

HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE: FIND TOYS, GADGETS, AND TOOLS OF THE TRADE

BOWLING

DIGEST

December 2000

FINE-TUNE YOUR FORM

Is your game ailing? Help is on the way—**Jeri Edwards** offers a four-point troubleshooting guide

INTERVIEW:

Tiger-esque
Tennelle Grijalva

BOWLING CLINIC:

Slow down your
approach

THEN AND NOW:

Dave Husted

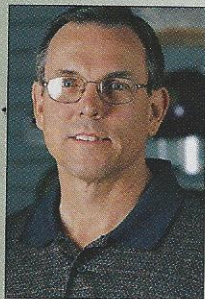
PARKER BOHN III
unveils the best gifts
to give your game

www.centurysports.net

U.S. & CANADA \$5.99



Fixing a Fast Path to



Bowling Clinic

By BILL SPIGNER

■ *I have trouble because I approach the foul line too fast. When I speed up, I tend to leave the ball on the right side of the head pin and I find myself trying to compensate by pulling the ball. Also, I can't feel the ball come off my fingers on the release. I have had special soles put on my shoes to help keep me from rushing the foul line. But after seven or eight frames, they become slick and I start rushing again. Is there anything that can be done about this problem?*

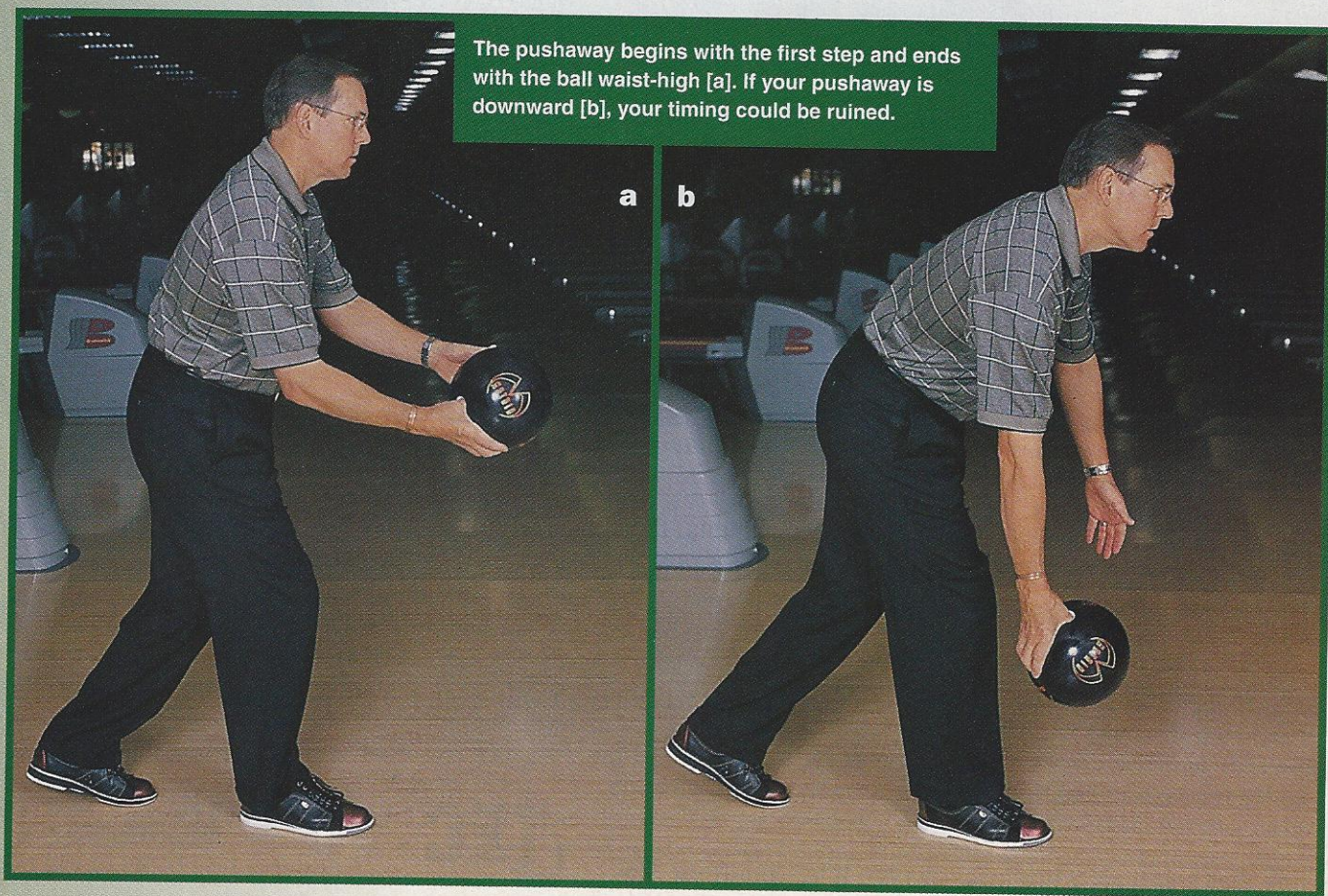
To avoid getting to the foul line too fast, pay attention to two key things: The movement of the ball out of your stance, coupled with the position of your upper body during the approach and the release.

Often times fast feet are caused by a mistimed pushaway or incorrect upper-body position on the first two steps of the approach. I don't know

how many steps you take or whether you are right- or left-handed, but I will base this answer on a righthander using a four-step approach.

Start your pushaway with the first step. At the completion of the step, after your body weight has been transferred to the right foot, the pushaway should be completed with the ball about waist-high. At this time, the second step begins and the ball starts into the backswing. If your pushaway is early and downward, and your upper body tilts forward to the point that your shoulders are out ahead of your knees, the backswing will speed up, causing your feet to move faster to keep up with your swing.

To slow down your feet, concentrate on two things: First, keep your upper body from leaning forward as you move the ball out of your stance; second, move the ball slowly. The ball



the Foul Line

has to stop at the top of the backswing and change directions to travel forward. Remember, at the same time you're walking toward the foul line to deliver the ball, your backswing is traveling in the opposite direction. The faster the backswing, the harder it is to stop the swing and send the ball in the opposite direction, toward the release.

Two more thoughts to keep in mind: (1) walk tall—the upper body should be tilted forward only slightly—and (2) walk past the ball on your backswing. In other words, don't try to swing the ball past your body. Instead, walk past the ball, which should help you move the ball through your backswing at a speed that's slow enough to keep your feet from accelerating

through the approach to catch up.

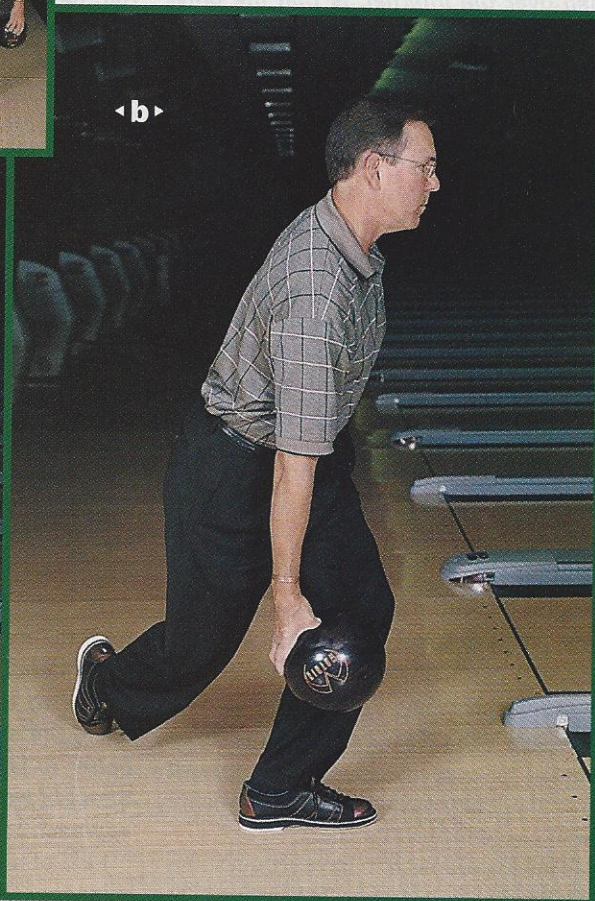
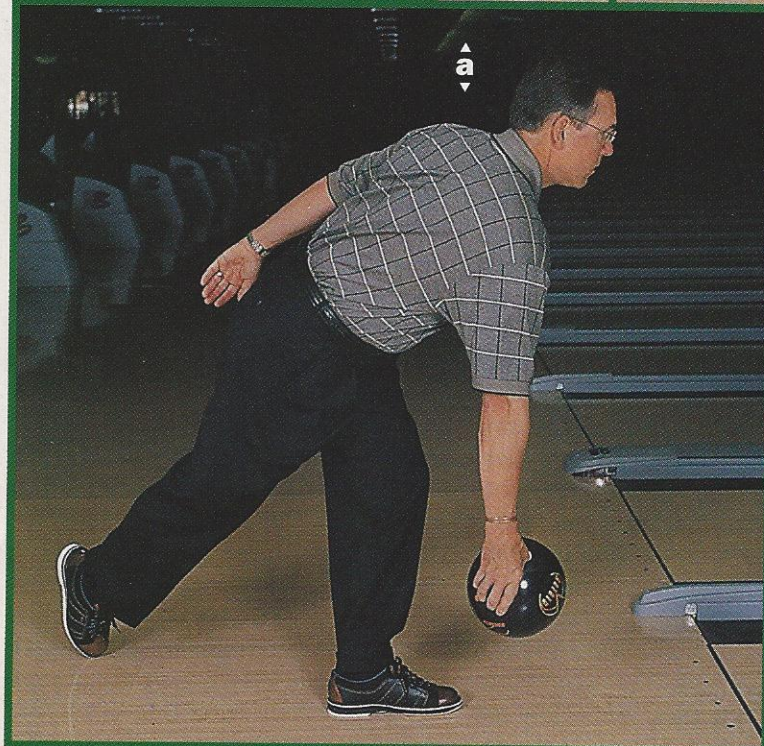
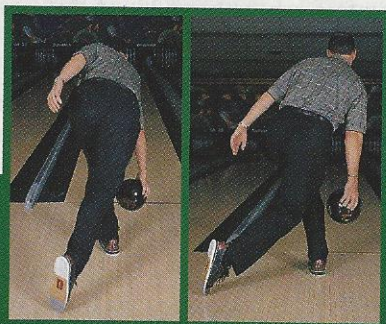
An upper-body lean could also be contributing to your lack of feel for lift at the release. When the shoulders are positioned too far forward, the downswing angle becomes steeper and the shoulders close, which tends to kill the lift and push the ball left. The solution is to concentrate on keeping your shoulders above the knee of your sliding leg or slightly behind it. This will help to give you more lift and keep your shoulders lined up toward your target.

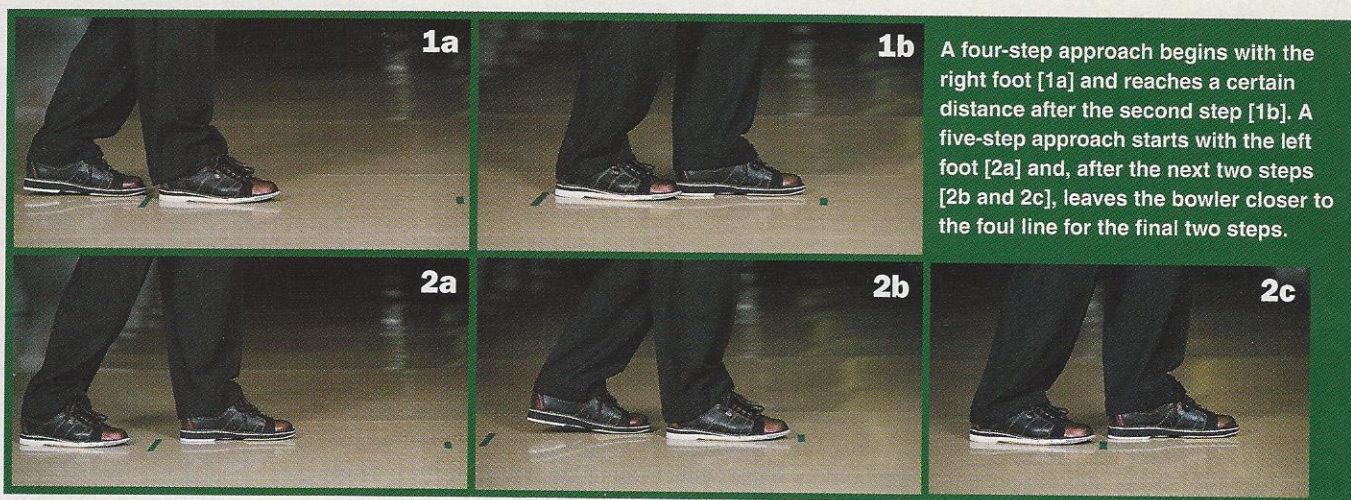
There is an old saying in bowling: "It's not how you fly, it's how you arrive." All this means is that there are many different forms to the approach, but the arrival—the position of the body when the ball is delivered into the release zone—is the key to performance. That is the moment of truth. At that moment, the body has to be in the right position to support the release, which needs to provide the proper speed, action, and accuracy on the shot.

■ In the August 2000 issue of *BOWLING DIGEST*, you discuss pin placement on

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.

Leaning on the approach [a] could cause a lack of lift, so stand tall and stay square to your target [b] for better response at the release.





1a A four-step approach begins with the right foot [1a] and reaches a certain distance after the second step [1b]. A five-step approach starts with the left foot [2a] and, after the next two steps [2b and 2c], leaves the bowler closer to the foul line for the final two steps.

the ball. My ball driller tells me that my pin is four inches from the axis. On the box my ball came in, I noticed these figures: weight (15 pounds, six ounces), pin (3-4 inches), and top weight (2¼ ounces). I have two questions: (1) Does the driller choose a ball that begins with the pin in a certain location, or does he choose any ball of the brand I want, then drill according to my specifications? (2) If I were to order a ball over the Internet, is that the only information I need to give them?

When purchasing a ball, there are a number of things to consider. If you came into my pro shop, for example, and wanted a proactive ball because you heard these were the newest and best balls available, I could do one of two things: I could either let you buy whatever you wanted, or I could figure out why you picked that particular style of ball, then help you select the ball you really need. A good pro shop operator today will almost always choose the latter. But if your mind is set on a certain product, he'll sell you what you want.

Working in a partnership with your pro shop to get the right piece of equipment in your hands is the best thing to do. Buying over the Internet means getting stuck with whatever you pick out. You might save a few bucks, but you risk wasting the money you do spend on a ball that's not right for you. Based on what I've seen, purchasing equipment over the Internet without proper guidance hasn't been the best choice.

The pro will need to have six questions answered to help select a ball for you. To

judge what ball is right for you, a pro will have to know your (1) ball speed, (2) revolutions, (3) axis rotation, (4) axis tilt, (5) the lane conditions on which you want the ball to work best, and (6) your current equipment and how it's drilled. Good pro shop operators can gather a lot of this information without the bowler even realizing he's doing it.

The pro will then choose the pin and cover sock he feels will work best for you, then drill it according to how you throw the ball and how it fits with the rest of your equipment. With the number of balls available, it's important to get help in this decision.

■ *Playing in three leagues this year, I have been able to maintain a 190-plus average for the first time in my career. Everything about my approach has felt good and smooth, with the exception of one detail. Over the past few months, I've taken a big interest in BOWLING DIGEST and all of its instructional articles, which all seem to stress the importance of being near the foul line upon release of the ball. I use a four-step approach, taking two baby steps and finishing with a powerful last step, and I tend to be about 2½ feet away from the line upon release. Would it be more beneficial to start my approach closer to the foul line and continue using the same approach? Would it be better to lengthen my first two steps? Should I work on moving to a five-step approach?*

First of all, I wouldn't get overly consumed with ending up close to the foul

line if it comes at the expense of your game. Although it's better to be closer to the line at release, there is no hard, fast rule stating the ideal distance. I've seen world-class bowlers finish farther from the foul line than you and do quite well.

But if you'd like to work on releasing the ball closer to the foul line, you could try increasing the distance of your first step. The problem with changing the length of your stride is that you can't see how long the step is, so you can't measure it. When you start trying to lengthen or shorten steps, your feel and timing will change. But if you have the time to practice a lot, trying it out might be an option.

Another option is to start closer to the foul line. If you opt for this choice, check to see if you're actually releasing closer to the line. If, for example, you start your approach one foot farther up but release only six inches closer to the foul line, then you're taking shorter steps in your approach. Experiment with starting points to find out how much you need to move to end up a comfortable distance from the foul line.

Your best bet, though, is to change your approach from four steps to five. A five-step approach will start with the left foot, which will automatically make the first step with the right foot longer, because the left foot is now positioned ahead of it. The other benefit of a five-step approach, because the second step is now longer, is that it gives you more time to get the ball in motion. This may improve your timing. ●