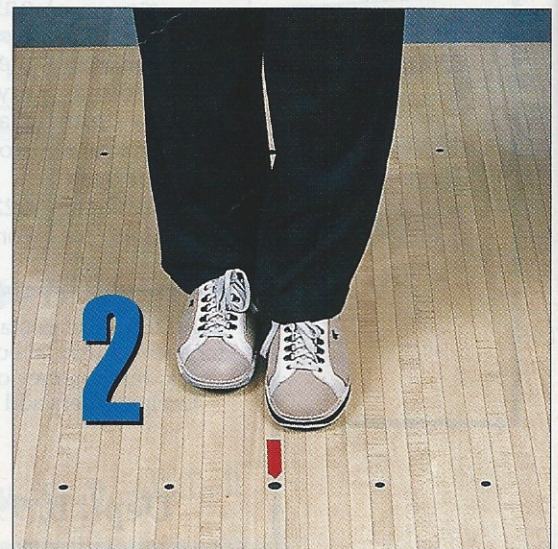
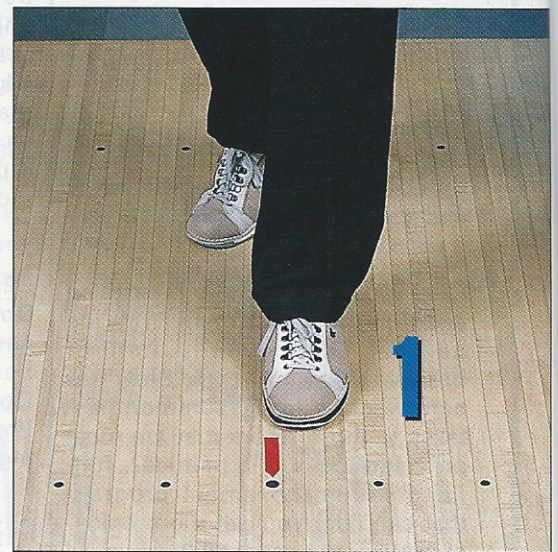
Use whatever part of your feet you want to

**First, line up the inside of your sliding foot at your starting point (1), then set your other foot, staggered slightly behind (2).**



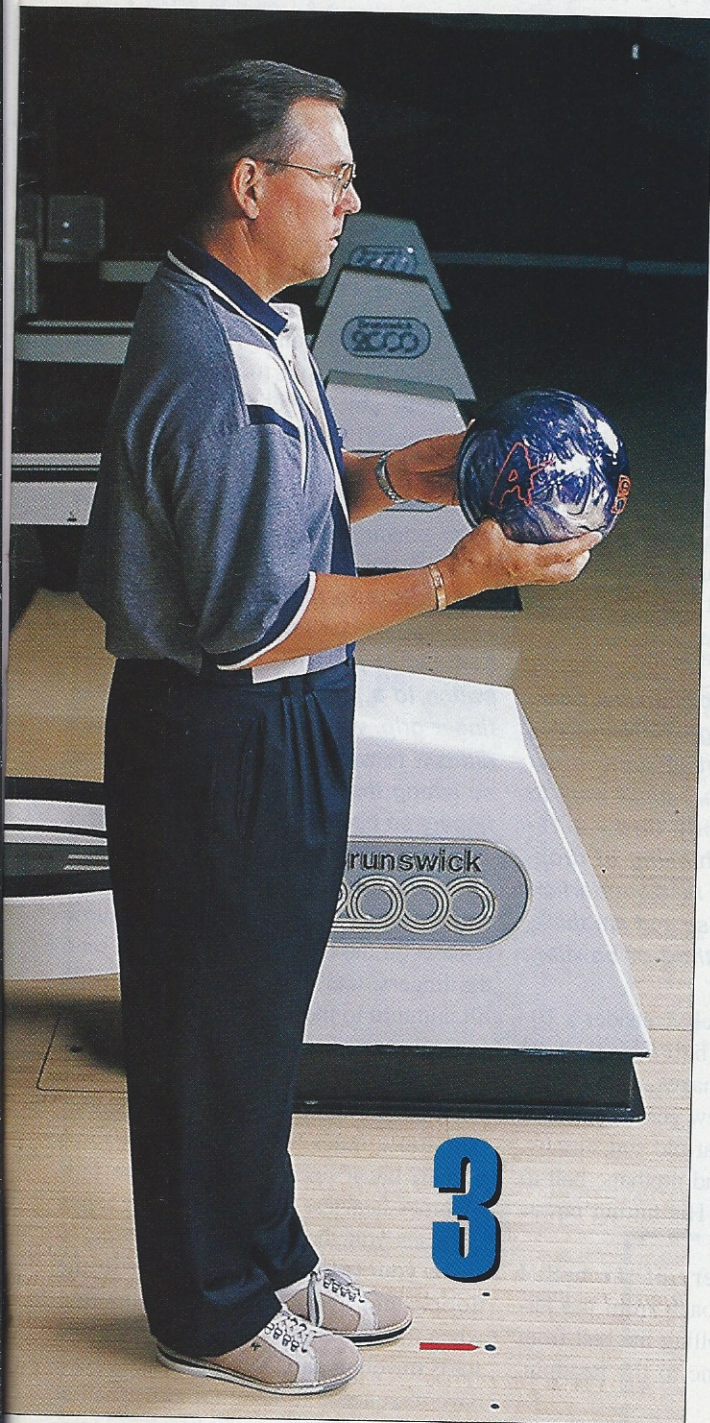
## Bowling Clinic

By BILL SPIGNER



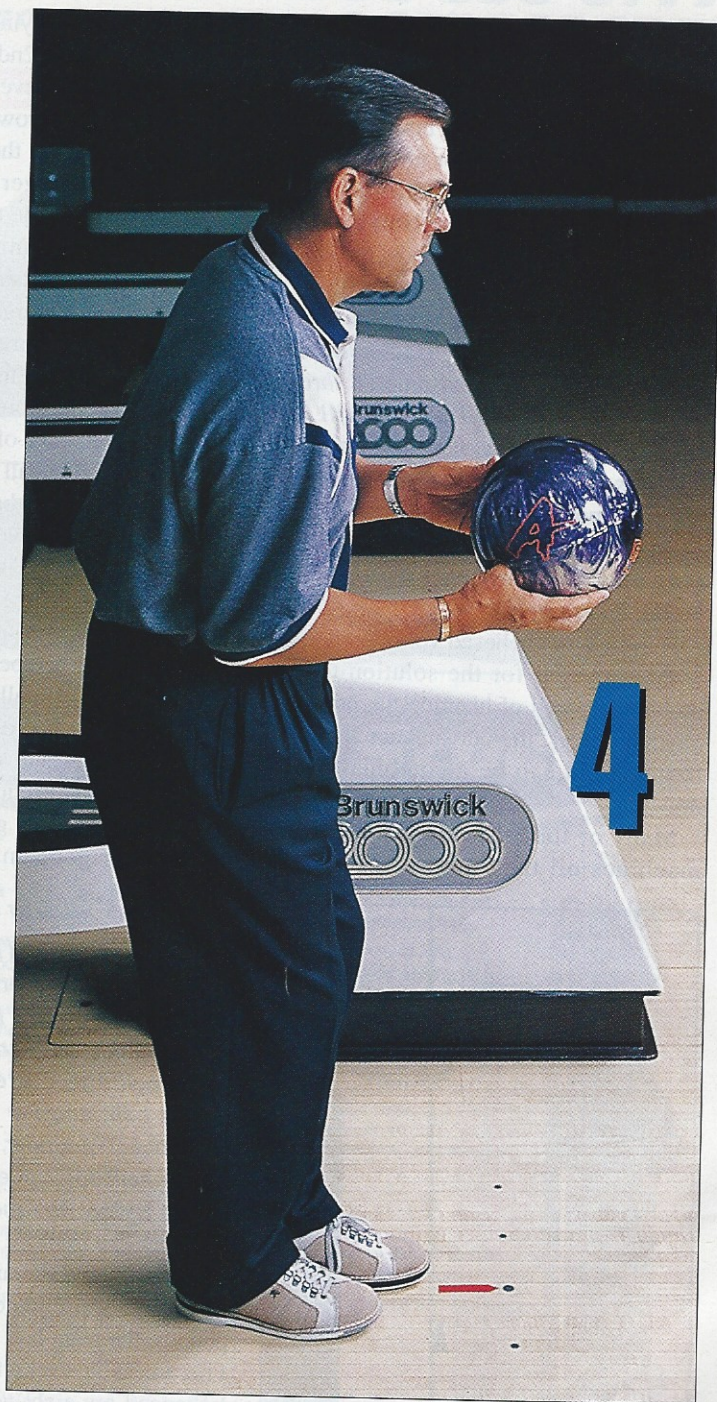
*Need some help with your game? Bill Spigner welcomes questions from readers. Mail your questions to: Bowling Clinic, Bowling Digest, 990 Grove Street, Evanston, IL 60201, or e-mail us at [bowling@centurypublishing.net](mailto:bowling@centurypublishing.net).*

# our Stance



pick out where you want to stand—the key is that you're consistent and allow yourself to set up properly for the shot.

foot to pick out where I stand. It was something I did without thinking; it was so ingrained in my game that I never



When your feet are set, raise the ball into the starting position (3), then tilt forward and flex your knees slightly, shifting your weight onto your non-starting foot (4).

I'm a right-handed bowler, and I've always used the center of the toe on my right

even thought about what foot I used to set up with. However, when teaching someone to bowl I always start them out using the inside edge of their sliding foot—it's a good visual cue that gets people started out right.

A correct stance is just as important in

bowling as it is in any other sport. A bowler is an athlete who is preparing to perform a series of precise athletic movements, and therefore the body must be located in the correct spot in a well-balanced position to initiate these movements properly. Pay attention to your setup—it's the key to the start of the shot.

■ *My problem is that sometimes I throw the ball and it will hook beautifully into the pocket, and the next time I'll throw the exact same ball and it will go straight as an arrow. I'm right-handed, and I usually lay the ball between the 1st and 2nd arrow. My husband says I need a new ball, but I say it's me—I feel that buying a new ball would be a waste. Please help.*

I have always believed you should look within yourself for the solution to the problem, instead of blaming the problem on other things. In your situation, though, the problem can be a combination of things.

Many of today's lane-conditioning machines oil the lanes in five-board

strips, and you're playing your shot right between the 1st and 2nd arrow. This part of the lane is oiled evenly from the 1st arrow to the 2nd arrow. Also, more oil usually is applied to the lane inside the 2nd arrow and longer down the lane. Therefore, it's possible that if you miss a little, the ball can miss by a lot. For example, if you're using a hard plastic ball and miss your target a little left, the ball could slide more because of the heavy oil. And if you missed to the right, the ball will hook more because you are hitting the drier part of the lane sooner, which will help the ball hook back.

Today the bowling ball is a major factor in being able to play the lanes right. Part of your problem is the need to get a ball that can give you a fighting chance in the oil—without knowing your speed and rotation I can't be specific, but reactive urethane balls generally handle oil well. As you stated, you roll the ball exactly the same two times in a row and get totally different ball reactions. The right ball can really help your game out. Beyond that getting good instruction is very important.

■ *I am 69 years old, I bowl once a week, and I carry a 148 average. However, I've been developing a lot of pain in my right shoulder and arm. I don't want to quit bowling—I already throw a 12-pound ball, and I'm thinking of dropping to a 10-pounder. I read your article on the helicopter release and am thinking of trying this method of bowling. What do you think?*

First, I would definitely consider a 10-pound resin urethane ball—even at 10 pounds, the resin ball makes a difference. I became a believer a few years ago when I changed my eight-year-old son, Jimmy, from a regular 10-pound urethane ball to a 10-pound resin ball. His hitting power dramatically improved.

Now for the delivery of the ball: I would start your approach from the far-left side of the lane, rolling the ball from the left side of the lane to the headpin.

**If your favored shot puts your ball on a "seam" or a border in the typical oiling pattern, a tiny miss can become a big problem.**

You want to hit the right side of the headpin so the ball can deflect into the 3-, 6-, and 10-pins.

I wouldn't recommend that you try to spin the ball the way the helicopter release requires. The helicopter release requires a significant turning of the wrist and elbow, which can lead to more physical problems—which you don't need, considering you already are experiencing pain. If you can roll the ball a little faster with a little more spin, though, it would help move the pins faster, which can help your carry.

When you have your ball drilled, use a conventional grip with loose holes and pitches that will make it easy to hang on to the ball. You need the holes a little loose because the ball is very light, and if you add a little spin to the release you need to be able to get your hand out of the ball quickly and cleanly.

■ *Last season I injured my ring finger while bowling—the doctor said I traumatized the knuckle—and earlier this year I did it to the middle finger. Now arthritis has set in, and every throw is somewhat painful. I've even had to switch to a thumb, index, and middle-finger grip, which causes a hook that's difficult to work with. What was I doing so wrong that caused me to injure two fingers so badly?*

I can't say for certain, of course, but I think you probably were squeezing the ball extremely hard. When your thumb releases in the delivery the ball falls onto the fingers, and then the fingers provide lift and turn to the ball. If your fingers are squeezing too hard, it puts a lot of stress on the joints.

Squeezing the ball can be the result of very loose holes with pitches that force you to hang on to the ball. The ball becomes heaviest during the swing when it passes your body on the backswing—when your arm is perpendicular to the floor—and again on the downswing, when the ball enters the release zone and starts traveling parallel to the floor. If you have to squeeze to hang on to the ball at these two points, you need to have your fit re-evaluated. You should also look at switching to a lighter ball, so the weight is easier to manage. ●

