



ADVANCED SKILLS

Watch the ball reaction

In the modern game, when the ball hooks is as important as how much it hooks. Watch your ball reaction on the lanes to see where the ball begins to move toward the pocket (the break point). Also watch the shape of the line between the release and break point and between the break point and the pocket. Being able to accurately watch your shot requires that you remain in a balanced finish position until the ball hits the pins.

There are three phases of ball reaction; skid, hook and roll. The ball skids through the heavier oil at the front (heads) part of the lane. As the ball finds more friction, it begins to hook. Once the ball has finished changing direction, it begins to roll toward the pins.

Commit to the spare

Visualization is very important at higher skill levels. When it comes to spares, being able to visualize the path the ball should take down the lane can help you stay focused. Commit to the spare and trust your fundamentals and execution to make the spare. Elite players plan to make the spare instead of assuming they will miss it.

Whether you choose to roll a straight or hook ball, many players make the mistake of trying to roll the ball too fast, losing their fundamental skills in the process. Most top amateurs and professionals use a spare ball and roll the ball straight at spares because a straight ball takes the lane conditions out of play. The straight ball takes the guesswork out of the equation.

Compensate for long oil patterns

If your ball is not getting to the strike pocket, it may be because the lane oil pattern is long. Try these tips to compensate for a long oil pattern:

1. Decrease your ball speed.
2. Reduce your angle to help get the ball to the pocket.
3. Change your hand position to get the ball into an earlier roll.
4. Switch to a ball that has more surface and will hook sooner.

Develop your mental game

As a top player, you are probably an active tournament participant and most of your competitors have great physical games. Having a great mental game, too, will give you an edge over the competition. Top athletes are able to keep their minds free of distractions. Being able to find an inner sanctuary allows you to make smart decisions during the heat of competition.

Targeting for higher averages

There are no hard and fast rules for setting targets for high level bowling only options that best fit each bowler. Players need to define and develop their own targeting strategy.

Many times, a big-hook bowler cant tell you which arrow he or she is using until after giving it some thought. Bowling basics tell us to always aim at a target. Shouldn't an advanced bowler be doing that? Not always. Using targets may sometimes take the high-average bowler out of his or her comfort zone.

Other high-level players may use a target to get the ball to the break point on the lane. Others will use one or more reference points based on where they are playing the lanes.

High-level players experiment when practicing to find out what works best for them. They will practice using targets and then switch to using just an area. When the lanes are conducive to scoring they may just target an area on the lane. When bowling on a USBC Sport Bowling condition such as at the USBC Masters where accuracy becomes a premium, players will use targets since hitting the pocket and leaving easier spares is very important.