Spigner looks for things to fall into place

It has been a long time, in fact three years, since Bill Spigner has won a title. And things haven't been going his way of late, noted the former Hamden bowler as he prepared himself for last night's semifinal round of the $115,000 Greater Hartford Open at Bradley Bowl.

Spigner wasn't making any rash predictions, but he did say he was making a couple changes.

"I played chicken this afternoon and almost blew it," said Spigner as he worked overr a new hard-surfaced ball for Thursday night's action. "I was locked in, and just had to bowl half-way decent, but then I tried to finesse the shot and things got worse." Last night was different. Spigner was going to become more aggressive,. He was going to go for it all, and hoped it would work. He felt he had nothing to lose. Afterall, he qualified 24th, the last spot qualifying spot, by the slimmest of margins, one pin. He could only go up, and with the Firestone Tournament of Champions coming up next week, he felt he had to get some things squared away.

"I feel real good, and I'm not bowling badly," said Spigner, who has earned only $3,550 this year. A good finish at Bradley could easily double that figure.

Knock On Wood
Red Burnham



"Bradley Bowl has been good to me," Spigner said. "In all the tournaments I've ever bowled here, I missed cashing only once. And that includes regionals, NEBAs or anything else."

Spigner's best finish at Bradley Bowl in a national stop was in 1976 when he was 10th, the eyar Earl Anthony won the Midas Open. This year's slump, however, has been a long one, and hopefully it will come to an end real quickly.

Though he managed to cash in the Long Island Open last week for $1,050, he's still a long way from being among the leading money winners, a spot he'd like to regain. If he could cash two straight weeks, it would be a sign of good things to come.

Bill, who now makes his home in Chicago, came close to not making the Top 24 in the semifinal field when he caught a split in the final frame of his last qualifying game. John Forst, who was bowling alongside Spigner, was in at 221 over. Spigner needed the split and nine to capture the last spot, and he got just that.

Thursday night, Spigner moved from 24th to 16th and was looking ahead to an even better finish.

"If the lanes stay tough, I could get up there," Spigner said. "I used a 3-dot tonight, because I didn't want the ball to hook. The lanes are tricky and all seem to play a little differently. But I have a pretty good feel now, and could improve quite a bit. I hope so."

"I just have to stay aggressive and get the ball out on the lane," Spigner said. "I have to shoot for the arrows. As long as I do that, I'll be fine. I'm only 200 pins out of first. That could be made up."

What's even more important is that the ex-Hamden bowler is only 122 pins out of fifth, the last television spot. It's not as good as being the elader, but it could be just as valuable as Spigner goes for his fourth title.

PIN NOTES — Pete Couture broke a string of four straight shutouts. The $1,000 check pushed the Windsor Locks bowler to over $17,000 for the year, far below the pace he would like to be at.... The GHO had bowlers from around the world — Mats Karlsson from Sweden, who made the finals, and Graham Smith, from Melbourne, Australia, who failed to cash.

When it comes to champions, Maz Farina has to be the champion of champions. The Danbury bowler set what is believed to be record when he recently competed in the Danbury Association City championship tournament. He won everything there was to win. He took the scratch and handicap singles title, with scores of 737 and 785 respectively. Included was a 300 games. He teamed wi Jim Brynes to win the scratch and handic doubles. The tem has 1,322 and 1,412 w Farina bowling a scratch set of 649. Then he bowled with the Connecticut Awards No. 2 team and took the team championship, with both handicap and scratch with scores of 3,268 and 3,466. He also broke records with the singles totals, the doubles totals, the handicap singles and team scores... So Farina made it eight for eight, a feat never before accomplished. The American Bowling Congress is searaching its records to see if anyone can come close.

(Red Burnham's bowling column appears weekly in the Journal Inquirer.)