

Now's The Time To Prepare For Next Season

Just returning from the USA Bowling/IBPSIA Convention in Las Vegas I have selected a topic that relates partially to one of my experiences there. I must comment first. I commend both Sue Haws and Bob Maki for the tremendous job combining our two organizations. I believe in unification and look forward to more combined activities. Congratulations and thank you my friends. I look forward to returning next year. Preparing for my trip to Vegas included searching for a local health club to exercise and burn some fat calories from all the wonderful food I anticipated eating. If you were with me personally, you know I can down the food. Isn't that right fellas? Anyway, I did a preliminary search on the net for some health clubs or fitness centers where my current membership would be valid. No luck though, so I decided to investigate further when I arrived. I did locate one with the help from Mark Benevides, thanks Mark. I attended the club on four different occasions with several bowlers and coaches accompanying me. I could not get Roby to go though. The point to this little story encompasses this month's topic of planning.

I want to guide you with some information and tips on planning for the upcoming bowling season including designing a plan of attack. We are talking about planning and forecasting as summer comes to a close and the winter leagues and collegiate seasons are ahead of us. Planning for the various leagues, tournaments, bowling camps, IBPSIA & USA Bowling certifications and conventions should be done with forethought and sincerity. So, allow BTM to draw a small picture for you getting the plan in gear and on paper.

Many athletes plan and prepare for athletics in similar sport specific fashions. They determine the competition or playing fields, lay out the length of time to prepare themselves, devise viable training and technical adjustments required, implement the training & technical adjustments and preplan dietary and sleep patterns ensuring health and rest. All team sports generally follow this pattern. Here at FSU, we religiously go to great lengths to acquire video of the competition, schematic layouts of the fields of play, scouting reports of the various players or participants and equipment specifications of the opposition. Believe me. They divest much money into athletic planning and preparation.

I have often wondered whether bowlers could or should do the same. Yes, we differ from many team sports in that bowling is both team and individually oriented. Yet, the individual bowler is the one who should be planning and preparing as a responsibility to our teammates. We are accountable to our teammates. Viewing other individual sports may clarify the question. For example, bodybuilders and power lifters both design pre contest diets and training regimens for up to 24 weeks in advance. That is training and dieting six months before a single competition. I have worked with racquetball players who design their entire year-round training and nutrient intake to the specific requirements of the state and/or national AARA tournament. Now that is planning if I have ever seen it. So what about bowlers?

The Bowling Plan

Preparing physically, psychologically, physiologically, socially, emotionally, technologically and cognitively are all important to our bowling performance. A series of checks and balances lie deep within each component. If any one becomes unstable or unmet, then the bowler is only as strong as his/her weakest link. Therefore, planning to satisfy each component should be a bowler's goal (diagram 1). I cannot at this time aid you in planning for each specific component since my focus in this forum is physiological or better known as fitness and wellness. Instead, I will aid in your planning of the upcoming season taking travel requirements into consideration.

Making exercise a regular priority will elevate your bowling over the duration of the many tournaments and leagues. BTM and I have espoused that for sometime now. The planning process requires each of us make exercise and activity patterns a regular part of our lifestyle. **Make them a priority.**

This statement may sound familiar, "I try to exercise, but other things get in my way. Different things in my life seem more important." I hear this all the time from people who proclaim to be so busy that they cannot make time for themselves. Well, I am sure we are all busy, but our health is one of the only things we realistically control.

How important is our health? In order to make exercise a priority we must define its importance. When our health is compromised, work, family, bowling performance, and other responsibilities all suffer. Taking care of our health indirectly fulfills a responsibility as a parent, worker, friend and athlete (Brehm, 1997). Therefore, we have an obligation to the people around us to maintain and promote our health. If not, we are letting ourselves and our teammates down.

Exercise helps prevent the many common causes of premature disability and death including cardiovascular disease, hypertension, diabetes, obesity, and colon and breast cancer. Research that has used exercise as a treatment for these support the beneficial effect of exercise. Prevention of the many risk factors in our society should begin in the younger

years continuing throughout life. An appropriate program of physical activity is important for all ages from the very young to the more experienced.

Our bodies have a desire or need for movement to stay healthy. It is unfortunate in our society that physical activity is not a daily part of most people's lives. When one is required to go out of the way to exercise, maintaining that program then becomes very difficult. This is why making exercise a priority in our life is so important. Staying healthy and physically fit must be one of our goals.

Preplanning for your upcoming bowling season should therefore include maintaining a successful fitness program from August 1997 to August 1998. In order to ensure your success, follow these simple steps:

1. Choose an activity you enjoy.
2. Schedule the activity during a non-conflicting time.
3. Set one or two realistic and attainable goals.
4. Find an exercise partner or obtain a personal trainer (optional).
5. Mix your workouts to include varying indoor and outdoor activities preventing boredom (diagram 2).
6. Reevaluate the program determining whether or not you are progressing toward the goals.

Planned Travel

Pre-trip planning is important to every bowler. There are few excuses for leaving a healthy lifestyle behind when traveling away from home (De Marco, 1997). When traveling to bowling tournaments or conferences, keep a mindset that continuous positive lifestyle habits will afford success. Maintaining positive lifestyle habits of exercise and diet while on the road reinforce the master plan.

Find a place to exercise while traveling and continue with the same program as at home. As we plan for those vacations or traveling engagements, our exercise patterns should continue to parallel the current routine. Often, athletes will train haphazardly and thoughtlessly on the road endangering performance while increasing the risk of injury. Awareness of what is available when traveling reinforces our goals. Many hotel chains have fitness centers, swimming pools, and health spas. They may have standing agreements with nearby fitness clubs affording guests the opportunity and availability to a facility. YMCA's and health clubs often share reciprocal agreements with other facilities across the nation. Some IRSHA or NIRSHA registered clubs work in this fashion. Most fitness centers or clubs offer a visiting or guest fee generally ranging from \$3.00 a day to \$25.00 a week. Just ask your local fitness professional what daily and weekly rates are available to guests.

Travel planning should also consider the varying climates and time zones that affect an athlete. Your reminder is to pack appropriate clothing for the destination. Comfortable walking shoes, sun block, bathing suit, swimming goggles, portable headset, gloves, a nit hat, sweat shirt, exercise apparel or whatever the climate requires. A little forethought and planning for any trip can go a long way.

As you prepare for the upcoming bowling season, take the time to plan your activity schedule. Exercise is the only means to improving physical fitness and a major avenue toward improved bowling performance. Even when traveling, our exercise habits should not be sacrificed to enjoy the travel. Take the time to plan your exercise training both home and away.