

Sport Science And Bowling

As a non-bowler looks upon our sport, the resemblance of bowlers as athletes, in their eyes, unfortunately has something to be desired. That's not our personal nor professional opinion here at Briggs Consulting, but the perception society has of us, and rightfully so, for we have emulated sometimes a less than stellar image. That's not gonna last much longer if we can help it. The **bowler-athlete**, as we term it, is making a comeback, or maybe that's a first coming. I'm not quite sure which, but needless to say we are working hard to curb the perception society has of us (bowlers) through our work in sport science.

Wait, before we go any further, allow me to introduce myself. My name is Dr. Jeff Briggs, the founder and owner of Briggs Consulting. We are a company committed to serving the bowling industry through our work: Conducting research, writing and publishing materials, speaking and teaching, and offering our professional expertise in the areas of sport science and sport medicine as they relate to bowling and the bowler-athlete.

An Intro of What's to Come

For decades athletes have tried every possible angle to achieve a competitive edge. Competitive people will do just about anything to gain an advantage over another, and the same holds true in athletics. In pursuit of this quest, athletes have resorted to everything from ergogenic and androgenic aids such as steroids, growth hormones, blood doping, illegally altering equipment, ingesting every pill and supplement known, hypnosis, relaxation therapy, and for us, soaking, weighting, and drilling up every bowling ball released by our industry.

Today, as you strive for athletic excellence, you should know there are still many variables the bowling community has yet to sufficiently address. There are many areas the sport simply hasn't taken the time to research and scientifically study. I'm referring to many things you should know that would enhance your overall performance and athletic success.

One performance variable that has come into the limelight of late is sport science. Work over the past 10 years by our company has begun to open some doors and reveal information from a sport science perspective. Stuff that's gonna help you become more informed, better prepared, and more functionally efficient as athletes. Stuff that will make you better bowler-athletes. That's a term we coined over ten years ago and use repeatedly in our writings. In fact, you will be able to learn about sport science issues and bowling each month as you read this section.

Over the past decade, we have discovered the bowling industry knows little about sport science in relation to bowling and the competitive bowler. We found little research had been conducted from a sport science perspective. Hence, our mission now entering into its second decade is to serve the bowling industry through our work as the bowling community's sport science leaders.

So that everyone knows the scope of the subject matter, sport science, entails sport medicine, sport psychology, sport nutrition, injury management, sport research, sport education, sport skill development, and several other items. Sport science has progressed through the ages with much scientific and technological advancement. Today there are multiple training principles applied by athletes, biomechanically correct exercise equipment, state of the art training facilities, individuals licensed, certified, and trained in conditioning and rehabilitation, multiple books, videos, television shows and even college curriculums educating and promoting human performance.

Getting Down to Bowling

So how does all this sport science stuff apply to bowling? Well, since few have actually researched and written about these connections and implications, I'm sure most of you are not quite sure. I know I was nearly a decade ago when I first started investigating it. So, let's briefly look through a microscope to see what is there.

Many people misconstrue bowling as a simple leisure activity. Society is often misled by the notion that bowling is nothing more than throwing a ball at ten pins and adding the score. This is quite a disillusionment from what we actually face as bowlers and coaches. This assumption negates the sport of bowling as physically demanding and difficult. In fact, bowling may not be as physically exhaustive as marathon running and distance swimming, or dangerous like football and boxing, **but it does require sport-specific athleticism.**

All sports require physical effort, which translates into work. Bowling, no different from any other sport in this respect, also calls for sport-specific physical exertion. Numerous combinations of muscular contractions generate the movements

essential to produce the aesthetically pleasing smooth roll of a bowling ball. These same muscular contractions equate into calories burned, energy expended and kinetic and heat energy created.

As a proponent of the sport sciences, I advocate bowlers and coaches maintain a working knowledge of the physical stresses of our sport. Developing an appreciation and a level of proficiency in sport-specific training, nutrition, injury management, fluid intake, and related topics will enhance the consumer's perception, your skill mastery, and your coaching ability. Knowing the terminology, understanding the physics, and employing sport-specific training will elevate your proficiency and confidence. Therefore, do not let society to be fooled by the smooth aesthetic beauty of our sport, for bowling is physically demanding and difficult.

The need for sport science intervention has been shown on all levels of sport from youth programs all the way to Olympic and professional levels. In fact, you'll probably find more and more sport science and sport medicine applications on the higher levels now than ever before. Now its time we introduce some of this technological advancement to you and how you can use it to positively affect your bowling performance.

This was a small introduction designed for you to begin thinking about the various sport science applications and implications to bowling. Each month I will bring the latest in our research efforts through a wide range of topics hopefully satisfy your hunger. By the way, just because I'm a sport researcher and a PhD doesn't mean I'm not a bowler. On the contrary, I'm a talented player and a trainer of many champions. So rest assured, you'll be receiving this information from not only a renowned expert, but also a bowler like yourself. Next issue, should bowlers physically train for their sport?