



# THE FORTY FRAME GAME RULES

*Official Rules, Policies and Playing Information*

National Bowling Stadium  
300 University Way  
Reno, NV 89501

## **Rule 1. AVERAGES – REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

- A. The Open Championships tournament average, based on the most recent 27 games bowled at the tournament since 2017 (Championships Average) converted to Standard.
- B. League Average – Bowlers without a qualifying Championships Average will enter with the highest average from either the 2024/2025, 2023/2024 or 2022/2023 USBC winter or summer season, based on 21 or more games in a USBC-certified league OR the highest composite average of 21 games or more during the same period.
- C. Current Average – Bowlers who do not have an average from A or B must enter with whichever is higher - their current certified average at the time of bowling of 21 or more games OR current composite average of 21 or more games in all current USBC leagues. League standings sheets or a letter of verification from the association manager must be presented upon check-in.
- D. No Average – Bowlers who do not meet any of the requirements of A, B or C will be entered with a 220 average.
- E. Green Sheet – Prior to competition, each entrant must complete and sign The Green Sheet available on BOWL.com, under Open Championships/Information.
- F. All bowlers must answer questions covering professional status, national/major titles, national team and collegiate status.
  - i. Bowlers with averages from either A or B above must also report any current league average for 21 or more games that is 10 pins or more higher than the entering average (Rule 319a-2).
  - ii. Bowlers with averages from B, C or D above must also answer questions covering USBC Rules 319c, 319d and 319e.

**Note:** All averages not established on a Standard condition will be converted to Standard using the appropriate conversion chart.

- G. Required Information - Failure to answer any question on the Green Sheet shall be cause for disqualification. Bowlers must attest to the accuracy of the information provided and an understanding of the consequences of their failure to provide the proper facts.
- H. Average Integrity - Any bowler found using an average below the player's ability will be disqualified from the competition and subject to suspension charges initiated under USBC Rule 17a, Grounds for Disciplinary Action – Unfair Tactics.

## **Rule 2. AVERAGES – VERIFICATION/CORRECTION**

- A. Bowlers are responsible for verifying the accuracy of their averages. If the submitted average is lower than required and results in a higher handicap, the bowler's score is disqualified. If the submitted average is higher than required, prize winnings will be based on the submitted average.

- B. Average corrections can be made up to the end of the bowler's 10th frame (Frame 10 of 40). If an extension of time has been granted in writing by tournament management before the end of the 10th frame, the bowler will be entered with a default average of 220 pending verification of average, which must be submitted by the bowler within 10 days of the end of the event.

### **Rule 3. AVERAGES – ADJUSTMENTS**

Tournament management has the authority to adjust a bowler's average upward before participation in any event. For purposes of average adjustment, tournament management will use guidelines including, but not limited to, USBC Open or Women's Championships performance, previous tournament winnings and any records of bowler performance from leagues and/or tournaments.

A bowler has the right to appeal adjustments to the USBC Rules department within 15 days of notification.

If the assigned average is not accepted by the bowler, the entry fee shall be refunded.

- A. Average Relief - Bowlers wanting to apply for relief of average due to injury or disability under the provisions of **USBC Rule 4e** must apply in writing to USBC Rules at [rules@bowl.com](mailto:rules@bowl.com) at least seven days prior to participation. Please see USBC Playing Rules for information regarding Rule 4e. Tournament staff does not have the authority to grant average relief.

### **Rule 4. DRESS CODE**

All clothing must be neat, clean and in good condition. Tournament staff will make judgment calls relative to any unacceptable dress code concerns.

### **Rule 5. ELIGIBILITY**

- A. Membership - All participants must have a current USBC Adult membership. If current membership cannot be verified, a USBC Associate membership must be purchased at the tournament site.
- B. Age - The tournament is open to all adult USBC members 18 years of age or older at time of competition.
- C. Employee Policy - USBC National Headquarters employees and tournament employees at the USBC Open or Women's Championships (including side events) are not permitted to participate in the prize funds or awards programs at The Forty Frame Game.
- D. Restriction - Participation in The Forty Frame Game in 2026 requires participation in at least one event in the 2026 USBC Open Championships. Bowlers may meet this requirement at any point during the tournament's start and finish date. If a bowler competes in The Forty Frame Game with the intention of competing in the Open Championships later, but fails to do so, it will result in a disqualification.

**NOTE:** All professional bowlers and past champions of national PBA/PWBA events will be ineligible to compete in The Forty Frame Game (see Rule 19).

### **Rule 6. EQUIPMENT**

The manager on duty will handle any questionable circumstances.

- A. Bowling balls - Every bowler must have a bowling ball and shoes for their exclusive use. Only USBC-approved bowling balls will be allowed and **MUST** have the manufacturer's name, product name and serial number clearly visible. Bowling balls and drilling must meet all USBC specifications.

**NOTE:** The following bowling balls are prohibited for use: 900 Global Altered Reality, 900 Global Wolverine, Roto Grip UFO Alert, Storm Electrify Solid, Storm Phaze 4, Storm Trend 2

Bowlers may request to have their bowling balls checked prior to competition.

- B. Equipment Alterations - Altering the surface of a bowling ball by the use of abrasives, cleaners or polish is prohibited during competition. In addition, no substance may be placed on the outer surface of the bowling ball. Bowlers are permitted to sand the surface of their bowling balls prior to certified competition; however, the use of abrasives strictly is prohibited once the first ball is thrown in competition. The outer surface of the bowling ball may only be cleaned with a dry towel once the bowler has begun competition.
- C. Foreign Substance - No foreign substance can be applied to bowling shoes or approaches. This includes, but is not limited to: rosin, powder, Easy-Slide, dry bags, slide stone, soap stone, polish, wax, alcohol and like products.
- D. Equipment Violation Penalties:
  - i. First offense: Individual is warned, and the ball is removed from competition.
  - ii. Second offense: Disqualification from the remainder of the event in which the violation occurred.

## **Rule 7. ETIQUETTE**

Unsportsmanlike behavior will not be tolerated on the lanes or inside the tournament venue. Individuals are subject to ejection for engaging in improper tactics or conduct including, but not limited to, physical and verbal abuse toward other individuals.

To maintain a consistent pace of bowling, it is proper etiquette to observe one-lane courtesy and deliver the bowling ball within a reasonable amount of time as determined by the tournament management.

## **Rule 8. EVENT**

Events are open to any USBC member who meets the criteria for the event and the requirements specified in **Rule 5 – Eligibility**.

- A. Main Event – Open to any USBC member. This is a handicap event. Actual score plus handicap will be used.
- B. Bonus Side Pots – Each of the following are included in your main event entry and will be paid out in a separate prize fund:
  - i. Big Whammy - Strike in the last six (6) frames and receive a share of the super pot. If the required number of strikes (6) are not achieved, the payout will be made for the next highest total of strikes in those frames and shared accordingly.
  - ii. Kingpin Cash - If the bowler strikes in Frames 2-7 AND has the last six strikes in Frames 37-40 (Big Whammy), they receive a share of the pot. If the required number of strikes (12) are not achieved, the payout will be made for the next highest total of strikes in those frames and shared accordingly.
  - iii. Sweep It Clean - The bowler must mark (strike or spare) in every frame of The Forty Frame Game. If the required number of clean frames (40) are not achieved, the payout will be made for the next highest total of clean frames and shared accordingly.
  - iv. Woof-Woof Strikes - The bowler must strike in the designated frames. Each frame is awarded a different point value. This will be a handicap event. The maximum score without handicap is 400. *NOTE: Handicap for Woof-Woof Strikes is based on 90% of 220. It is not multiplied by four like the handicap for the Main Event (see Rule 10 – Format).*

Frame	5	9	16	17	21	25	31	33	34	39
Points	20	20	30	30	40	40	50	50	60	60

Payout for Woof-Woof Strikes will be like the Main Event, with prizes paid out based on the highest score with bonus handicap (if applicable). Any ties will be split accordingly.

#### C. Optional Events

- i. Gray Pay – Open to all USBC members who will be 50 years of age or older as of the first day of the tournament (March 13, 2026). This is a handicap event. Actual score plus handicap will be used.
- ii. 175 & Under – Open to all adult USBC members with an entering average of 175 or less specified under Averages – Reporting Requirements – **Rule 1**.
- iii. Scratch - Open to all adult USBC members. Actual scores without handicap will be used.
- iv. Ladies Only – Open to all female adult USBC members. This event is a handicap event. Actual score plus handicap will be used.

## Rule 9. FEES

- A. MAIN EVENT - Entry fee for The Forty Frame Game Main Event is \$100 per bowler. The breakdown is as follows:

- i. \$50 total for combined prize funds
- ii. \$35 for main prize fund
- iii. \$3 toward Payday bonus (Frames 3, 5, 19, 21, 34, 35)
  1. Payday Strikes = one (1) share each
- iv. \$4 toward the Bingo-Bango-Bongo bonus (Frame 40)
  1. Bingo (First strike) = 1 share
  2. Bango (First and second strike) = 3 shares
  3. Bongo (All three strikes) = 5 shares
- v. \$2 for each bonus side pot (\$8 total)
- vi. \$50 for lineage/expenses

The following items are available at an additional cost based on product restrictions. Entry fee is \$10/per event and 100% of the entry is returned as prizes.

- B. GRAY PAY
- C. SCRATCH
- D. 175 & UNDER
- E. LADIES ONLY

There will be no daily payout for prizes. All winnings will be paid out at the end of the tournament. See Prize Checks and Awards – **Rule 17**.

## **Rule 10. FORMAT**

The Forty Frame Game (FFG) is one continuous game 40 frames long with unique scoring opportunities (and pitfalls!) that lead to a perfect score of 1,305 scratch. The game is a singles event.

There is no plain/normal 10-pin frame of bowling in The Forty Frame Game. Normal scorekeeping and handicapping apply. Handicap is based on 90% of 220, with that number multiplied by four (4) to determine the final handicap for each entrant.

There are also opportunities for bonus or point reductions, see **Rule 22 - Scoring**.

## **Rule 11. GAMBLING**

All forms of gambling are prohibited while bowling. This includes, but is not limited to, card playing, pushing coins, etc.

## **Rule 12. LANE CONDITIONING**

Lanes will be conditioned before all squads. USBC will not disclose any pattern information until after the entire event has concluded. It is prohibited to discuss lane maintenance procedures or pattern information with tournament personnel during the tournament. Violators may be subject to disqualification. Questions or comments regarding lane maintenance must be directed to the tournament director.

## **Rule 13. LOST SCORES**

In the event a game (or portion of a game) is irretrievably lost in the scoring process, the game (or portion thereof) shall be re-bowled at a time and date determined by tournament management. Should the time and date of re-bowling be refused by the participant, USBC is liable only for the return of the entry fee paid for the event in which the loss occurred.

## **Rule 14. MEMBERSHIP**

See Eligibility – **Rule 5**.

## **Rule 15. PACERS**

Pacers shall not be permitted in the tournament.

## **Rule 16. PARTICIPATION**

A bowler may enter The Forty Frame Game up to four (4) times. However, they will only cash with their highest score in the main event and bonus side pots, with the exception of Woof-Woof Strikes, which a competitor may cash multiple times.

A bowler may cash multiple times in the \$10 Optional Events.

## **Rule 17. PRIZE CHECKS AND AWARDS**

- A. The IRS requires USBC to furnish 1099 forms to individuals who accumulate winnings of \$2,000 or more annually in any USBC events in which they participate.
- B. Failure to furnish a Social Security number (U.S. citizens) or Individual Tax ID Number (ITIN) (non-U.S. citizens) to USBC will result in a 30% tax reduction of the prize check.
- C. Prize winnings will be distributed within 30 days after the conclusion of the tournament (Rule 309) unless permission is granted to extend by USBC.

- D. Any prize check requiring replacement within 90 days of the tournament ending will require a \$25 replacement fee and \$50 thereafter.
- E. Prize checks, or replacement checks, must be cashed by July 31, 2027, or prize winnings will be forfeited.

## **Rule 18. PRIZE RATIOS**

All prize money will be returned 100%. Prize ratio will be at least 1:5.

All posted prize funds and low-to-cash figures are estimates.

Bowlers may only cash one time in the Main Event, regardless of the number of times they entered. The highest score will be used.

Optional events such as the GRAY PAY, SCRATCH, 175 & UNDER AND LADIES ONLY will feature a prize fund-style payout with multiple cashing places based on entries. Same for the bonus side pot WOOF-WOOF STRIKES.

The other bonus side pots such as the BIG WHAMMY, SWEEP IT CLEAN AND KINGPIN CASH will feature a jackpot-style payout with each winning entry receiving an equal share of the total prize fund.

## **Rule 19. PROFESSIONAL BOWLERS AND PAST CHAMPIONS**

All professional bowlers and past champions of national PBA/PWBA events will be ineligible to compete in The Forty Frame Game.

- A. For the purpose of participation in The Forty Frame Game, **PBA PROFESSIONAL BOWLERS [19-A]** are defined as: Any bowler, under the age of 60, having applied for membership or held membership in the Professional Bowlers Association during the following time frames:
  - 1. Calendar year (Jan. 1 – Dec. 31, 2025) preceding the event; and or
  - 2. Up through their first day of competition at The Forty Frame Game in 2026.
- B. For the purpose of participation in The Forty Frame Game, **PBA NATIONAL TOUR TITLISTS [19-B]** are defined as: Any bowler, under the age of 60, who has won any of the following:
  - 1. A PBA national tour title regardless of professional status at the time of the win.
  - 2. A USBC Masters or U.S. Open title.
- C. For the purpose of participation in The Forty Frame Game, **PWBA TOUR I [19-C]** are defined as: Any bowler, under the age of 60, who meets any of the following criteria:
  - 1. Has won a PWBA national title regardless of professional status at the time of winning, within the past 10 years (2016-2026); and or up through their first day of competition at The Forty Frame Game in 2026; or
  - 2. Has won a PWBA major title regardless of professional status at the time of winning, within the past 20 years (2006-2026); or

3. Has finished in the Top 30 on the PWBA National Tour points list at the conclusion of the 2025 season.

D. For the purpose of participation in The Forty Frame Game, **PWBA Tour II [19-D]** are defined as: Any bowler, under the age of 60, who has finished 31st – 50th on the PWBA National Tour points list at the conclusion of the 2025 season.

## **Rule 20. PROTESTS**

Any protest or appeal concerning scoring must be made in writing briefly stating the grounds of the protest or appeal and submitted to the USBC tournament office no later than 24 hours after the game has been played. Any other protest must be filed in accordance with USBC Rule 329.

## **Rule 21. RE-RACKS**

Each bowler is allowed a total of two re-racks per game. Tournament management may grant additional re-racks.

## **Rule 22. SCORING**

The Forty Frame Game maximum scratch score is 1,305. The following are the details on each of the frames offered in The Forty Frame Game.

- A. NO TAP - The system registers a strike when the bowler throws a strike or a nine (9) count on the first ball. The strike is scored as a strike in standard 10 pin bowling.
- B. BONUS – If the bowler strikes, the strike is scored as a strike in standard 10 pin bowling, and the bowler is awarded 10 points into the bowler's game total line.
- C. PAYDAY – If the bowler strikes, the strike is scored as a strike in standard 10 pin bowling, and the bowler will receive a payout for the strike at the end of the tournament.
- D. SOUR GRAPES – For any ball marks, the frame is scored as a standard 10 pin bowling frame. If the bowler does not strike on the first ball, the bowler will lose two (2) points for every pin left standing on the first ball in the bowler's game total line.
- E. SUPER SOUR GRAPES – For any ball marks, the frame is scored as a standard 10 pin bowling frame. If the bowler does not strike on the first ball, the bowler will lose five (5) points for every pin left standing on the first ball. The points are removed from the bowler's game total line.
- F. BIG KAHUNA – If the bowler strikes in this frame, the strike is scored as a strike in standard 10 pin bowling, and the bowler will receive a bonus of 25 points added to their game total line.
- G. MULLIGAN FRAME – In the Mulligan frame, if the bowler does not throw a strike on their first ball, the bowler has the option to "do over" the first ball.
- H. BINGO-BANGO-BONGO - This event covers the three (3) balls thrown in the 40th frame and is a successive cumulative award. Bingo – Strike on first ball, get one share of the pot. Bango – Strike on first and second ball, earn an additional two shares (three total shares) of the pot. Bongo – Strike on all three balls of the 40th frame and earn an additional two shares (five total shares) of the pot.

## **Rule 23. SMOKING**

No smoking or use of tobacco products of any kind are allowed during competition, including the use of "smokeless" cigarettes or any products intended to simulate the tobacco/smoking experience.



## **Rule 24. SPECIAL NEEDS/REQUESTS**

Bowlers requiring aids, such as crutches, canes, wheelchairs, etc., or who are blind, must report this if special scheduling consideration needs to be arranged.

## **Rule 25. SQUAD TIMES/ASSIGNMENTS**

- A. Times listed are "bowling for score" times.
- B. Squad Times: 10 a.m., 1:30 p.m., 7 p.m. and 10:30 p.m.
- C. Reservations made online take priority over walk-up entries. Walk-up entries will close 30 minutes prior to the start of every squad.
- D. Bowlers must check in 30 minutes prior to scheduled squad time or reservation may be forfeited and transferred to someone on the wait list.
- E. Hours are subject to change.

Tournament management has the right to reschedule lane assignments or times, including the number of bowlers per pair, up to the time of bowling for score. Reasons for the rescheduling of lanes may include, but are not limited to, mechanical breakdowns, bowling unopposed, technical problems and booking conflicts.

**Note:** All squad times are assigned/scheduled in real time when payment is received. Times are not guaranteed from year to year. Special events or circumstances may require squads to be conducted at times other than the times listed above.

## **Rule 26. VIDEO POLICY**

All participants agree to abide by USBC Open Championships Video Policy, which can be found on BOWL.com. Any participant appearing in, recording, publishing or sharing video clips deemed by USBC to affect the integrity of the tournament may be subject to disqualification and suspension.

## **Rule 27. OTHER RULES**

- A. Prior to participation in The Forty Frame Game, all bowlers must read and sign the Acknowledgment of Assumption of Risk and Waiver of Liability document.
- B. Bowlers agree to follow all directives issued by federal, state and local authorities designed to ensure public safety regarding gatherings/events.
- C. Individuals arriving late shall begin play and the scores shall count beginning with the frame then being bowled. Entrant will receive a zero for all frames missed.
- D. Bowlers withdrawing after competition has started will receive a zero for all frames missed.
- E. Any frame scored as zero as the result of late arrival or withdrawal is subject to any applicable penalty points of that frame.
- F. All USBC tournament rules will apply, unless otherwise stated.
- G. Tournament management has the authority to make decisions regarding anything not covered by these rules.

## **TERMINATION/RELEASE CLAUSE**

To the Chief Executive Officer of the United States Bowling Congress: We, by our captain and agent, hereby make application to participate in the 2026 The Forty Frame Game events listed and tender the entry fees required, therefore. We warrant that we are USBC



members. We agree to abide by all tournament and playing rules and regulations prescribed by USBC, including all provisions set forth on this form. We specifically agree for ourselves, and any replacements chosen by or for us if we are not eligible for participation and/or cannot bowl in The Forty Frame Game, then our prize, bowling and expense fees shall be forfeited, and all sums tendered by us as prize, bowling and expense fees may be retained by USBC as liquidated damages. The entrants whose names appear hereon, or their authorized replacements, hereby agree that the USBC, its officers and agents shall be liable only to the extent of returning entry fees, less expenses, if and when these entrants shall be prevented from bowling any event in the tournament through premature termination of the tournament, which may be brought about by war, national emergency or emergencies or causes relating thereto or resulting therefrom, fires, strikes, labor difficulties, terrorism or threats of terrorism, or other causes beyond the control of USBC. We further agree that USBC may use our names and likenesses (including video) for promotional purposes at no cost to us and with no fees being paid by us. The entrants whose names appear on this application, and/ or their authorized replacements, hereby agree that the USBC, and its officers and agents, shall not be liable for any injury resulting from participation in bowling in The Forty Frame Game, absent willful or gross negligence on the part of USBC.

Updated 1/12/2026