

# This, That, And The Other

## The Difference is .....

I once read a statement by Dr. Jack Hutslar founder of the North American Youth Sport Institute that I want to share with you.

*"Fitness is one of several traits that contribute to high level performance in sport. The other traits are speed, strength, power, endurance, agility, quickness, flexibility, balance and the kinesthetic sense of feel. The latter is the ability to learn and execute the skills of the activity. Each sport engages these traits in different proportions. Strength and speed are the primary performance differentiators along with the ability of the player to acquire and utilize the skills of the activity. Fitness is specific to the activity and its pattern of muscle use. It becomes more important in performance as the speed, duration and workload of the activity increases. Lack of fitness, both cardiovascular and muscular, has a negative affect on performance over time."*

Wow that's a mouthful. But what I got out of that was simple, physical fitness is an influential factor on bowling performance ... and ... components of physical fitness, such as strength or flexibility are primary performance differentiators for those who bowl more often, and for longer periods of time.

I once noted, the overall talent of highly competitive bowlers is nearly equal across the board. They all throw the same high tech equipment, they all have great releases and pretty good spare games. They all read lanes fairly well and have some form of a mental game. However, the greatest difference between them is, and eventually will be, their level of physical fitness, dietary habits, and lifestyle wellness. Now that's a pretty hefty statement, but in sport science we are seeing this common denominator in every sport and athletic event. So, I suspect, very soon we will see it to be more apparent in bowling as well. Do you want to set yourself apart from the rest of the pack? Lifestyle wellness and bowling-specific training may be your answer.

## How Sweet It Is

I hear the Wichita State University Shockers are having a phenomenal year on the collegiate bowling circuit. Did you know they have a stringent and rigid physical conditioning program? All bowlers are required to participate in weekly team training sessions in conjunction with team practice. In fact, Shocker Coach Dan Dick recently visited to provide me details of the program.

Every student is required, as part of the tryouts, to go through a physical fitness test battery. In fact, the data is used as part of the selection process. I'm not sure what weight it is given, but I am proud to say it is a sound program in place. Furthermore, each team practice includes stretching, floor exercises such as sit-ups, push-ups, leg lifts, jogging in place, and a host of other training and callisthenic items.

Do you think you're good enough to bowl for Wichita State University? Better make sure your healthy and fit, or you won't have the Shocker Stuff. Congratulations Coach Gordon Vadakin and Coach Dan Dick. You win my ESPY Conditioning Program of the Year Award.

## It Hurts, What Do I Do?

I recently noticed I've received a large amount of mail concerning bowling-related injuries. In fact, I've probably received more inquiries this winter than in years past. As with any repetitive throwing sport, a vast majority of those injuries deal with the wrist, elbow, and shoulder joint. What's even more apparent is that they usually relate to deep tissue pain and inflammation. It became obvious to me a few years ago that there was no definitive injury-related information published for bowlers. What's worse is that I have found little information on the identification of the primary bowling related injuries, their risk factors, signs and symptoms, and defined treatment methods for those injuries.

In March 1996 and 1997 I provided some information on injury management for bowlers. I may have written more, but they seem to elude me at the moment. Therefore, I have accepted the challenge over the course of the next three months, excluding this one, to zero in and focus on one highly common injury each month starting with the lower back. For now, let me pass on this piece of vital information to those who have or are experiencing an injury.

## **Let your doctor diagnose it first, then focus on your treatment before considering a return to the lanes.**

I know that's probably not what you wanted to hear, but the **truth** is, injury and illness of any kind must be properly diagnosed and treated by a medical provider as the first steps taken toward appropriate recovery. Holistic methods, chiropractics, massage therapy, home remedies, heat and ice, and even exercise are not substitutes for proper treatment, but only components of a treatment program.

There are literally hundreds of injuries that can occur to the wrist, elbow, and shoulder joint. Many require similar treatments, while a great many others require dissimilar treatment. The trouble arises when someone doesn't take an injury seriously, and they think time and ibuprofen will solve the problem. It doesn't, and actually could worsen it. I encourage everyone to take any bowling or non-bowling- related injury seriously, and think twice before attempting to "work through it."

My car broke down one day and I tried working on it. The master mechanic in me decided he would make a stab at the, perceived, small problem. I ended up making the damage worse and had to have it towed to a dealer for more extensive work. I thought my personal knowledge of motor vehicles was enough to suffice. I was wrong. Unless you are a trained physician, don't try to diagnose and work on an injury yourself. Bad things could come of it. Next month, the all-mighty low back pain.