

Faces In The Crowd

Who does it and why? Many of you religiously read about sport medicine, bowling-specific training, sport nutrition, injury management, proper warm-up, and athletic preparation habits, in this monthly section. But do any of you actually use it? I know a lot of you believe in the concept, and even support it verbally, but who actually uses it. I've met hundreds of serious golfers, tennis players, racquetball players, runners, cyclists, and even bobsledders who all train specific to their sport. But what about the committed bowlers in this world?

I heard once from Billy Hall that the Malaysian National Bowling Team trained together three times a week and were committed to a physical regimen. Hopefully I can bring that story to you one day. Last year I reported Wichita State University Assistant Coach Dan Dick implemented a physical training regimen for their collegiate bowling program. We even reported all of 1998 on a research study involving a highly skilled bowler named Mark Robey. So, let's meet some more of these faces in the crowd.

This month I'm turning the pen and mic over to you. I'm gonna let you speak, and tell others how you feel about sport medicine as it relates to bowling. We are gonna meet and hear from three different individuals who are using sport medicine techniques as a method of preparation for competitive bowling.

First, meet Denny Grover, a University of Nebraska (Omaha) Collegiate Bowling Assistant Coach. Listen as Denny tells us of the rigors of collegiate bowling. *Bowling at the collegiate level of competition demands certain things of bowlers that they most likely have not experienced in their junior competition. One of the first things they face is the duration and intensity of the competition, which requires a large amount of time and energy. If a bowler is not in top physical condition under-energized, or not well prepared for this type of competition, they will not be successful. When the body fades the mind will follow. A huge importance for sport nutrition and sport-specific training. That's one of the reasons we brought in Dr. Jeff to address our team and make them aware of the potential for greater success. We wanted our collegiate bowlers to be taught a little about sport medicine and how they can implement it into their practice habits. We also worked on a proper warm-up routine before we bowled. I believe sport medicine is both directly and indirectly important to success at the collegiate level, and we will continue to advocate it to our bowlers.*

Along those same lines, I believe in a strong warm-up regimen at the youth bowler level. We initiated a regular warm-up activity with our junior program at Gateway Lanes five years ago.

Prior to each league session, a regular warm-up session is held and is mandatory for all bowlers and coaches.

This session does three things for us: First, and most important, it provides us with a process to help prevent injury to the bowler by warming up the bowling-specific muscles and joints. Secondly, it provides an opportunity for coaches and players to get together as a unit for announcements, awards, etc. Third, which we need to address more, is the public perception of our sport of bowling. By conducting these activities to promote better health, wellness, and athletic preparation of our athletes, we are, at the same time, making the public aware that we, as coaches and players, consider bowling a serious sport.

Now, meet Frank DeVane, a competitive bowler who has been training on the Bowling-Specific Training Program for almost 12 months. Frank is 52 and works as a medical transcriptionist running his own business. According to him, it is a very sedentary business, where the biggest weight he might have lifted (before the training program) was a 50-pound box of paper or a computer/printer.

I bowl a lot, especially in tournaments locally as well as in the International Eliminator and High Roller events, but do not do as well as I feel I am capable of. I have won some money here and there, but I was not as competitive as I felt I had been in the past. I average 197 - 199 in leagues, but have always averaged over 200, until the past couple of years. I had worked with a coach who knew my game, and had taken other remedial steps, but still something seemed to be missing. I knew what it was and finally did something about it.

I had read with interest some of the sport medicine articles in [Bowling This Month](#), and felt this was what I needed to get to my next competitive level. Back in January of 1999 I e-mailed Dr. Jeff asking if he still personally trained bowlers. After learning that he still did, I arranged for him to fly to Colorado Springs in February 1999 to work with my wife and I to develop a comprehensive training program.

When I first started the program I weighed almost 270 pounds. On a 6'5" frame this didn't really seem too bad, but I didn't have the energy level I had in the past, when I weighed less, nor the stamina to do many games at time in practice or long

tournaments without being worn out. My waist was 48" and my strength, though I was not weak, was not the best. Now, less than a year later, my weight is down to 228, my waist is at 43", and I have at least doubled or more than doubled the physical strength I started with. Flexibility was not a problem when I started, but I believe even that has improved. Our training was based on our individual goals and current physical condition. In the beginning I was barely able to get out 20 minutes on a recumbent bike at the lowest setting. Now I do 45 minutes at a mid-range setting. I'm not quite where I want to be yet, but feel I will be there in a couple more months. What an investment.

I find, where bowling is concerned, that I have much improved speed control and am able to use more and different hand positions to start the ball sooner or get it down the lane further. Another benefit of the program has been improved leg strength. I had surgery on my left knee several years ago. Before the surgery I was always low at the line, but after surgery I had a tendency to favor the leg, and so didn't get as low to the line or get as much knee bend as I had in the past. Now, I feel the strength and flexibility in my legs and knee is SO much better, and I am more solid at the foul line, which has further improved my balance and being able to "get down and get through" the shot with more consistency and improved accuracy. Also my confidence in my ability has grown with my skill improvement as well.

I also learned a series of stretching exercises, which I do before each bowling session. These allow each shot in practice to be more or less at full speed instead of having to get "loose" before throwing the ball at "game" speed. I'm implementing a true bowling-specific warm-up routine. I'm really doing it and I believe in it.

I enjoy training for my sport A LOT! When I don't get down to the YMCA to work out, because of workload or whatever, I seem to work all that much harder at the next session. I travel to Las Vegas several times a year for tournaments, and have always been able to work out during these times, either using the "home program" Jeff introduced us to, or at a health club facility in the hotel. I feel my program has helped my bowling, but I feel even more that it has helped me to be physically healthier and reduced my risk of heart disease and other problems through improved eating habits and exercise. I would recommend it to anyone who is looking to improve their game and/or their overall level of fitness.

When I was younger staying fit was not so much of a problem. But, as I get older I sort of convinced myself that I can't really do anything about my physical conditioning. I'm here to tell you that you can, and should, because all it takes is a commitment to three days a week and 1-2 hours on those days to feel better, look better, and bowl better. Short of an injury or illness that would prevent me from continuing my program, I will be on it for life. Without this sport-specific program, I would probably be at 280 with my bowling slipping even further. Now, thanks to Jeff and my belief in sport medicine for bowling, I'm bordering on being in the best condition I have ever been in and enjoying life and my bowling a whole lot more.

Lastly, listen to Rodger Stroup. Rodger is a 42-year-old FBG Services Internal Manager in the Facilities Service Management division. That's a sedentary position, according to him. Rodger is also an accomplished bowling instructor for over 20 years and is currently a YABA Level II coach as well as a USA Bowling Silver Level coach. He is working toward earning USA Bowling's Gold Level Certification and is a striving competitive bowler to boot. Rodger has also been the head coach of the Papillion-La Vista High School bowling team for the past five years. He bowls regularly once a week, and substitutes as needed one more night per week. His average last season was 198, although it has been higher in previous years. Let's listen to Rodger's story and how sport medicine has impacted his life and performance.

I attribute the recent decreases in my average to my increasingly poor physical condition. Lack of strength forced me to drop down to 15-pound equipment three years ago. Generally, I was pretty worn out by the time the third game was completed. As a result, I don't bowl many tournaments. I would always say it was because I was too busy coaching, but the truth is, I was not in the physical shape and condition I needed to compete.

I became interested in bowling-specific training after reading in BTM of one of the studies performed by Briggs Consulting. In April of 1998 I was personally trained by Dr. Jeff on the Bowling-Specific Training Program. "At that time I weighed 230 lbs., had a 48" waist, and was bowling with 15-pound equipment because my wrist had no strength. I had enough energy to bowl three games, but not much more than that. I wanted more out of my bowling and thought sport medicine was the answer.

My main goal was to reduce my waistline to 36" and build strength to generate more ball speed and increase my overall physical endurance. Now, some 19 months later, I am still training regularly and am a dedicated believer in bowling-specific training, unlike one Johnny Campos. I've had to travel for my work several times since beginning my program, but I've been able to find other training facilities capable of satisfying my needs. I'm also eating better. The best news in all this is the results.

I've reduced my waistline to 42". My strength has increased steadily over the 19 months. I've been able to increase my resistance training frequently. In terms of flexibility, I've noticed that I have been able to increase the length of my back swing when I bowl, that was a hindrance for many years. I bowled in a 4-game league during the first summer after I started training, and noticed that I became stronger in the final game than in years past. That was a great discovery since it was one of my goals.

Truthfully, because I'm in this for the long haul, some of the changes in my body have kind of snuck up on me. I'm doing the workouts because I want to improve my bowling performance and because I want to. I'm sold on that. I know I'm taking care of myself, so aside from measuring my waist every week and charting my exercise resistance, I'm not obsessed on how my body changes. The time and money I invested in being personally trained for bowling by the world's expert, and maintaining a health club membership has been one of the best bowling-related investments I have made to date.

Because of my personal success and my belief in sport medicine for competitive bowlers, I brought Dr. Jeff to Omaha to teach my high school bowling team, the Papillion-La Vista High School about it.

I've always had our bowlers engage in stretching prior to matches or practices. Now I wanted them to learn more about the benefits that bowling-specific training could bring to them. Jeff's presentation and work with the team gave them a wealth of information for their use. Several different topics were addresses and some good exercises for bowling were taught, and because of that, we are now incorporating some sport medicine into our weekly practices. My personal belief in sport medicine for competitive bowlers has allowed me to pass on this information and training advantage to my students.

There you have it. I wanted you to hear from these three individuals like yourselves who are using sport medicine as a preparation tool for their competitive bowling. If this is something that interests you, I encourage you to continue to read BTM and this section for more detailed information on a wide-range of sport medicine topics. You can also visit our web site at <http://members.home.net/bowlfit/> to review past BTM articles and other sport medicine and bowling information.