

View From The Researcher - Part IV

Flash Report - Subject Records First Sanctioned 300 Game And Accredits Performance To Training Program

You'll have to read it to find out.

As the sport of bowling enters the 21st century, it is becoming more apparent the bowling enthusiast, much like the modern day consumer, demands the highest quality of information and service. It is no longer enough to know more, but we have transgressed to a point where our demand for service eclipses the quest for knowledge. As we have prospered through the ages reaching a more technologically informative society, it is my hope that you follow this monthly research report and use the information to propel your bowling and health just as our eager subject.

Probably the most documented of all discriminating variables between sport and its participants, is **specificity of training**. Today's competitive athlete, no matter what sport, employs sport specific scientific training in order to enhance his or her physical and functional ability. If you desire to take your bowling to a more competitive level, ask yourself this one simple question "How important is my physical and functional mobility to my athletic performance?" Looking deeper into this subject matter, I recently interviewed my subject to answer this and a host of other questions. Follow along and review his perspective on bowling-specific training.

The following interview with the subject is a qualitative assessment of the program and its effect or lack thereof on both his physical and functional capacity, as well as bowling performance. The subject was informed components of the interview would be printed and was requested to be as honest and accurate as possible.

JB: When was the last time, if ever, you seriously exercised?

Subject: I was in college in 1981 and I played football and exercised. It's been some 16 years.

JB: How long have you been training now?

Subject: Three months. I've only missed a few days around the holidays or due to illness and work.

JB: Tell me about anything out of the ordinary that you have noticed since you started training.

Subject: I can feel a firmness in my body, the overall structure seems to be changing. A firmness under the body fat.

JB: Let's start with your program first, tell me about your cardiovascular training?

Subject: I purchased a heart rate monitor as you suggested and use it every time I ride the recumbent bike. Using the monitor, I'm seeing my recovery time decreasing as I move from the bike to the strength training exercises. The heart rate comes back down to normal levels quicker after the aerobic training. This is how I know my training has improved my cardiovascular performance. I can also handle the workload on the bike with greater ease. It's becoming more of a joy to aerobically train now that I've acclimated to the training and I'm seeing the changes firsthand. I wish we had started this years ago.

JB: Do you like or dislike the aerobic exercise I have designed for you?

Subject: I like the recumbent bike. It supports my back and I feel like I'm able to use my full leg strength. It is a Cybex bike and has a receiver in it allowing my heart rate monitor to record directly on its monitor so I no longer have to wear the watch as a receiver.

JB: Tell me about the strength-training portion of your program.

Subject: First off, acclimating to the exercise equipment is important. I am fortunate we found a facility where they take good care of the equipment and have a wide variety of apparatus to choose from. When you trained me on the routine in September, each machine was numbered on my exercise chart so I could find it without having to learn the names or search around the club.

Every machine we worked on was fine and I feel like I adjusted and learned the routine after a few sessions. However, for some odd reason I could not get accustomed to the bicep curl machine, so we switched to cable curls. I think it is particularly important to find the machines you are comfortable with, and then use them to your fullest extent as you have shown me.

I had early problems with the leg extension machine. Not the machine itself, but my right leg was previously damaged/injured - an old baseball injury. I initially experienced some slight stiffness and pain during and after the training. **However, I have noticed through continued training that the leg injury and pain has diminished greatly. In fact, I am happy to share with everyone I can now exercise my legs without any pain in my right knee. It is a really helpful benefit because my right knee used to always hurt.**

JB: Did you experience any soreness during or after the training sessions?

Subject: Initially yes - the first two weeks. Now, even if I miss a session, I don't experience any.

JB: Are you charting your training sessions?

Subject: Yes, I chart every training session on the monthly cards you provided. I like charting my progress to see the strength improvements. The exercise chart keeps me precisely on track with the resistance I am using and the number of repetitions for each machine.

JB: So are you saying you enjoy or just tolerate the bowling-specific training?

Subject: I look forward to the days I train. I feel like I'm actually training for bowling which is a foreign concept to our sport and industry. My heart rate now recovers in the cool-down phase within 60-90 seconds instead of its original 4-6 minutes. That's how I know I've improved my aerobic capacity. My strength has improved on every exercise and I'm noticing firmness in many areas of my body. I am now more tired at bedtime and sleep sounder as well as I'm dreaming again. My total time in the gym is only about 65-75 minutes. What more could I ask for.

ATTENTION READERS: DO NOT PASS GO AND COLLECT \$200 UNTIL YOU FIND OUT ABOUT OUR RESEARCH SUBJECT RECORDING HIS FIRST SANCTIONED 300 GAME.

JB: Before we get to your big moment, lets qualify some things. How often do you bowl and is it more or less than years past?

Subject: I am bowling one league this season that has been my standard for several years now. I practice only sparingly since my work keeps me quite busy. I have been a "scratch" bowler for many years now **(The subjects' lifetime average in the ABC national tournament is over 202 for 10+ years)** and have seen little if any improvement in my skill over that time.

JB: That is a good point you just made. One of the things I'm controlling for as a researcher is your bowling, making sure it is the same as it has been for the last several years. This will allow me to more accurately infer improvements in performance to your increased physical fitness.

Subject: My bowling habits haven't changed in the past 5-10 years. A few new balls each year, little practice around tournament time, and no more tournaments than normal. My current average is 205 on a legitimately difficult condition. Last year there I closed out at 204. Hey, I'm up a pin already. I only bowl the one league each week and choose to do so on a condition that will at least require one to think and execute a quality shot.

JB: You've never had a ABC sanctioned 300 until December of 1998?

Subject: Correct, I've had a few perfect games in practice and one in an unsanctioned event, but never in a sanctioned event or league. This December though I shot my first sanctioned 300 game in league. I didn't workout that day, but the day before. At this particular center, the heads are pretty deteriorated and ball speed is a premium asset to possess. I have struggled with that over the years. Since I've started training, I've developed the ability to increase my ball speed 1-2 miles per hour when necessary without diminishing my form. It's been quite sometime, maybe last year, since a 300 was shot there and we're a pretty strong league! It's a sanctioned league and center. That should give you an idea about the condition we are talking about. Scores are not growing on trees out there.

Here's the payoff, I broke the pot of gold and collected jackpots totaling about \$480 and have the league high game. OK here's the bottom line, my health club membership cost a couple hundred bucks and working out takes a little time, but not a lot. Just this one evening, I more than offset that cost with the money I won. I consider the health club membership one of the best bowling investments I have ever made. You can quote me on that.

JB: I plan on it. You the man.

Subject: My aerobic capacity improvements may not show a tangible benefit immediately, but it has definitely allowed me to bowl longer, stronger, more consistently over a greater period of time. I left college in 1982 and have not worked out on a regular basis since. Now, I'm training, bowling more confidently, winning money, and have a sanctioned honor score to boot. My teammates have noticed my increased ball speed without losing my form or balance. We have bowled together for many years and I can honestly say someone else has noticed my speed control besides myself. This is directly attributed to my strength training.

I must confess that when I started this program, I was looking for the benefits of cardiovascular training and conditioning on my lifestyle. I was not directly looking to improve my bowling abilities except through this indirect means. I suppose that I didn't fully buy into the bowler-athlete concept. My mental image of the sport was one of concentration and thought processes. I thought that as long as I could get to the line, I could bowl well. It was a matter of mental skills and physical repetition. I've since learned that's not entirely the case.

Well, consider me a convert. I lived the other side of the coin, heck, I could be the poster child for that well-worn belly image of the bowlers. I am a believer, I have seen a direct improvement in my physical skills as a bowler from this program, and I have not done anything different from any of the previous eight years except this program. Thank you Jeff.

Next month we will look closer at the subject's training advancements and preview some more pertinent information. Follow us each month and find out whether or not the subject is healthy or injured, has advanced his training, added some more bowling titles, or is gearing for Reno.