

As a bowler becomes more comfortable with the three step approach you can help them along by reminding them of the following:

- * Use proper grip
- * Concentrate on their target
- * Approach in a straight line
- * Keep their shoulders square to the target
- * Use a smooth delivery
- * Keep their arm close to their body
- * Release the ball past the foul line
- * Follow through to their target
- * Don't try and throw too hard
- * Don't approach too fast



Learn to BOWL

CHAPTER 3

Advanced topics (optional) learned at the Bowling Centre

REFINING SKILLS AND MAKING ADJUSTMENTS

(Noted for right handed students.... reverse for left handed)

Now that the basic concepts of safety in a bowling centre and the general mechanics of delivering a bowling ball have been covered this chapter works on refining the delivery and improving performance through adjustments. While this section is not required for a 3-Visit program, it is great content for students in higher grades, especially where a 5-Visit program has been selected. The following tips will teach your students the fundamentals of how to refine their game and improve their scores.

ADJUSTING YOUR STARTING POSITION

One of the significant advantages of spot bowling is the target (centre arrow) remains the same, regardless of which pins the bowler is trying to knock down. Moving the starting position left and right on the approach is used for hitting pins other than the headpin as well as for adjusting for the lateral movement of the ball. This lesson focuses on moving on the approach in order to convert spares. The starting positions are approximate and should be refined for each bowler.

MAKING THAT SPARE

Even the best bowlers only get strikes approximately half the time they hit the headpin. Therefore, the ability to convert your second shot is a skill that distinguishes good players from everyone else. If you miss the middle (headpin) on your first ball, use the same starting position for your spare and focus on throwing the ball over the centre arrow.

RIGHT CORNER SPARES

To hit the right corner pin, adjust your starting position to the left, using the centre arrow as a pivot. Your starting position, the centre arrow, and the right corner pin should be in a straight line. It will be necessary to move approximately 10 boards to the left to establish a straight line between these reference points. The exact distance depends on how far from the foul line the bowler starts. The dots on the approach can be used as a guide to remember your starting position. To create a straight line, it will also be necessary to point your feet towards the right corner pin. Do not change any of the mechanics to throw the ball. Follow through over the centre arrow.

LEFT CORNER SPARES

To hit the left corner pin, adjust your starting position to the right. Again using the center arrow as a pivot, create a straight line between your starting position and the left corner pin. Remember to point your feet towards the left corner pin.

This method has three major advantages. The bowler is using the same target and the same delivery for each shot. Moving across the lane also increases the angle to the pin allowing for a greater margin of error in case the bowler does not make a perfect shot.

By moving the starting position on the approach and pointing your feet at the pin, you can use the center arrow to hit any pin.

CHOP OFF SPARES

If moving 10 boards from the center positions for the bowler to hit a corner pin, then hitting the 3 pin would require a less extreme adjustment. Moving about 5 boards to the opposite side of the 3 pin you are aiming at will put the bowler in a straight line with their starting position, the center arrow and the 3 pin.

A common mistake with new bowlers is to walk straight towards the foul line, instead of walking towards the center arrow. They will wind up in the wrong position at the foul line and have to throw the ball across their body to hit the center arrow. Make sure your students turn their feet slightly to face the center arrow and walk in that direction.

THE FOLLOW THROUGH

An extremely important part of bowling is the follow through, or ability to carry out the proper motions of delivery even after the ball has left the bowler's hand. An incorrect follow-through often leads to incorrect delivery and lessened performance. Bowlers may end up off-balance, release the ball too low or too high, release the ball with a veer-left or veer right trajectory, etc. Ensuring a bowler's follow-through will allow the bowler to achieve a more consistent delivery with a bowling ball and ultimately perform all the mechanics of the sport better.

COMMON MISTAKES on the FOLLOW THROUGH

- Not getting down low enough when sliding.... at the time of releasing the ball the bowler's arm should be approximately 5-10 cm (2-4") from the lane surface.
- Standing upright with the follow through (over extending)..... this is often caused by going to fast.
- Turning sideways with body - often caused by going to fast.

TYPES OF BALL DELIVERY

Descriptions relate to right handed bowlers (reverse for left handed)

HOOK BALL

A ball that rolls down the lane and moves to the left is called a hook. A hook is caused by a counter-clockwise rotation of the hand when releasing the ball.

In the previous section, you learned to move left when you want the ball to hit right. The proper adjustment to compensate for missing to the left when hitting the center arrow is to move the starting position one or two boards to the left of the center dot. This concept will seem counter-intuitive to many of your students, but remember you are using the center arrow as a pivot so moving left will actually send the ball more to the right.

If you are hitting the center arrow and you are missing the pin that you are trying to hit, move in the direction that you are missing....

MISS LEFT, MOVE LEFT..... MISS RIGHT, MOVE RIGHT.

While a counter-clockwise movement of the hand is natural for most people, it is difficult to be consistent throwing a hook ball because of the range of rotation of your hand at release. Students should focus on having their hand in the same position during each follow through.

BACK UP BALL

A ball that makes a movement to the right as it rolls down the lane is called a back up. It is caused by a clockwise rotation of the hand when releasing the ball. As your hand can only rotate a limited distance clockwise, the back up ball, while more difficult to learn, provides the greatest consistency. To throw a back up ball, students should focus on having their palm facing up in the follow through position.

THE RELEASE

Unfortunately the release happens so quickly it is virtually invisible to the naked eye. You can determine what is happening at the release by observing how the ball moves down the lane and what happens when the ball hits the pins.

A hook ball will move to the left. It will also deflect more to the left when it hits a pin. A back up ball will move to the right and deflect more to the right when it hits a pin.

The direction the ball moves and deflects is determined by the rotation at release. Remind your students that a straighter ball is easier to control. Focus on releasing the ball off your fingertips, and reduce the amount of rotation in your wrist.

THE DYNAMICS OF LEAGUE & TOURNAMENT PLAY

For those who may wish to get more in depth on the subject of bowling, the following are some basic principles which bowlers learn quickly once introduced to a bowling league and/or tournament. Teachers may wish to explain these items to the students should they wish to continue with bowling after the class program has been completed. And remember, each student participating in Learn To Bowl will receive an Achievement Card which offers them 5 Free Games of Bowling over the course of the summer, as well as a \$5.00 discount off of registration costs with Youth Bowling Canada (YBC). YBC Leagues typically form in September, so those who are interested in bowling can practice using their Free Game coupons and then take advantage of the \$5.00 savings when they're ready.

LANE ETIQUETTE

There is a pattern to taking your turn so that bowlers who are beside each other are not throwing the ball at exactly the same time. This is called lane etiquette.

If a bowler is standing on the approach on a lane next to you, it is that bowler's turn. Stay off of the approach until the ball has been thrown. If two bowlers are stepping onto the approach at the same time, the bowler on the right gets to throw first. The other bowler stays off the approach until the ball has been thrown.

Lane etiquette is seldom used during public bowling but it is always used during leagues and tournaments.

LANE ETIQUETTE is like crossing a street. Look both ways before getting up on the approach.

ALTERNATING LANES

When you go to the bowling centre with your friends you usually are given one lane and take all of your turns on the same lane. When bowling in a league or a tournament, you alternate lanes. All odd frames of a game are played on one lane and all even frames are played on the other lane.

HANDICAP OR CLASSIFIED EVENTS

Bowlers of different skill levels can compete on a level playing field through the use of handicaps. However, to establish a handicap it is necessary for each bowler to play enough games to determine their average. Usually a minimum of 12 games is required. Once an average is established, there are several methods of creating competitions that allow bowlers with different averages to compete against each other.

In handicap events each bowlers average is compared to a fixed score (usually 250) and they are given a handicap equal to the difference between their score and the fixed score. A bowler with a 125 average would have a handicap of 125, while a 200 average bowler would receive a handicap of 50. The handicaps are added to their scores at the end of a game, thus providing a level playing field for competition.

A variation of this is to compete on a Pins Over Average basis. The bowlers final score is compared to their established average, and the difference is recorded as their Pins Over Average score. A player with a 125 average that bowls 150 would receive a plus 25 score. A player with a 200 average that bowls 150 would receive a minus 50 score. Again, this levels the playing field and rewards bowlers based on their personal ability.

In a Pins Over Average event, you are bowling against yourself first. How are you doing today compared to what you usually do? Plus? Minus? Even? The majority of tournaments and almost all leagues are based on Pins Over Average or a handicap system which works the same way.

If your students have the necessary math skills please introduce handicaps to them. With the introduction of computer scoring, many bowling centres can add handicaps directly to each bowler's score. For more information on handicaps, contact your local bowling centre or bowlers' association.

