

# Bowlers Journal

MAY 2013 • \$3.95 • [www.bowlersjournal.com](http://www.bowlersjournal.com)

INTERNATIONAL



## DOUBLE TRIPLE

### How Pete Weber Won the PBA Triple Crown Twice





# THE PRO APPROACH

BY BILL SPIGNER { bills@bowlersjournal.com }



## Parkin: A Backswing Like No Other

**MISSY PARKIN BURST** onto the national scene in 1998 when she won the first-ever “Junior Olympic Gold” tournament at 16 years of age. From that point on, she has worked her way to the top at every level of competition — from juniors to collegiate to Team USA (junior and adult) to the professional ranks.

It’s unfortunate that she never had the opportunity to bowl on a true women’s pro tour. But she has made the most of it in the few women’s events that remain, as well as some PBA tournaments. Today, I’d rank her among the top three women bowlers in the world.

I had the opportunity to see Missy when she won JOG in ’98; she was Missy Bellinder then. The next year in Orlando, I took my video camera to the JOG and recorded many of the top youth players in the event, Missy included.

Missy has a contemporary game and sports a high backswing a la Pete Weber’s. Over the years, we haven’t seen a lot of women with backswings like that. There probably would have been had the great Marion Ladewig — who had such a swing 60 years ago — been seen on television more often.

Missy is the only female pro today who rolls a 16-lb. ball. Even most male pros use 15-pounders. She has used this weight for many years, and can do so because of how she utilizes her legs,

spine tilt and upper body rotation to get that high backswing. Her game is big-time legs with a killer swing.

Missy is a five-step bowler who starts with a staggered stance; her right heel is a couple inches in back of her left, and her body weight is centered over her feet and facing right with knees flexed, hips and shoulders facing right of her intended walk and target line, and her upper body leaning slightly forward.

She holds the ball about chest high, with her elbow tucked into the right side below her shoulder. Her bowling-side hand position is on the bottom-right side of the ball, with her wrist very cocked and slightly cupped. Her left hand is under the ball and in the center of her body.

Missy’s pushaway starts before her second step, is complete before the second step is done, and goes slightly right. At the completion of her second step, the ball is below her right knee. At the completion of the pushaway, her left arm is straight out in front of her.

On her third step, Missy

increases her spine tilt to about 50 degrees. At the same time, her right leg pushes the upper body forward. These two actions, in conjunction with the shoulders opening, propel the ball back and give her a high backswing without

her “muscling” it to the top.

The ball reaches the top of the swing before the fourth step is complete, and pauses briefly. As her foot contacts the floor on the fourth step, her swing is starting down. So, when she starts her last step, everything is moving forward.

Missy generates a lot of ball speed starting in the downswing. The first factor, of course, is that the swing is coming from a very high position. But at this point she also loses some of her



Missy Parkin’s third step is starting, and note that the ball is below the knee — a little lower than most because of her early forward tilt and knee flex. Given her high backswing, she is in a good position from a timing perspective.

Posted with permission from *Bowlers Journal International*.

forward spine tilt, which speeds up the downswing. This is not something I would recommend for most bowlers, but it works for her.

Missy ends up at about a 30-degree forward tilt when she is ready to release the ball — again, great for her. Her fingers are above the “equator” of the ball, and if she were to maintain the forward tilt she had on her third step, she would release the ball from on top of it into the lane. But with her spine in the correct position, relative to her hand position, she is set up to finish the shot well.

When her thumb is coming out, Missy starts leaning forward, helping her fingers extend through the ball, giving her time to rotate and lift it. Her long finish and follow-

through — led by her right shoulder rotating, lowering and going forward to her target — helps to keep the hand moving fast through the release and in line with the direction she wants the ball to travel.

Once the upper body stops moving forward, she completes the follow-through with her hand moving up toward the center of her head, and finishes with her hand almost touching her right shoulder, illustrating how flexible she is. Her hand comes back down quickly, but her legs stay in a rock-solid position until the ball is well down the lane. Her balance is amazingly good, considering her whole upper body is extended out over the lane.

That great extension is the big reason she can effectively release a 16-lb. ball out in

front of her onto the lane. Most bowlers who have their upper body that far forward have their trail foot come off the floor, and as a result, they fall off after the shot is complete.

Looking at Missy from the back, because her feet, hips and shoulders are facing right, her pushaway starts right — which leads to her straight inside-out swing. Her walk direction is slightly left on steps two and four, getting her body out of the way for the swing. She opens her shoulders, and at the top of the swing, her hand is on the “inside” of the ball.

The one thing that’s not great is that the ball is left of her head at the top. It requires a lot of strength to keep the swing inside on the way down without losing speed.

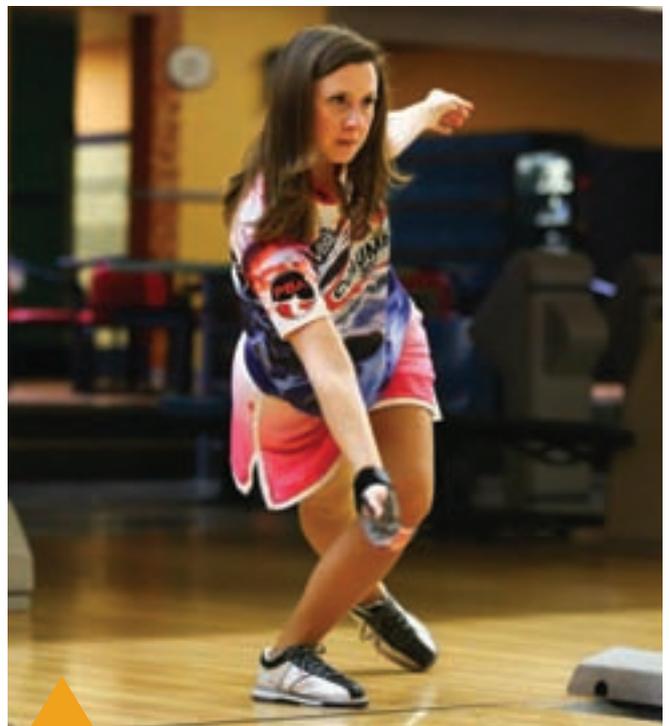
But Missy is able to increase her swing speed because she loses some forward tilt on the downswing, and her shoulders stay open long enough so the swing stays inside. From there, the finish does the rest.

Missy’s game looks smooth and effortless. She practices a lot, and bowls in every tournament she can at home for competitive practice. She’s a big believer in getting in the most competition you can. Plus, her youth tournament experience taught her how to handle pressure and finish off games to win, which has been a big factor in her success.

*Bill Spigner is a PBA Tour champion, USBC Hall of Famer and Gold-certified coach. Read archived “Pro Approach” features online at [billspigner.com](http://billspigner.com).*



The fourth step is almost complete and the ball is at the top of the swing, where it pauses in preparation for the transition to the downswing. Her wrist is arched back, indicating there’s no unwanted “muscle” in the backswing.



As Parkin completes her extension after the release (just before the follow-through), her sliding knee is well forward and her upper body is past the foul line. Importantly, the bowling arm is fully extended toward her target on the lane.

Posted with permission from *Bowlers Journal International*.