Requested Bowling Topics

National Federation of State High School Associations

Feedback and information provided in this document were requested by the NFHS. For more information, please contact Brian English, IBC Varsity Bowling Manager. E-mail: BEnglish@ibcyouth.com

Table of Contents:

- ***The Baker Format – Page 2***
- ***Ball Certification – Page 5***
- ***Ball Demonstrations – Page 6***
- ***Team Competition Formats – Page 7***
- ***Lane Conditions – Page 8***
- ***SMART Program – Page 10***
- ***USBC Coaching Opportunities – Page 12***
- ***IBC / USBC Contacts & References – Page 13***

The Baker Format:

The format is named after Frank K. Baker, former executive secretary treasurer of the American Bowling Congress, the predecessor to the United States Bowling Congress (USBC).

Baker competitions are unique because they are always bowled as a team and every member must work together on the same bowling game. Typically found in Collegiate tournaments, the Baker format comprises of a team of bowlers (usually 5), who rotate bowling in each frame in a game. This is much different than a normal team event in which each bowler will bowl for their own individual scores. In a Baker format, a higher emphasis is put on bowling as a team as each shot is absolutely crucial to your team's success. *Resource Bowling Tourney.com*

Frank K. Baker devised the Baker system of scoring in the 1950's while he was Executive Secretary of the American Bowling Congress. This system involves the lead-off person bowling frames one and six, the second person bowling frames two and seven, and so forth. Baker developed his system after the professional National Bowling League failed because of its lack of spectator appeal. It was felt that the traditional system was too tedious for the average spectator to follow. Baker also felt that the five-person team concept in league play was deteriorating.

After developing his new system, Baker confronted the Professional Bowlers Association regarding the possibility of forming a new league using the Baker system but was unsuccessful in his attempt. Similarly, the American Bowling Congress did not consider utilizing the new format. Thus, the unused Baker scoring system was set aside.

In the early 1970's, the National Bowling Council initiated plans for a Bowling Spectacular, involving professional, amateur, collegiate, and military bowlers. The Baker system was given consideration as a format to be used in the Collegiate Division of this tournament. In 1974, various colleges and universities, including Kansas State University, experimented with the Baker format in order to assess reactions to this untested, twenty year old system. As a result, the unique Baker format was accepted and was used in the 1975 Bowling Spectacular during the final twelve games to determine the National Collegiate Team Champions.

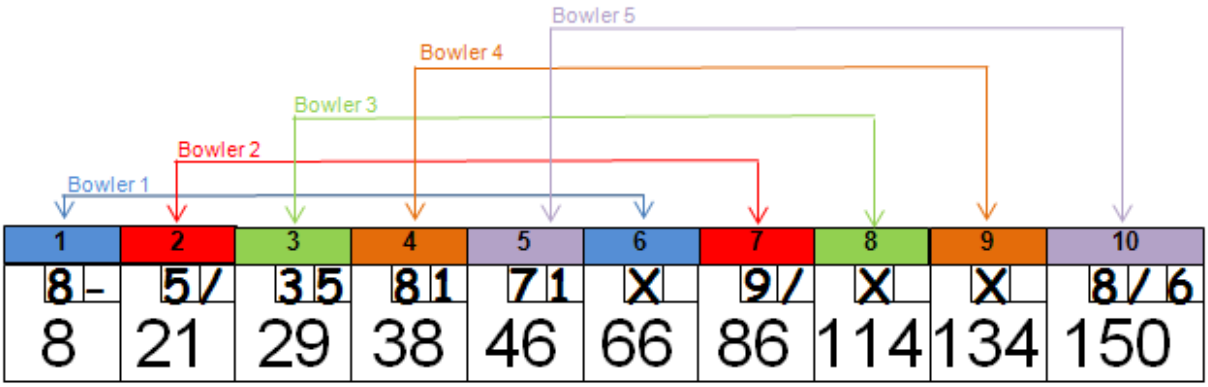
The bowlers felt that the Baker system emphasized the idea of performing as a team by capitalizing upon each other's strikes and spares for team count. They felt that the system brought out the best in each bowler for the good of the team.

The Baker system was again used in the 1976 and 1977 Bowling Spectaculars to determine the Collegiate Team Champions. However, there were no indications that the Baker system had ever been used in a league situation, until 2009 when a new youth test format, USA Bowling, was launched.

Due to the popularity and excitement found in the Baker system, the USA Bowling youth program has chosen to include the format in their league structure. USA Bowling is essentially a little league version of bowling, often mirroring a high school or collegiate format. By including the Baker system in this league structure, kids at a younger age are being introduced to a new and exciting level of bowling that not only emphasizes teamwork, but also entices them to participate in middle school, high school and collegiate programs as they get older.

Resources: Robert E. Yecke The Baker System: An alternative for league bowling, Mort Luby, Jr., "Remembering F. K. B.," The National Bowlers Journal and Billiard Revue, June, 1975, p. 49., "Wow ' is Reaction of Collegians," The Woman Bowler, May/June,1975, p. 52.

Five-player Baker Game Strategic Lineup Guideline



A Baker Game is when multiple bowlers combine to bowl one game.

Bowler 1 (frames 1 & 6) –Trustworthy and the most consistent, the leadoff bowler will help the rest of the team get a good read on the lane conditions. This player is positive, energetic and helps motivate the team throughout competition.

Bowler 2 (frames 2 & 7) – Trusting and comfortable in making moves based off Bowler 1's information, this player is positive and will be able to keep the energy level of the team positive and upbeat.

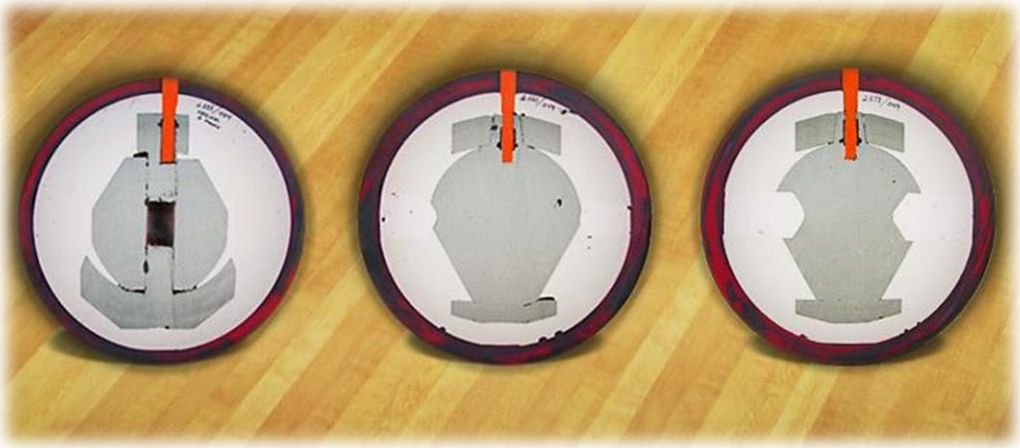
Bowler 3 (frames 3 & 8) – Steady and reliable in filling frames, this player is level-headed and able to keep a positive outlook.

Bowler 4 (frames 4 & 9) – Fundamentally solid, this player will share the weight of pressure toward the end of a game while being able to strike to set up the anchor bowler.

Bowler 5 (frames 5 & 10) – The best and most consistent player on the team, this bowler can handle the pressure of the 10th frame and keep the motivation going.

Note: Sometimes, a coach can substitute players at any time (frame) during the game or have another player come in and throw the final shot of the 10th frame. ***Check the procedures adopted by your state athletic/activities association before making any changes.***

Ball Certification:



Upon manufacturer completion, a bowling ball goes through a series of tests in order to become certified. Only certified equipment can be used in USBC certified competitions. This includes both adult and youth certified competitions, as well as any international competition that uses the USBC Approved Ball list as a guideline for their equipment restrictions.

Once the highly trained USBC Equipment & Specifications Department approves the bowling ball for competition, ball companies can engrave the USBC Star Logo on their equipment. This logo designates that model of bowling ball has passed all of the requirements to be approved for use in USBC Certified competition. After this process, the ball manufacturers release their equipment to the public for purchase.

These tests and certifications help protect the consumer and athlete in several ways. The certification verifies that the bowling ball will perform at the standard the presenting manufacturer states it will. This keeps consumer confidence in what manufacturers are creating and providing to them. Likewise, the certification is validation for the manufactures to prove to consumers that they are offering the best performing equipment they can. Manufacturers are very supportive of the tests and certification process; knowing it reinforces the strong integrity found in the industry and sport of bowling.

The certification also insures that the bowling ball meets the standards and competition rules governed by USBC. This validates that any honor score achieved in a USBC certified league or certified tournament (local, state and national) was achieved using equipment that was verified and approved by the USBC; allowing full honors to be awarded to the bowler.

For more information, please visit www.bowl.com/equipandspecs.

Ball Demonstrations:

Ball demonstrations are designated, marketed and funded by the ball manufacturers, distributors and pro shops. Each of these organizations has something to do with bowling ball demonstrations.

The ball manufacturers have professional staff members who travel to various markets around the country and host ball demonstrations. Sometimes, these events are held in addition to a bowling event in the same area and time frame, or sometimes the demonstration is held to promote upcoming or newly released equipment. The best place to check for dates and information regarding a ball manufacturer demonstration day in your area would be to visit the website of the desired manufacturer. Another great place to find out about these events is by asking your local pro shop operator.

Likewise, bowling equipment distributors hold demonstration events as well, usually involving multiple ball manufacturers. These events are usually in the same location, or within close proximity, every year. This demonstration event is open to the public, but is usually marketed to pro shop operators to give them the opportunity to see and use the new or upcoming equipment. Most of the time, the best way to find out about this information is through your local pro shop.

Additionally, some pro shops have staff from the ball manufacturers come out for a special demonstration day or weekend at their center. This is all dependent on the relationship that pro shop has with the staff and manufacturer. Most pro shops will advertise when these demonstrations occur and usually incorporate some form of a sale or special show price on the equipment being demonstrated.

Some pro shops are also equipped with a set of demonstration bowling balls that are available to bowlers to try out. This could be another option for those bowlers interested and curious about certain equipment and how it would perform for them. Bowlers can try the equipment, usually for a small fee, and then have more confidence in the equipment they are looking to purchase. Your local pro shop operator will be able to tell you if they have this demonstration equipment or not.

Demonstrations, on any level, are recommended for a bowler looking to gain more information when deciding what equipment to purchase.

Team Competition Formats:

There are two basic competition formats in regards to high school bowling. Unfortunately, at this time, there is not a standard system that all the states abide by. However, a majority of the states, both club and varsity, tend to incorporate a combination of the team match-play format and the Baker format.

Team Match-Play Format:

The team match-play format is similar to the traditional league style. 5 members of the bowling team compete against another team of 5 bowlers. The individual scores of the players in the lineup are added together and compared with the score of the opposing team.

Each bowler on each team is responsible for their own 10 frames. This allows individual high school bowlers to roll enough games to create a USBC certified average (if they are USBC Scholastic Members). It also allows conferences and states to hold a singles high school state championship.

If the state does not hold a singles state championship, then the team match-play games still serve a purpose. The individual games still allow those certified with USBC Scholastic to gain an average, and they can also be used to determine the cut to get to the Baker qualifying sets. For instance, the top 16 teams with the most pins or points make the cut to the Baker elimination round.

Baker Format:

The Baker format is commonly known as the "team game". This form of bowling is the closest comparison to other sports, such as basketball.

Each team lineup consists of 5 players. Each member is responsible for 2 frames each, equaling a 10 frame game. The players do not bowl their respected frames back to back, instead the lineup bowls in a successive order until all 10 frames are completed (please refer to Page 4 for a detailed visual). According to different state rules, substitutions can be made during this game, much like basketball or other sports.

The Baker format is often very exciting and used in a majority of the states. This format is also very popular in collegiate bowling, due to the excitement, athleticism and strong team element. Baker games are most applicable forms of competition on the high school and collegiate levels.

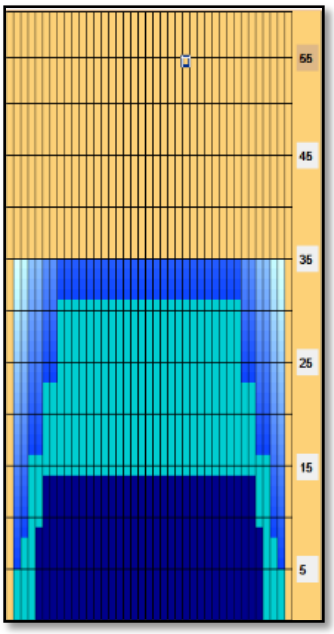
For a deeper look into Baker format, please refer to Pages 2-4 of this document.

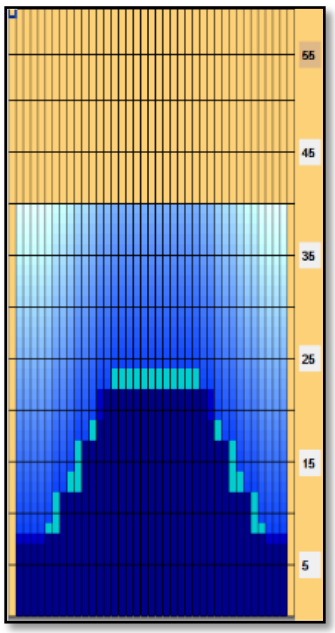
Lane Conditions:

Lane conditions are purely at the discretion of the participating proprietor, conference coordinator or state bowling official (club or varsity). These individuals determine the specific lane conditions that are acceptable to conduct a high school bowling competition.

Depending on the technology and equipment available at the participating bowling center, it can be difficult to have the same lane conditions throughout a conference or state. Lane machines are programmed to lay down the desired condition. Depending on the make and model, this could be an issue in establishing a designated and adopted lane condition across the entire state, or even the country.

Lane conditions can be compared to golf courses. Different holes on the golf course range in difficulty, much like the different lane conditions in bowling. The patterns vary in length, width and oil volume to create a unique playing field for matches or competitions. Again, this is subject to the parties listed above, and what they choose to institute.

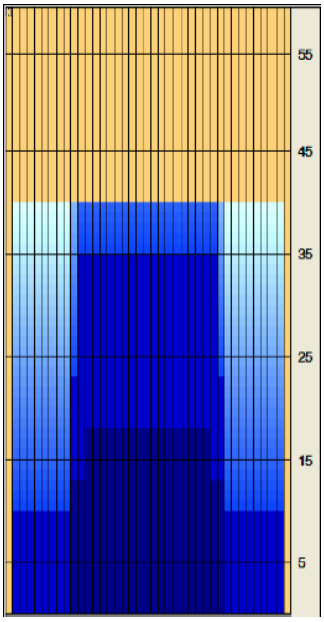


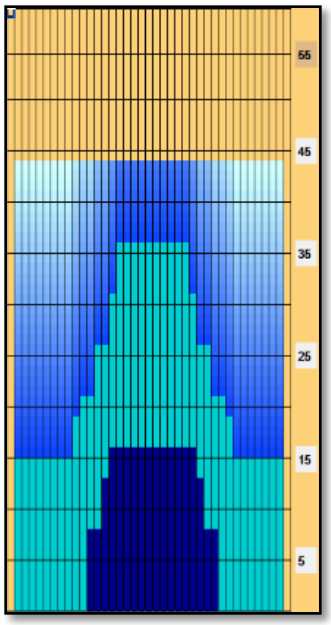


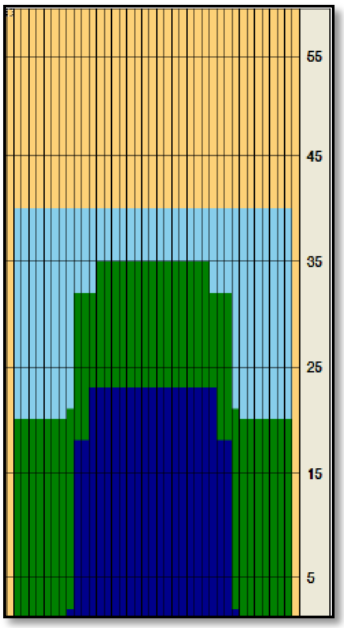
Some states chose to conduct season matches with a basic “house shot”. A “house shot” is the standard lane condition that the bowling center puts out for all participating leagues or open play. The conditions tend to be easy and enjoyable for all bowlers to compete on. Not all “house shots” are the same, but they tend to share similar characteristics.

When teams begin to enter regional competitions to qualify for state, most states use a more difficult pattern. These tend to be either a modified “house shot”, or an easier sport bowling pattern. The mentality behind this is to insure that the best competition takes place. The patterns used in this instance are purely at the discretion of the previous parties mentioned.

Lane conditions should be decided by the participating parties in regards to what works best for the outcome they are trying to achieve; keeping in mind the integrity of competition and the abilities of the student-athletes.







SMART Program:

USBC offers millions of dollars in scholarship money to help young bowlers get a jump start on their dreams. More than $6 million in scholarship money is offered each season by bowling associations and councils, certified tournaments and proprietors throughout the United States.

SMART, which stands for Scholarship Management and Accounting Reports for Tenpins, is a program that began operation in 1994 as a service offering the bowling community a centralized location to manage bowling scholarship funds as well as providing USBC members with a resource for inquiries about bowling scholarships. In 2010, the SMART Bowling Scholarship Funding Corporation was created as an independent entity dedicated to the management, protection and promotion of the SMART scholarship funds.

SMART oversees bowling organizations' scholarship funds for individuals who have earned scholarships. USBC's SMART staff provides complimentary assistance for recipients and providers.

SMART MISSION:
To assist youth bowlers and life-long learners to achieve their full potential in life through their accomplishments in bowling competition and educational learning.

We will do this by encouraging the organizing of bowling tournaments, special events and donations to create scholarships for youth bowlers and providing for the effective and convenient access, safe keeping, and prudent management of such scholarship funds until such time as they are able to be distributed in compliance with all NCAA regulations.

SMART VISION:
To be the premier custodian of youth scholarship funds in bowling admired for its efficiency, transparency, and friendly and responsive service.

The SMART program began operation in August 1994 as a service offering the bowling community a centralized location to manage bowling scholarship funds.

The SMART Scholarship Program is designed to assist organizations in setting up, managing and disbursing youth bowling scholarships. Since its inception, the SMART Program has proven to be a secure, effective timesaver for scholarship providers. SMART also provides its USBC members with a resource for inquiries about bowling scholarships and fosters the youth members' pursuit of continuing education. The program disburses youth bowling scholarships in compliance with the United States Olympic Committee ("USOC"), the National Collegiate Athletic Association ("NCAA"), and the state's high school athletic association's rules and policies.

Participation in the program is at no cost to the provider and/or member. The SMART operating expenses are covered by using income generated from the investment of scholarship funds on deposit. Residual income, after the operating expenses are deducted, is allocated back to the scholarship organizations participating in the program.

I highly encourage those very interested in SMART to visit the links below, or contact the SMART Team in regards to your questions. SMART contact information is located on Page 10.

For more information, please visit www.bowl.com/smart.

Click here for the SMART Procedure and Reference Manual.

USBC Coaching Opportunities:

USBC Coaching is dedicated to the development of coaches around the world. They specialize in delivering engaging information and training to help you take your team or student to the next level. There are two certification courses from USBC Coaching that high school coaches might find interesting and helpful, the Level I certification and the Fundamentals of Team Coaching certification.

The USBC Coaching Level I online course covers fundamentals that apply to youth and adults and includes topics such as:

- Roles and responsibilities of a coach
- Progression of skills from two-handed delivery to the basic four-step approach
- Sport safety
- Maintaining a positive teaching approach and environment
- Adding fun to your youth program
- An overview of programs and opportunities
- Analyze video case studies

Prerequisite: RVP Approval (For more information on RVP: bowl.com/rvp); Youth must be 13 years of age or older to take this course.

Class fee: $49.00 (includes a PDF of manual in Reference Resources)

Click here to sign up.

Fundamentals of Team Coaching is an online course designed for new and veteran coaches, youth, parents and anyone wanting to increase their knowledge about team bowling. The three lessons cover:

- Your role as Team Coach
- The Facility and Equipment
- Educating your Team.

Prerequisites: Level I Certification (or higher); **RVP Approval (**For more information on RVP: bowl.com/rvp)

Class fee: $49.00 (includes a PDF of manual in Reference Resources)

Click here to sign up.

For additional information about USBC Coaching Certifications, please click here.

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