

# League Bowler Development System

## League Structure



Prepared by  
The BPAA League Development Committee

## Introduction

The League Bowler Development system provides bowling center owners, operators, managers and other personnel with fast and efficient guidance on the development and retention of league bowlers.

This system will provide you with the tools and techniques necessary to meet your league goals, regardless of the season.

No matter how much or how little skill you have in league development, the guidance in this system will make you a better, more proficient and more confident bowling center owner, operator or manager.

## Why Do You Need This System Now?

In the past quarter of a century, America's appetite for entertainment has grown, expanded and become more diverse. Consumers want the latest and greatest, the newest and fastest and they want it now.

As a result of these changing lifestyles and demographic movements, the demand for league bowling participation, especially for traditional 30+ weeks has decreased, making the job of developing new and retaining existing customers even more challenging.

In an effort to get you plugged in to new and exciting ways to build leagues as well as tricks, tips and secrets, this **League Bowler Development System has been designed as a reference tool**, a tool that we believe is even more important than ever and is organized in a way that allows you to choose the topics and utilize the sections most relevant to your current business situation. You will find that the information is well organized and easy to find.

## League Structure

In this section we will cover the league structure and the key elements that go into defining the structure for your center.

### In This Chapter:

- ✓ **Making Leagues Fun**
  - The importance of league structure and how it relates to bowler retention
  - The growth ladder of leagues for bowlers and creating culture of fun
  
- ✓ **The Team Make Up**
  - Matching league bowlers with appropriate teams
  
- ✓ **The Handicap System**
  - What is the role of handicap in the league system?
  - A handicap template that you can give to new leagues and new bowlers
  
- ✓ **Games/Pots/Brackets**
  - How do these side games benefit and impact the league bowling experience?
  - What are house rules for conducting these programs during league play?
  
- ✓ **Various League Formats (traditional and short season leagues)**
  - Various formats for changing customer tastes
  - Executing new and current league programs
  
- ✓ **League Meetings**
  - Understanding the importance of the league meeting
  - A league meeting template
  - Scheduling the league meeting
  - Hosting league meetings

- ✓ **League Officer Management**
  - Define the role of league officers
  - The league officer monthly checklist
  
- ✓ **League Officer Meetings**
  - The value of league officers and of hosting a league officer meeting
  - Developing a league officer meeting agenda
  - Scheduling league officer meetings
  - Hosting league officer meetings
  
- ✓ **League Recordkeeping**
  - Define the service you are providing to league bowlers
  
- ✓ **League Rules and Operating Systems**
  - Develop a set of house league rules to be used for all house leagues
  
- ✓ **Prize Fund Management**
  - Is your center going to offer league banking?
  - How to set up the league banking system
  - What is the center's role and responsibility of a league prize fund?

✓ **Making Leagues Fun**

The whole premise of any league is that it is well organized and the guest has a great experience. It is also vitally important that people know they will be bowling in a league where they really have an opportunity to compete and that they are on a team where their team mates are similar to them in their attitude about competition and/or socialization.

So if, for example, the person is on a team where everyone is highly competitive and that person is not, they would probably have more fun if they were on a team that was only mildly competitive and places more importance on the social aspects of league bowling rather than the competitive aspects of the league experience.

The best way to explain the league to a potential league bowler is via a flyer that relates all necessary information.

- A flyer relative to any league should explain the basics of the league so that a potential bowler is not confused.
- League flyers should be readily available and a person (counter control, manager, assistant manager, shift supervisor, etc.) who is well versed should be available to explain the league and answer any questions that the potential bowler may have.

It is important to note that research indicates that both current and previous league bowlers agree that “fun” and “competitive” are NOT mutually exclusive formats. It is possible to have a fun league that is social as well as a fun league that is competitive.

- In focus groups with successful proprietors of league bowling, “fun” in the formation and planning of leagues is the single biggest change they have seen over the years.
- It is also important to provide a growth path for league bowlers that desire to move along the life cycle and give them opportunities to develop their ability, frequency and skill level.

**The basics of any league program include the type of league, the handicap system and the length of the league season.**

- Is it a men’s league, women’s league, kids’ league, adult/child league or mixed league?
- If it is a mixed league, does it consist of two men and two women or can it be any combination of women and men?
- Is it a singles league, doubles, three-person, four-person or five-person team?
- What will the handicap be?

## ✓ Team Make Up

**One of the main reasons that bowlers quit their league is because they are not happy being on their team.** The reasons could include:

- Bowling skill does not match the other team members' skill levels and bowler feels that she is "costing her team points," which they frequently mention to her.
- Other team mates are far more competitive than the bowler and are only concerned about "prize fund money."
- Other team members show up consistently late.
- Other team members bowl so slow that the disgruntled bowler doesn't get home till very late.
- Bowler has nothing in common with other team members and very little verbal interaction; he's just not having fun.
- Other team members drink too much and get rowdy and boisterous.
- Too much side gambling and bowler can't afford to participate so he feels left out.

While it is likely there are other reasons bowlers are unhappy in their league, you can avoid many of these problems by asking a NEW bowler a few simple questions, as outlined in Exhibit 4.1.

## Exhibit 4.1 Sample Questionnaire for New League Bowler

- Do you prefer to bowl in a mixed league, men's league or women's league? \_\_\_\_\_
- When was the last time you bowled in a league? \_\_\_\_\_
- What was your league bowling average? \_\_\_\_\_
- What level of competition are you comfortable with: (check one line only)?
  - highly competitive team \_\_\_\_\_
  - moderately competitive \_\_\_\_\_
  - just there for the fun \_\_\_\_\_
- Would you say you are a: (check one line only)?
  - Serious bowler \_\_\_\_\_
  - Somewhat serious \_\_\_\_\_
  - Not real serious at all \_\_\_\_\_
- How important are league awards to you?
  - Very important \_\_\_\_\_
  - Somewhat important \_\_\_\_\_
  - Somewhat not important \_\_\_\_\_
  - Not very important \_\_\_\_\_
- Do you mind being on a team where some of the other team members smoke?
  - Yes \_\_\_\_\_
  - No \_\_\_\_\_
- What is your vocation (what do you do for a living)?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Outside of bowling what are your favorite sports or hobbies?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

By getting answers to both skill levels of the bowler and some lifestyle questions, you will be better able to place the new bowler on a team with people who have similar skill levels, similar attitudes toward league bowling and also have similar interests outside of the center.

## ✓ The Handicap System

Many bowlers, including newcomers or beginners in the game, do not understand the system of **how to calculate bowling handicap**. It is important to point out to your new bowlers that the same bowling scoring system is used universally and, therefore, handicap in bowling is universal in its use during competitive aspects of the game.

Most amateur bowling leagues and tournaments utilize a bowling handicap system. **Calculating bowling handicaps** allows bowlers of varying levels of skill and ability to have an equal chance of winning.

- A bowling handicap is a percentage of the difference between the bowler's average and a basis average.
- If the bowler has never bowled in a league, leagues assign an average until it is established or apply an initial average retroactively as soon as a few games are bowled.
- The league ultimately votes on the handicap system they use. The basis score is a high score intended to be more than any individual bowler's average. Typically, basis scores range from about 200, 210, or 220.
- The percentage factor is used to calculate the bowler's handicap and will usually be 80, 90, or 100 percent, but may vary in special competitions.
- To determine a bowler's average, add the scores from all of their official league games, then divide by the number of games bowled.



## EXHIBIT 4.2 Handicap Template

Base for  
Handicap: 220

Percentage of  
Handicap: 80%

Average	Handicap	Average	Handicap	Average	Handicap	Average	Handicap
80	112	120	80	160	48	200	16
81	111	121	79	161	47	201	15
82	110	122	78	162	46	202	14
83	109	123	77	163	45	203	13
84	108	124	76	164	44	204	12
85	108	125	76	165	44	205	12
86	107	126	75	166	43	206	11
87	106	127	74	167	42	207	10
88	105	128	73	168	41	208	9
89	104	129	72	169	40	209	8
90	104	130	72	170	40	210	8
91	103	131	71	171	39	211	7
92	102	132	70	172	38	212	6
93	101	133	69	173	37	213	5
94	100	134	68	174	36	214	4
95	100	135	68	175	36	215	4
96	99	136	67	176	35	216	3
97	98	137	66	177	34	217	2
98	97	138	65	178	33	218	1
99	96	139	64	179	32	219	0
100	96	140	64	180	32	220	0
101	95	141	63	181	31	221	0
102	94	142	62	182	30	222	0
103	93	143	61	183	29	223	0
104	92	144	60	184	28	224	0
105	92	145	60	185	28	225	0
106	91	146	59	186	27	226	0
107	90	147	58	187	26	227	0
108	89	148	57	188	25	228	0
109	88	149	56	189	24	229	0
110	88	150	56	190	24	230	0
111	87	151	55	191	23	231	0
112	86	152	54	192	22	232	0
113	85	153	53	193	21	233	0
114	84	154	52	194	20	234	0
115	84	155	52	195	20	235	0
116	83	156	51	196	19	236	0
117	82	157	50	197	18	237	0
118	81	158	49	198	17	238	0
119	80	159	48	199	16	239	0

For example, if a bowler has three games with scores of 140, 146, and 156, you have a total series score of 442 pins.

- Divide the series score by three for the per game average which is 147.3 pins per game.
  - Always drop a fraction of a pin. The official average in this example then works out to 147.
- Subtract the average score from the basis score and multiply the result by the percentage factor to calculate the bowling handicap. Suppose the basis score is 220 and the percentage factor is 80 percent. If the average is 147, you have  $(220-147=73) \times 0.80 = 58.4$ .
  - Again, drop the fraction. The handicap in this example is 58 pins per game.
- Add the handicap to the bowler's actual score for each game. For instance, if the bowler has a game in which the score is 160 and the handicap is 58, the adjusted score is 218.

The United States Bowling Congress (USBC), the sanctioning body for bowling making the rules and regulations of play, 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.

The object of a league is for the bowler to enjoy him/herself and have some fun with his/her teammates and with others in their league. Handicap leagues usually bring out goodwill in most of the bowlers and an atmosphere of friendly competition emerges.

Bowling in handicap tournaments can be rewarding both by remaining competitive because of the handicap system and because of the enjoyment brought forth by competing for prizes or monies.

## ✓ **Games, Pots and Brackets**

A bowling pot is literally a pot of money that league bowlers contribute to during the league experience. Usually it involves bowling a strike or a series of strikes in designated frames based on your average.

As a bowler, you pay a small (usually anywhere from \$2 to \$10) fee to get into the contest, and then if you win, you have the chance to bowl a strike.

- If you succeed, you get the money.
- Rules may vary from league to league.

### **Here's how it usually works:**

A lot of leagues run the strike pot like a raffle. During the first game of the night, someone will walk around selling tickets to anyone who is interested in getting in on the action.

- Tickets are usually cheap - a dollar each (or five for \$3, or 10 for \$5, etc.) and a lot of bowlers will not only partake, but will spend a lot of money trying to get into this contest.
- Then, once everyone had a chance to buy tickets, a random drawing is held. One ticket is pulled, and that bowler has won the drawing. However, he/she hasn't won the money...yet.
- His/Her next frame is going to be important. It doesn't matter what his/her score is at the moment, when he/she is up or what else is going on. If his/her next shot is a strike, he/she wins the money in the strike pot. If it's not a strike, he/she will typically be given nothing, or in some cases, a dollar for every pin knocked down.
- When someone fails to strike, the money will be left in the pot and go toward next week's drawing. After a few weeks of no winners, you'll see bowlers increasing their spend to try and win.

## Brackets

In bowling, brackets are a type of competition within regular league play. Each bowler pays the entry fee amount (sometimes one dollar or five dollars, or more) prior to competition.

- Bowlers are entered into a random drawing (either mechanically or by computer). They are then drawn against another player for each game of competition. The bowlers can be given a handicap to make it a fair bet or the brackets can be based on scratch play with no handicap involved.
- Essentially, brackets are a type of "pot game" in which bowlers can compete directly against other bowlers during league or tournament play.
- The winner of the head-to-head match moves on to the second round in the bracket competition with all of the other winners from the first game. The loser is then eliminated in that bracket.
- This elimination process happens after each game and the winners of the third game win the payout for the bracket, if the competition is based on three games of bowling. A common 3-game league would consist of 8 bowlers per bracket.
- There are bracket formats allowing for two games of competition and others for a greater number of games in competition.
  - Starting with 8 bowlers after game 1 there are now 4 bowlers left. The bracket tree causes the 4 bowlers to be paired into 2 groups of 2 bowlers. After the 2nd game, the bowler with the higher score in their bracket pairing would move on to the final bracket level.
  - Now there are 2 bowlers and they bowl against each other.
  - The bowler with the highest 3rd game would get the winner's share of the money and the other bowler would get the runner-up share of the money.

- It is possible to enter into multiple brackets thereby increasing chances of winning money.
- An example of a common bracket payout formula is based on a typical 3-game league bracket which would cost each bowler \$5.00.
  - 8 bowlers X \$5.00 is a total prize fund of \$40.00.
  - There is usually a \$5.00 administrative charge (this is the money paid to the center, or person, running the brackets).
  - That leaves \$35.00 in the prize fund.
  - This money is usually a split \$30.00 for the Winner share and \$ 5.00 (money back) for the runner-up share.
- Bracket wagering is often accompanied by side pot wagering where the highest individual game winners are rewarded with prize monies.

Research shows that league bowlers of all levels of experience find the action of brackets, strike pots, or virtually any side action as an important part of the overall league experience. The center can choose to be an active part of this, or let it run on its own.

### ✓ **League Formats**

Historically, and up until recently, league formats have consisted of 2 to 5 person teams that run about 32 to 36 weeks starting the day after Labor Day and continuing until the week before Memorial Day.

However, as the lifestyles of Americans have changed, so has league bowling. Many proprietors now offer shorter season leagues, anywhere from 4-week learn-to-bowl programs to 16-week leagues to almost anything in between.

Additionally, leagues can be very competitive to very social. That is, one league can be highly competitive fiercely competing for prize fund winnings while another league could be purely social; just looking for a night out to socialize, eat and drink.

When constructing a league it is important that you make sure that its members understand the “format” of the league.

**Here is a sample of different leagues that could be more competitive or more social or a mixture of both:**

1. Men’s scratch league
2. Men’s classic league
3. Women’s classic league
4. Mixed league – high prize fund
5. Mixed league – low prize fund
6. Junior leagues
7. Adult/child have-a-ball
8. Learn to bowl program
9. 8 for 8 leagues (\$8 for 8 weeks)
10. 10 for 10 leagues (\$10 for 10 weeks)
11. 12 for 12 leagues (\$12 for 12 weeks)
12. Premium leagues (jackets, concert tickets, Viz-a-ball, etc.)
13. Tournament leagues
14. Pizza and beer leagues
15. Company league of their own
16. 9 pin or 8 pin no tap leagues
17. Once a month leagues

It is vitally important to place a new league member in the right league based upon his or her (skill level) average, when they prefer to bowl (day and time) and in what type (fun, social, competitive) of league they are looking for.

Customers today demand more flexibility, shorter seasons and certainly a league atmosphere that makes them feel comfortable.

Some examples of leagues that meet a changing demand include:

1. **A single parent and child league** that meets every other week to accommodate alternate weekend visits
2. **Once a month leagues** for different groups like Chamber of Commerce, social organizations, or even companies
3. **4-week learn to bowl programs** (like Bowling 2.0) that teaches people how to bowl, and gets them ready to join a league so they have a sense of achievement, thus creating more enjoyment



To learn more about various league formats, refer to the **Planning, Communications, or Marketing sections.**

### ✓ **League Meetings**

In this section we are going to cover the importance of league meetings and how to set up, schedule and conduct them.

- **It is important to attend all league meetings.** The league business for many centers is the heart and soul of the business and to truly know your business, you need to know your customers and gauge their satisfaction or dissatisfaction.
- Therefore, you need to be at ALL league meetings if nothing more than to observe your staff, answer any questions that the staff might not be able to handle and let your best customers know that you care because you are in attendance.

- Some existing leagues have their league officers already decided by the time they come to the league meeting, having voted them into office at the end of the previous season.
  - However, if it is a new league, there needs to be a slate of officers as follows:
    - Election of league officers
    - Elect a President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. These are the essentials although some leagues have Sgt. At Arms, Banquet and Prize Fund Committee Chairmen

## **The League Meeting Template**

There are many different ways to establish an agenda (or template) for a league meeting. If this is the initial league meeting that takes place one week before the start of the league or an hour before the league actually starts, here are some items that should to be included on the meeting template/agenda, as outlined in Exhibit 4.3 below:

### **Exhibit 4.3 Agenda for Initial League Meetings**

1. Welcome by Center Management
2. Review League Benefit Program as well as any new happenings in the center
3. Take attendance of attendees from league sign-up sheet and last year's roster
4. Review and vote on league rules for upcoming season
5. Go bowl and have fun!



Below are some considerations and helpful information about what your league rules should cover.

- League name, date and time league bowls
- Number of people on a team (men, women, mixed, scratch, handicap or no tap)
- Introduce staff and any new people who have joined
- Discuss the handicap (handicap % to be voted on)
- Center establishes lineage price
- Prize fund amount (if any) to be voted on
- League banking procedures and collections
- If it is an established league, you will have league officers (they are usually elected at the end of the previous season)
- League rules are reviewed and if no change to the rules from the previous year, they are again adopted. However, some rules are subject to change. It is good to have a USBC representative at any league meeting you feel will be subjected to a change in their rules.
- What dates will be skipped (no bowling) such as Christmas Day or Christmas Eve or a day that you may have a tournament (usually on a weekend).
- Decide on rules for position round. Usually **position round is the final round of bowling prior to final seeding for a championship**, and it always involves one versus two, three versus four, five versus six and so on, all the way down to the lowest place.

- Verify averages
- **Decide on rules for vacancies, blinds, absentee scores.**  
 Definition of a “Blind”: the score applied to a bowler who misses league play. Most leagues mandate a blind score of a bowler's average or a bowler's average minus ten. If bowling against the absent bowler, the bowler must beat his/her blind score to earn the victory.
  - **What is the difference between “absentee” and “vacancy?”**
    - As defined in the USBC rule book, **an absentee score is used when a regular member is absent and a substitute is not available.** Unless otherwise provided by league rule, the absentee score for each game shall be the member’s current average less 10 pins and, in handicap leagues, the handicap is based on the member’s current average.
    - According to the USBC rule book, **a vacancy score is used when the team’s roster is less than the playing strength of the league.** The vacancy score shall be 120 unless the league rules state another number. In handicap leagues, handicap for vacancy scores is calculated using the same handicap percentage the league utilizes for its regular members unless the league rules state otherwise.
    - For example, if the league’s regular handicap is 100% of 220, vacancy scores must be calculated on the same basis unless the league rules state otherwise.
- How many bowlers constitute a legal line up at time to bowl?

- Number of games to establish an average in a handicap league (usually 9 in a fall league and 3 in a short term league)
- What frame a person may show up during before given a blind score for that game
- Check in all bowlers to see how many teams there are and if anyone is missing bowlers or if there are any individuals that need to be placed on a team.

## Exhibit 4.4 Sample League Rules



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# USBC Sample Adult League Rules

**Note:** The following is a set of league rules, which may be adopted by completing the blanks and providing copies to each team. Other options may be available as provided in the rules outlined in Chapter 4 of the USBC Playing Rules book. Other rules may be added, but cannot in any way conflict with USBC Rules.

The \_\_\_\_\_ League will bowl on \_\_\_\_\_ (day of week) at \_\_\_\_\_ am/pm at \_\_\_\_\_ (name of bowling center). The league will have a scheduled starting date of \_\_\_\_\_ and a scheduled ending date of \_\_\_\_\_ and will participate for a total of \_\_\_\_\_ weeks. The league will not bowl on the following dates: \_\_\_\_\_.

**OPTION:** The schedule will be divided into \_\_\_\_\_ (halves, thirds, quarters). If there are an unequal number of weeks, the extra week will be placed in the last segment.

**Rule 1.** The league board of directors, which consists of the officers and team captains, shall manage this league. The board of directors/full membership (select one) adopts the league rules. (Refer to USBC Rule 122.)

Position	Name	Home Phone	Work Phone
President			
Vice President			
Secretary			
Treasurer			
Sergeant-at-Arms			

**Rule 2.** The league will consist of \_\_\_\_\_ teams with a playing strength of \_\_\_\_\_. Rosters will be limited to \_\_\_\_\_ members per team.

The names of players, as well as any changes in the roster during the season, are to be reported by the team captain to the league secretary before a player competes.

**Rule 3.** League fees, which must be paid by each member each session, shall be \$\_\_\_\_\_ of which \$\_\_\_\_\_ covers the cost of bowling, \$\_\_\_\_\_ is for the secretary/treasurer's salary, and the balance of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to be placed in the league account. Games shall be forfeited by any team whose participating members are not current in league fee payments. The secretary's salary shall be paid at the completion of the league schedule.

**Rule 4.** The team franchise (team spot) is held by the team captain. The captain must notify the league secretary of the team's intention to retain the franchise for the next season by \_\_\_\_\_ (date). (Refer to USBC Rule 104b.)

**Rule 5.** An account will be opened in the name of the league and deposits must be made within 7 days of receipt. Withdrawals from the account may only be made with the joint signatures of at least two officers as designated by the league board of directors. The league president shall verify the account monthly.

**Rule 6.** A prize list, drawn up by a committee appointed by the league president, must be submitted for approval by the league board of directors/full membership (select one) within five weeks after the start of the schedule. (Refer to USBC Rule 117a.)



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All league members must bowl at least 2/3 of the league's scheduled games to be eligible for individual league prizes or awards. (Refer to USBC Rule 117b, Item 2a).

Special individual/team high series and game prizes shall be awarded on a scratch/handicap basis.

**Rule 7.** Entering averages of all players shall be determined in the following order:

- a. Average established in this league last season, based on 21 games or more.
- b. Highest average from the previous season in any USBC league, based on 21 games or more.
- c. Current average from another USBC league, based on 21 games or more.
- d. Bowlers who do not have a qualifying average outlined in items a-c will establish their average the first session they bowl.
- e. The maximum entering average per team is \_\_\_\_\_ (delete if this does not apply).

**Rule 8.** The league will determine wins and losses on a handicap / scratch basis (select one). Handicap will be \_\_\_\_\_ % of the difference between a bowler's average and a scratch figure of \_\_\_\_\_. (The scratch figure should be higher than the highest average in the league and shall not be limited unless otherwise provided by league rule.)

**Rule 9.** The USBC Membership fees required to participate in the league are as follows:

Men \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Women \$ \_\_\_\_\_

The league will be certified through USBC. Adult membership fees must be paid before completion of the bowler's first series.

**Rule 10.** The league will consist of:  Males only  Females only  Males and Females

Substitutes will/will not be permitted to participate in the league (select one).

Pacers will/will not be permitted to participate in the league (select one).

A substitute or replacement may be a male/female/male or female (select one). (Refer to USBC Rule 107c, Item 6.)

**Rule 11.** The minimum legal lineup of \_\_\_\_ players must be present before the completion of the first frame of each game. Regular members and substitutes (unless league rules provide otherwise) count toward a legal lineup. (Refer to USBC Rule 109a for minimum legal lineup provision.)

**Rule 12.** When bowling in a known forfeit situation or scheduled against a non-existent team, the team must bowl at least the team average less 10 pins per player to earn the points. (Refer to USBC Rule 110c, Item 2 and 104d.)

**Rule 13.** Absentee and vacancy scores will be allowed when a team has a legal lineup, but less than a full lineup at the start of any game in a series. Handicap will be figured on the average of absent member. The absentee score will be the absent member's average minus 10 pins. (Unless otherwise provided by league rule.)

Teams having an incomplete roster (vacancy on the team) will use a score of \_\_\_\_\_ for the vacant position, which shall be used for the basis of determining handicap. (Refer to USBC Rule 105d, Items 1a and 1b.)

**Rule 14.** All postponement requests must be approved by the postponement committee/league board of directors. In the absence of a postponement committee, the league board of directors is responsible for making decisions on all prebowl/postponement requests.

Teams may request to bowl unopposed before or after a regularly scheduled match. All requests must be made through the league prior to the league start time except for emergencies. Procedures outlined in Rule 111a-g must be followed. (See USBC Rule 111b for information regarding emergency postponements.)



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**Rule 15.** A bowler who arrives late may enter the game provided \_\_\_\_ frames have not been completed. In this situation frames missed may be made up. (Refer to USBC Rule 109c.)

**Rule 16.** Team position standings shall be determined on a point basis, with \_\_\_\_ point(s) awarded for each game won and \_\_\_\_ point(s) awarded for the high team series in each match.

**Rule 17.** If a team or individual must withdraw from the league during the season, two weeks notice and sufficient reason must be given in accordance with USBC Rule 114a.

## ✓ League Officer Management

### **League Officer Roles & Responsibilities**

#### **Bowling League Officer**

A bowling league officer is a person elected by league members to handle certain tasks for the entire league. Not every league has the same number of officers, as larger leagues require more people to keep things organized. We will look at the most common and basic league officers so you can get a feel for what each one does.

#### **President**

The bowling league president is the person in charge of overseeing every aspect of the league. He or she delegates tasks to other officers to make sure practices and tournaments work out well, and he or she runs the meetings for the league. This person also acts as a representative of the league during bowling association meetings and more.

The league president must organize all of the tournaments throughout the year, and he or she must attend them when possible. This may be done in collaboration with other officers, but at the end of the day, the president makes the final decisions.

## **Vice President**

As you may expect, the vice president in a bowling league is in charge of helping the president in whatever way possible. If the president is sick and unable to attend a meeting, the vice president steps in and handles it for a day. If, for some reason, the president has to leave the league completely, the vice president will usually take over the role until the next election. The vice president will also carry out a lot of the tasks that the president assigns to set up a tournament, like ordering signs or ordering food for the event.

## **Secretary**

A league secretary takes down the minutes for meetings and handles all paperwork. He or she will calculate score averages during tournaments and handicaps before the tournaments even happen. This person must also distribute or post tournament rules for players to see and issue awards at the end of the tournament or season. League secretaries issue letters to players to announce upcoming events, and they keep track of where every player stands in the league.

## **Treasurer**

The league treasurer handles all of the money for the league. This person is in charge of collecting dues, tournament fees, membership fees, and more. This person is also responsible for paying any fees that the league itself may owe, like money given to the bowling center for letting the league be conducted there. Treasurers do a lot of running back and forth to the bank, so he/she needs to be prepared for that.



**USBC provides a League Operations Handbook that is a great additional resource for your use. The handbook is available at [www.bowl.com](http://www.bowl.com) or a PDF version is part of the digital items available for download.**

## The League Officer Monthly Checklist

Many proprietors have informal checklists which consist of weekly get-together, usually on the lanes, asking the secretary or other league officers if there are any problems or concerns.

These concerns may be about:

- Scoring and lane conditions
- Equipment performance
- League disagreements over certain rules
- Specific players who are causing “problems”
- Players who are in arrears with their weekly fees, although this type of problem usually gets addressed by the secretary and/or treasurer of the league

Other proprietors utilize a formal questionnaire that they distribute to the league bowler in October, February and May.

- **One note of caution here:** if you are going to distribute a questionnaire and DO NOT respond to their concerns, you will lose credibility.
- You can always modify this questionnaire or only send it out twice, once in November and again in February or early March so you have a bench mark at the beginning of the season and a “final grade” close to when you will be handing out league contracts for the next season (usually in the February 15<sup>th</sup> to March 15<sup>th</sup> time period).



## EXHIBIT 4.5 League Bowler Questionnaire

Dear League Bowler,

Thank you for bowling at HAPPY LANES. Because we value you as a customer and want to always provide you with a fun, entertaining experience, we would like your input. That's why we have developed this brief questionnaire. We hope that you will take a few moments to complete this important information. In appreciation for your assistance, when you return this survey to the Service Desk you will receive two free games of open bowling.

Sincerely  
(Your Name)  
Owner

Optional: Name: \_\_\_\_\_ League Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Sex: \_\_\_ male \_\_\_ female. Age: \_\_\_18 to 24, \_\_\_25 to 34, \_\_\_35 to 44, \_\_\_45 to 54, \_\_\_55 to 64, \_\_\_65+.

Bowling average: \_\_\_\_\_ # of years as a League Bowler: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Leagues do you bowl in? \_\_\_\_\_ Bowl in a league at another center? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Importance of these areas to you						How satisfied are you in these areas					
"low"		"high"				"low"		"high"			
▪	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
▪	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
▪	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
▪	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
▪	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
▪	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
▪	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
▪	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
▪	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
▪	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
▪	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
▪	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
▪	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
▪	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
▪	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
▪	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
▪	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
▪	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5

Of the items above, which one item would you most want to see improved or changed?

\_\_\_\_\_

General Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

On a scale of 1 to 10 (with 10 being a Very Strong YES), would you recommend HAPPY LANES to a friend or family member?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Please circle the number that best describes your intent to recommend Happy Lanes to a friend or family member.

## ✓ League Officer Meetings

The purpose of league officer meetings is to inform your officers of any new happenings at the center, to review any improvements that might be taking place during the upcoming season and to discuss their specific league, rule changes that have been instituted.

- Most importantly it is for YOU to get a sense of how many teams and bowlers have agreed to come back for the upcoming season.
- Ideally, you want to conduct this league meeting the last week in July, preferably during the week (Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday night around 6pm).
- Serve some refreshments (pizza, chicken wings, sliders, or cold cuts, chips, salads, etc.).
- Offer free bowling after the meeting or run a fun league officer and team captain tournament where you put up a small prize fund of \$250 to \$500.
  - Remember, these people are your “quasi” sales organization and they are the ones that can help to build your league. So what you spend on this night should be viewed as “an investment” and not as an “expense”.

## **Exhibit 4.6 League Officer Meeting Agenda**

### **Happy Lanes (Day date and time)**

- Introduction of staff and league officers
- Review of last year's projects
- Physical plant plans (if any) for this year
- League information and status of sanctioned leagues (USBC Reps)
- New leagues we are planning (short season and why)
- Suggested league structures to retain bowlers
  - Split seasons?
  - Three 17-week seasons?
  - Position rounds
- League bowler benefits
  - Open play bowling discounts
  - Birthday child of league bowler bowls free when he or she has party at Happy Lanes
  - Discounts for company parties or special events when league bowler brings his/her company, organization or group to Happy Lanes
- Tournaments scheduled for this year that will effect schedules
- Pricing (if you are increasing prices or are holding them)
- League strength as of this date (officers and captains)
- Questions and answers

## Exhibit 4.7 League Officer Invite Letter

Dear League Officer,

With summer upon us, fall league bowling cannot be that far away and we are excited to be hosting another season of your league this coming September.

In order to ensure that your league has a great experience every time they bowl at Happy Lanes, we want to extend an invitation to you to attend our league officer meeting and get-together scheduled for (day, date and time).

As you know, we have had many changes to Happy Lanes this year and are planning even more changes in the upcoming year. In addition we would like to assist you in building your league base with any needs you may have.

At the meeting we will cover a host of topics (agenda is attached), share some food and beverage and then open the center to you for some free bowling.

Please RSVP to me, Brad Smith, General Manager at (phone number, extension # or email me at [manager@happylanes.com](mailto:manager@happylanes.com)) before the date of the meeting so we can plan for our food and beverage needs.

Thank you and I look forward to seeing you on (day, date and time)

Sincerely,  
Brad Smith  
Proprietor, Happy Lanes

P.S. We will be conducting a fun “pins over average” tournament with a guaranteed 1<sup>st</sup> place prize of \$100 and a \$250 total prize fund.

## ✓ **League Recordkeeping**

This is one of the most important services a center must offer to its leagues and their members.

- League record keeping (standing sheets)
- Team standings
- League averages
- Individual averages
- Awards for individual and team achievements
  - High games
  - High series
- League banking
  - Payments for lineage
  - Prize fund payments
  - Arrears

Today's back office packages come with a LRS (League Record Service) program. It is certainly a best practice to provide this service to ALL of your leagues as a part of their league benefits.

It is not recommended to put this responsibility in the hands of an officer or third party. These are your most frequent guests and this is a service that you should be providing. It not only is an added value to them, you are in control of this very important function.

## ✓ **Prize Fund Management**

**A prize list should be fair and consider all teams and bowlers.**

- Remember, everyone is contributing to the prize fund and should receive a reasonable amount in return.
- Some prize lists pay team prizes only while others pay team prizes and special individual/team prizes.
- Popular prize lists are the drop down, in which the dollar amount decreases with the standings, or base amount for each team plus point money, or just point money.

**What makes a good Prize Fund?**

- **First, the rules pertaining to league prize funds.**
  - Prize funds should be presented to the league as soon as possible - USBC rules mandate by week 5.
  - Remember a prize fund must have the MAJORITY vote in order to be accepted.
  - What this means is that if you have 16 teams and you distribute 3 prize lists, in order to be accepted one must receive at least 9 votes.
  - Otherwise, you must drop the list(s) with the least votes and re-vote on the 2 lists which received the most votes.
- **Now, you're preparing a list, what should you include?**
  - Most leagues bowl a split season.
  - Example: assume your league has 16 teams and bowls a split season in 2 halves.
  - Your prize fund should pay every team based on standings each half.
  - And then pay the top 2 or 4 teams in a roll-off at the end of the year.
  - Additionally you should pay team awards for High Series Scratch, High Series Handicap, High Game Scratch, and High Game Handicap.

- The awards should be of equal value, and you should pay 2 places in each so that half of the teams in this league will get some team award money.
  - Also, you will pay individual awards for the same: High Series Scratch, High Series Handicap, High Game Scratch, and High Game Handicap.
  - Again these awards should be of equal value, except it is recommended that you pay 3 places in each, so that 12 different bowlers will get individual award money.
  - There will also be awards for High Average (3 places), and Most Improved (2-3 places).
- **Finally, Point Money.**
    - Point money is an amount of money that each team will receive for each point it wins during the regular bowling season – not including roll-offs.
    - Two very important reasons to include point money in your prize fund:
      - Point money will give some of the bottom teams a little extra money which is more evenly distributed than your overall league prizes, because there will just not be as much disparity between first and last place monetarily where point money is concerned.
      - For instance, if point money is worth \$1 per point, then the first place team may get \$160 in point money and the last place team is going to get around \$75 in point money as opposed to the \$600 for first and \$100 for last they are also going to get.
      - The second reason is point money is easily adjusted to account for variation in actual prize fund dollars at the end of the year.
    - In an effort to generate additional prize money, some leagues have 50/50 raffle's, which provide an unknown amount to the prize fund, and therefore you could have a "budget shortfall or windfall" at the end of the year, which

without point money leaves you with a problem of what to do. With point money you have a way to easily adjust the point money to the actual amount in the prize fund at the end of the year.

- Let's assume your League has 16 Teams and a Prize Fund of \$10,000, Exhibit 4.8 below is a sample distribution.

### Exhibit 4.8 Example of League Prize Money Distribution

#### Team Place Awards

First Half	Second Half	Roll-Offs
1st \$500.00	1st \$500.00	1st \$500.00
2nd \$300.00	2nd \$300.00	2nd \$300.00
3rd \$200.00	3rd \$200.00	3rd \$200.00
4th \$175.00	4th \$175.00	4th \$100.00
5th \$150.00	5 <sup>th</sup> \$150.00	
6th \$125.00	6th \$125.00	
7th \$100.00	7th \$100.00	
8th \$100.00	8th \$100.00	
9th \$75.00	9th \$75.00	
10 <sup>th</sup> \$75.00	10th \$75.00	
11th \$50.00	11th \$50.00	
12th \$50.00	12th \$50.00	
13th \$50.00	13th \$50.00	
14th \$50.00	14th \$50.00	
15th \$50.00	15th \$50.00	
16th \$50.00	16th \$50.00	

- **Team Awards**

- High Series Scratch – High Game Scratch – High Series Handicap – High Game Handicap
  - 1st \$ 150.00 2nd \$ 100.00



- **Individual Awards**
  - High Series Scratch – High Game Scratch – High Series Handicap – High Game Handicap
    - 1st \$ 100.00 2nd \$ 60.00 3rd \$40.00
  - High Average
    - 1st \$ 125.00 2nd \$ 75.00 3rd \$50.00
  - Most Improved
    - 1st \$ 75.00 2nd \$ 50.00
  - Point Money
    - Estimated Point Money \$0.82 approximately Per Point \$2,525.00
    - Actual Point Money Adjusted to Reflect Actual Total Prize Fund
    - **Total Prize Fund \$10,000**

## Should you offer league banking?

**The answer is a resounding YES!** Providing in-house league banking for your leagues removes ANY issues with missing funds, period. If you decide to provide league banking, make sure you consult with your CPA for proper handling of these funds for accounting purposes.

If you decided not to offer league banking or you have an existing league that does their banking outside the center, **USBC provides a limited free bonding, burglary/robbery insurance to leagues.**

**There are two valuable services that cover funds when:**

- A league officer misuses funds.
- A league officer, youth league supervisor/official or their messenger is robbed by force or threat of violence. **When using an in-house deposit service, the messenger is the bowling center employee** who takes the deposit to a banking institution.

- Someone burglarizes the premises, vehicle or locked receptacle where funds are kept. There must be visible evidence of forced entry and an on-site police rep.

**To ensure leagues receive full coverage under the USBC insurance program:**

- The league must open an account in the league's name in an insured banking institution or in-house deposit service, and make deposits within a week of receipt.
- **The president and/or youth league supervisor must verify the account each month** by obtaining a statement from the bank or in-house deposit service and mathematically checking for an accurate balance. The account statement is sent to the president for verification purposes.
- **Two elected officers must co-sign for withdrawals.** Two signatures are required on all checks written on a league account regardless of the banking institutions policy.
  - Cosigners cannot be immediate family members.
  - All officers and/or co-signers on the league account must be at least 18 years of age.

**The treasurer, as you would expect,** has the most responsibility for league banking.

- Work with the president to open an account in the league's name at an insured and recognized bank, credit union or in-house banking service.
- All disbursements or withdrawals must have two signatures, even if the bank does not provide or monitor this.

- Account statements are mailed to the president for verification purposes.
- Deposit funds in the league's account within seven (7) days of receipt.
- Work with the league president to verify the league account balance at least once per month.

### League Structure Summary

The structure of your leagues is an important aspect of the league bowling development process as it is directly related to league bowler acquisition, retention and growth. In this section we learned about the importance of:

- ✓ Making leagues fun
- ✓ Matching league bowlers with appropriate teams
- ✓ The handicap system
- ✓ Games, pots and brackets
- ✓ League formats to meet your customers' needs
- ✓ League meetings
- ✓ League Officer roles/responsibilities and meetings
- ✓ League recordkeeping
- ✓ League rules and operating systems
- ✓ Prize fund management