

KIM ADLER TELLS YOU HOW TO ATTACK THE SPORT CONDITION

BOWLING DIGEST

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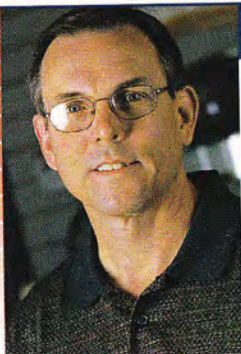
- PURPOSE for PRACTICE
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Use the Conditions to Your Advantage

By **BILL SPIGNER**

■ In my hometown, we have very difficult conditions for anyone with a lot of side turn. The lanes are 28 feet of synthetic surface, and the rest are wood, with a dry condition in the track area, a band of medium oil between the left and right 15 boards, and an out-of-bounds outside the 6-board.

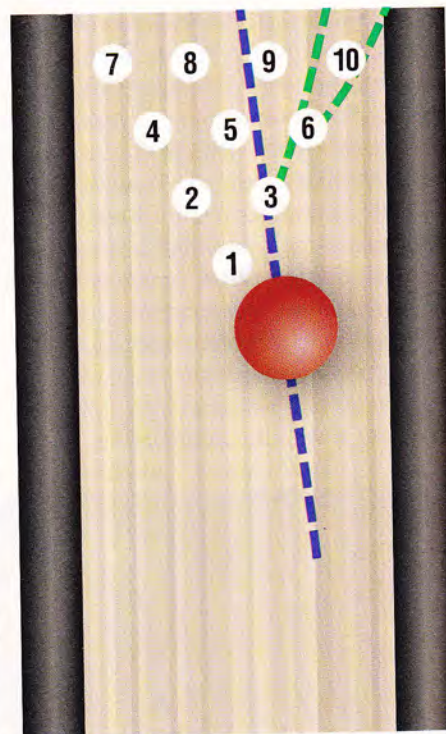
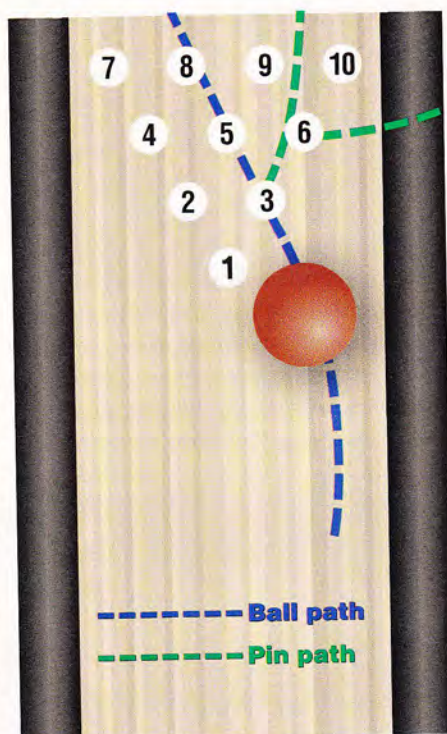
I have a lot of side roll—not a spinner—but have never had any trouble rolling over the thumb hole. I use a Columbia game ball drilled with the pin four inches from my axis (PAP), a Columbia Spirit, and a Scout leverage weighted. I can find the pocket very consistently, but I don't seem to get any carry. I am leaving a lot of 10-pins.

I have tried to move deeper than 16 boards, but I am not real comfortable playing that deep. What drilling would you suggest, and what surface would be better to make this condition carry?

By the way, when I asked why the lanes are oiled the way they are, I was told it's so averages don't get too high, and that this way bowlers from this alley will do well at state and other tournaments.

The condition you described doesn't sound too tough. The bowling center is giving you a track to play off of and has created a very defined playing area. You have to stay in the track.

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.



Bringing too much angle to the headpin [left] is often a reason for not carrying the 10-pin. Adjusting your roll so your ball enters the pocket at less of an angle [right] will give the 3-pin enough energy to clear out the 6 and 10.

Carrying the 10-pin is a matter of the angle at which the ball contacts the headpin and how it deflects into the 3-pin. If the ball catches too much of the 3-pin, the 3-pin will hit more on the side of the 6-pin and that pin will go around the 10-pin.

To carry the 10-pin, you need to change the angle slightly. The oiling pattern you are playing and where you are comfortable playing are clearly defined. You can't change your strike line because you have to play off the track the oiling pattern offers you.

I assume that because you get a lot of side roll, you are coming into the pocket at a wide angle. If that is the case, you

need to get the ball to enter the pocket at less of an angle to get the right deflection in the pocket to carry the 10-pin.

There are three ways you can adjust for this. One is instead of rotating around the ball, try to stay behind it so the rotation you apply is more end-over-end. The second thing to try would be to play more in the o and keep a straighter line to the pocket.

Your third option would be to change the drilling of your ball. All your balls are drilled to flare and hook a lot. That helps create area, but it also may be forcing you to arc the ball too much for the condition, causing you to come in behind the headpin. If you try to square up to the pocket, the

ball will have a tendency to jump, and you'll start leaving 4-pins. The rotation you're getting is a good indication that the drilling or surface is causing your ball to overreact.

Switch to a drilling that will give you more control. For example, if you need the ball to lose energy and/or speed but give you more control, use pins closer to your axis (PAP). Move your pins closer to your track if you need the ball to retain energy and have back-end control.

Consult a pro shop operator who is familiar with your bowling and the condition you are playing on to help you decide the direction to head in with the new drilling.

Keep one thing in mind: Drillings that work on a specific condition are only good for that condition until it changes and starts to give you a different ball reaction. In your case, early in the night you have to approach the oiling pattern with a more direct line so the ball can perform well on the pattern and give you the right angle to the pocket. As the pattern starts changing, how you approach the track to control the ball will change, and the ball you started the night with may have to be put away.

For most league bowlers, I recommend a drilling that allows the ball to stay in your hand as long as possible. It would be more beneficial to have a ball that allows you to play the lanes better in the second and third games of league play than a ball and drilling that work best on a fresh condition that you will face only at the beginning of the night.

For those who have a number of balls, using a ball designed for specific situations is OK, but learning how to use different equipment at the *right* times will make you a better and more versatile bowler. It's our job as players to use equipment the right way once we know we are playing the right part of the lane and rolling the ball well.

■ ***I am an avid bowler who bowls in two leagues. One is a school league and the other is recreational. Why is it that dur-***

ing the summer, my thumb either shrinks or swells, causing me to drop the ball at the bottom of the release point?

It's not unusual for a person's hand size to change. During the summer, when you are outside and the temperature is warm, your hand tends to swell. If you are living in a humid climate, that humidity, coupled with the heat, will make your hand



swell even more. When you first go inside to bowl, you'll find that the holes in your ball feel tight because of the swelling. If your bowling center has good air conditioning, your hand will shrink as you adjust to the cool air. Your hand faces the opposite problem in the winter: shrinking outside in the cold and swelling in the warm bowling center.

Being aware of how your body is affected by temperature and humidity will help you learn how to get your hand to fit in the ball properly and get a good grip on the ball. The No. 1 thing to do is add tape to the holes to tighten them when your hand swelling is down—or take tape out of the hole when your swelling is up.

I recommend using white insert tape, which has some texture to it and is thick

enough so it's easy to install and remove. The width of the tape is important. Pre-cut tape sold in pro shops and bowling centers comes in three sizes: one inch, three-quarter inch, and one-half inch. A general rule to follow: If your thumb hole size is $\frac{3}{4}$ " or larger, use one-inch tape; from $\frac{1}{16}$ " up to $\frac{29}{32}$ ", use three-quarter-inch tape; and smaller than $\frac{1}{16}$ ", use one-half-inch tape. You can take the wider tape and cut it down to the size you need, or mix and match different sizes to really fine-tune the fit.

Many once-a-week bowlers don't want to deal with learning how to use tape. But if you want to be a better bowler, one of the most important things you need to do is to learn how to get your ball to feel good right from the beginning of the night. If

Depending on the weather outside your center and the air temperature inside, your fingers can swell or shrink to surprising sizes as you bowl.

you have a problem with your hand changing sizes as you bowl because of the room temperature, have three to four pieces of tape in the thumb hole when your hand swelling is down. Many times you put tape in the hole at the beginning of the night and remove it as you bowl, as your hand warms up and starts to swell.

Besides using tape to improve your grip or release the ball more easily, there are a lot of other products made to aid your grip and release. Most bowlers will come into my pro shop and ask for rosin. I immediately ask them what they are looking for the rosin to do; most of the time bowlers think rosin will help them release the ball more easily, when actually rosin does just the opposite.

Instead, I recommend using powder bags. There are basically three different reasons to use powder bags. One is to help you get a better grip on the ball, the same thing rosin is used for. (Rosin is a sticky substance that

helps promote a better grip—but you have to be careful about how much you apply, and even where you put rosin on the thumb, so it provides a better grip without making you stick to the thumb hole.)

The second and most popular type of product to use dries your hand without making the hand sticky or slippery. These products are made with kitty litter or like substances. For players who sweat, it's a

fit of the ball at the beginning of your bowling session. Be aware of the feel of the ball throughout your bowling session so you are prepared to add or take a piece of tape out when your hand size is changing.

Some nights your hand swells, other nights it shrinks. What you eat and drink, the pace you bowl, and the environment of the bowling center will have an effect on your hand.



A variety of mid-priced pearlized balls are available, including [clockwise from top] Brunswick Monsters, Ebonite Cats, Columbia Messengers, and the Hammer Blade.

great way to keep your hand dry.

The third product that is used to help slip out of the hole is the same product that's sold to help your shoes slide easier. Many bowlers use these shoe products, or baby powder, to help them release the ball easier.

This method is common with once-a-week bowlers who don't want to take the time to learn better ways to adjust their grips. Powder is the worst way to help you release the ball. Using powder makes your release very easy, but also very inconsistent because of how slippery your hand gets when you initially apply the powder.

Preparing your ball and hand to have the proper grip is part of your pre-bowling and pre-shot routine. Adding and subtracting tape to the holes in the ball for a good fit doesn't begin and end when you adjust the

■ My wife bowls two nights a week and is looking for a new ball. She throws a Brunswick Arc but is looking for something reactive, a ball that goes long and hits hard at the pins. Our lanes are oiled heavy in the middle and tapered out to the 5th board and down the lanes 38 to 40 feet. She throws the ball down the second arrow with a fingertip grip.

The ball your wife is currently using is an early-rolling, smooth-breaking reactive resin ball. Knowing the basic characteristics of the ball will help her choose the next ball she wants.

To get a ball that will have more length than the ball she currently is rolling, go to a pearlized reactive resin ball. Every manufacturer makes a good mid-priced pearlized ball, including Brunswick with its Monsters series, Columbia Messengers, the Ebonite

Cat series, and Hammer's Blade. Most of the companies have more than one type of mid-priced ball, so ask your pro shop operator which ball would be best based on what you are looking for the ball to do compared to what you have.

You are bowling on a lane condition that can give you a lot of room to hit the pocket. You should lean toward a strong drilling on the new ball so the ball track can flare a good amount. You want the drilling to help you create more area to take advantage of the oiling pattern.

■ I am a 13-year-old bowler with a 155 to 160 average rolling a semi-roller. I play the 12-board out to the 8-board, but when it's time for an adjustment, I can never decide whether to move the mark I am throwing at, or my feet. Can you help me out?

It sounds like you are already doing a lot of things correctly. Referring to the lane and approach by board numbers is the best way to begin learning how to adjust.

The whole lane—from the 1st board to the 35th—is your potential playing area. Where you play on the lanes is determined by two things: (1) the oil on the lanes and (2) how you throw the ball and your ability to have releases that allow you to play different parts of the lane. The better you are at releasing the ball to play more parts of the lane, the easier it is to become versatile enough to play anywhere on the lane.

The first rule of thumb to follow is moving your feet and target in the direction that you are missing on the lane. If you are missing left because the ball is hooking too much, move your feet and target left. You do the opposite when you're missing right. By moving your feet and target, you are looking to find a place on the lane where the ball can start hooking at the right time. That way, when your ball hits the pocket you can carry. You are also moving so you can find a place on the lane that gives you some area to get the ball to the pocket.

As you learn to move, also work on your release. You want to be able to play deep inside and still get the 5-pin out on light pocket hits. ●