



Handicap

The United States Bowling Congress (USBC) defines handicapping as the means of placing bowlers and teams of varying degrees of bowling skill on as equitable a basis as possible for competition against each other.

Myth:

Any handicap used by a league equalizes competition.

BUSTED: The results of an extensive four year study of handicap leagues -- mixed, all women and all men -- disclosed that the handicap percentages 75%, 80% and 90% do NOT achieve this goal as illustrated by the results from the study as follows:

<u>Handicap Percent</u>	<u>Championship Won by Team with Average Below Median in the League</u>	<u>Championship Won by Team with Average Above Median in the League</u>
70	0 out of 100	100 out of 100
75	0 out of 100	100 out of 100
80	0 out of 100	100 out of 100
85	6 out of 100	94 out of 100
90	11 out of 100	89 out of 100
95	24 out of 100	76 out of 100
100	30 out of 100	70 out of 100

Myth:

At 100% handicap every team has a 50-50 chance of winning.

BUSTED: Even at 100% handicap, as the above chart shows, the higher average teams or bowlers still have a decided edge. Seventy out of 100 championships are still won by the higher average team when 100% handicap is used. An exact 50-50 distribution of league championships would result only if a 116% handicap was used.

Myth:

USBC has a rule that bowling shoes must be worn during USBC competition.

BUSTED: The only rule USBC has relating to shoes is Rule 12, “Approaches Must Not Be Defaced.” Rule 12 states that soft rubber soles and heels that rub off on the approach cannot be worn. Today, many bowlers are using a tennis shoe for the push-away foot to give more momentum and keep from sliding.

Bowling centers, leagues, and tournaments may have rules that require bowlers to wear nothing but bowling shoes on the lanes.

Myth:

League rules supersede USBC Rules.

BUSTED: USBC Rules are the basis for the game of American Tenpins. Leagues may adopt rules as long as they do not conflict with USBC Rules. Many USBC rules allow leagues to adopt options, in this instance adopted league rules would take precedence; otherwise, USBC Rules are the default. The USBC General Playing Rules (Rules 1-18) are examples of rules that have no options; these rules are the basics of the game which cannot change.

A good example of a rule that is often changed by leagues is Rule 106d, “Tardy Players.” We often see leagues adopt a rule stating the bowler can join the game and make up frames missed until a designated frame, when in reality the USBC Rule states the bowler may join in the game at any frame and must take one-tenth of the league absentee score for all frames missed.

Tardy Players

Rule 106d. Unless otherwise provided by league rule, a player who arrives late may be permitted to bowl after a game has started under these conditions:

1. The player shall begin play, with the score to count, beginning with the frame then being bowled by the team.
2. The player shall receive one-tenth of the absentee score for each frame not bowled.
3. Partial games shall not be used in determining a bowler’s average, unless league rules require the secretary to maintain averages based on the actual frames bowled by each player.

Myth:

A foul is committed any time a bowler crosses the foul line.

BUSTED: A delivery takes place when a ball is released into fair territory, according to Rule 4a. If a bowler crosses the indefinite line including walls, flooring, posts and ball returns before a bowler is in position for the next delivery on that lane, a foul is created. Conversely, a bowler who never releases the ball does not commit a foul.

For example, the bowler is up to bowl, goes through the approach and sticks just before the foul line. The bowler topples and loses balance and steps onto the lane but holds onto the ball. No foul is committed; the player did not release the ball. Basically - no delivery completed, no foul.

Have something you believe is true? Maybe it is, maybe not. Send your thoughts to: Rules@bowl.com SUBJECT: *Mythbusters*.