

SCHEDULES

INTERVIEW: 'Bad Boy' Marshall Holman

BOWLING

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DIGEST

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MEYERS

Bill Spigner's Bowling Clinic

Q. I'm a right-handed bowler, averaging 196 to 200 for the past five years. I use a four-step approach, but my first step is directly in front of my left foot. How can I correct this?

A. There could be a few reasons for your first step going left. First of all, you may not have a pushaway and may just drop your ball into your swing. By doing this, you are unconsciously getting your hips out of the way of the ball in order to keep your swing straight. Secondly, your pushaway could be going left, which will force you to walk left.

Start your approach with your left foot slightly ahead of your right foot. Be sure to push your ball away in the direction of your target, and make sure you think about your first step following in line with your pushaway. It will take a conscious effort for a while on every shot. Also, be sure to keep your shoulders level. If your shoulder drops, it could push your hips left and make you walk left.

Q. I see many people wearing wrist supports, but when I ask them what they do, they really can't tell me. Are these wrist bands a help or gimmicks?

A. Unfortunately, most people don't know why they are putting the aid on. I call them aids because they all do something that can help, but only if you know why you are using one.

There are aids that help you turn the ball more, lift it more, lift it less and help a sore wrist.

If you are going to buy a wrist band, be sure to explain to the pro-shop operator what you are doing with the ball, and what you want to do with your ball. If he's a good pro-shop operator, he can tell you what glove or wrist band would be best suited for you. Remember, not all devices are good for all people.

Q. I'm confused about what to do on tight lanes and hooking lanes. I don't know when to apply more turn, lift, roll, spin, etc. What's best for what lane condition?

A. Playing lanes is definitely one of the most difficult parts of bowling. It is the mental part of the game. A couple of basics to follow are: 1) On tight lanes you need less turn and more lift in order to get the ball into a good roll; 2) On hooking lanes you need less lift and more spin on the ball in order to get the ball to slide down the lane and finish on the back end.

On the Pro Bowlers Tour we encounter a

different type of lane condition every week. Because of these varying lane conditions, different types of shots dominate each week. This explains why you see many different bowlers on the TV telecast. When a bowler makes many TV telecasts, you know that player has a lot of versatility in his shot-making and lane-playing ability.

Q. I have thumb problems. I usually have my thumb hole drilled small for a tight fit, but after a few frames I start slipping out of the ball. I've tried all the gripping aids, with no results. Are there any rubber grips available?

A. I don't know of any all-rubber thumb inserts. What you might want to do is get an old inner tube and make your own thumb inserts. You can experiment with the sizes and where to put the grip until you solve the problem.

Your slipping problem could be due to a shrinking thumb. I have the same problem. Many times when I first start bowling I can't get my thumb into the ball. When this happens, I take out all of the tape I've put in the ball and start with a larger thumb hole. As I bowl, my thumb will start shrinking and then I'll put the tape back in.

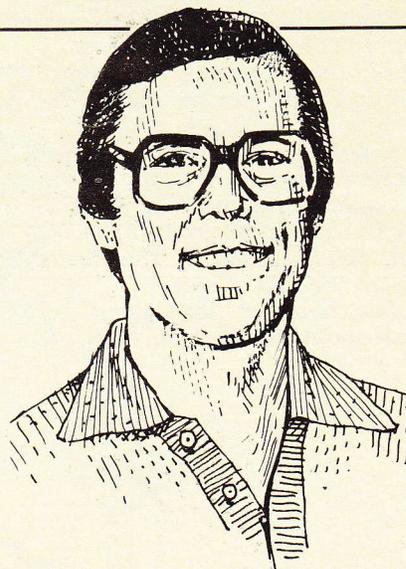
I suggest you start with a little larger thumb hole and put tape in the back of the hole until it fits. Your thumb changes a lot, so don't be afraid to change the tape often. Sometimes you might have to put tape in and out a few times during the course of a night's bowling.

Another thing you might want to check is the shape of your thumb. If you have an oval-shaped thumb you will need to make your hole oval-shaped to be able to hang onto it. You can do this with tape, an oval thumb grip or work out a round hole to an oval shape.

Q. I have been bowling for 17 years and throw a powerful ball. I have arthritis in my bowling fingers, but the doctor told me bowling will not damage them further. The pain is awful so I tried going to a "softer" shot, but my average has suffered terribly. What should I do?

A. If the "soft" shot doesn't hurt your hand, I would suggest staying with it. But when you change from a power shot to a "soft" shot, you also need a timing change.

Most power players have late timing. Late timing occurs when a bowler is entering their slide and his ball is still at the top of his swing. When this happens there's a lot of strain on the body. By getting in better



Bill Spigner is in his 10th year on the PBA Tour. He holds three national PBA championships and seven regional PBA titles. He is also a head teaching pro and instructor at Don Johnson's Summer Bowling Camps.

time—where the ball will be waist-high entering the slide—it will put a lot less pressure and strain on the body.

Most strokers have good timing. Earl Anthony is a perfect example. His good timing makes his approach look effortless.

I would suggest you slow down your foot speed and shorten your approach. This will help your swing get in better time with your feet—a must with your new stroker shot.

Q. I've noticed that not all the pros have knee bend. I've always thought good knee bend was a must for bowling. Am I wrong?

A. You are correct in saying that correct knee bend is needed in bowling.

The pros you see on TV actually have good knee bend, but not in their finishing position. If you watch closely when the ball is at the bottom of their swing (just before release), their knee is most definitely bent. But as they release the ball their knee straightens out and helps aid that bowler get lift and loft on the ball.

PBA champions Ted Hannahs, Bob Handley, Butch Soper, and Roy Buckley don't have knee bend in their finishing positions, but they have it at the most important time—at the start of their release.

Bill Spigner welcomes questions from readers. Mail your questions to: Bill Spigner, Bowling Digest, 1020 Church Street, Evanston, IL 60201.