



Helen Duval's Bowling Tips

Spot Bowling

Suppose you took a rifle and tried to hit a two-inch target 75 feet away. Think you could do it?

Rolling a bowling ball at a spot that size can be nearly as difficult. Yet people who look at the target pin during their approach wonder why they never improve, while their friends who use the spot-bowling system continue to improve.

Spot bowling means aiming at a target only 15 feet down the lane. You'll remember that I told you in an earlier lesson about the importance of starting at the same spot on the approach each time, walking straight to the foul line and delivering the ball so it rolls over the second arrow.

Spot bowling is an extension of that system. It involves using an area between the second and third arrows during each delivery for strikes and spares. (Remember that left-handers count spots and arrows from their side

of the channel.)

Suggestion: Let your arms and hands relax at your side. Now, swing them alternately up to your face. See how they come up into the handshake position? See how your thumb is at 11:00?

You can get out your electric iron and practice the bowling swing. Your hand naturally falls into nearly the same position on the iron's handle as it does in the bowling ball. This practice swinging is especially good if you turn your hand over too far in bowling. If the sharp point of the iron isn't pointed straight ahead at the follow-through, you'll know you have failed to keep your hand in the shake-hands position with your wrist locked.

If your foot work and arm swing are now consistent and you release the ball the same way each time, you will understand which direction to move for spare-shooting. I recommend using the five-board area between the second and third arrows, even for converting spares on the opposite side of the

lane.

If your bowling ball has dots or emblem marks, you can use them to improve the ball's effectiveness against the pins. Near the end of the trip down the lane, the dots or emblem should revolve steadily in the same position until the ball hits the pins. If your thumb comes out of the ball at 10:00 or 11:00 (1:00 or 2:00 for left-handers), the dots or emblem should revolve steadily at that position. Turning over the wrist at delivery causes the thumb to come out of the ball at 6:00.

An effective ball should do three things: Skid, roll and hook. And it must go past the arrow 15 feet down the lane and into the area between the arrows and the head-pin about half-way before it begins to hook. Naturally, if the ball is hooking at the arrow area, you probably will pick off the 7-pin instead of hitting the pocket.

Now be honest with yourself in answering these questions: Did I look at the second arrow before I started my delivery? Did I really roll the ball over the second arrow? Did I see what the ball did after it left the second arrow area? Where did the ball strike the pins? Did I stay at the foul line at least until the ball hit the pins?

Be sure your body leans forward over the foul line and your head is over your sliding foot. This will also help you keep your balance. Therefore, you will have better control of the ball, making it so much easier to hit the spot.

Did the ball take the 5-pin when you hit the 1-3 strike pocket? The 5-pin is the key pin. If you leave it consistently on the strike ball, your angle is wrong. Check two things? First, the thumb after delivery; then, whether the ball went over the arrow.



weaker layout after the opening 300 game. "The back ends always hook more in the first game, so my plan was to compensate with surface and a stronger layout after the first game, and it worked pretty well," he said.

One might surmise that it worked very well. Fong worked in the pro shop business for six years, and now drills his own balls in his garage. "I learned a lot when I worked with Tom Wicker, and now I am very meticulous about my equipment," he said.

In the final frame, a large crowd gathered behind lanes 27-28 to watch. The center had all 48 lanes going with league business. Teammates and many others took photos with cell phones.

"It was very exciting and pretty incredible," said Fong's teammate Tom Dunn, who has been bowling for a half century, but had never seen back-to-back 300 games. Tom and his wife Sandy were thrilled for their friend. "It was a privilege to watch," said Dunn.

For most bowlers it is impossible to imagine what it must feel like to roll 35 consecutive strikes, but Fong appeared cool during the evening, talking with teammates, and playing one shot at a time. "I wasn't nervous til I saw the crowd behind us in the last frame," he said. And those nerves caused his first delivery in that frame to go a little high, tripping out the 4-9. His second shot was high flush perfect, and off his hand, the final ball made everyone think he had done it, but there stood the dreaded 10-pin.

"I thought I had it," said Fong. "I guess it was just a little too fast. It felt good and the same. But who can be unhappy about an 899? It was a great night. I just kept telling myself, just roll it like you do in practice. I also thought about my breathing, making sure I took deep breaths to stay calm."

Fong started bowling at age 13, and has had 21 previous 300 games, and four series of 800 or better. He actually stopped bowling for about 10 years in his twenties to become a better golfer, like his sister, who was a standout player at Baylor University. "I love golf, but I knew I would never be the best, so I went back to bowling," he said.

Fong's average in the Monday Mixers jumped from 228 to 230 after the big night. He bowls in four leagues, and with practice, rolls about 15-20 games a week.



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Bill Fong's 899 A New Texas Record

By: Jim Goodwin

46-year-old Bill Fong made a little bowling history in his Monday Mixers league session January 19 at Plano Super Bowl. Fong, owner of his own hair salon for the past 20 years, missed a perfect 900 series by a hair, rolling 300-300-299 in his quest to roll the 16th USBC certified 900 series in bowling history. A stubborn 10-pin on his 36th delivery made him the 11th bowler to roll an 899.

However, to set a new series record in a state that has produced such storied players as Bill Lillard, Mark Williams, David Ozio, and Del Ballard Jr. to name a few, is quite an accomplishment. The previous record was 890, set in April 2002 by DeSoto's Frankie Alonzo.

One of the most remarkable aspects of the story is that Fong made a ball change after the first game. He had two Storm Reigns in his bag, and opted to switch to the one with a