

How Far Have We Come?

I often wonder how far we have come: From the standpoint of accepting competitive bowlers as competitive athletes; from the perspective of treating bowling as physically demanding and difficult, requiring sport specific training; and from the position that qualified bowling coaches need to know, not just be aware of, but honestly know a few of the finer points of training, nutrition, injury management, and stretching to train competitive bowlers. Heck, if bowling coaches are supposed to know about the mental game, should they not also know about the physical side of the athlete. What is the job of a coach or instructor? To develop skill and bring out the best in every athlete. That may be one short definition and does that not then include training the bowler-athlete? I think so.

You know what I'd like to see. I'd like to see our various coaching organizations mandate every certified instructor read my monthly section as an ongoing continuing education requirement. Wouldn't that be nice you say. For BTM it would ensure a few more committed subscribers, but beyond that is what's more important: It would, at a national level, acknowledge and recognize the physical side of the sport of bowling as a top priority of the coaching community. WOULDN'T THAT BE NICE?

Quiz Time

This month you are taking a quiz. Test your knowledge and awareness of the areas I write about. Answer the following true/false questions to the best of your ability. At the bottom are the answers with supporting explanation. Give yourself 1 point for every correct answer. Total your score and see how you did.

True or False

Write the answer on the space provided.

- _____ 1. Competitive bowlers are athletes.
- _____ 2. Athletes physically condition themselves to improve sport performance.
- _____ 3. Bowling related injuries are not serious and do not require medical attention.
- _____ 4. Fatigue is a fictitious character in a bowler's mind.
- _____ 5. Bowling-specific training has been shown to be an effective tool enhancing performance.
- _____ 6. Society believes bowling is a leisure or recreational activity.
- _____ 7. You cannot make a difference in changing the perception society has of bowling.
- _____ 8. The difference between a good bowler and a great bowler is the amount and type of equipment they use.
- _____ 9. Bowlers do not need to warm-up before bowling because they do not exert themselves enough to warrant it.
- _____ 10. Bowling center food is a great energy provider for you during league or tournaments.
- _____ 11. The recent movies Kingpin and The Big Lebowski were accurate representations of today's bowler-athlete.

Check Your Answers

1. True. Any competitive participant is considered an athlete. We competitive bowlers are definitely competitive athletes, as exemplified by our systematic and routine commitment to the sport (training, practice, learning, etc.).
2. True. For decades, athletes have engaged in strength and conditioning as well as dietary regulation to improve their sport specific physical fitness and performance. Bowlers, though rather unacquainted to this concept, have

begun in recent years to use The Bowling-Specific Training Program and other active pursuits as means to enhance their bowling specific condition and performance.

3. False. On the contrary, an athletic injury, no matter what sport, is serious and should be treated appropriately by a medical provider. Since bowling centers do not employ athletic trainers, who are one of the few trained sport medicine resources to evaluate the condition of athletes, I strongly recommend if you incur a bowling related injury to have it properly diagnosed and treatment prescribed by your medical provider. Granted not all general practitioners or even orthopedic specialists understand the stresses and functions of our sport. Noting that, have them contact me and I will gladly speak with them on the more technical aspects of our sport and its related stresses. I've consulted with physicians on multiple occasions dealing with treatment of bowling related injuries. The incompetent thing to do would be to continue bowling hoping an injury will just "go away." This line of thinking does not work and quite often worsens the injury. Treat your bowling injury as seriously as any other injury.
4. False. Fatigue is a potential enemy hiding inside all of us. Fatigue is when the body quite simply runs out of gas and or cannot supply it quickly enough to sustain the current activity. When runners "hit the wall" they have dehydrated and are fatiguing since the body can no longer supply ample energy to sustain the activity. The onset of fatigue is silent until 100% present. It is within every athlete of every sport. To fight off the fatigue monster while you bowl, it is good to provide yourself a continual supply of fuel. I suggest some easy edible foods such as nuts, raisins, grapes, apple slices, crackers, water, or even a carbohydrate drink such as Carboforce.
5. True. Recent study of the program I designed several years ago, The Bowling Specific Training Program, has produced growing support for it. To date, three studies of the program have provided supportive data confirming 1) the effectiveness of the training principles, 2) the quality of the program itself, and 3) the impact of the program on bowling performance.
6. True. There is a component or part of our sport that is recreationally driven. The Billiards and Bowling Institute of America (1998) determined that there are some 50 million recreational bowlers alone in the United States. Unfortunately, the decline in membership of our national organizations, accompanied with tremendous increases in overall recreational participation, has somewhat dampened the image we share as competitive bowlers.
7. False. If you want society and the rest of the sporting community to accept you as a bonafide bowler-athlete and bowling as a sport, then present yourself as such, and your sport as physically demanding and difficult, requiring training and conditioning. Our society, at least here in North America, measures the difficulty and athletic requirements of a sport often by the appearance of its participants. If we present ourselves as out of shape, de-conditioned, "I don't care about training" bowlers, then society will view us in that light. They will view us as a recreational or leisure activity and not as participants in a true athletic endeavor. If you want to change the preconceived notion of our so-called "recreational activity," then be the spokesperson and the sounding board for the bowler-athlete. Let your training do the talking. DON'T TELL ME YOU THINK BOWLING IS A SPORT. SHOW ME YOU THINK IT IS.
8. False. The differences between really good bowlers are minimal these days. They all have great releases. They all use sport psychology and acknowledge the importance of a mental game. They all know their equipment and throw top of the line equipment. BUT, the real difference between the good bowlers and the great bowlers will be their level of functional and physical fitness, dietary regulation, and lifestyle habits. We are seeing it in every sport and it is slowly arising in bowling as well. If you want to differentiate yourself from the rest of the good or great bowlers, do what other athletes do to propel their physical performance.
9. False. As revealed in last month's issue, bowlers have the same need for a structured warming routine as any other sport or physical activity. Bowling is physically demanding and many injuries occur during the practice session of a tournament or league. To minimize your risk of injury as well as really prepare for the activity, grab a copy of February's issue and review The Bowling-Specific Warm-Up Routine.
10. False. Generally, not always, but generally, bowling center food is high in saturated fats, cholesterol, and sugars, while low in carbohydrates, proteins, vitamins, minerals, and water. Your body requires carbohydrates for energy, proteins for maintaining organ and lean tissue, and water to facilitate all these functions. If you don't have a good storage and steady supply of carbs, proteins, and water, you're gonna run out of energy. This will awaken that fatigue monster hiding inside of you.
11. False. If you missed that one, you should be forever plagued with 10-pinitis. I have yet to see an accurate representation of our sport in a movie or documentary setting. Then again, I probably haven't seen every bowling movie ever made either.

Scoring Key

If you scored 1-3 correct, you receive BTM to look at the pictures. If you scored 4-6 correct, you occasionally skim my articles as you head back to the ball reviews. If you scored 7-9 correct, you read my materials possibly doing some of what I say. If you scored 10-11 correct, you are a bonafide Body-By-Briggs convert just like Mark Robey.