



PRESENTED BY  **SMART**

2026-2027 League Level Handbook



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An Exciting New Era for Youth Bowling Competition Formerly the Pepsi Youth Championships, this premier youth tournament has been rebranded as the USBC Youth Scratch Championships presented by SMART.

What's New:

- New Name, Same Mission: A fresh identity for a long-standing grassroots event.
- Double the Scholarships:
Through the SMART Program, scholarships has increased annual scholarship funding from \$150,000 to \$300,000.
- Age-Based Divisions Aligned with Junior Gold:
Competition will now be held in U12, U14, U16 and U18 divisions. U8 and U10 will still be offered, but only at the Youth Scratch Championships.
- Scratch Format Maintained
- Optional Handicap divisions can be offered

How It Works:

- League-Level Qualifying is based on your state rules and available for all USBC Youth members.
- Athletes advance to state or regional finals based on the format in your state.
- Division winners at the state/zone level (U12, U14, U16, U18) earn a berth to the Junior Gold Championships.

Junior Gold Membership Note:

- Junior Gold membership is not required to compete in league- or state-level events.
- If an athlete wins a qualifying division and is not a member, they must obtain Junior Gold membership prior to May 15 to compete in the Junior Gold Championships.
- If membership is not obtained, the athlete retains any earned awards but will not advance to Junior Gold.

Opportunities for Youth Bowlers:

- Compete nationally starting at the local level – no added cost at the league stage.
- Earn recognition, awards and scholarships.
- Gain eligibility for Junior Gold and further scholarship opportunities.

Important Instructions:

- Use the League-Level Rules provided to conduct qualifying competition. These may be stapled to the league worksheet for easy distribution.
- Rules must be followed and shared with every participating athlete.

Questions or Support?

Please consult your **state/zone tournament director**,

You may also contact:

☎ 817-385-8426

✉ youthtournaments@bowl.com

TOURNAMENT OVERVIEW AND SCHEDULE

League-Level Qualifying Information

The USBC Youth Scratch Championships begins with league-level qualifying. All USBC-certified youth leagues are automatic qualifying sites — no additional registration is required at the league level.

Entry Fee

There is no entry fee for league-level qualifying. Participation is included as part of USBC Youth league membership.

Qualifying Period

Oct. 1, 2026 – Feb. 28, 2027

This window includes October to accommodate youth in high school leagues. If your league needs to begin earlier than your state/zone's specified dates, please contact your state/zone tournament director for guidance and approval.

Age Divisions

Bowlers will compete in divisions based on their **date of birth**:

	Division Birthdate Range
U8	Born 8/1/2018 or later
U10	Born 8/1/2016 – 7/31/2018
U12	Born 8/1/2014 – 7/31/2016
U14	Born 8/1/2012 – 7/31/2014
U16	Born 8/1/2010 – 7/31/2012
U18	Born 8/1/2008 – 7/31/2010

Each division includes both **Boys' and Girls'** categories.

Advancement & Scholarships

- **Division winners** will advance to the **state/zone competition**, where they may earn **SMART scholarships**.
- **U12, U14, U16 and U18 Division Champions** at the state/zone level will receive:
 - o A **paid entry (berth)** to the **Junior Gold Championships**
 - o **Waived entry fees** as follows:
 - U18 & U16: \$250, U14: \$200, U12: \$150
 - o A chance to compete for **additional national scholarships**

To participate in the Junior Gold Championships, advancers must be Junior Gold members or must purchase membership prior to the event. If a winner chooses not to join, they retain local awards but cannot advance.

Important Dates Summary

Date	Event
Oct. 1 – Feb. 28	League-level qualifying window
Mar. 1 – Apr. 30	Center/sectional qualifying (if applicable in your area)
Mar. 1 – May 2	State/zone competitions
May 15	Deadline for USBC to receive state/zone advancer information

Need Help or Have Questions?

- Please refer to the **rules and contact list** in this handbook.
- Visit BOWL.com to find your **state/zone tournament director** and additional information.

LEAGUE-LEVEL RULES

(ATHLETES MUST SEE THESE RULES AND CHOOSE THEIR OWN DIVISION)

1. The USBC Youth Scratch Championships is certified by the United States Bowling Congress and governed by USBC rules.
2. Competition is open to all 2026-2027 USBC Youth members. To compete, a bowler must be a regular member of a certified USBC league and not be under suspension at the time of qualifying. League substitutes are allowed to participate if it is their only USBC Youth league. USBC Collegiate members are eligible if they are 2026-2027 USBC Youth members, bowl in a USBC Youth league and have not violated USBC Rule 400.
3. All USBC Youth members in good standing are eligible for the league-level competition. There is no entry fee at the league level. Bowling centers having 2026-2027 USBC-certified leagues are automatic league-level qualifying sites.
4. **Participants must be aware of each competition level in the state/zone and all associated rules, fees and deadlines. These items are contained in the specific state/zone rules from the State/Zone tournament director. (State director information can be found on BOWL.com.)**
5. Competition will be conducted in divisions based on the participant's date of birth as listed below. Participation in the wrong age division will lead to automatic disqualification. Bowlers must stay in the given division in that particular league throughout the entire window.

Division Birthdate Range

U8	Born 8/1/2018 or later
U10	Born 8/1/2016 – 7/31/2018
U12	Born 8/1/2014 – 7/31/2016
U14	Born 8/1/2012 – 7/31/2014
U16	Born 8/1/2010 – 7/31/2012
U18	Born 8/1/2008 – 7/31/2010

Each division includes both **Boys' and Girls'** categories.

***There is no requirement of Junior Gold membership to enter U12, U14, U16 or U18 Division!**

6. In states offering a side handicap division, the qualifying window average will be the current league average as of the first date of competition (no minimum number of games). Participants must remain in that division for the duration of that window. Bowlers are eligible to compete in a different division in a different league during the league level of competition.
7. League-level qualifying will be conducted in certified leagues during the qualifying window(s) between Oct. 1 and Feb. 28. Each state/zone tournament committee decides the qualifying window dates. Consult

state/zone rules for the specific dates. **If needed, the state/zone tournament director can grant changes in the qualifying dates to individual bowling centers.**

8. Qualifying scores must be bowled during regularly scheduled league play. **Pre-bowled or post-bowled scores may not be used as scores for advancement purposes.** Advancement to the next competition level will be from the league level.
9. Participants can attempt to qualify in any state/zone where they hold a 2026-2027 USBC Youth membership card; however, the bowler can only advance once using the following criteria:
 - A. In the event a bowler qualifies in more than one league in the same division, the bowler must advance from the league in which the highest series was bowled. For identical qualifying scores, the member will advance from the league where the first score was bowled.
 - B. If a bowler qualifies in different leagues from multiple divisions, the bowler must select one division they will compete in before subsequent competition.
 - C. If the bowler advances out of league level in more than one state/zone, the bowler **must** declare one state/zone to continue competing in before the next competition level.
 - D. Participation in any level of competition past the league level in more than one state/zone and/or more than one division will result in automatic disqualification.

Note: Advancers remain in the division they qualified in during the league level in all subsequent competition. If there is a tie for the last-place qualifier in a division, both will advance to the next level of competition.

STATE/ZONE LEVEL

10. The top one (1) bowler in the U12, U14, U16 or U18 divisions for boys and girls at the state/zone competition with the highest scratch score (plus applicable bonus pins) will earn a berth to the Junior Gold Championships. To receive the berth, the bowler must be a USBC Youth Standard member and Junior Gold program member no later than May 15. **If the winner is not eligible for the championships, he/she will still retain all awards from the state/zone, but the next eligible bowler will receive the berth to the Junior Gold Championships.**
11. Advancers to the Junior Gold Championships must agree to bowl in the Junior Gold Championships. Replacements will be selected based on the order of finish in their division at the state/zone level. In the event that a qualifier needs to be replaced (declined or previously qualified) and there is a tie to determine who will advance to the Junior Gold Championships, the high game from the qualifying scores will determine who will advance. If the high score for each is the same, the next subsequent high score will be used until the tie is broken.
12. Failure to abide by any rules and regulations will lead to disqualification from this event. The USBC Youth Scratch Championships National Tournament Committee reserves the right to accept or reject any participant.
13. The USBC Youth Scratch Championships National Tournament Committee will decide all matters not covered by these rules and regulations or USBC rules and regulations. All decisions are final.

ALL BOWLERS MUST SEE AND
UNDERSTAND THESE RULES

GUIDELINES FOR LEAGUE OFFICIALS / PROGRAM DIRECTORS

League-Level Competition Guidelines

The following are general guidelines to help you conduct the league-level competition. The packet and information from your state/zone tournament director will have specific information. This event is provided for all USBC Youth members — do not disappoint your bowlers. USBC Youth members deserve your assistance!

It is not mandatory to use the provided league worksheets. It is acceptable to produce the required information on your computer through a league secretary program. CDE Software produces league secretary software that contains the USBC Youth Scratch Championships forms. Please enter all information accurately. If you want to purchase software, please contact the company directly: **CDE Software** Phone: (206) 937-8069 Website: cdesoftware.com

Each athlete is required to read the league-level rules and agree to the division in which they have been placed for this tournament.

Competition Set-Up

- By **Oct. 1**, you should receive the information from your state/zone tournament director. If not, contact the director. See the listing of tournament directors on the Youth Championships page of bowl.com.
- Locate your qualifying window dates in the information sent by the director. If these dates conflict with other obligations, notify your tournament director. They have the authority to adjust the dates.

Step-by-Step Plan for All Qualifying Windows

1. Inform bowlers and parents the week before competition. Distribute copies of the League-Level Rules.
2. Locate the league worksheet in this handbook. Make a worksheet for each division:
 - o **Boys' Divisions:** U8, U10, U12, U14, U16, U18
 - o **Girls' Divisions:** U8, U10, U12, U14, U16, U18
 - o All divisions will be **SCRATCH**.
3. Have each member select their division and enter their name on the worksheet. Confirm age eligibility and that they have USBC Youth Membership. Bowlers can participate in different divisions for different leagues but must remain in the same division within one league window.
4. After the first session, record the scratch series for each bowler on the worksheet. If absent, mark as **"0."** No pre-/post-bowled scores allowed.
Note: If a one-week qualifying window was selected, skip to Step 8.
5. In the second week, remind bowlers they're in the competition. Record the scratch series again. If absent, mark as **"0."**

6. Determine and circle each bowler's highest score. Do **not** add both weeks' scores. Only the best series counts.
7. Rank bowlers by best score. Use your director's advancement ratio to determine qualifiers. Inform winners. Let them know they will bowl at least three games at the next level and must pay applicable fees.
8. On the worksheet, indicate whether bowlers accepted or declined to advance. **At least one bowler per division must advance** regardless of ratio.
9. If a bowler qualifies multiple times:
 - o Choose one **state/zone**.
 - o Choose one **division**.
 - o Choose the **first qualifying window**.
 - o Choose the **league with the highest series**.

Once a bowler chooses, they forfeit all other options.

10. Record advancing bowlers at the bottom of each division's worksheet.
11. Copy completed worksheets for your files and send originals to your state/zone tournament director. Check rules for submission deadlines and additional required forms or fees.

Sample League Worksheet



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Per division per league - reproduce as necessary

Division: U18 Boys Submitted by: Tammy Smith
 Bowling center: Bowlerville Lanes Submitter's address: 9797 S. 97th St.
 League name: Saturday Bowlerville Juniors Bowlerville, WI 19977
 Window dates: November 4 & 11 Telephone number: (979) 799-7979

ATHLETE'S NAME	DOB MM/DD/YY	INITIALS ACCEPT DIVISION	WEEK	SCRATCH SERIES	QUALIFIED	
					RANK	ACCEPT
Black, Alan	9/26/15	AB	1st wk	575	2	NO
			2nd wk	Absent		
Miller, Kevin	10/12/15	KCM	1st wk	400	6	
			2nd wk	415		
Smith, Tom	8/25/15	TS	1st wk	450	5	
			2nd wk	Absent		
Jones, Darryl	10/7/16	DJ	1st wk	500	3	YES
			2nd wk	520		
Rogers, Mark	8/26/16	MR	1st wk	300	8	
			2nd wk	350		
Martin, Pete	11/08/16	PM	1st wk	493	4	YES
			2nd wk	480		
Grant, Frank	2/25/18	FG	1st wk	400	7	
			2nd wk	397		
Williams, Bob	12/10/17	BW ^o	1st wk	625	1	YES
			2nd wk	580		
Johnson, Chris	9/17/15	CJ	1st wk	320	9	
			2nd wk	300		

* All USBC Youth members are eligible (i.e. mentally challenged bowlers over the age of 18 are eligible for all levels of competition)

SUMMARY SAMPLE - (per division per league - see state/zone rules for ratio and fee)

** See specific state/zone rules for exact ratios and fees **

Division	# of Entrants	Ratio	Advancers	Total Submitted
U18 Boys	9	1:3	3	\$45.00

League Worksheet



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Per division per league - reproduce as necessary

Division : _____

Submitted by: _____

Bowling center: _____

Submitter's address: _____

League name: _____

Window dates: _____

Telephone number: _____

ATHLETE'S NAME	DOB MM/DD/YY	INITIALS ACCEPT DIVISION	WEEK	SCRATCH SERIES	QUALIFIED	
					RANK	ACCEPT
			1st wk			
			2nd wk			
			1st wk			
			2nd wk			
			1st wk			
			2nd wk			
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			2nd wk			
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			1st wk			
			2nd wk			

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SUMMARY - (per division per league - see state/zone rules for ratio and fee)

** See specific state/zone rules for exact ratios and fees **

Division	# of Entrants	Ratio	Advancers	Total Submitted



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ATTENTION ALL TOURNAMENT MANAGERS

Please make sure you have the following items before your USBC Youth Scratch Championships presented by SMART:

1. Have you certified your USBC Youth Scratch Championships presented by SMART?
 - a. You may certify online at www.bowl.com. Under the TOURNAMENTS tab, you will find the “Tournament Certification” link.
 - b. Your Certification number is: _____
2. Do you have your USBC SMART Account number?
 - a. If not, you will want to contact SMART at 817-385-8292
 - b. Your SMART Account number is: _____
3. Do you understand the “Age Chart” for placing bowlers in the proper divisions?
4. Are you using a center that is a BPAA Member?
5. Did you read and understand the USBC Youth Scratch Championships presented by SMART Rules?
6. Have you submitted your tournament rules to for approval?
 - a. They should be sent to youthtournaments@bowl.com no later than September 15.
7. If you have any questions after reading the handbook, please contact USBC Tournaments to get a better clarification of the rules at 817-385-8426.



USBC YOUTH SCRATCH CHAMPIONSHIPS WAIVER FORM

The USBC Youth Scratch Championships allows parents/players to request a WAIVER to allow their player to “play up” into an older group. Requests and any approval granted are for the current season’s tournament only. Requests are by written application only by the parent or legal guardian. While the USBC Youth Scratch Championships does not recommend that players play up, the tournament leadership does recognize that there may be a number of factors, including but not limited to, size, maturity, experience and skill levels that may influence a player’s decision to play up.

PLEASE PRINT

PLAYER LAST NAME _____ FIRST NAME _____

DATE OF BIRTH _____ USBC ID# _____

PHONE _____ EMAIL _____

Current Age Division: (Circle one) U8 U10

Requested Age Division: (Circle one) U10 U12

I, the parent/guardian of the above-minor child, hereby request my child to compete in the division requested above. I understand that this is not the age division he/she was originally assigned by the USBC Youth Scratch Championships tournament rules. I am aware that my child will be competing against older and potentially more physically developed players with potentially higher-level skills, and I, therefore, recognize the added risks to my child’s health and safety, as well as to my child’s emotional well-being. In signing below, I accept these risks and accept all and every liability and responsibility stemming from such risks as my own, and I absolve the USBC Youth Scratch Championships, its affiliated clubs, board members, volunteers, and associated personnel against any claims. I also acknowledge that I am making this decision on my own initiative and have not been requested to do so by any outside influence.

It is the policy of the USBC Youth Scratch Championships that all players compete at a level they are capable of, both physically and developmentally.

This form must be submitted to the USBC Youth Scratch Championships State Coordinator before participation in the local qualifier. No changes to a division may be made once a bowler has started a qualifier.

PARENT/GUARDIAN NAME (PLEASE PRINT) _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____