

BRITISH TENPIN BOWLING ASSOCIATION



General Playing Rules

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May 2023 Change- Rule 7 rewritten and legal/illegal string pinfall rule amended



General Playing Rules

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Rule 1 – BTBA Certification

Leagues and tournaments must be organized and bowled in accordance with BTBA Bylaws, rules and regulations. These events must be scheduled on lanes that currently are BTBA certified and only BTBA approved equipment may be used.

Note: Unless otherwise specified all USBC equipment specifications will automatically be approved by the BTBA

[Approved Bowling Balls](#)

Bowling Ball drilling specifications can be found in chapter 8 of the [USBC Rules](#)

Rule 2 – The Game

2a. Definition

A game of tenpins consists of ten (10) frames. A player delivers two balls in each of the first nine frames unless a strike is scored. In the 10th frame, a player delivers three balls if a strike or spare is scored. Every frame must be completed by each player bowling in regular order.

2b. How Scored

Except when a strike is scored, the number of pins knocked down by the player's first delivery is to be marked next to the small square in the upper right-hand corner of that frame, and the number of pins knocked down by the player's second delivery is to be marked inside the small square. If none of the standing pins are knocked down by the second delivery in a frame, the score sheet shall be marked with a (-). The count for the two deliveries in the frame shall be recorded immediately.

2c. Strike

A strike is made when the full setup of 10 pins is knocked down with the first delivery in a frame. It is marked by an (x) in the small square in the upper right-hand corner of the frame where it was made. The count for one strike is 10 plus the number of pins knocked down on the player's next two deliveries.

2d. Double

Two consecutive strikes is a double. The count for the first strike is 20 plus the number of pins knocked down with the first delivery following the second strike.

2e. Triple or Turkey

Three successive strikes is a triple or turkey. The count for the first strike is 30. To bowl the maximum score of 300, the player must bowl 12 strikes in succession.

2f. Spare

A spare is scored when pins left standing after the first delivery are knocked down with the second delivery in that frame. It is marked by a (/) in the small square in the upper right-hand corner of the frame. The count for a spare is 10 plus the number of pins knocked down by the player's next delivery.

2g. Open

An open is recorded when a player fails to knock down all 10 pins after two deliveries in a frame.

2h. Split

A split is a setup of pins left standing after the first delivery, provided the head pin is down and at least one pin is down:

1. Between two or more standing pins; e.g., 7-9 or 3-10.
2. Immediately ahead of two or more standing pins; e.g., 5-6.

NOTE: A split is usually designated by a (0), but any other symbol may be used.

Rule 3 – Modified Formats

Competition in which a modified game of tenpins is played or bumpers are used may be certified by



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BTBA. With the exception of bumpers, all BTBA equipment specifications shall apply to such competition and all BTBA rules shall apply insofar as practical, in addition to the following:

1. Games bowled using the modified format shall not be included in averages established in league play for entry in standard tenpin competition.
2. Only award scores bowled using the standard tenpin scoring system as described in Rule 2a and meeting BTBA equipment specifications qualify for BTBA awards.

BTBA may permit modifications or variations in team play formats for the purposes of exhibition events, television bowling or playoff matches resulting from BTBA tournament competition in the qualifying rounds. The results of such events should be included in the tournament's prize or awards programs.

Rule 4 - Delivering the Ball

4a. Legal Delivery

A delivery is made when the ball leaves the player's possession and crosses the foul line into playing territory. Every delivery counts unless a dead ball is declared. (See Rule 8.) A delivery must be made entirely by manual means. No device may be incorporated in or affixed to the ball that detaches on delivery or is a moving part during delivery except as provided in Rule 4b and Rule 4c.

4b. Special Equipment to Grip the Ball

A player may use special equipment to aid in grasping and delivering the ball if it is in place of a hand, or major portion thereof, lost by amputation or otherwise.

4c. Mechanical Aids to Grip the Ball - Alternating Delivery

A player may, if granted permission by BTBA Head Office and each league or tournament in which the player participates, alternate right/left-handed delivery and/or use special equipment to aid in grasping and delivering the ball.

Permission may be granted if the following is submitted to BTBA Head Office:

1. A doctor's certificate describing the disability and the reason to alternate right/left-handed delivery and/or recommending the aid.
2. Mechanical Aid. A description, drawing or model of the aid. Unless the individual is unable to impart force or impetus to a ball, the aid cannot incorporate a mechanical device with moving parts that would impart force or impetus to the ball.

When authorization is given, BTBA Head Office will provide the player with a special card stating that alternating right/left-handed delivery and/or the use of the specified mechanical aid has been approved. If permission is denied, the player has the right of appeal to the BTBA Legal Committee. Permission may be withdrawn for cause.

4d. Special Considerations to Deliver the Ball

A player unable to execute a delivery in accordance with any of the foregoing procedures may bowl in BTBA competition provided the league's board of directors or tournament management:

1. Authorizes such participation.
2. Establishes specific provisions to govern such participation.

The average established by the player is not acceptable in another league or tournament unless allowed by the rules of that league or tournament. The bowler is eligible for all BTBA awards.



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4e. Tournament Average Relief

Relief of an average, due to injury or disability, for entry into a tournament must be approved by BTBA Head Office in accordance with the following:

1. A player who has become injured or disabled may request relief of his/her BTBA average by providing the following information to BTBA Head Office:
 - a. A doctor's certificate describing the:
 - 1) Disability or injury.
 - 2) Length of disability or injury.
 - 3) Reason for a downward average adjustment.
 - b. Bowler's weekly game-by-game bowling record and current standing sheet from each BTBA league in which the player is participating.
 2. If authorization is granted, BTBA will notify the player:
 - a. The minimum average a tournament may assign the player.
 - b. The time limit for the relief.
 3. Tournament management may, prior to participation:
 - a. Accept the bowler's highest current BTBA league average, provided it meets or exceeds the minimum established by BTBA.
 - b. Assign the bowler an average that meets or exceeds the minimum established by BTBA.
 - c. Deny the relief and require the bowler to use the average as stated in tournament rules.
- Permission may be withdrawn for cause.

Commonly Asked Questions – Rule 4e.

4e/1 Last year I averaged 190 right-handed, but due to an injury I am bowling left-handed and have a 127 average. I want to participate in tournaments bowling left-handed. Can I apply for tournament average relief? If so, how?

Yes. Prior to bowling in any tournament you must submit documentation to BTBA Head Office. (See Rule 4e for details.) Tournament Management cannot give average relief without BTBA first making the decision to grant relief.

4e/2 If BTBA grants average relief does the tournament manager have to accept the relief?

If authorization is granted by BTBA Head Office, the player will be notified in writing of the minimum average a tournament may assign and the time limit for the relief. The bowler then must request tournament management's permission to use the assigned average. However, tournament management still has the authority to deny the relief and require the bowler to use the average as stated in tournament rules or assign the bowler an average that meets or exceeds the minimum established by BTBA.

Rule 5 – Fouls

5a. Definition

A foul occurs when a part of the player's body encroaches on or goes beyond the foul line and touches any part of the lane, equipment or building during or after a delivery. A ball is in play after a delivery until the same or another player is on the approach in position to make a succeeding delivery.

The certification and inspection committee of a local association can require that the foul line be plainly marked on the walls, posts, division boards or any other structure in a bowling center on a line with the regular foul line.

When a foul is recorded the delivery counts, but the player is not credited with any pins knocked down by that delivery. (See Rule 6b.)

NOTE: The foul line is of infinite length including walls, floors, posts and ball returns. A foul is not committed when foreign objects such as pens, jewelry, coins, cigarettes, etc., drop from a bowler's pocket or fall from a person's body or clothing. (Footwear and clothing are considered part of the body.) A player should request permission to cross the foul line to retrieve any items that have fallen beyond the foul line.



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Commonly Asked Questions – Rule 5a.

5a/1 What happens when there is a dispute over a foul call?

According to Rule 10, a provisional ball should be thrown when there is a controversy. A provisional ball or frame shall be bowled when a protest involving a foul cannot be resolved by the two team captains.

When a dispute over a foul occurs, the player shall complete the frame and then bowl one provisional ball. The score sheet or printout and a record of both scores for the frame in which the provisional delivery is made shall be kept. The protest must be referred to the league board of directors for a decision.

5a/2 A player goes over the foul line while retaining possession of the ball. Is this considered a foul?

No. A legal delivery must be executed for a foul to be committed. A legal delivery is made when the ball leaves the player's possession and crosses the foul line into playing territory.

5a/3 A member of a team crosses onto an adjacent approach when making a delivery. Is this considered a foul?

A foul is not called when a bowler crosses onto an adjoining approach area. However, if the bowler steps over the foul line on that lane, it is considered a foul.

5a/4 Is a foul called when the ball rolls over the foul line during delivery and the foul detector is activated?

The bowling ball is not considered a part of the bowler's body. If the bowler did not step on or go beyond the foul line, a foul is not recorded.

5a/5 If a wheelchair, walker or other mechanical aide goes over the foul line during or after delivery is it considered a foul?

Yes. If the chair crosses the foul line and touches any part of the lane, equipment or building during or after delivery. Likewise a bowler holding on to a walker or another mechanical aide while delivering the ball must keep these items from crossing the foul line and touching any surface beyond the foul line.

5b. Deliberate

When a player deliberately fouls to benefit by the calling of a foul, the player shall be credited with zero pinfall for that delivery and not allowed further deliveries in that frame. If questions arise, Rule 10, Provisional Ball, should be followed.

5c. Foul Detection

A BTBA approved automatic foul detecting device must be used, if available. When not available or temporarily inoperative, the following procedures shall be used to call fouls:

1. In tournament play, management shall assign a foul judge or have the official scorers call fouls.
2. In league play, the opposing team captains shall call fouls or a foul judge shall be appointed.

Failure to provide for the calling of fouls as specified shall disqualify scores bowled for BTBA High Score Award consideration.



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Commonly Asked Question – Rule 5c.

5c/1 What happens if our foul lights are not available?

If not available, members of the league should be advised the captains are responsible for the calling of fouls or someone can be designated to act as a foul judge.

5d. Apparent

A foul shall be declared and recorded if the automatic foul detecting device or foul judge fails to call a foul that is apparent to:

1. Both captains, or one or more members of each of the opposing teams, or
2. The official scorer, or
3. A tournament official.

If there is a dispute, refer to Rule 10, Provisional Ball.

Rule 6 - Pinfall

6a. Legal Pinfall Freefall

Pins to be credited to a player following a legal delivery shall include:

1. Pins knocked down or off the lane surface by the ball or another pin.
2. Pins knocked down or off the lane surface by a pin rebounding from a side partition or rear cushion.
3. Pins knocked down or off the lane surface by a pin rebounding from the sweep bar when it is at rest on the pin deck before sweeping dead wood from the pin deck.
4. Pins that lean and touch the kickback or side partition. All such pins are termed dead wood and must be removed before the next delivery.

No pins may be conceded, and only pins actually knocked down or moved entirely off the playing area of the lane surface as a result of a legal delivery may be counted.

6b. Legal Pinfall String

The need to observe the pinfall of all bowlers at all times is essential to assure that string pinfall is correctly recorded in accordance with the rules of legal and illegal pinfall.

Pins to be credited to a player following a legal delivery shall include:

1. Pins knocked down or off the lane surface by the ball, another pin or the string attached to a pin
2. Pins knocked down or off the lane surface by a pin or its attached string, rebounding from a side partition or rear cushion.
3. Any pin which has legally fallen, as above, before the sweep guard starts to drop. If a pin fails to be reset at this point it must be reset.
4. Pins that lean and touch the kickback or side partition. All such pins are deemed dead wood and must be 'removed' before the next delivery if reset by the pinsetter.

No pins may be conceded, and only pins actually knocked down or moved entirely off the playing area of the lane surface as a result of a legal delivery may be counted.

6c Illegal Pinfall

When any of the following occur, the delivery counts but the resulting pinfall does not:

1. A ball leaves the lane before reaching the pins.
2. A ball rebounds from the rear cushion.
3. A pin rebounds after coming in contact with the body, arms or legs of a human pinsetter.
4. A pin is touched by mechanical pinsetting equipment.
5. Any pin knocked down when dead wood is being removed.
6. Any pin knocked down by a human pinsetter.



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7. The player commits a foul.
8. A delivery is made with dead wood on the lane or in the gutter and the ball contacts such dead wood before leaving the lane surface.
9. A delivery is made with dead wood on the lane or in the gutter, and a pin, after coming into contact with the dead wood, knocks down one or more pins.

If an illegal pinfall occurs and the player is entitled to additional deliveries in the frame, i.e. a Dead Ball (see rule 8), the pin(s) illegally knocked down must be respotted where it (they) originally stood before delivery of the ball.

6d Illegal Pinfall String

Any pin which was standing at the point the guard starts to drop but is not reset must be respotted.

Rule 7 – Pins

7a. Improperly Set

It is each player's responsibility to determine if a setup is correct. The player shall insist that any pin(s) incorrectly set be respotted before delivering the ball, otherwise the setup is deemed to be acceptable.

When bowling at a full setup or to make a spare, if it is discovered immediately after the delivery that one or more pins are set improperly, but not missing, the delivery and resulting pinfall count.

No change can be made in the position of any pin(s) left standing after the bowler's first delivery, unless:

1. The pinsetter moved or misplaced any pin(s), or
 2. Any standing pin(s) is (are) outside the range of the sweep bar.
- Any such pin(s) will be respotted where it (they) originally stood before the delivery.

3. If a string pin slides from its original position but does not fall, then whether it is recorded by the pinsetter as fallen or not, it will either automatically be returned to its starting position or will need to be respotted there.

7b. Rebounding

Pins that rebound and stand on the lane must be counted as standing pins. On a string pinsetter such pins will be replaced by the pinsetter on the pin spot from which it originally came.

7c. Replacement

Should a pin or any attached string, be broken or otherwise badly damaged during the game, it shall be replaced at once by another pin/string as nearly uniform in weight and condition with the set in use. The league or tournament officials shall determine whether pins shall be replaced.

A broken pin or its attached string does not change the score made by the bowler. The pins knocked down are counted, after which the broken pin/string is replaced.

NOTE: A broken pin is described as, but not limited to, the following:

1. Any pin with the core exposed where it was originally manufactured with a plastic coating.
2. The plastic base broken, loose or cracked.
3. Any breakage of the core.

Rule 8 – Dead Ball

When a dead ball is called, the delivery does not count and the correct pins must be respotted. The player is allowed to re bowl that delivery.

A ball shall be declared dead if any of the following occur:

- a. After a delivery, attention is immediately called to the fact that one or more pins were missing from the setup.
- b. A human pinsetter interferes with any standing pin before the ball reaches the pins.



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- c. A human pinsetter removes or interferes with any downed pin before it stops rolling.
- d. A player bowls on the wrong lane or out of turn, or one player from each team on the pair of lanes bowls on the wrong lane. (See Rule 9.)
- e. A player has physical contact with another person or moving object as the ball is being delivered and before delivery is completed. In such case, the player has the option to accept the resulting pinfall or have a dead ball called.
- f. Any pin is moved or knocked down as a player delivers the ball but before the ball reaches the pins.
- g. A delivered ball comes in contact with a foreign obstacle.

Commonly Asked Questions – Rule 8.

8/1 If an individual bowls out of turn does the delivery count?

No, according to Rule 8, Item d, a dead ball would be declared and the correct bowler is then required to continue play.

8/2 A player made the first delivery when the pinsetting machine was set on the second cycle. Seven pins were knocked down and the remaining pins were swept away as the machine reverted to cycle one. Should a dead ball be declared and the pins reset?

Since the bowler made a legal delivery and the pins were properly set, there would be no basis for declaring the first delivery a dead ball. The three pins left standing would be reset for a second delivery in accordance with Rule 6b.

8/3 On the second delivery, the sweep bar comes down and deflects the ball before it can make contact with the remaining pins. When this happens, what should we do?

According to Rule 8, Item g, a dead ball is declared when a player's ball comes in contact with any foreign obstacle. The sweep bar is considered a foreign obstacle, and the player is required to have the pin(s) remaining respotted and rebowl the second ball.

Rule 9 – Bowling on the Wrong Lane

In league or tournament play, a dead ball shall be called and the player or players required to rebowl on the correct lane when:

- a). One player bowls on the wrong lane.
- b). One player from each team on the pair of lanes bowls on the wrong lane.

If more than one player on the same team bowls on the wrong lane in turn, all deliveries stand as bowled. Upon discovery, bowlers shall complete subsequent frames on the correct lanes.

In singles match-play competition, where a player normally bowls two frames each time it is the player's turn to bowl, and the player bowls on the wrong lanes, a dead ball shall be called and the player required to rebowl on the correct lanes, providing the error was discovered before the opposing player has made a delivery. Otherwise, the score stands as bowled, with all subsequent frames in the game bowled on the correct lanes.

Rule 10 – Provisional Ball

A provisional ball or frame shall be bowled when a protest involving a foul, legal pinfall or a dead ball is made and cannot be resolved by the two team captains or a tournament official.

The following procedures apply when a dispute occurs:

- a). For the first ball of any frame, or after the second ball in the 10th frame if the first ball was a strike:



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1. **Foul:** The player shall complete the frame and then bowl one provisional ball at a full setup of pins.
2. **Illegal Pinfall:** The player shall complete the frame and then bowl one provisional ball at the same setup which would have remained standing had the disputed pin(s) not have fallen.
3. **Dead Ball:** The player shall complete the frame and then bowl a complete provisional frame.
 - a) On a spare attempt or the third ball of the 10th frame:
 1. **Foul and Illegal Pinfall:** No provisional ball is necessary.
 2. **Dead Ball:** A provisional ball shall be bowled at the same setup which was standing when the disputed ball was bowled.

The score sheet and a record of both scores for the frame in which the provisional delivery was made shall be kept. The protest must be referred to the league board of directors or tournament management for a decision. If they are unable to make a decision, the local association or BTBA can be asked for a decision on submission of the facts relating to the protest.

Rule 11 - Forfeit - Delay of Game

No unreasonable delay in the progress of any game is permitted. If a player or team in a league or tournament refuses to proceed with a game after being directed to do so by a league or tournament official, the game or series shall be declared forfeited.

Rule 12 - Approaches Must Not Be Defaced

The application of any foreign substance on any part of the approach that detracts from the possibility of other players having normal conditions is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, talcum powder, pumice and resin on shoes, and/or soft rubber soles or heels that rub off on the approach.

Commonly Asked Question – Rule 12.

12/1 One of the bowlers is having a difficult time sliding on the approach and applies a commercial product purchased at the center pro shop to the bottom of his/her shoes. The product is designed to help a bowler slide. The secretary says she has received a complaint from the opposing team and notifies the individual to stop using the substance or the game will be forfeited. Can an officer tell a bowler to stop using the substance and declare the game forfeited?

Commercial products, talcum powder or any substance applied to the shoe or approach could be in violation of Rule 12. If a league participant uses a substance and somebody complains that it prohibits him/her from having normal conditions, the league officer should require the individual to immediately stop his/her action. If the individual refuses, his/her games are subject to forfeiture.

Rule 13 - Supplemental Fees

No member of BTBA shall participate or be involved in the operation of a scheme or arrangement requiring a supplemental fee of any type or character for the purpose of having any part or all of a player's score in BTBA league or tournament play qualify for a prize where competing entrants bowl in different bowling centers, except as follows:

- a. Mail-o-graphic league.
- b. Mail-o-graphic tournament.
- c. League scores may be used to determine prize winners in a supplementary contest when the following conditions are observed:
 1. A minimum of two-thirds of the gross collected as entry fees must be donated to a recognized charitable organization.
 2. Entry is made available to all bowlers in a single local association and its metropolitan area.
 3. Operating costs shall not exceed 10 percent of entry fee.



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Penalty: Membership may be suspended or denied to anyone who is a participant or involved in a violation of this rule.

Rule 14 - Gambling

A member of BTBA, while bowling in BTBA competition, shall not participate or be involved in the operation of any gambling scheme which is in violation of any applicable law, where all or part of a score bowled in BTBA play determines the winner.

Contests or schemes which threaten the integrity of the game and/or entice a player to bowl beneath his/her ability are strictly prohibited.

Penalty: Membership may be suspended or denied to anyone who is a participant or involved in the violation of this rule.

NOTE: Side competitions/brackets in leagues/tournaments where the participating bowlers pay a fee, optional or otherwise, and receive prizes for high game and/or series, with or without handicap, do not violate the rule because these involve merit pinfall based solely on the skill of the participant.

Rule 15 - Suspended Bowler Ineligible

A suspended bowler or a bowler who has been denied BTBA is ineligible to bowl, pace or hold office in any BTBA league or tournament until reinstated.

Penalty: When a team:

1. Unknowingly uses a suspended bowler, games are subject to forfeiture in accordance with Rule 119.
2. Knowingly uses a suspended bowler, it shall forfeit all games in which the suspended player was used and all involved are subject to suspension.

Rule 16 - Grounds for Disciplinary Action

16a. Unfair Tactics

An individual can be charged with attempting to gain an unfair advantage in league or tournament play for the following reasons:

1. Directly or indirectly tampering with lanes, pins or bowling balls so they no longer meet BTBA specifications.
2. Misrepresenting an average to gain a greater handicap, or qualify for a lower classification in an event.
3. Establishing an average below the player's ability to gain an unfair advantage in handicap or classified competition.

Penalty: Loss of games, prize winnings, league removal (see Rule 115a or Rule 115c), and subject to suspension from or denial of BTBA membership.

NOTE: A complaint may be filed only in the current season or the season immediately following the alleged violation. The complaint shall be in writing and detail the charges against the member(s) and the BTBA rule(s) involved. The complaint shall be signed by the person(s) making the charges and filed with BTBA Head Office.

16b. Improper Conduct

An individual can also be charged with the following violation(s):

1. Engaging in improper tactics or conduct in connection with the game of bowling including, but not limited to, physical and verbal abuse toward other persons.
2. Failing to distribute prize money to team members consistent with verbal or written agreements.
3. Failing to pay fees due for participation in a BTBA league or tournament. (See Rule 115b for league procedures to suspend an individual for nonpayment of league fees.)
4. Misusing/mishandling/misappropriation of any funds collected or held in trust for BTBA, a league or tournament or a chartered local or state association.
5. Misfeasance, malfeasance, or nonfeasance of office.

Misfeasance - The performance of a lawful action in an illegal manner.

Malfeasance - Wrong doing or misconduct.

Nonfeasance - Failure to act, especially failure to do what should be done.



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Penalty: Membership may be suspended or denied to anyone who is involved in a violation of this rule. Leagues may also remove the individual following the provisions in Rule 115a or Rule 115c.

NOTE: A complaint may be filed only in the current season or the season immediately following the alleged violation. The complaint shall be in writing and detail the charges against the member(s) and the BTBA rule(s) involved. The complaint shall be signed by the person(s) making the charges and filed with BTBA Head Office.

16c. Improper Conduct by an Adult Leader

An adult leader, while involved in youth activities, can be charged with improper conduct which is not in the best interest of youth bowling including, but not limited to the following:

1. Using tobacco products, illegal drugs or alcoholic beverages.
2. Using foul language or gestures.
3. Wearing clothing depicting foul language or gestures.

An adult leader includes any individual acting in an official capacity during a youth activity including, but not limited to, the following: league supervisors, league officials, tournament managers, league coordinators, in-state instructors, certified coaches, youth directors or designated coaches having leadership in prescribed areas of youth involvement.

Penalty: Membership may be suspended or denied to anyone who is involved in a violation of this rule.

NOTE: A complaint may be filed only in the current season or the season immediately following the alleged violation. The complaint shall be in writing and detail the charges against the member(s) and the BTBA rule(s) involved. The complaint shall be signed by the person(s) making the charges and filed with BTBA Head Office.

16d. Junior Conduct

Individuals holding junior membership can be removed from competition/functions and/or suspended/denied membership for the following:

1. Conduct derogatory to the best interest of junior bowling including, but not limited to, the following in conjunction with youth competition and functions:
 - a. Using tobacco products, electronic cigarettes, illegal drugs or alcoholic beverages.
 - b. Using foul language or gestures.
 - c. Wearing clothing depicting foul language or gestures.
2. Prior adjudication of delinquency or conviction of a crime including, but not limited to, crimes involving physical or mental abuse or sexual assault.

NOTE: A complaint may be filed only in the current season or the season immediately following the alleged violation. The complaint shall be in writing and detail the charges against the member(s) and the BTBA rule(s) involved. The complaint shall be signed by the person(s) making the charges and filed with BTBA Head Office.

16f. Using Assumed Name

No person shall bowl under an assumed name or under the name of another person scheduled to bowl in a BTBA league or tournament.

Penalty: Forfeiture of games in which the player was used and all found to be involved are subject to suspension.

NOTE: A complaint may be filed only in the current season or the season immediately following the alleged violation. The complaint shall be in writing and detail the charges against the member(s) and the BTBA rule(s) involved. The complaint shall be signed by the person(s) making the charges and filed with BTBA Head Office.

Rule 17 - Bowling Ball - Altering Surface and use of Resin bags

While bowling in BTBA competition, a bowling ball cannot:

- a. Have the surface altered by the use of any abrasive.
- b. Be cleaned with any liquid substance or cleaning agent.
- c. Have any foreign material on it including, but not limited to, powder, resin, marker or paint.

All bowling balls so altered or cleaned must be removed from the competition.



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Commonly Asked Questions –

17/1 When may I alter the surface of my bowling ball?

You are permitted to sand, polish, or clean the surface of your bowling ball prior to the start of competition. However, once tournament or league play begins, altering the surface of a bowling ball is strictly prohibited. This includes balls that have not yet been introduced into play.

17/2 When does competition start?

Competition starts once any bowler throws a ball for score in a league or tournament.

17/3 Can I pat my ball with rosin or powder if I wipe the ball before it is delivered?

No. Wiping the ball with a towel does not make the ball compliant to the rule. Patting a ball with a product is adding a foreign substance to the ball and cannot be done during competition. A product can only be applied to a bowler's hand and not leave residue on the surface of the ball.

17/4 Can I clean my ball with an approved cleaner during practice?

You can clean your ball with an approved cleaner during practice, unless otherwise specified by league or tournament rules.

17/5 If I take a ball out of my bag that I have not bowled with, can I clean it with an approved cleaner?

No, approved cleaners cannot be used once competition has begun. This rule applies to balls from a bowler's bowling bag, locker or car, etc. We suggest you clean all your bowling balls prior to the start of competition.

17/6 A tournament consists of consecutive events. Can I "alter the surface" of my bowling ball between events?

Yes.

17/7 Can a bowler use an abrasive, cleaner or polish on just the track or only just a portion of the track of the ball?

No. BTBA specifications require that the entire surface of the ball be prepared in a uniform manner. Preparing the surface of a ball in any other manner would be a violation of Rule 17a, Item 1. The penalty for a violation of this rule can include disqualification, forfeiture, removal from the league, and/or suspension of BTBA membership.

17/8 What happens if a bowler uses a cleaner, abrasive, or puts a foreign substance on the ball?

If the bowler was not aware of the rule, the ball is removed from competition. The bowler also should be given an explanation of the rule. Conversely, if the bowler knows a ball cannot be cleaned, patted with rosin or powder or use an abrasive, the ball must be removed from competition and the games are subject to forfeiture. If there is a question as to whether a bowler knew the rule or not, the league board of directors make the determination. If the bowler refuses to remove the ball from competition, the games are subject to forfeiture.



General Playing Rules

17/9 If my ball comes back with residue on it and I cannot clean it with my dry towel, rag or shammy, can I use an approved cleaner?

Yes, provided you get permission from a league officer or tournament official. If you clean your ball without prior permission, you may be asked to remove the ball from competition, and/or the games may be subject to forfeiture.

17/10 When I have permission to clean my ball, may I clean the entire ball?

Yes, you may clean the entire surface of a bowling ball.

Rule 18 Smoking

The use of any tobacco products or ecigarettes, is strictly forbidden during any sanctioned play.

Penalty: Forfeit of game score