



# Tenpin Puzzlers

## Puzzle #67

### COVID-19 Options? – June 3, 2020

Is USBC going to modify any rules to help leagues deal with social distancing and providing a safe environment?

That is a great question and one USBC has been working on. After an extensive review of USBC rules, there were a few rules identified that could be modified to help address concerns related to this pandemic. Let's look at these rules and the temporary modifications USBC has put in place.

First, in relation to center occupancy limitations and to provide options for social distancing, USBC is waiving certain requirements in league rules Rule 106a and 106b, and in tournament rules 320a and 320b which state two lanes must be used for competition and bowlers must alternate lanes bowling 5 frames on each lane each game. USBC will now allow a league or tournament to schedule one team on a pair of lanes and not require that team to alternate lanes. What this will do is allow a team to bowl on the pair by themselves and stay on the same lane for the entire competition.

This temporary change to these rules is an option for leagues or tournaments and not a requirement. To go along with this, USBC will now recognition of scores bowled on a single lane for USBC High Score Awards and for a bowlers official average.

The other temporary rule modification has to do with Rule 18, more commonly referred to as the dry towel rule. USBC is allowing a temporary exception for the use of Isopropyl Alcohol, more commonly known as rubbing alcohol, to clean the outer surface of the bowling ball at any time during USBC certified competition. This exception is only for isopropyl alcohol and does not apply to any other cleaners on the USBC approved cleaner list.

This a great example of USBC quickly addressing issues affecting bowlers but remember, these modifications are only temporary and as conditions change, USBC will review these and determine how long they will be in effect.

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## Puzzle #66

### What's new for 2020-2021? – May 6, 2020

Are there any new rule changes that become effective on August 1, 2020 that we need to be prepared for?

There are a few significant rule changes that will take effect August 1, 2020. Specifically, there are two changes regarding bowling balls that you really need to know about. The first one deals with any balance holes you may have in your current equipment. For an explanation on this change, we'll turn to our resident USBC equipment specifications expert, Jason Milligan.

Beginning August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020, any bowling ball with a balance hole may not be used during USBC certified competition. If your ball currently has a balance hole, that balance hole would need to be plugged before it can be used in USBC leagues or tournaments on or after August 1<sup>st</sup> of this year.

Along with this rule, the static balance allowance was changed to 3 oz. side weight, 3 oz. finger/thumb, and 3 oz. top/bottom weight. This means that most balls will still be within the static balance requirements once that balance hole has been plugged.



These changes were announced almost 2 years ago. Since then we've allowed bowlers the option of using either the original drilling rules, or the upcoming rules to give them plenty of time to both experiment with new layouts and to continue to use their current arsenal until these new rules were implemented.

The other equipment change for the new season deals with bowlers using all the holes drilled into a ball on all deliveries. Let's turn once again to Jason for an explanation on that change.

Any hole drilled in the ball must be used as a gripping hole on every delivery. If a bowler does not put their thumb in the ball, that ball cannot have a thumb hole in it. Bowlers will still be allowed to have up to five gripping holes, one for each finger and one for the thumb all for the same hand, but every hole drilled must be used for gripping on every delivery. Vent holes will still be allowed to each gripping hole as well.

For bowlers who are not using a thumb hole, the ball must have a set of crosshairs engraved or scribed into the ball where the palm of your hand will cover it during your approach and delivery. This crosshair mark is to designate the orientation of the ball in your hand. The cross hair must be covered by your hand on every delivery, meaning you cannot flip the ball over and use it in a different orientation.

Thanks again Jason. As always, we can count on you to provide an understandable explanation on all things related to bowling equipment and specifications.

The other significant rule change that goes into effect this summer has to do with youth bowlers. USBC is lowering the maximum age for USBC Youth membership to 18, effective August 1, 2020. USBC Youth membership policy will state that youth membership is available to individuals who have not reached the age of 18 prior to August 1 of the current bowling season.



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## **Puzzle #65**

### **What is the correct entering average for a tournament? – March 3, 2020**

We have a tournament coming up that is run by the local association. It is a handicap event and they are using a house shot. The rules state you need to provide:

- a. Previous season's highest USBC league average based on a minimum of 21 games.
- b. If no average last year, use highest current season USBC average at the time of entry for 21 or more games.
- c. Bowlers with neither of the above averages must bowl scratch.

If current season average for at least 21 games at the time of bowling exceeds last season's average by 10 or more pins, current season average must be used.

Four of us have been bowling together on Thursdays in a standard league for the past 4 years. Two of the bowlers also bowl on Tuesdays in a Tough Shot" league which USBC classifies as a "Challenge League" and they have averages from the league for last season. Our 5<sup>th</sup> bowler only bowls in the Tough Shot league.

### **What averages do we use for this tournament?**

For the two teammates with only a standard league average, they should submit the averages from last season along with any current average that is 10 or more pins higher than their average from last season.

For the two teammates that bowl in both leagues, the averages from the Challenge League are not adjusted and that average would be submitted if it is higher than the bowlers Standard lg average from last season.

The fifth teammate that bowls only in the Tough Shot league would convert their Challenge average to a Standard average using the average conversion chart on bowl.com and submit that average for entry into the tournament.



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#### **Puzzle #64**

##### **What is a position round? – February 4, 2020**

Our league has a “position round” coming up, what exactly is a position round and why do leagues have them? Are there any special rules we need to be aware of regarding these position rounds?

Position rounds are a league session, or multiple league sessions where the match pairings are set based on the position standings of the team. For example, in most position rounds the first-place team bowls against the second-place team, 3<sup>rd</sup> place bowls 4<sup>th</sup> place and so on.

Position rounds generally serve 2 purposes...first, they can provide additional head-to-head competition between the teams closest to themselves in the standings. Secondly, they can be used to even out a schedule and fill in the extra weeks when the # of weeks in the league season and the # of teams, aren't equally divisible resulting in teams bowling each other an unequal number of times during the season.

Because position rounds are viewed as a special event by some leagues, many have adopted rules placing limits or restrictions on who can participate. Rules requiring a minimum # of games in the league are common, as are rules limiting or even excluding the use of substitutes on position rounds. It is the captain's responsibility to be sure their lineup complies with any league rules so take the time to familiarize yourself with the rules of your league.

If you are looking to add a little excitement to your league competition, using position rounds is one of the options other leagues use to keep the standings close and keep a team from running away with the championship.

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#### **Puzzle #63**

##### **Rule 18 Family Feud Style – January 6, 2020**

We are having some disputes over how Rule 18 works and figured we would turn to you O wise one, PB for answers. Please tell us, O wise one, if these statements are true...

##### **#1**

**You can pat the finger and thumb holes of the ball with your rosin bag as long as you wipe the residue off with a dry towel.**

No. Wiping the ball with a towel does not make the ball compliant to the rule. Patting a ball with a rosin bag is adding a foreign substance to the ball and cannot be done during competition. A product can only be applied to a bowler's hand and not leave residue on the surface of the ball.

##### **#2**

**After the first game, I want to change balls. I go to my bowling bag and grab a different one. Since I haven't used it yet, I can scuff the ball with an abrasive before I throw it.**

No, approved cleaners or abrasives cannot be used once the competition has begun. This rule applies to extra bowling balls that have not yet been used in the competition. We suggest you clean all your bowling balls prior to the start of competition if you expect to use them.

##### **#3**

**If my ball comes back with some gunk from the machines, I can just grab a USBC approved cleaner and clean it off.**

Not so fast grasshopper. You must first try to remove the residue with a dry towel. If that doesn't work, you must first get permission from a league officer or tournament official to use a USBC approved cleaner on the outer surface of the ball. If you clean your ball without prior permission and then use it, you may be asked to remove the ball from competition, and/or the games from that point forward may be subject to forfeiture.

These are just a few examples of misunderstandings of Rule 18 circulating out there in the bowling world. When you have a question just remember these wise words spoken by a well-known bowler who has requested to remain anonymous...Just because someone says it's true, doesn't make it true...unless it comes from the Rules Team at USBC. That you can take to the bank!!!



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### **Puzzle #62**

#### **Unprecedented Protestation – December 6, 2019**

We had a situation last week where a team used a player but did not submit the player's name to the secretary the week prior, like our league rules require. Because of this, the secretary declared the games forfeited. The team thinks this penalty is excessive and that it was an honest mistake and has filed a protest, which we are going to meet about this week to discuss. We have never had a protest before in the league, so how should we handle this?

#### **Answer**

Well Tom, to challenge a decision on matters like this, we look to Rule 119. It states that the league board must meet and make a decision on a written protest.

Here is what to do if there is a protest in your league...First, have the protest submitted in writing detailing exactly what happened and what is being protested. Without this, you can't conduct an effective review of the issues at hand. Once you have the written protest, you need to verify that it is filed in a timely matter. Rule 119 has specific guidelines for filing and processing protests and there are strict timelines regarding when they must be submitted.

Next, you will call a meeting of the league board of directors. The board of directors consists of all the team captains and the league officers. This group will have a meeting to discuss the situation, review any rules the league has in place for these situations, and also review any USBC rules that may apply. After reviewing the rules and situation, the board should then vote and make a decision by a majority vote. That decision of the board is final unless it is appealed to either the local association or USBC Rules Department under the time limitations specified in Rule 119.

Handling disputes within a league is not something anyone looks forward to. The key is to be consistent, apply the rules that are in place equally to all teams, and address the issues quickly and fairly. If you can accomplish all three of these, your league board is functioning as it is meant to function and should be able to effectively address any issues that may arise in the future. If not, then I hope your league has a really burly sergeant at arms.



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### **Puzzle #61**

#### **Show Me the Money – November 6, 2019**

I bowl in this league where it seems that most of the bowlers are there just to have a good time. My average is at least 10 pins higher than anyone else in the league. I think the bulk of the prize money should go to the top team. Isn't that the best way to award the league prize money?

#### **Answer**

Well Rod, each league is different and that is why USBC allows each league the ability to adopt their own policies regarding how the league will split up the money they are competing for.

Most league prize lists will use 3 categories...

- 1 - Team awards based on highest games and series for the season
- 2 – Individual awards based on highest games and series for the season and
- 3 – Team awards based on final position standings.

Some leagues will pay a set amount based on the final position standings while others will pay a calculated amount based on the number of points won during the season.

The Top 5 things to remember regarding a league prize list are:

- 1 – Prize Committee should present multiple options by the 5th league session.
- 2 – Prize lists must comply with any adopted league rules.
- 3 – You must accurately project the amount of prize money available for payout.
- 4 – Rule 117a and 117b govern league prizes.
- 5 – Prize list is adopted by league board unless league rules allow the league membership to adopt it.

You can get more information on how to structure and adopt a fair prize list for your league by reviewing the [prize list guide](#) which is found on the Rules page of bowl.com.

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### **Puzzle #60**

#### **The Ball Return Strikes Back – October 2, 2019**

The other night, my teammate and anchor bowler Drew missed an easy spare in the 4th frame and smacked the ball-return with his hand on the way back. He injured his hand to the point that he couldn't grip his ball anymore.

Because of this injury, he expects to be out 6 to 8 weeks. We have a replacement so that is not the problem. Because he could not finish the game, we don't know how to score the rest of that game. He had completed four frames of the last game. After missing that spare, he had a score of 86. His average is 194. What do we do for the remainder of the game?

#### **Answer**

To score out a game when a player is unable to continue due to an injury or disability, we turn to Rule 108a for guidance. The rule states the bowler gets credit for their actual score for the frames bowled and then gets one-tenth (1/10th) of their absentee score for the remaining frames and any fractions are dropped. Using this rule the game is scored as such.

He has a score of 86 through the 4th frame and will miss 6 frames. Since his absentee score is 184, he will get one-tenth of his absentee score of 184 (18.4 pins per frame) for the remaining 6 frames. That's  $18.4 \times 6 = 110.4$ . We drop the fraction of .4 and Drew will get credit for 110 for the final 6 frames. Adding that to his score after frame 4, he will have a total of  $86 + 110 = 196$  for that game. It should be noted that this game will count towards the team scores but will not be part of his official average records as partial games do not count towards a persons' average.

Thanks for the question Teddy and remind Drew that it was most likely operator error that caused him to miss that spare and not the ball return.

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### **Puzzle #59**

#### **New Officer Survival Guide – September 12, 2019**

I just got elected to be the secretary and treasurer of our league. I have never done this before and I have no idea where to begin. How about some tips for the first-time league secretary to get through the first night of league?

#### **Answer**

First, thank you for taking on this responsibility. Rules has put together a number of valuable reference pieces that you and the rest of the officers should review to help make your league run smoothly and hopefully stop problems before they start. We want to first direct you to the [League Resources page](#) of bowl.com.

On this page you will find a link to the League Operations Handbook. This tool was created for all the officers in your league to help them understand and perform their responsibilities and help the league run smoothly and successfully. Download a copy of this and have the other officers download their own copy too.

On the League Resources page you will find links to many other guides Rules has created on a number of different topics like Entering Averages, Prebowls and Postponements, Sample League Rules, How to Run a Meeting....to name a few. There are even training videos that have been created for each of the officers that further explain their duties and responsibilities.

Take some time and review these and get prepared as best you can for the season.

The best advice we can give a new league secretary is this. First, don't plan to bowl the first session...your plate is going to be a little full with everything that needs to get done that first night. Second, remember, if at any time you feel overwhelmed, ask your fellow officers for help. Everybody wants you to succeed. The bowlers had enough faith in you to elect you to this office. They are trusting you with their competition and the league finances, so taking your time and doing the right thing is the best you can do. And third, if something doesn't work right, you can always blame the laneman.

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#### **Puzzle #58**

##### **Goo be Gone – August 7, 2019**

My ball got stuck in the machine the other day and when it came back it had all kinds of stuff on it. We tried to get everything off with a dry towel but there is still some residue left. What can I do to get this stuff off my ball?

#### **Answer**

Rule 18 was changed this year and now restricts bowlers from using any liquid cleaner to clean the outer surface during competition. However, the rule has a provision for the removal of stubborn residue. If you have something on the outer surface of the ball that you haven't been able to remove using just elbow grease and a dry towel, you can ask a league officer or a tournament official to authorize the use of a USBC Approved cleaner to remove it. You can't just ask a teammate or the other team's captain; the authorization has to come from the league officer or tournament official.

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#### **Puzzle #57**

##### **Birthday Party Buffer – June 5, 2019**

I have a question regarding buffer lanes during league or tournament play. I bowled a tournament last weekend and the center had placed a birthday party right next to the tournament competition. Doesn't USBC rules require at least an open pair of lanes between USBC competition and open play bowlers?

#### **Answer**

As a nonprofit and noncommercial organization USBC recognizes proprietors right as an independent businessman to conduct business in his/her center in the manner in which he/she believes is in the best interest of the center.

While USBC has jurisdiction over certified leagues and tournament competition, as well as over those members participating in such competition, we do not have the authority to dictate to a proprietor how he/she is to conduct the internal operations of their business.

If a league or tournament wants open lanes between the competition and open play bowlers, this should be negotiated in the contract with the center. If a center agrees to the “buffer” lanes, then the league or tournament bowlers should expect an open pair, or more, of lanes between them and the open play bowlers.

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### **Puzzle #56**

#### **Another Foul-O-Up Question – May 15, 2019**

If a towel or some other object the bowler had on their body falls off and lands on the bowling lane, is it a foul if the bowler touches the lane while picking up the object? If so, how does the bowler retrieve the object without committing a foul?

#### **Answer**

According to Rule 5a:

“A ball is in play after a delivery until the same or another player is on the approach in position to make a succeeding delivery.”

If the player picks up the object prior to stepping off the approach, the player’s delivery is not over and touching the lane to pick up the object would cause a foul. To not foul, the player must finish their delivery by stepping off the approach and then head back to the lane to retrieve the object.

The player may also motion to the opposing team captain or tournament management and inform them an object is on the lane. If the team captain or tournament management approves them picking up the object, the player’s delivery would be deemed finished and the object can be retrieved without a foul occurring.

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### **Puzzle #55**

#### **PBA Nails Respot Rule? – April 3, 2019**

In the PBA World Series Championship, late in the semi-final match, Jacob Butturff left the 5-6, sliding both pins off spot. The machine was able to pick up the six-pin and set it back down where it came to rest after the first ball while the five-pin was so far off spot that the machine missed it and swept it away. The five-pin was re-set on the original spot while the six-pin was left where it came to rest.

Rob informed the audience it was done correctly by rule but made no reference to what rule was used. What rule was enforced?

#### **Answer**

There were actually two rules which came into play on that situation. The six-pin was left standing where it moved to after the first delivery due to the enforcement of Rule 7a, Pins – Improperly Set. According to the third paragraph:

“No change can be made in the position of any pin(s) left standing after the bowler’s first delivery, unless:

1. The pinsetter moved or misplaced any pin(s), or
2. Any standing pin(s) is (are) outside the range of the sweep bar.”

Since neither of those two situations occurred, keeping the six-pin in place was correct.

The five-pin was respotted due to the application of Rule 6b, Illegal Pinfall. According to Rule 6b, item 4:

“When any of the following occur, the delivery counts but the resulting pinfall does not.

4. A pin is touched by mechanical pinsetting equipment.

If an illegal pinfall occurs and the player is entitled to additional deliveries in the frame, the pin(s) illegally knocked down must be respotted where it (they) originally stood before the delivery.”

Since the five-pin was knocked over by the sweep bar, it was knocked over by the mechanical pinsetter and must be respotted where it stood before the first delivery, which is on the five-pin spot.

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#### **Puzzle #54**

##### **The Foul Trifecta – March 6, 2019**

I have a question regarding the actions of a player and whether it would constitute a deliberate foul. We have a player that consistently runs out every shot by crossing multiple lane approaches. Can this action be counted as a deliberate foul if there is another bowler on the approach in that adjacent lane? And can a foul also be called if no bowler is on the approach? Another question would be if a bowler drops their towel, that is placed on their shoulder over the foul line be a foul?

#### **Answer**

The definition of a deliberate foul, according to Rule 5b is:

“When a player deliberately fouls to benefit by the calling of a foul, the player shall be credited with zero pinfall for that delivery and not allowed further deliveries in that frame.”

In order to foul, according to Rule 5a, a part of the player’s body must encroach on or go beyond the foul line and touch any part of the lane, equipment or building during or after a delivery.

Taking the two definitions and applying it to your situation, as long as the player does not cross the foul line when running out the shot on adjacent lane approaches, it would not be considered a foul and therefore cannot be a deliberate foul. In addition, a towel is not considered a part of a player’s body and cannot cause a foul.

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#### **Puzzle #53**

##### **One hand per Bowler? – February 6, 2019**

One of the bowlers in our Thursday night league broke his right hand and requested to be allowed to switch deliveries from his right hand to his left hand. I voted NO but was out voted by the rest of the board and they decided to allow him to use his left hand. Now that he is establishing a new average, is he considered a new bowler and must he buy another USBC membership?

#### **Answer**

A bowler who does switch hands does have to reestablish his or her average and, most likely will need to be added into the league software package as a different individual but as far as USBC is concerned, once a bowler has membership, that membership is good for that season and another membership is not required.

Each member has a unique National ID number which must be used anytime the bowler is competing in USBC competition or involved in role within the USBC structure. This unique number is what keeps a bowler’s history of averages, scores and roles connected to the member. One bowler, one member, one ID.



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**Puzzle #52**

**Rerack – Denied – January 9, 2019**

Can a league or tournament have a rule that says no reracks or limits the number of reracks a player can have unless the rack is missing a pin?

**Answer**

According to Rule 7a, it is each player's responsibility to determine if a setup is correct. The player shall insist that any pin(s) incorrectly set be respotted before delivering, otherwise the setup is deemed to be acceptable.

Ultimately, the player has final say on whether or not the pins are spotted correctly according to the rule. However, USBC does allow a league or tournament to adopt a rule which would limit the number of reracks done without approval from an official. For example, a competition could have a rule that allows an individual to respot the pins two times in a game without prior approval from an official and any additional rerack would require approval from an official.

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### **Puzzle #51**

#### **The (Long) Provisional Ball – November 8, 2018**

A player bowled the first frame of game two when the machine was on the second ball cycle, so the remaining four pins were cleared from the pin deck. While waiting for the appropriate pins to be reset, someone on the opposing team grew tired of waiting and encouraged the player to just rethrow his first ball. The player scored a nine count and made the spare.

I know this is improper and the pins should have been reset for the original shot. However, I was only made aware of this seven days later and have now received a protest from the opposing team and I see no explicit rule that states how this should be handled.

#### **Answer**

Since a protest was filed within the time constraints of Rule 119, the situation can be corrected provided you have a frame by frame printout of the game in question.

In this situation, Rule 10 regarding provisional balls, would be enforced. The four pins left standing after the first shot would be re-spotted and the bowler would attempt to make the spare. If a spare is made, the game does not change and the score is accurate. However, if the spare is not made, the alternate score would need to be inserted and the game recalculated.

After the provisional ball is thrown and the game is recalculated, the rule requires the league's board of directors to make the decision on what frame should be used. Since there was no dispute on what occurred, the game with the provisional frame should be the correct frame to be used. Also, as long as a protest is filed in a timely manner, it is perfectly acceptable for a provisional ball to be thrown seven days later.

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### **Puzzle #50**

#### **New Ball Spec, Part 2 – October 4, 2018**

How does the new specification affect youth bowlers throwing a house ball between their legs. Is this now deemed illegal because they are not using any of the drilled holes to grip the ball?

#### **Answer**

A new rule has been added to the Equipment Specification Chapter specifically for house balls. This rule allows for these bowling balls to be used and be exempt from the No Weight Holes Rule when that specification is the only one in place come August 1, 2020. As long as a house ball is used, which is defined in the rule, the ball can be used without using any of the gripping holes.

However, if a bowler who throws the ball between their legs purchases a ball for their own use, then the specification must be adhered to. So if they do not use gripping holes to deliver the ball, the ball cannot be drilled with any holes.

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### **Puzzle #49**

#### **New Ball Specs, Part 1 – September 6, 2018**

Can I or can I not have a balance hole in my bowling ball?

#### **Answer**

The simple answer is yes you can, currently. The specification that has been in place for many years where the static balance of a ball cannot have no more than 3 ounces of top/bottom weight and no more than one ounce of left/right and finger thumb weight is still in effect. As long as the ball weighs out this way, a balance hole is allowed.

What became effective on August 1, 2018 is allowing up to three ounces of static weight all around the ball. If a ball is drilled within these parameters, then a balance hole cannot be drilled.

Either of these drilling methods can be used to drill a bowling ball for use in USBC competition today. However, effective August 1, 2020, the long-standing specification of 3:1:1 will go away along with the ability to drill a balance hole. At that time, all holes must be used on every delivery.

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### **Puzzle #48**

#### **Pesky 4-7 Split – August 2, 2018**

I was bowling in a tournament and in one of my frames I left the seven pin and had the six-pin slide across the deck over to the four-pin spot. At first the machine picked it up but since it was wobbling, when it tried to reset it, the pin toppled over. Where is that pin supposed to be reset? Obviously a much easier spare conversion if it could be re-spotted in the four-pin spot.

#### **Answer**

According to USBC Rule 6b item 4, the pinfall would be considered illegal. When illegal pinfall occurs and the bowler is entitled to additional deliveries in the frame, the pin, or pins, illegally knocked down must be re-spotted where they originally stood before the delivery of the next ball. Therefore your spare attempt just got that much tougher as the pin would need to be moved back to the 6-pin position.

Had the pin remained standing in the 4-pin spot and the machine picked it up and re-spotted it, if you were able to convert the spare you would have received credit for converting the 6-7 split.

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### **Puzzle #47**

#### **Foul Light Gremlins – July 12, 2018**

The other day in the fourth frame of the first game, the foul light went off when I was shooting at my spare. I know I saw the light come on before I began my slide and after I stopped I looked down and my foot was not across the line. A foul was recorded but I don't believe I fouled. What is the proper procedure to protest a foul?

#### **Answer**

If the foul light comes on and you do not believe you fouled, you should first stay at the foul line and call an opponent over to view the position of your foot. This is very important because if you do not remain at the line, then you will not be able to prove that you did not foul. After that you should then call down a competition official to officially protest the foul. If required, the official will have you throw a provisional ball. In this instance, the provisional ball would not be necessary since it occurred on the second delivery.

The official will then make a decision after asking questions of those who may have seen the incident, also taking into consideration other factors such as the functionality of the foul light detectors during the competition and where you normally stop in comparison to the foul line. The decision of the official can be protested to the league's board of directors in leagues and USBC in tournaments.

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## **Puzzle #46**

### **90% of Something or 100% of Nothing? – June 7, 2018**

At our year-end league meeting, we voted on some rules for next season. One of the rules we voted in, I am questioning if it's legal. The rule is about handicap and states,

“Handicap will be 90% of 220. Bowlers with an average over 200 will receive no handicap.”

Our league has had an issue with the teams that have all high average bowlers always winning the league, therefore we wanted a rule to penalize them. Is this a rule we can adopt?”

## **Answer**

The rule the league adopted is not legal in a USBC league since it would cause individuals to violate USBC Rule 17a, item 3 which states:

“An individual can be charged with attempting to gain an unfair advantage in league or tournament play for the following reasons: Establishing an average below the player's ability to gain an unfair advantage in handicap or classified competition.”

A bowler with a 199 average will have every incentive to keep that average at or below 199 since adding a pin to the average will change the bowler's handicap from 18 pins to 0. A league adopting any rule which could cause an individual to violate a USBC rule cannot be adopted.

Therefore, USBC would recommend keeping the average on which the percentage is based above the highest average bowler in the league. So, if the top bowler averages 225, the base should be at 230 or higher.

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## **Puzzle #45**

### **What Came First, The Gutter Ball or The Missing Five? – May 3, 2018**

In last month's Puzzler, a question was asked about a dead ball situation when the ball hits the sweep bar after entering the channel. You said it was not a dead ball because a legal delivery was made. You also said the same would apply if the bowler committed a foul. Is it the same ruling if I throw it in the gutter or the ball hits the sweep bar and after the delivery it is discovered the five-pin was missing from the rack?

## **Answer**

In these three situations, you need to look at what circumstance occurred first. In last month's situation, both the foul and the gutter ball occurred before the ball hit the sweep bar. In this situation, the missing five-pin occurred before the delivery took place. Therefore, in this instance, according to Rule 8, a dead ball would be declared, and the bowler would get to redo the delivery.

When faced with this type of situation on the lanes, determine which occurred first, and apply the rule that corresponds to that situation.

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## **Puzzle #44**

### **Saved by the Ball Sweep – April 5, 2018**

During tournament competition last weekend, one of my players threw the ball and it went into the channel. However, before it reached the pit area, the sweep bar came down and hit the ball. What takes precedence? Is this a dead ball situation or did the bowler throw a gutter ball and therefore receives a zero?

**Answer**

Although USBC Rule 8 states a ball shall be declared dead if a delivered ball comes in contact with a foreign obstacle, which the sweep bar would be considered, this rule would not apply. Because a legal delivery was made, once the ball leaves the lane, the delivery counts and the player would receive a zero. In this instance, Rule 6b would take precedence even though no pins were knocked down.

The same ruling would also apply if the bowler committed a foul and then the ball hit the sweep bar. The only difference here is it would still be considered a foul even if the ball did not land in the channel prior to hitting the sweep bar.

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**Puzzle #43****Mr. Sandman bring me a bowling ball – March 8, 2018**

My question is in regards to Rule 18 on ball surface and alterations.

If someone gets a new ball from the pro shop or goes out to their vehicle and brings in one of their balls from the car, can they add surface to it or is this in violation of Rule 18? The ball was never used in competition and had not yet even been in the building. In this example it was retrieved from the vehicle, an abralon pad was used and then the ball was thrown the third game. Thanks in advance for your answer.

**Answer**

USBC Rule 18 does not allow the outer surface of any bowling ball to be altered with an abrasive after the start of competition. This includes balls that have not yet been introduced into play.

The start of competition is defined as the point the first ball is thrown by any participant for score. Therefore, a bowler may alter the outer surface of a ball during practice and not be in violation of Rule 18. However, once the first ball is thrown, an abrasive cannot be used on the surface of any ball.

If a league or tournament official encounters someone altering a bowling ball, a warning should be issued to the bowler and the altered ball must be removed from competition. If the bowler complies, all games bowled prior to that time would stand as bowled, and there would be no penalty.

However, if the bowler had prior knowledge that altering the ball was a violation of USBC Rule 18, then any game bowled where the illegal ball was used is subject to forfeiture.

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**Puzzle #42****The Pre-Foul-Line-Floor-Dumper – February 2, 2018**

There is this bowler on my league who always releases the ball 1 to 2 feet before the foul line. Is this considered a legal delivery? By doing this, the ball is crossing the foul line which to me would be considered a foul and since the ball is rolling on the approach, it is causing oil to be applied to the approach. Please tell me this is not a legal delivery.

**Answer**

Sorry to be the bearer of bad news but releasing the ball before the foul line is legal because it meets the definition of a delivery, which is that the ball leaves the player's possession and crosses the foul line into playing territory. It also would not be considered a foul since it does not meet the definition of a foul because the ball is not considered to be a part of the player's body and therefore cannot cause a foul.

When it comes to the oil that is on a bowling ball transferring to the approach, the amount of oil on the ball is minute and the time a bowling ball is in contact with the approach is very short. Both these factors greatly limit the chance any oil is applied to the approach which would violate Rule 12.

But even though the bowler's delivery is legal, you might want to let him know that if he would just scoot up a foot or two on the approach, the lane would be that much shorter.



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#### **Puzzle #41**

##### **Realistic Rerate Reasons – January 11, 2018**

I am left-handed and have bowled my entire USBC career as a left-hander. Recently, I lost the use of my left hand due to it being crushed in a work-related accident. I have switched to use my right-hand. I want to enter a tournament in a month but they are requiring me to use my 195 left-handed average and I am averaging 122 now with my right hand. Is there any way I can use my lower average?

##### **Answer**

USBC has adopted a rule where a bowler with an injury or disability such as the one you have experienced, can request relief from your 195 left-handed average. According to Rule 4e, you may request relief by providing a doctor's certificate describing the disability or injury, length of disability or injury and the reason for the downward adjustment. Also required is a sheet of your week to week scores from any league in the current season. Once received, USBC will review the data and assign you an average with which tournament management may allow you to enter.

To guarantee a decision prior to bowling the tournament, the information should be submitted at least one week prior to your tournament date.

The rule was established for injuries or disabilities like yours which has a significant impact on your bowling ability. What it does not cover is getting older, temporary loss of bodily functions, weight loss, weight gain, pregnancy, a Blister on your finger, stitches on the hand, headaches, the common cold, the flu, a sore knee, bruises on the leg, intoxication on league night, loss of bowling ability, change of weight of bowling ball, insanity, marriage, divorce or any other non-significant reason your average drops



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#### **Puzzle #40**

##### **The Wanderer – December 7, 2017**

We have one member of our league who is never around when it comes up for his turn. Sometimes he is at the bar, other times he is talking to his friends in the league next to us. He has even decided to bowl in the other league with his friends at the same time he bowls in our league. What can we do to stop this from happening? Our members are really starting to get upset and do not want to bowl against his team.

##### **Answer**

There are a couple things you can do to stop the bowler from delaying the progress of the game. First, an officer can enforce USBC Rule 11, Forfeit-Delay of Game. When the bowler is not at his lanes when it is his turn, a league officer can direct him to bowl and if he doesn't in a reasonable time frame, the game can be forfeited.

If after a couple forfeits the individual continues to delay the game, the league can remove the bowler from the league following the provisions in Rule 115a.

Also, to prevent anyone from bowling in two leagues at one time, a league could have a rule not allowing any individual who is bowling in the league to bowl simultaneously in another league.

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### **Puzzle #39**

#### **The Two-week Blues – November 2, 2017**

I'm 46 and have been bowling pretty much since I was 8 years old. I recently joined a league with my wife and bowled approximately eight weeks but, unfortunately, I needed to quit the league. I had a run of bad luck where my wife got sick, my cat had an emergency, my alternator in my car went and to top it off, our refrigerator and oven died as well. I explained this to the league secretary. I was current with my dues and did not owe anything, but the secretary told me the by-laws stated I needed to give a two-week's notice to quit. He threatened that if I don't pay the following two weeks he'll call USBC and cancel my membership card. I was wondering if he could do this or not. I hope not because I'm so thin with cash due to the problems I'm having.

#### **Answer**

The league secretary is correct regarding the requirement of paying two weeks of league fees when you withdraw from a league. USBC Rule 114a requires an individual to give a two-week's notice, pay for those two weeks and supply sufficient cause to withdraw.

It doesn't sound like sufficient cause is an issue in your case. The next step then is to properly withdraw, which would entitle you to a prorated share of the team's prize money. However, failure to properly withdraw could lead to a suspension of your USBC membership.

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### **Puzzle #38**

#### **League of Discriminating Gentlemen – October 5, 2017**

USBC membership is open to any individual regardless of race, color, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation or National origin. So, if any individual can be a member of USBC, how can anyone be denied entry into any USBC league or tournament? I wanted to join a league this fall and I was told the league is for men only and I am not eligible.

#### **Answer**

As a USBC member, you are eligible to bowl in any USBC certified competition where qualified. The USBC has always held that leagues are invitational by nature and each league, through its board of directors and adopted rules, can determine who can and cannot bowl. Possession of a USBC membership does not guarantee you the right to participate in every competition because leagues and tournaments can have qualifications one must meet in order to compete. These qualifications can include right-handers only, left-handers only, bowlers with averages below 200 and even gender qualifications.

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### **Puzzle #37**

#### **No Parking on Your Assigned Lane – September 7, 2017**

What USBC rule prevents league members from bowling on their assigned lanes for that night just hours before they bowl league? Each week this same team comes in and bowls on their assigned lanes right before league and I don't believe that is fair.

**Answer**

USBC rules do not govern the playing of the game prior to league or tournament competition, especially when it pertains to a proprietor's right to conduct business. A league could adopt a rule restricting such practice but before that happens, the officers would have to talk to the proprietor to make sure he or she will agree to the restriction. If the proprietor is not willing to enforce the rule, the league cannot adopt it.

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**Puzzle #36****The Missing Stone 8 – August 3, 2017**

After I completed my frame and the next bowler bowled, I was informed I was missing the 8 pin from my rack. My team captain agreed it was missing. The other team said it was a deadball and I needed to rebowl that frame while my team captain argued that since the next bowler threw his first ball, the delivery stands. Who is correct?

**Answer**

The opposing team captain is correct. According to Rule 8, a ball shall be declared dead if after a delivery, attention is immediately called to the fact that one or more pins were missing from the setup. Although one could argue it was not immediately called since the next bowler bowled, there was no dispute a pin was missing and it was able to be corrected. Therefore, the proper call is to declare a dead ball and rethrow the frame.

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**Puzzle #35****Happy Wife, Happy Life – July 13, 2017**

After last week's Rules Extra, I received a lot of questions asking why two members of an immediate family cannot hold the office of president and treasurer.

**Answer**

The convenience of signing checks by immediate family members, while does have its benefits, has one big disadvantage, it makes it much easier for the league's money to be used for non-league expenses. One of the most important duties of the league president is to verify the bank balance monthly to ensure the league money is being used for league expenses. When the president and treasurer are members of an immediate family, that oversight can be difficult to accomplish. One might say, it is a conflict of interest.

USBC certainly does not want to allow any conflict between husband and wife which would disrupt the "Happy Wife, Happy Life" motto.

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**Puzzle #34****Legal League Gambling – June 8, 2017**

The league I bowl in has numerous side competitions we can enter where the winners earn cash. These side competitions include brackets, pot games and strike jackpots. We can also enter a contest where if you shoot a score which is known prior to the start of the game, you earn the money in the pool. Is this legal under Rule 15 and what type of contests are considered illegal?

**Answer**

The contest you are referring to where the target score is known prior to bowling would not be considered legal under Rule 15 because it can entice a player to bowl beneath his or her ability. Contests where a member can earn a prize by purposely missing pins is not only a violation of Rule 15, but also Rule 17a, item 3, concerning establishing an average below

a player's ability. Contests where the score is drawn after every participant has completed a game, are permissible under Rule 15. Also, any contest that violates any applicable law also violates Rule 15 and cannot be conducted in USBC competition.

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### **Puzzle #33**

#### **A Foul Length of Time – May 10, 2017**

I bowled this past weekend and after I made a legal delivery without committing a foul, I decided to test the approach where I had stuck a little. The pins were being reset when I accidentally crossed the foul line during my testing of the approach. The opposing team called a foul on me. I disagreed because my delivery was already complete. Who is correct?

#### **Answer**

According to the definition of a foul, a ball is in play after a delivery until the same or another player is on the approach in position to make a succeeding delivery. Since you never left the approach and crossed the foul line before your delivery was complete, it is a foul. Had you left the approach and then returned to the foul line to test the area where you stuck and crossed the line at that time, it would not have been considered a foul.

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### **Puzzle #32**

#### **The Case of the Missing Five – April 6, 2017**

In the 8<sup>th</sup> frame of my second game, I rolled a strike to extend my string to five in a row. When I came off the approach after delivering the ball, the opposing team captain informed me I was missing the five pin. Nobody on my team saw any pin missing nor did I. The league president was called down and he told me to throw a provisional ball. Why did I have to do that and what is a provisional ball?

#### **Answer**

A provisional ball, according to Rule 10, is bowled when a protest involving a foul, legal pinfall or a dead ball is made and cannot be resolved by the two team captains or tournament official.

In your situation, the league president had you throw a provisional ball so the decision on whether or not a pin was missing could be determined at a later time so the teams could continue bowling. The president would then call a league board of directors meeting to decide which of the two frames bowled would be used for the final score.

Of course, if you thrown a strike on the provisional ball, there would have been no need to send the question to the board since both frames would have resulted in the same score.

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### **Puzzle #31**

#### **March Madness – March 2, 2017**

A dead ball is declared when there is physical interference either by contact with another bowler or a moving object. Does that mean that a dead ball has to be declared if there is physical contact during their delivery, even if they get a strike?

#### **Answer**

In addition to the parts of Rule 8 that we covered last month, the rule goes on to further state that a player who is physically interfered with has the option to accept the resulting pinfall or have a dead ball called. So, if you bowl a strike when physical contact happens, you can accept the strike.

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**Puzzle #30**

**Let's Get Physical – February 2, 2017**

Last night during league, I was in the middle of my approach when a bowler two lanes down yelled really loud because he picked up the 7 – 10 split. I was unable to stop my delivery and I threw the ball in the gutter. Because I was startled, could I have called interference and re-bowled my first delivery?

**Answer**

USBC Rule 8 allows a player to call a dead ball only when there is physical contact with another person or moving object as the ball is being delivered – or before the delivery is completed. In this case, since there was no physical inference during the delivery, a dead ball cannot be declared and the resulting pinfall – or lack thereof – stands.

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**Puzzle #29**

**One-Step Drill – January 5, 2017**

What is the “legal” starting position for competitive bowling? Can a player legally stand right in front of a foul line and bowl? Most of the time, I’ve seen people starting from 12 or 15 feet back from the foul line and go through their approach toward the foul line to bowl.

It seems those who stand at the foul line to bowl are cheating because they removed all the variables of the approach out of the delivery.

On the flip side, can a bowler start their approach in the setae area? This would also seem like cheating too but I see no rules regarding ones approach.

**Answer**

As long as you deliver the ball without going over the foul line, where one starts is up to the bowler. Coaches teach beginning bowlers to start at the foul line to get comfortable with how the ball should be delivered and to take out the extra steps which make it more difficult to learn bowling. Once they have developed a good delivery at the line, the steps are brought into the equation. While it is easier to stand at the line and deliver the ball, the steps add speed and power to the ball which greatly increases the chances of striking.

In regards to starting your delivery off the approach, this too can be done. Obviously how a bowling center is designed would limit where one can start their approach but if you bowl in one where you can begin in the parking lot, that would be acceptable.

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**Puzzle #28**

**Trick Shot 10 pin – December 2, 2016**

I had a situation where the 10 pin was left, but then the machine swept it away. After about a five-minute delay after calling the front desk to have the pin respotted, the bowler got tired of waiting and decided to try and pick up the spare with a full rack of pins. He did not pick it clean and hit the six pin before hitting the 10 pin. What’s the ruling on this?

**Answer**

Once the ball hit the six pin, the resulting pinfall would be deemed illegal. Since the only pin that should have been on the deck was the 10 pin, the remaining pins are considered deadwood.

According to Rule 6b, Illegal Pinfall, item 8, when a delivery is made with deadwood on the lane and the ball contacts the dead wood, all pins knocked down are considered illegal pinfall. Had the bowler picked up the 10 pin cleanly, the spare would have counted.

However, shooting a 10 pin this way is not recommended.

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### **Puzzle #27**

#### **Order of Operations – November 3, 2016**

On my Thursday Night Scratch Classic League, I was bowling in the first position and finished my delivery. Unfortunately, the second bowler did not go next. This was not noticed until our anchor bowler delivered his first ball. Since we were already on our fifth bowler, we had him shoot for his spare and then had the second bowler bowl and corrected all the scores. Did we do this correctly?

#### **Answer**

Unfortunately, that was not the correct way to handle the situation. Since the third bowler bowled out of turn, anyone who followed him or her also bowled out of turn. According to Rule 8, A ball shall be declared dead when a player bowls out of turn.

Since the second bowler had not bowled yet, those frames bowled by the third, fourth and fifth players should have been declared a dead ball. The second bowler should have then bowled and players three through five should have then bowled their frames over, in correct order.

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### **Puzzle #26**

#### **How Much of a Challenge is a “Challenge”? – October 6, 2016**

The bowling center is changing its lane pattern for our league per the league members’ request because we wanted to bowl on something tougher. Does this qualify our league as a Sport or Challenge League?

#### **Answer**

Without going into the specifics of what qualifies as a Sport or Challenge condition, which can be found on [bowl.com](http://bowl.com), the simple answer is yes. As of August 1, 2015 the Sport Bowling rules were changed to no longer require tapes or a special membership in order to be classified as a Sport League. The new rule requires all leagues that do not bowl on a “standard” or “house” shot to mark its league as a “Sport” or “Challenge” League. So if your league is requesting a different pattern than normal, it is considered a Sport or Challenge League.

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### **Puzzle #25**

#### **This League is Your League – September 1, 2016**

My league president just informed our league that he and the secretary decided to move the league to a different bowling center because the center manager was offering free lineage for the officers for any league that moves. Can the president and secretary make this decision?

#### **Answer**

A league is governed by the board of directors which consists of the officers and team captains and are not meant to be run as a dictatorship. No one individual in the league has the authority to make unilateral decisions. Therefore, in this case, a change of center must be voted on by the members of the board.

If the majority of the board decides that the league is not going to move, that league, not the league officers, would retain ownership of the league records, bank account and EIN. If the league does vote to move, then and only then would your league president and secretary be able to take advantage of the free-lineage-for-league-officers deal being offered by the other center.

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#### **Puzzle #24**

##### **Only the Ineligible Bowl Young – August 4, 2016**

My team needs a fourth bowler and I would like my 16-year-old son to bowl with me. Can I fill out the Singles Competition Prize Waiver form and have his share of the prize money submitted to SMART so he can still be eligible for USBC Youth competition?

#### **Answer**

Actually, that would be a violation of USBC Rule 400. As the form states, the waiver is for singles competition only. A youth bowler who participates in a competition where prize money is awarded and teams are comprised of two, three, four, five, or more adult bowlers cannot bowl and sign the waiver to retain their eligibility.

As a parent, the best thing you can do to keep your son or daughter's youth eligibility is to not allow them to bowl any adult team competition; even if they are only pacing or subbing.

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#### **Puzzle #23**

##### **An Officer and a Spouse – July 7, 2016**

My league just elected a husband and wife to the positions of secretary and treasurer. I thought members of an immediate family could not be in officer together? Do we need to elect new officers?

#### **Answer**

No you do not. Rule 102a restricts immediate family members from being the president and treasurer, secretary/treasurer or vice president and treasurer, secretary/treasurer. But members of an immediate family can hold the office of secretary and treasurer.

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#### **Puzzle #22**

##### **The Sneaky Sandbagger – June 9, 2016**

Is there a rule against deliberately throwing off during a league match once a game has been decided and if so, what can we do to stop them?

#### **Answer**

Intentionally throwing off is a violation of Rule 17a-3. If you file a protest with your league and they find that the team was indeed intentionally sandbagging, the league has the right to declare the game or games forfeited and to null and void the games from the league record.

And how does one tell if a team, or a player is throwing off? Well, if a guy is averaging 200, and every time the game is over he suddenly develops a bad case of the yips and throws a double gutter in the tenth frame...he's probably sandbagging.

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### **Puzzle #21**

#### **The Shoe's on the Other Foot – May 12, 2016**

Are bowling shoes required during league play?

#### **Answer**

There is no USBC Rule that requires bowlers to wear bowling shoes. The policy on whether a bowler must wear bowling shoes is determined by each bowling center.

However, USBC Rule 12 does not allow bowlers to use non-bowling shoes or street shoes that have soft rubber soles or heels that rub off on the approach. If a league or tournament participant complains that the marks prohibit them from having normal conditions, the officers of the league or tournament officials could request the bowler to stop wearing the shoes.

USBC recommends you check with your bowling center manager on this issue to see what their policy is.

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### **Puzzle #20**

#### **Ban the Two-handers? – April 7, 2016**

How is the two-handed bowling style being that's growing in popularity with the youth legal? This is not how a ball was intended to be delivered. Bowling is meant to be a one-handed sport.

#### **Answer**

The two-handed style is considered a legal delivery according to USBC rules and it is indeed growing in popularity.

A commonly misunderstood fact about the two handed game is that in reality, the ball is actually being delivered by the bowler's dominant hand at the point of release.

The two-handed style can provide some advantages over traditional bowling, if done correctly. But outlawing the style altogether would be like outlawing dunking in basketball. Or the Fosbury flop in high jumping. The point is, outlawing a legal style that is helping to popularize bowling with young people is something that would hurt the sport, not help it.

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### **Puzzle #19**

#### **To Catch or Not to Catch? – March 3, 2016**

If a bowler has their thumb stick in the ball – causing the ball to fly in the air – and the bowler catches the ball on the lane side of the foul line, is it considered a foul?

#### **Answer**

Despite this being one of the more dangerous situations that could ever take place on a bowling lane – even more dangerous than wearing rental shoes barefoot – this would not be considered a foul because the bowler did not execute a legal delivery.

According to Rule 4a, a legal delivery consists of two parts, which includes the ball leaving the player's possession and then crossing into the playing territory. USBC considers the ball crossing into the playing territory when the ball lands on any part of the lane, equipment or building beyond the foul line. Since the ball did not cross into the playing territory, no foul occurred.

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### **Puzzle #18**

#### **Should Deadwood Cost Dude his 900 – February 4, 2016**

In the video of the most recent 900 series there was deadwood in the gutter when the guy was bowling his last frame. Shouldn't he receive zero for those shots?

#### **Answer**

It depends on whether or not the ball – or any pins – came in contact with the deadwood on the shots in question. Fortunately, in this case, that did not occur, so all of the 900-shooter's pinfall stands.

Rule 6b, Items 8 and 9 are the rules that cover this issue. They state that if the ball or a pin should come in contact with a deadwood that is either on the lane or in the gutter, and then knocks down any pins, those pins would need to be resotted.

In situations where the rule is in question – or a protest is filed – it is always a good idea to roll a provisional ball (or balls) in the event the protest is upheld.

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### **Puzzle #17**

#### **The Re-racker – January 7, 2016**

How many times can a bowler re-rack? Last week during night league one of the league's high average bowlers decided to re-rack because one of the pins in the rack was slightly off set. This bowler re-racked 8 times for one frame before he got a rack that satisfied him. But here is the kicker he left the 10 pin. Yes some of us were wondering when he was going to actual roll his ball down the lane.

#### **Answer**

According to Rule 7a, Pins Improperly set, it is each player's responsibility to determine if a setup is correct. The player shall insist that any pin(s) incorrectly set be resotted before delivering the ball, otherwise the setup is deemed to be acceptable.

Since it is ultimately the player's responsibility for an accurate setup, restricting the player from resotting pins would be against USBC rules. However a league or tournament could adopt a rule requiring approval from an official after a bowler has resotted pins X amount of times, a number stated in the rules.

If a machine is consistently setting up pins incorrectly, the bowling center should be notified so adjustments can be made to the machine to avoid situations like you had.

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### **Puzzle #16**

#### **The Artist – December 3, 2015**

If a bowler is an artist and wants to use marker to draw on their bowling ball for league. Is this legal?

### Answer

Unfortunately the answer is no. According to Chapter 8, item 4-B under Bowling Balls:

“No foreign material may be placed on the outer surface or in the balance hole of the ball including but not limited to powder, marker or paint. Bowling tape is acceptable in a balance hole.”

So if you wanted to make a tiny mural portraying the Last Supper out of bowling tape on the inside of your balance hole, that would be OK, just don't do it with any other substance besides bowling tape, or on the surface of the bowling ball.

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### Puzzle #15

#### Mark it Zero! – November 5, 2015

When a foul occurs, the player is credited with a zero count for that delivery. Occasionally, a player does not believe he/she committed a foul. Below are the top ten reasons (based on information gathered by the USBC Rules Staff) a foul was not recorded, although one did occur.

10. I was distracted by the bowler next to me
9. I never crossed the foul line, I jumped over it onto the capping
8. The pins were all down before I crossed the line
7. My foot crossed over on the adjacent lane, not the one I bowled on
6. The foul light never went off so it's not a foul
5. I shot a 300 game, they did not want to take that away even though I fouled on my last shot
4. The automatic scoring machine did not record it as one and I did not want to change it
3. I never foul so something else must have triggered the foul light to go off
2. The foul lights are not working and nobody called me on it
1. This is a fun league, we don't count fouls

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### Puzzle #14

#### Trick or Treat – October 1, 2015

My league just granted a prebowl for a team who will not be here on Halloween. Apparently all of the members have kids and they want to spend the night trick-or-treating instead of being here to bowl. The team should not be spending the night trick-or-treating, they should either bowl or forfeit, right?

### Answer

When a team cannot field a legal lineup – whether it is due to celebrating a holiday or for some other acceptable reason, the team would be allowed to bowl those games as a pre-bowl or postponement. For more on acceptable reasons for pre-bowling or requesting a postponement, please see Rule 111B in the Official USBC Playing rules.

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### Puzzle #13

#### Dead Ball – September 3, 2015

If a guest from the other team tracks water into the bowling center, causing a member of our team to get water on his shoe, which then causes him to stick on the approach and foul, does he get to re-bowl the delivery?

### Answer

Unfortunately Fred, the answer is no. Every delivery during certified league or tournament competition counts unless a dead ball is declared. A dead ball can be called under certain situations, such as when there is physical interference with the bowler or the bowling ball during the delivery, but not when a bowler sticks on the approach, even if the cause was not his fault. To learn more about when a dead ball can be called, see USBC [Rule 8](#).

Click [here](#) for a Tenpin Puzzler video featuring PB Atkinson.



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### **Puzzle #12**

#### **Foul Play – August 6, 2015**

A bowler in a league needed a mark in the 10<sup>th</sup> frame to win his match. He had a strike in the 9<sup>th</sup> and his first ball in the 10<sup>th</sup> resulted in a 4-6 split. But before the rack could come down, he deliberately fouled, obviously thinking that since he was on a strike, his foul would not cause him to lose pins in count, and his chances of converting the full rack were much better than picking up the 4-6. Can he legally do that?

#### **Answer**

The answer is no. According to Rule 5b regarding deliberate fouls, since Cheaty McCheaterton intended to benefit by the calling of the foul, he shall receive zero pinfall for the entire frame.

It is always a good idea when these kinds of situations come up, to have the player throw a provisional ball in the unlikely event that your league's original ruling is found to be incorrect.

Click [here](#) for a Tenpin Puzzler video featuring PB Atkinson.



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### **Puzzle #11**

#### **Dewey wants to bowl – July 9, 2015**

Your worst fear as the league president comes true at the organizational meeting – Dewey Cheatum attends the meeting and insists he is going to bowl in the league. Dewey is infamous for his bad behavior and refusal to abide by USBC and league rules, so you do not want him to bowl in your league. Are you stuck with Dewey or can you stop him from joining the league?

#### **Answer**

USBC leagues are invitational by nature and each league, by a majority vote of the league's board of directors (officers and team captains), can determine who can and cannot bowl in the league. Before Dewey bowls in the league, hold a meeting of the board of directors. If a majority of the board present votes to keep him out of the league, you can tell Dewey he needs to find a different league.

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### **Puzzle #10**

#### **Can Willy do this without a league vote? – June 4, 2015**

Willy B. Goode joins the Striking for Dough Summer League and decides to start bowling with a two-handed approach style with his right-hand being his dominant hand. After three weeks of bowling utilizing the two-handed approach style and averaging 50 pins less than his normal average, Willy decides two-handed is not his cup of tea and goes back to using just his right hand. Can Willy do this without a league vote?

#### **Answer**

Since Willy stayed with his right hand, a league vote is not necessary for him to transfer from a two-handed approach bowler to a one-handed approach bowler. However, since Willy now has an average that is not indicative of his ability, the league board of directors should meet and adjust his average upwards in accordance with Rule 118b, item 4.

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### **Puzzle #9**

#### **What should the president do? – May 14, 2015**

It is playoff time for the \$50,000 Striking for Dough League. The winner of the first half, Winning is Everything, is bowling the winner of the second half, Nothing is Stopping Us to determine the league champion. They split the first two games. The winner will be determined by the last game.

The last game is close. Winning is Everything is up by 9 pins going into the anchor bowlers. Winning is Everything's anchor bowler, Cary N. Tenn is on lane 7 while the anchor for Nothing is Stopping Us, Layne Kegler is up on lane 8. Cary and Layne both like to know what they need in order to earn victory. They argue on who is going to bowl first.

The match is not concluding because neither Cary nor Layne want to bowl first. The teams call the president down to the lanes to settle the issue. What should the president do?

#### **Answer**

USBC does not have a rule on who must go first when two individuals are up at the same time however, common etiquette suggests the bowler on the right should go first. The president should instruct Layne to bowl first. Should Layne refuse, the president would enforce USBC Rule 11 – Forfeit-Delay of Game and issue a forfeit to Layne's game thereby giving the championship to the Winning is Everything team.

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### **Puzzle #8**

#### **Is it a win or a redo? – April 2, 2015**

It's the championship match and the anchor bowler, Rodney, needs one pin to secure the win for the Lite 'em Up team. As Rodney is delivering the ball, he is hit by a member from the adjoining lanes. Rodney's ball is off target but manages to knock down the 10 pin. Rodney's team rejoices as they have won the league. However, the opposing team, Bud's Horses, calls interference and is requiring Rodney to rebowl the frame. Is it a win or a redo?

#### **Answer**

Bud's Horses team is correct, it is interference, but Rodney does not have to rebowl. When interference occurs, the bowler can choose between declaring a dead ball and accepting the pinfall. Since Rodney knocked down one pin to win the championship, accepting the pinfall is a wise choice. This time Rodney get his one pin.

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### **Puzzle #7**

#### **Was Willy a good pick-up? – March 5, 2015**

The Win at All Costs team adds a new bowler, Willy B. Goode. Willy is not a current USBC member and does not buy membership. The opposing team, Rules R US, verbally protests to the secretary. The following week, the league board of directors meets and decides the games must be forfeited. The Win at All Costs team appeals the decision because there was no written protest. Was Willy a good pick-up?

#### **Answer**

He could have been had he purchased USBC membership. While the league is not required to act on verbal protests, when it does, the minutes of the meeting act as the written protest. Since USBC membership is required to be purchased by the end of the first session the bowler bowls, Willy was ineligible and forfeiture of his games would be the appropriate penalty.

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### **Puzzle #6**

#### **Pre-bowling Notification – February 5, 2015**

Team 23 comes to bowl as normally scheduled only to find out their opponent for the night, team 26 has pre-bowled. The secretary explains, she had been informed of the pre-bowl and had approved team 26 to bowl yesterday.

Team 23, before bowling begins, files a protest with the league's secretary based on league rule 8 which requires the opposing team to be notified of the pre-bowl. In the protest, team 23 requests the games to be forfeited due to the lack of

notification. The president schedules a meeting of the league's board of directors for the following week to vote on the protest. What options does the league's board of directors have to vote on for this situation? Would USBC overturn any of the board decisions? Click here to find out.

#### **Answer**

Notification of the opposing team is courtesy. When the league adopted a rule requiring notification and the opposing team was not notified and filed a timely written protest, the league board would have the following options:

1. Games stand as bowled.
2. Null and void both teams' scores and require both teams to re-bowl in direct opposition.

USBC holds a team cannot be made to forfeit for a procedural issue such as failing to notify the opposing team.

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#### **Puzzle #5**

##### **Forfeits – January 8, 2015**

Johnny, team captain of the Strikers called to request a postponement. The secretary granted the postponement to be completed within two weeks per the league rules. The opposing team, the Gobblers, bowled as scheduled on the normal league night. After the league session was completed, the Strikers decided to forfeit rather than complete the postponement. The following week the secretary told the Gobblers they didn't bowl within the 10 pins per player of the team average and therefore lost all three games and series. Should the Gobblers automatically win all of the points or do they need to earn the points?

#### **Answer**

When the match was originally contested, the Gobblers bowled under the condition, the opposing team was completing a postponement. Thus as the games were originally bowled it was not a known forfeit situation.

Only after the games were bowled did Johnny and the Strikers decide to forfeit. This would mean the Gobblers bowled in an unknown forfeit situation. In an unknown forfeit the non-forfeiting team is automatically credited with the win and does not have to earn the points.

In this scenario the Gobblers automatically receive the points for all three games and series.

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#### **Puzzle #4**

##### **Pinfall – December 4, 2014**

Judy rolls a ball down the lane leaving two pins standing. The sweep bar drops and hits a pin that is still on the deck causing it to roll back into the two pins that are still standing. Is this a strike or should the pins be re-spotted?

#### **Answer**

There are two scenarios which should be addressed:

1. If the pin is stationary before being hit by the sweep, and the sweep bar causes the pin to be set in motion, any resulting pinfall after the sweep bar touches the pin would be illegal. According to USBC Rule 6b, any such pins would need to be re-spotted if the player is entitled to additional deliveries in the frame.
  2. If a pin is in motion and rebounds from the sweep bar on the way down to the pin deck or when the sweep is stationary on pin deck, and results in additional pinfall this would be considered legal pinfall. Any such pinfall would count.
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#### **Puzzle #3**

##### **Fouls – November 6, 2014**

Joe is completing his delivery. He sticks and falls off balance and touches the wall of the bowling center. The team he is bowling against shouts foul and changes his score to an "F" and requires him to complete the frame with a full set of pins. Joe says that it is not a foul and protests. Is Joe right or wrong?

**Answer**

Either party could be correct depending on where Joe touched the center wall.

USBC Rule 5 states a foul occurs when part of the player's body encroaches on or goes beyond the foul line and touches any part of the lane, equipment or building during or after a delivery.

If Joe touched the wall before the foul line, Joe would be correct and it is not a foul. If Joe touched the wall on or beyond the foul line the opposing team would be correct.

In the meantime, USBC Rule 10 states when a foul for the first ball is disputed, the player shall complete the frame and then bowl one provisional ball at a full setup of pins. The league's board of directors, which includes the team captains and officers will make the decision by a majority vote as to which score to use if the teams cannot come to an agreement.

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**Puzzle #2****Switching Hands – October 2, 2014**

Ben suffers an injury to his right hand and asks the league board for permission to switch to his left hand and establish a left-handed average. The league approves his request and allows Ben to switch to his left hand. After a few weeks, Ben's hand begins to feel better, so he begins to bowl with his right hand one week, and his left hand the next week. Members are complaining, but Ben claims he is not breaking any rule. Is he?

**Answer**

Yes, Ben is breaking rules. Per USBC Rule 118e, once Ben received permission from the league board to switch to his left hand due to injury, he must continue to bowl with his left hand until he receives permission from the league board to switch back to his right hand.

Once permission is received to switch back to his right hand, Ben must use his right hand only. He cannot bowl one game left-handed and another game right-handed, or one week right-handed and the following week left-handed.

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**Puzzle #1****Dead Wood – September 4, 2014**

John is the Strikers lead off bowler. On his first ball delivery a pin is propelled beyond the sweep bar onto the lane and comes to rest in the gutter. Only the 10 pin remains standing. John delivers his second ball at the 10 pin without having the pin in the gutter removed and converts the spare. Bill, the opposing team captain claims the bowler must accept a zero for the delivery because the pin in the gutter was not removed.

**Answer**

Bill's claim is incorrect. USBC Rule 6b specifies John's ball must come into contact with the dead wood in order for illegal pinfall to be declared.