

MY CHAT WITH N.A.S.A. AS RELATED BY COLIN JOHNSON FROM WHITSTABLE

It was a hot Summers night and I couldn't sleep. 2.30 am and I'm searching the Internet trying to find out who the famous musician was who played with "The Strawbs". Having found out it was Rick Wakeman in his pre-YES days, I turned to the N.A.S.A.. site. They have an online Instant Message facility which allows you to chat with their techie types. "ASK US ANYTHING" the banner read. "Boy are they gonna regret that" I thought. Below is the conversation as it happened.

"Hello, your thru to Jackson at N.A.S.A. Do you have a question for me?"

"Hi, I'm Scratchbasher, I have a few for you. You say you can answer questions on anything?"

"That's right, I've been working on the Shuttle Program for 10 years, how can I help you?"

"Well, I bowl in an AMF bowling centre in England. We have problems maintaining a good, consistent lane condition. We are being told the problem is with the building having cold outside walls which the lane machine rests against. The close proximity to the sea, the greenhouse effect and global warming have also been sited as parameters. What would you recommend to ensure a good consistent condition?"

"This is N.A.S.A. The North American Space Agency. Are you sure your on the correct website?"

"Oh yes! We bowlers maintain that putting down a good lane condition isn't Rocket Science. The Chief Tech here says it is. I thought, who better to go to for Rocket Science than N.A.S.A.?"

"I mainly get asked questions about Rockets and Astro physics, I'm not sure I can answer questions about bowling"

"Well If that's the case, why put on your banner you'll answer questions on anything?"

"We mean Space related"

"Then you should make that clear. I suppose I'll have to go to Rosaviakosmos and ask the Russians to help. After all, they did get a man in space first, they probably got the first really playable lane condition as well!"

"We put the first man on the Moon, we're quite proud of that here."

"Did you really? To quote R.E.M. If you believe, they put a man on the Moon! I heard it was done on a movie set in the Epcot centre"

"That's an Urban myth. We have all the film footage and pictures to prove it"

"That's all very good, but it doesn't help me with my lane condition problem, can't you give me some info on what constitutes good conditions for bowling?"

"Probably not, I think it's classified. Wait a minute, you said you from England. This isn't some sort of a Joke is it"

"No, I'm serious, if you can put a man on the moon, lane conditioning should be a piece of piss for you."

"We have a bowling centre on the N.A.S.A. complex, I'll pass you over to the Chief tech there he might be able to help you" I get transferred to Earl:

"Hi, I'm Earl, you have a lane conditioning problem. I can see from the chat log you have a bowling related problem? I've got to ask, is this a joke?"

"Well it started out as one, I thought it might be a laugh to wind up a N.A.S.A. techie, but he doesn't realise I'm taking the mickey, so it fell a bit flat."

"Their all Professors here, not a sense of humour amongst them, but if it's a genuine problem I have a few suggestions if your interested?"

"Fire away"

"Get the machine away from outside walls, they don't like it. Take the conditioner tanks out and keep them in a temperature constant place so the oil stays at the same viscosity before use. In winter, put an electric blanket around the machine at all times to maintain it at a constant temperature. Make sure the jets on the stripping heads are blown thru weekly or they'll clog and won't clean the lane properly and you'll have no back end. It's not rocket science, but it may as well be to the N.A.S.A. techies.

Is that any help?"

"I feel like you've given me a long drop kharzi"

"Excuse me?????"

"I now have something to go on! Thanks for your help."

"No problem. Just one more thing. Don't try contacting the techies again, they log all Instant message logs and will have your I.P. address. You'll be blocked next time you log on. Also, you mentioned contacting the Russians. They don't like that sort of thing here, you'll probably get a visit from the F.B.I. They'll take away your PC and check it for classified information, so I'd re-format your hard drive to be on the safe side."

"You can't be serious!"

I'm not, it's my turn to take the mickey!!!!!! LOL. Did you have anymore questions.....please say no."

"No, but thanks for the help, bye "

"Bye, Have a good day"

VERSATILITY IS THE KEY TO GREATER CONSISTENCY

One-dimensional bowlers are at a disadvantage - says John Jowdy.

Chris Barnes, Parker Bohn III, Norm Duke, Amleto Monacelli, Brian Voss, Pete Weber, and Walter Ray Williams, and the retiring Mike Aulby, over the years, have placed themselves on a higher plateau in (USA) professional bowling. And, what do they have in common? Although they perform in their own individual and inimitable fashion, they have managed to maintain consistency. Consistency is the retention of form and the undeviating steady method of execution that, day in and day out, permits a bowler to perform like clockwork. Although Barnes' five titles pale in comparison with the other aforementioned superstars, it must be noted that the former Wichita State All-American and USA Team standout has been around for less than six years. Yet, in his rather short professional career, he has exhibited incredible versatility on the PBA tour.

As of this writing, Bohn, Duke, Monacelli, Voss, Weber and Walter Ray have annexed over 150 titles between them during their illustrious careers. It doesn't take a bowling scholar to realize these superstars have had the capability to perform and succeed under any and all conditions.

During the past 18 months, Steve Jaros' star has rapidly risen. He has exhibited an ability to successfully perform on all conditions during the past two seasons and thus, established himself as a force to be reckoned with. During this eventful period, the Bolingbrook, Illinois native abandoned his whip-like, behind the ear follow-through in favor of a long extended arm and, together with variable hand positions, has transformed his career from mediocrity to a bright, promising future. Jaros is a prime example of the merits of versatility.

Unfortunately, far too many youngsters have become obsessed with the power game. They revel in maximizing revolutions on the ball. They favor splattering pins in all directions on light hits rather than opting for a simpler, more stable game: that is, sacrificing excessive power for controllable shots with proper direction. Generally speaking, most power bowlers have been reduced to one-dimensional players that encounter difficulty when lane conditions are not conducive to booming strike shots. The PBA roster is replete with players of this type. Respectfully, they shall remain nameless. Nonetheless, the combined titles of those who rely on the power game only manifest their ineptitude to post greater winning records against players who display versatility.

How do you characterize or portray versatility in bowling execution? Simply put, versatile bowlers have the ability to overcome diverse lane conditions by altering hand positions and speed control.

The art of altering hand positions and speed control constitute the principle ingredients for determining the ball's path to the pocket. Remember, hitting the pocket is the primary objective for successful scoring. Bowling manuals, instructional books, astute coaches and competent instructors are all in agreement with this viewpoint. I venture to say that most mentors in the bowling game subscribe to the philosophy that any ball delivered with sufficient revolutions to carry out the five-pin will generally record strikes. With this in mind, excessive revolutions, far more difficult to manage, can be regarded as "overkill". This is not intended to degrade, belittle, or minimize the advantages of arcing hooks that enter the pins from deeper angles, and in doing so, create wider pockets. Nevertheless, statistics speak for themselves and records reveal, beyond doubt, that "straighter is greater".

Perhaps straighter is misleading. I do not recommend delivering a bowling ball in a STRAIGHT line but I strongly suggest that, in projecting it away from the pocket, minimize the degree for better command. The advantage in this method of bowling execution can be evidenced by the 150 plus titles accumulated by the aforementioned superstars. With the possible exception of Amleto Monacelli, these players can be all be classified as stokers, rather than power players. Moreover, in defense of Monacelli, he has exhibited an uncanny ability to reduce his high revving delivery in favor of a straighter line to the pocket. Although Pete Weber delivers one of the most potent strike balls in the game, he cannot be categorized as a power bowler. Weber has mastered his high-rev, wide hooking ball and, due to his soft, effortless execution and incredible release, he is the epitome of a POWER STROKER.

How do you distinguish a power bowler from power stroker? Webster describes stroke as gentle and soothing, two words that set Pete Weber apart from bowlers who apply undue force in their deliveries. Therein lies the secret for consistency that can only be accomplished through smooth, free-flowing arm swings that permit bowlers to repeat shot after shot without exerting exaggerated force. It must be noted that Walter Ray Williams is an exception to this rule. Williams, whose forte is mastering an end-over-end delivery, applies a thunderous follow-through and literally comes out of his shoes. However, due to the deflection factor of end-over-end deliveries, Walter Ray drives through the ball with unusual force in order to keep the ball from rolling out.

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Suffice to say, the contents of this column are geared towards bowlers who are competitively driven but not totally obsessed with posting unrealistic averages on house conditions. Unfortunately, many bowlers averaging 220 to 245 in (USA) league play allow their egos to overcome their shortcomings and rather than relinquish their superiority on blocked conditions, they prefer to be big fish in a small pond. But alas, sometime, somewhere, they must face the consequences of undoctored lanes. More often than not, they fall flat on their faces. Consistency is the ability to overcome diverse lane conditions. Basically, most bowlers excel in one particular method of execution. The truly talented players utilize various hand positions and speed control to gain the most favorable entry angle

Essentially, there are six assorted paths (angles) to the pocket, each providing a strike potential. They are...a gutter shot, down and in, an end-over-end roll, outside, inside, and deep inside. In order to remain competitive and develop versatility, these various angles require assorted techniques in execution. This will be addressed in my next article.

By John Jowdy – Coach to leading players on the USA ProTour.
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CLUB REGISTRATIONS for 2003-4

There was a disappointing number of entries for the 2003 Club Tournament For those of you who don't know what the Club Tournament is, here is a brief explanation. There are 5 "Clubs" which you can only enter by bowling a qualifying score during the bowling year. The 650 Club is new for the 2003-4 season—will you be the first person to win it? Qualifying scores are now being collected for the period 01 September 2003 to 31 August 2004. Scores have to have been achieved in either in a sanctioned league or tournament. The player with the highest series in the 600/650 Club will be invited to take part in the Masters event at the Area Championships as will the female bowler with the highest series in the 500 Club.

The **200 Club** is open to any bowler with an average under 160 who achieves a game of 200 or more.

The **500 Club** is open to any female bowler who achieves a series of 500 and above—no average restriction.

The **550 Club** is open to any bowler with an average under 170 rolling a 550 and above series.

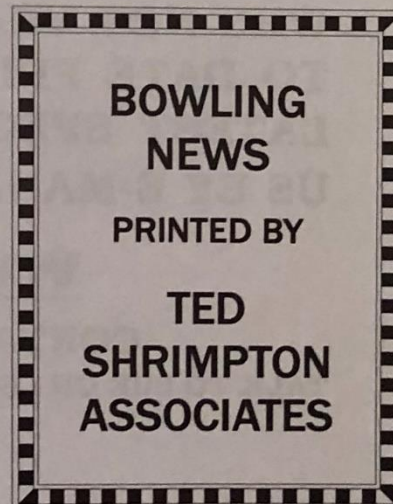
The **600 Club** is open to any bowler achieving a series of 600 and above.

The **650 Club** is open to any bowler achieving a series of 650 and above.

The registrations received for the season to date are listed below. If you believe that you have rolled a qualifying score that does not appear please check with your League Secretary and ask them to submit the scores by the end of the bowling season.

200 CLUB											
Janet Grant	200	Bex	Ken Trevor	219	Bex						
Sue Blackmore	219	Bex	Peggy Hammond	221	Bex	Alan Valsler	223	Chat			
Tony Bonds	211	Bex	Dave Harris	200	Bex	Dawn Webster	200	Grav			
Dot Boyd	211	Bex	Mark Horsefield	207	Bex	Roger Whitehead	221	Chat			
Mandi Buckley	223	Bex	Roy Hunt	205	Bex	Brian Williams	207	Grav			
Lesley Collin	226	Bex	Chris Kent	202	Grav	Carl Williams	204	Grav			
Mandi Cooper	204	Bex	Andy Krangel	205	Bex						
Jason Cross	220	Bex	Charlie Long	202	Chat	500 CLUB					
Robert Duffett	203	Chat	Kevin Osborne	253	Bex	Jayne Allerton	511	Clif			
Jack Denne	215	Bex	Ross Pinner	202	Bex	Pat Blaber	510	Bex			
John Denne	202	Bex	Trevor Rudland	218	Bex	Sue Blackmore	516	Bex			
Sam Denne	223	Bex	Tony Sales	211	Chat	Dot Boyd	568	Grav			
Beryl Drury	202	Bex	Ben Seaden	210	Chat	Mandi Buckley	591	Bex			
Brenda Field	203	Bex	Claire Sellars	202	Bex	Chris Conner	550	Bex			
Eddie Flett	203	Bex	Margaret Shrimpton	212	Bex	Sam Denne	595	Bex			
Matt French	200	Bex	Dave Smith	231	Chat	Beryl Drury	512	Bex			
Mick Gatfield	202	Bex	Ray Spalding	202	Bex	Emma Drury	520	Grav			
Matthew Gear	224	Bex	Peter Stanley	207	Bex	Pam Ellis	529	Bex			
Chris Genovese	214	Bex	Roger Stone	213	Bex	Brenda Field	509	Bex			
Neil Gibson	227	Chat	Ray Tarr	214	Bex	Sharon Genovay	509	Clif			
Brian Godden	215	Bex	Howard Thomas	200	Bex	Marilyn Godley	517	Chat			
Marilyn Godley	201	Chat	Sylvia Thomas	200	Bex	Janet Grant	520	Bex			

Gwen Green	556	Grav	Howard Thomas	552	Bex	Wayne Shaw	659	Chat
Peggy Hammond	510	Bex	Dawn Webster	552	Grav	Clive Smith	630	Clif
Alison Higgs	527	Bex	John Wells	599	Clif	John T Smith	674	Clif
Elaine Hinch	584	Grav	Eric Woodruff	607	Clif	Peter Stanley	604	Bex
Mark Holmes	584	Clif				Gary Steventon	656	Clif
Sharon Letchford	503	Bex	600 CLUB			Laure Sutherland	622	Chat
Carolyn Lock	509	Bex	Paul Allerton	608	Clif	Alex Thisleton	615	Bex
Helen Maple	535	Chat	Keith Andrews	602	Grav	Paul Tuff	607	Chat
Janet May	537	Bex	Terry Bolton	619	Clif	Mike Tumber	607	Clif
Lucy Percival	561	Bex	Brad Bottone	607	Bex	Colin Underhill	607	Clif
Jackie Pullinger	505	Bex	Dave Buck	703	Clif	Neil Webb	614	Grav
Jan Saunders	625	Clif	Steve Carnall	640	Grav	John Venables	723	Clif
Margaret Shrimpton	521	Bex	Adrian Conner	600	Grav	Sally Wells	640	Clif
Claire Smith	552	Bex	Chris Conner	637	Bex	Steve White	688	Grav
Jan Smith	504	Chat	Andy Cook	613	Clif	Steve Williams	645	Grav
Laure Sutherland	622	Chat	Paul Crundell	614	Clif	Steve Wilson	666	Clif
Angie Thick	511	Bex	Steve Eastop	660	Clif	Eric Woodruff	607	Clif
Amanda Thomas	564	Bex	Paul Fletcher	614	Grav			
Sylvia Thomas	530	Bex	Paul Fox	662	Grav	650 CLUB		
Dawn Webster	504	Grav	Len Franklin	612	Bex	Dave Buck	703	Clif
Sheila Webster	507	Clif	Dan French	601	Grav	Andy Cook	659	Clif
Sheila White	523	Bex	Malcolm Geddes	621	Chat	Steve Eastop	660	Clif
Anne Whitehead	526	Chat	Ron Genovay	608	Clif	Paul Fox	662	Grav
			Neil Gibson	606	Chat	Dan French	698	Bex
550 CLUB			Mark Godley	645	Chat	Keith Hecken	654	Chat
Sam Bass	580	Bex	Dave Godwin	639	Grav	Shane Hecken	673	Chat
Terry Bonds	563	Bex	Keith Hecken	654	Chat	Dan Hobson-Wallis	685	Chat
Iain Booth	562	Chat	Shane Hecken	673	Chat	Jan Hodge	652	Grav
Brad Bottone	607	Bex	Jeff Higgs	604	Bex	Keith Hodge	715	Grav
Dot Boyd	568	Grav	Dan Hobson-Wallis	685	Chat	Brian Major	727	Chat
Peter Brown	581	Bex	Jan Hodge	652	Grav	David Pitt	657	Chat
Mandi Buckley	591	Bex	Keith Hodge	715	Grav	Bob Potts	670	Clif
Chris Conner	550	Bex	Mark Jennings	608	Grav	Gordon Puxty	724	Grav
Jason Cross	553	Bex	Alan Jones	631	Grav	Peter Rogers	660	Bex
Colin Davis	573	Bex	Gary Kerr	637	Chat	Justin Shaw	687	Chat
Jack Denne	565	Bex	Steve Letchford	623	Grav	Wayne Shaw	659	Chat
Sam Denne	595	Bex	Tim Letchford	624	Bex	John T Smith	674	Clif
Michael Foord	550	Grav	Brian Major	727	Chat	Gary Steventon	656	Clif
Steve Franz	597	Bex	George McElwaine	612	Bex	Mike Tumber	655	Clif
Matthew Gear	561	Bex	Jim Middleditch	601	Bex	John Venables	723	Clif
Neil Gibson	606	Chat	Tony Mirams	610	Clif	Sally Wells	683	Clif
Dave Goddard	569	Chat	Jerry Moll	617	Chat	Steve White	688	Grav
Gwen Green	556	Grav	Ken Morris	648	Grav	Steve Wilson	666	Clif
Alison Higgs	568	Bex	Colin Ottoway	609	Clif			
Jeff Higgs	604	Bex	Rob Packman	613	Bex			
George McElwaine	612	Bex	Roy Palmer	620	Chat			
Martyn Miller	566	Clif	David Percival	642	Bex			
Dave Mitchell	596	Bex	David Pitt	657	Chat			
Anthony Pawsey	552	Bex	Bob Potts	670	Clif			
Lucy Percival	561	Bex	Paul Prestidge	624	Grav			
Tony Sales	609	Chat	Terry Pullinger	622	Bex			
John Scott	560	Bex	Gordon Puxty	724	Grav			
Ben Seaden	584	Chat	Phillip Reeve	630	Chat			
Bob Smith	550	Chat	Trevor Reeve	604	Chat			
Claire Smith	552	Bex	Peter Rogers	660	Bex			
Kurt Smith	550	Chat	Tony Sales	609	Chat			
Peter Stanley	604	Bex	Jon Santinella	620	Grav			
Paul Stevens	582	Clif	Jan Saunders	625	Clif			
Laure Sutherland	622	Chat	Dave Saville	648	Bex			
Amanda Thomas	564	Bex	Justin Shaw	687	Chat			

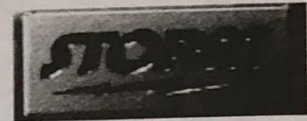


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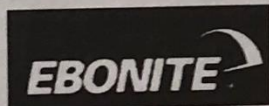


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