

INTERVIEW: BRAD ANGELO, THE NEWEST PBA STAR

# BOWLING DIGEST

## WIDE OPEN

*The PBA race for top honors promises to be close from start to finish*

**Mika Koivuniemi**

**Kim Adler** on becoming a bowling mentor

**The Match I'll Never Forget: Steve Jaros**

**Walter Ray Williams Jr.**

**Bill Spigner** takes a vacation

**Chris Barnes**

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# Vacations Are in the Eyes of the Bowlers

By **BILL SPIGNER**

■ *Two guys I know refuse to bowl in the summer for various reasons. I, on the other hand, feel that I must bowl in the summer—at least in one league and one practice day—to keep my game in shape. After all, to be good at anything, you need to practice. Anyway, by bowling all summer, I kept my 200-plus average. However, the other two guys who didn't bowl for seven-plus weeks seemed to have the edge. One guy subbed with us on the last night of the summer league and shot a 750. The other guy started out the first night of his league with a 298/750, while I struggled to get 600.*

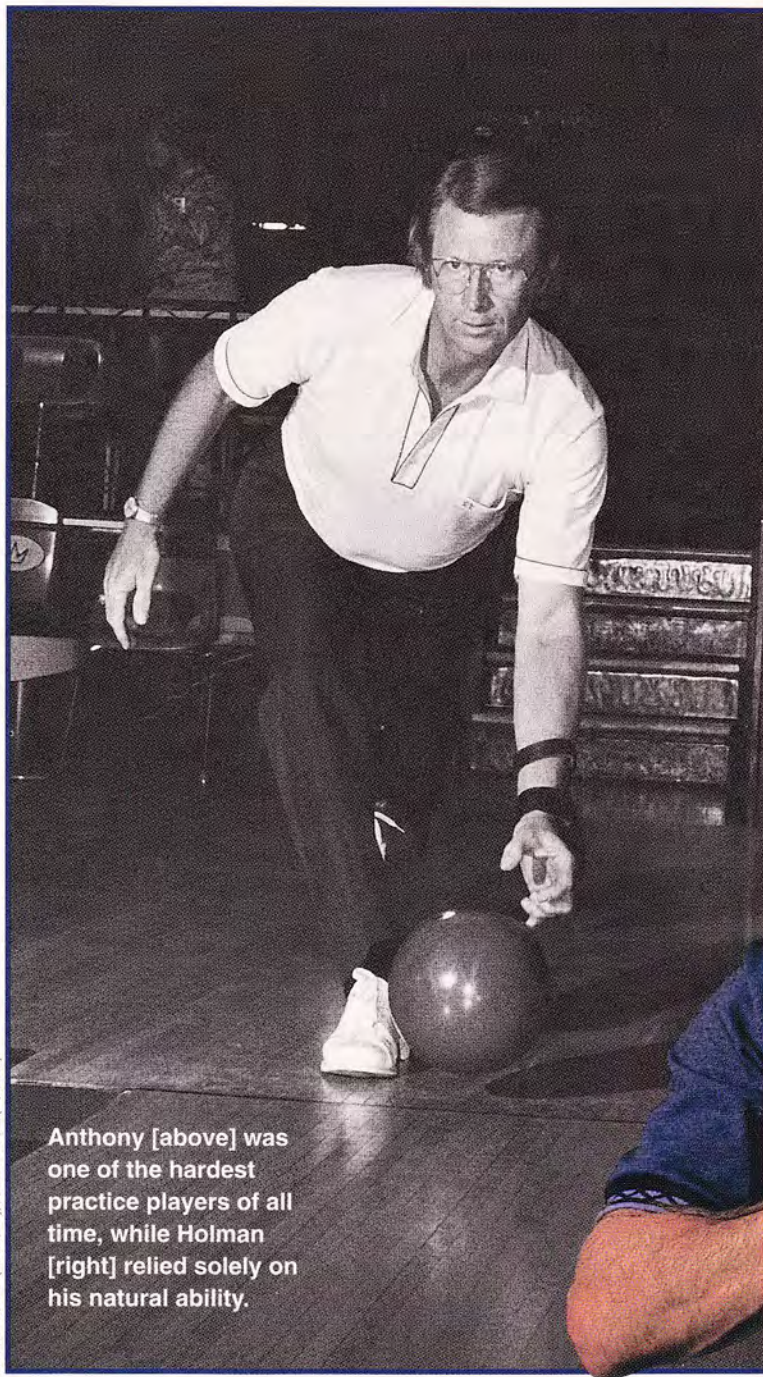
*We are all good bowlers who average well more than 200, but how can people score so easily without keeping up their games? I'm in the 615 range, with practice, and they came in and shot 250s without throwing a ball for seven weeks. Does this mean I should give up practicing and stop giving my time, effort, and money to the game, too? Or is this the way bowling has progressed (if you call it that)?*

This is nothing new to sports. There always have been athletes who don't work hard on their body, mind, and game, but are able to excel at very high levels.

In bowling, Marshall Holman was one such player. He had such incredible talent he would just “turn it on” and bowl well. Some players just fall into everything correctly and don't work hard on their games.

Then there are those who practice endlessly to improve. David Ozio is one such player who is always seeking answers to his game and working extremely hard. He never was the natural talent that Holman was, but it didn't make David not want to practice and get better just because Marshall bowled better with less work. Earl Anthony was probably the best-practiced bowler the sport had ever seen, and he became one of the all-time greats. Don Johnson, another all-time great, practiced constantly and had a big appetite to learn and teach.

Now, I mentioned four Hall of Fame bowlers. There is one thing three of them had in common—the desire to practice to get better. All three remained great bowlers throughout their careers. They never went backwards in their ability, relative to the age of the players they played against. They were able to maintain very high playing standards because of the work they put in to learn their games, the evolving sport, and the equipment needed to play the game at the highest level. Holman, on the other hand, never having to be a student of the overall game or his own, ran into trouble when a slump came. He



Anthony [above] was one of the hardest practice players of all time, while Holman [right] relied solely on his natural ability.

ALLEN ENSTEIN (ANTHONY); JOE WILKINS III (HOLMAN)

never really worked his way out of his slumps because he never had to work as hard as the others to get to the top level of the sport.

The first time I saw Marshall bowl, I was in awe, and I made a passing comment to him that he might become one of the best ever. Obviously he did, and could remain so, if he had decided to fight like mad to stay at that highest level of his bowling career. Marshall will be 50 soon, and I hope he will be doing some Senior bowling; it would be great to see the fire in Marshall's eyes again.

Anyway, I believe it is worth the work to hone your game if you love the sport and want to get better. Bowling is an endurance game; you have to grind it out day after day, year after year, to get really good.

On the Senior tour, Dale Eagle has developed into one of the best Senior bowlers ever. He has been bowling professionally since the late 1960s and was a decent tour

player in the 1970s and early 1980s, but never a superstar. Through a never-ending desire to get better, Eagle has done some incredible bowling as a Senior. Now he is better than players he couldn't come

close to beating on a regular basis as a young pro.

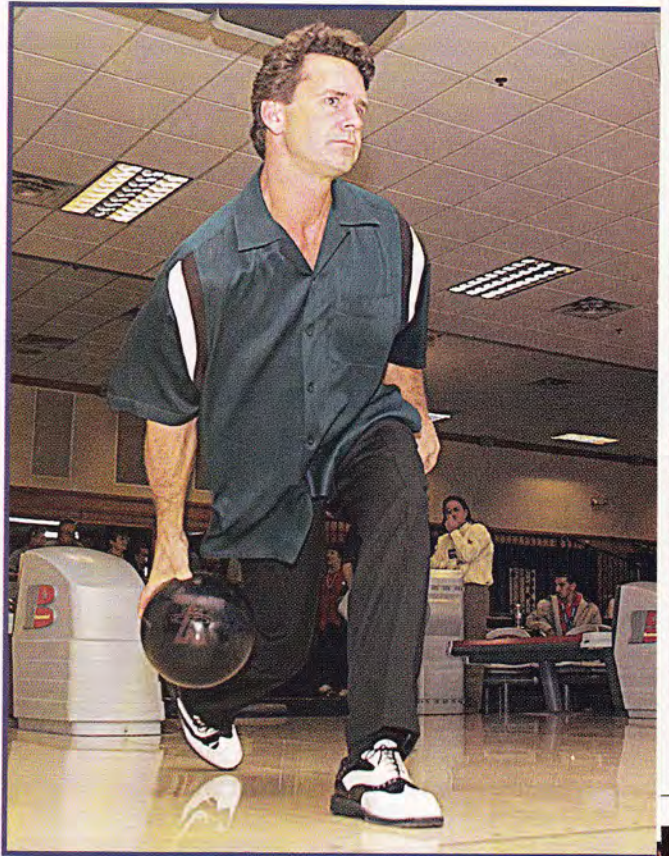
The bottom line is you never know when you are going to peak as a player. Some reach their peak at a young age. Some keep learning and working to get better, because they believe in themselves and won't rest until they achieve their goals. You have to make the choice as to which way you want to go. One of my idols is Dick Weber, not because of his early bowling career, but because of his ability, at 73, to win on the Senior regional tour. It's absolutely amazing to see what this guy can do. He never lost the desire to compete and win.

The way that Marshall approached bowling was the right way for him—you can't be better than one of the best ever. Anything short of that for a player that skilled is not good enough for them. The way Dale did it was right for him; he always believed he could become an elite player, and it took him a long time to become good enough to be the best.

Keep up the fight, and enjoy the journey to better bowling.

■ **Bowling instruction books say the best strike percentage is from the outside of the lane, decreasing the more you move to the center. Now you see more and more right-handed**

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



DAVID DUROCHNIK

**Voss is among the players who prove that you don't need a big hook to be a successful bowler.**

*bowlers playing the 4th arrow, or left of it. Is this because the ballmakers are cranking out balls with more hook by the hundreds, and players are forced to play there? Or is the strike percentage just as good playing the outside line?*

The best strike angle is determined by the entry angle of the ball into the pocket. The angle that gives you the most area to contact the head pin and strike is about six degrees. This is a large angle of entry that the crankers employ.

A large entry angle is not the determining factor in scoring, however. The more the ball hooks, the more difficult it is to control. The big-hook players leave many more difficult spares and splits than a player with a narrower angle of entry.

If hooking the ball a lot was the ultimate way to score, players like Brian Voss, Walter Ray Williams Jr., and Mika Koivuniemi would not be among the best in the world.

Where the bowlers play the lanes is ini-



tially determined by how the lanes are oiled. If you have a chance to watch the tour on ESPN, you will notice the bowlers playing a variety of lines, which were determined by the oiling pattern. The PBA's E pattern almost always plays out and is the shortest pattern (35 feet) used. The B pattern plays best from deep inside and is the longest (43 feet). The A pattern, which has been used in the past two years at my bowling center (Hawthorn Lanes) for the Miller High Life Open, is a medium-length (37 feet) and multi-angle pattern, which can play well from in or out.

Of all the PBA patterns, the E pattern is by far the highest-scoring. This pattern plays from outside, and the bowlers who do the best overall are the straight players. However, Robert Smith won two events on the E pattern—he's one of the few crankers who are able to take advantage of the free hook that the E pattern provides.

On the typical lane conditions used for league play, there is very little oil on the first 10 boards of the lane, and the middle of the lane has a lot of oil. So bowlers who have a lot of hand will start left and project the ball out to the dry, so their breakpoint is outside the oil line, at the 8-board. The straighter player will play more parallel to the oil line, but will also have their breakpoint around the 8-board.

Bowlers look for two things: A line that they can use to get the ball to the pocket consistently, and an angle that will carry the pocket. First you have to be able to hit the pocket consistently, then you subtly adjust your shot on that line to carry.

With the outside 10 boards of the lanes so dry on typical house conditions, the strength of the bowling balls and the releases of the bowlers cause more players to play a deeper line and swing the ball more. The bowlers are looking for the oil so they can project the ball to their breakpoint down the lane. On house conditions, bowlers can be sloppy in their shot-making because they know if they get the ball to the dry area of the lane, it will hook back no matter where they hit it and at what angle.

If the lane condition did not allow the bowlers to hook the ball as much as they wanted and still be able to control it, they would not develop releases that give them a six- to eight-degree angle of entry to the pocket. So the real answer to your question about angle of entry and where the lanes are played is based on what the oil pattern allows the bowler to do.

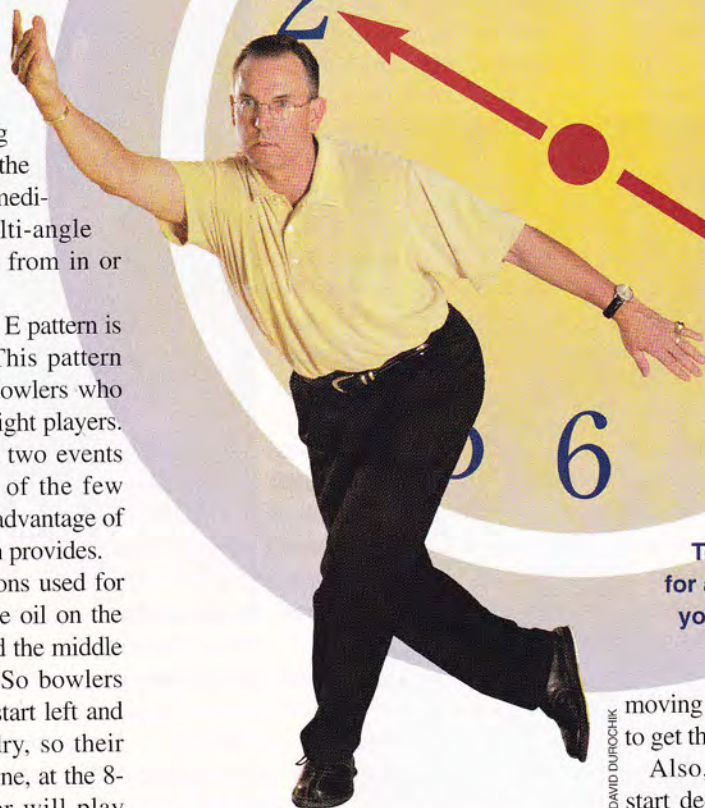
For a basic rule of thumb, the longer and flatter the oil, the closer the breakpoint needs to be to the pocket. The shorter the oil pattern and drier the lanes are near the gutter, the closer to the gutter the breakpoint can be.

Bowling balls do have an impact on where the bowler plays the lane. High-powered balls make the bowler look for oil to project the ball to a breakpoint. Those balls remove the oil from the lane at a very rapid rate, so the bowlers keep

moving to the center of the lane to find oil to get the ball down the lane.

Also, bowlers with a strong release start deeper and develop a ball track for themselves. Most house conditions have an oil line that is parallel to the boards. The cranker develops a track in the oil that is at an angle from the foul line to their breakpoint. Most crankers have more of an inside-out swing path than straighter players. Once that ball track is developed, they have an oil line to play off of that is complimentary to their swing path.

The bowling balls of today and the dry back ends enable bowlers to develop releases that allow them to play the middle of the lane and project the ball toward the gutter to create a lot of angle to the pocket. They are actually creating an angle from *inside* that was once only attainable from playing the *outside* line. High-performance bowling balls have definitely created more places to play the lane and still allow for a good angle to carry.



DAVID DUROCHIK

**To get your right leg to clear, try for a finish point at two o'clock for your right hand and eight o'clock for the tip of your right shoe.**

■ *I know it's hard to answer questions about bowling without watching the bowler, but I think my problem is in the timing of my pushaway. I use a four-step approach, and try to push away at the same time as my first step. I'm 72 years old and average 175 to 180 in a once-a-week league. I have a slow-to-medium speed on the approach. My problem is I do not get the weight off my right foot, and swing it over behind my left foot at the time I deliver the ball.*

*I have torn my Achilles tendon twice while bowling in the last year and a half. I had to have surgery and missed this season. What do you think I am doing wrong? Should I start my pushaway later?*

There are a couple of things that could be happening. The first one, as you suspect, is timing. If your timing is early, the ball gets to the release zone before the body is set up to receive the ball. The body weight is not transferred

over the sliding leg, and the shoulders and hips close too much, which makes it impossible for the right leg to clear properly.

The other problem could be that your spine angle is too vertical and the body weight gets trapped too far behind the sliding leg. This makes it very hard to get the weight transferred over the sliding leg. This can happen when a bowler tries to get a real deep knee bend; the knee of the right leg moves downward as the slide starts, which can cause the weight to get trapped on the right foot. That puts a lot of strain on the Achilles tendon of the right leg.

If your timing is OK and your spine tilt is sufficient, then you have to look at your swing path. If your swing is outside-in and you throw the ball pretty straight, then you will have trouble clearing your leg. The leg must clear so the ball and arm can swing under the shoulder. A swing that is entering the release zone

from an outside-in path will not swing under the shoulder correctly.

First, try to delay your timing. You can change your pushaway by either holding the ball higher or pushing the ball slightly upward as you start. You can also try to get your feet moving faster and let the ball hang a little longer when it reaches the top of the swing.

To enable the right leg to clear, picture a big clock in front of you that you end up in at your finish position. As a righthander, your right arm and leg are the hands on the clock. You want your right arm and hand to finish pointing toward two o'clock, with your arm at a 90-degree angle to your shoulders—this will keep your shoulders from rotating closed. Next, the tip of your right shoe should finish on the floor at eight o'clock. If you get the tip of the shoe touching the floor, the weight has to have been shifted over the sliding leg. This takes the pressure off the right foot. ●

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