

# Bowlers Journal

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# PRIME TIME

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# THE PRO APPROACH

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## CDB's Delivery: Simple as 1-2-3

**CAROLYN DORIN-BALLARD** is one of the all-time great bowlers. She's affectionately known as CDB, and 2015 marked the beginning of her second run in women's professional bowling. She had become one of the dominant players when the PWBA Tour went away 12 years ago.

The women's tour may have been gone, but not CDB's desire to bowl. She kept her game intact by bowling in PBA tour events and PBA regionals, on Team USA, in U.S. Women's Open tournaments, in the USBC Queens, and any other event she could get to.

And she did it while working a full-time job, being a wife and mother, running a pro shop, coaching, doing TV commentary, and representing Storm and Turbo in the industry. To say the least, she is quite comfortable having a full plate all the time; she says she always performs best when she has a lot going on.

Carolyn has a sound game with good fundamentals, but she has never taken her game for granted or come to the conclusion that she was as good as she could be. Instead, she has constantly worked to tweak her game and make it stronger and more versatile — but always while keeping it simple.

There isn't anything all that unusual about her delivery, except that it's one of the most fundamentally sound and repeatable in the sport. She would humbly say she is not the most physically talented player, but her grit and



**Text Book:** Dorin-Ballard achieves great position just before her ball gets to the release zone, with chin over knee, knee over foot, and the right amount of knee bend. You don't want or need more knee bend than this.

determination led her to become a hall of fame player.

Carolyn takes five steps. Her set-up is sound, with the bowling-side shoulder lower, a slight side-tilt of about 10 degrees. The ball is held right in front of the bowling-side shoulder with her

forearm parallel to the floor, which puts her ball above waist high. She has no forward spine tilt in her stance, and says she has been working on walking taller to try to get a little more natural ball speed.

Carolyn's pushaway begins a little

after her second step starts. She takes a long second step and has a long pushaway that moves straight out. She maintains her vertical spine angle during this step, which helps her counterbalance the ball, which has been placed pretty far out in front of her body.

Her third step is shorter than her first and second. She tilts forward to about 25 degrees on step three, and increases it slightly to about 30 degrees at release. Usually, the third step in a five-step approach is longer than the second. Because of Carolyn's long second step, the third step shortens as a natural compensation that allows her to tilt and get her upper body over the leg of the third step and her head out in front of the foot.

One of the key things with any approach is that the head should be over or slightly in front of the leading foot during at least the last three steps. This allows the upper body to lead the feet, which provides a smooth transfer of the upper body weight forward with less effort. If the spine angle is too vertical on the last three steps, the upper body has to lean forward just before the release to get in position to release the ball out in front of you, level to the lane.

Carolyn has very little shoulder rotation, which lets her free swing get to a little above shoulder high — lower than the higher swings of a lot of contemporary players. One of the benefits of the minimal shoulder movement is that she

has one of the steadiest heads in the game.

Looking at her head from a rear view, it is over the ball in the stance, and it remains over the ball as it's passing the body on the backswing. Then it's directly behind her head at the top of the swing, and directly under her head at release. Her swing is very straight and that, combined with her steady head throughout the approach, makes her deadly accurate.

Carolyn's body position at release and through to her finish position is as good as it gets. If we were to have a poster child for the end of the shot, she would be it. She has a strong knee bend with her knee directly over her slide foot, her



## LESSON PLAN

**IF THERE IS** one thing to which all bowlers should aspire, it's to look like this at the point of release. Note how Carolyn Dorin-Ballard's bowling side shoulder is down, with her hand and forearm facing the direction the ball is going. The balance foot is very close to the floor and on its side, with the shoe laces touching the floor. Copy this position, and you will be on your way to better bowling.

arm perpendicular to the floor with the ball right at her ankle, and the bottom of the ball just above ankle high before the exit of her thumb. This is a great position for releasing the ball out in front of her on a slight descending angle, using gravity.

After Carolyn's hand leaves the ball, her slide knee continues forward until it's right over her toe. The forward momentum through the release helps speed up the hand. Her follow-through is fast and free. Her hand snaps back behind her head, but it occurs naturally as a finish to her fast-moving hand through the release and her loose swing. While doing this, her hand and forearm stay in line with her upper arm, facing the direction she wants the ball to travel — no flying elbow, which is great.

The other important benefit with this type of finish is that Carolyn's right shoulder never lifts and she doesn't lose her spine angle; the hand and arm go up and come right back down. She actually is so loose that her arm goes back up and down a *second* time.

The one drawback Carolyn has for today's game is the strength of her release. Her fingers are above the equator of the ball at the release, so she has very little time difference between the thumb and fingers coming out. This decreases her chances of getting the revs and axis rotation needed at times.

That's the one thing she wishes she could do better: get more side roll so she would be able to open up the lanes a little more and increase the angle of entry to the pocket and through the pins — without working hard to make it happen, because that would be too difficult to repeat.

Carolyn can play anywhere on the lane from the gutter to the fifth arrow, but when the shot gets deep and you have to go away from the pocket to create enough angle to carry, it hurts her. When she learned to bowl, the balls were much weaker and the shot moved more slowly because the balls and the rev rates of the players did not erase the oil as quickly.

At 52, Carolyn is still a work in progress. She has worked hard to stay in shape, going to the gym three days a



week to work with weights and cardio. She also takes some PIYO classes for core strength and flexibility.

Carolyn says heart, desire, and sheer will sometimes trump talent and give you strength you didn't know you had to be successful in bowling over the long haul — like CDB has.

**Classic:** Dorin-Ballard has very good position entering her slide, with fingers inside the thumb, ball a little higher than her shoulder, and out-stretched balance arm for stability. She's ready to fire through to the release, with the perfect position and timing to do it.