

Red, White and Blue Open results affirm equity of new oil patterns

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USBC Equipment Specifications and Certification



For the past several months, the United States Bowling Congress Equipment Specifications and Certifications team has been testing the new **USBC Red, White and Blue patterns**, newly created "house" oil patterns designed to present bowlers with conditions of varying difficulty as they progress from beginning bowlers to USBC Sport Bowling members.

To date, the results of all field tests have fallen in line with USBC's intended and predicted ranges regarding scoring pace and equity to bowlers of all styles; nevertheless, USBC was looking for a higher level of affirmation regarding the Red, White and Blue patterns. That's just what it got during the Pepsi Red, White and Blue Open presented by the USBC, which was held Dec. 7-13 at Northrock Lanes in Wichita, Kan.

During that event, USBC analyzed the scores of the 24 bowlers that advanced to match play because those players rolled 16 games on each of the three oil patterns, Red, White and Blue.

This group, which featured both right-handed and left-handed bowlers of varying bowling styles, was tracked in order to determine whether the Red, White and Blue patterns displayed the same difficulty typical league bowlers experienced – **Red** being the least challenging, **Blue** being the most challenging – and whether or not that difficulty was distributed equitably.

"Interestingly, the PBA players scored higher on the White pattern than on the Red," said **Neil Stremmel, USBC Vice President – National Governing Body**. "This was not a surprise because the extreme wall on the Red pattern that helps average bowlers can actually hurt elite players by causing their balls to over- and under-react. Still, in a typical

league setting, our data shows Red will be the highest scoring of the three patterns.

"But what was truly encouraging about this event was the fairness the three patterns showed to all bowlers. Just look at the TV finalists. You have two lefties (Patrick Allen and Mike Scroggins) and four righties (Walter Ray Williams Jr., Mike Machuga, Michael Fagan and Wayne Garber) that represent every style – straight players, high-rev players and everything in between. That just goes to show that nobody is shut out on these patterns. Players of all styles can succeed, and that is exactly what we expected to see."

The USBC Equipment Specifications and Certifications team also expected high scores, which it got as the five-day tournament featured several bowlers averaging in excess of 240 as well as a Lumber Liquidators PBA Tour-record 31 perfect games.

"The scores were very high, but people need to realize the Red, White and Blue patterns are house patterns, not USBC Sport Bowling or PBA patterns," **USBC Technical Director Steve Kloempken** said.

"Even the USBC Blue pattern, which is the hardest of the three, is a great deal less challenging than what the PBA pros bowl on week in and week out. Remember, these are the best bowlers in the world. They routinely average 220 or better on most of their patterns, so it really isn't surprising to see them average 10-20 pins higher on the Red, White and Blue house patterns."

If the results of current tests continue to fall in line, USBC will finalize the initial testing process and move forward by gathering data at select city and state tournaments this spring. Currently, USBC is still on track for a Fall 2010 roll out of these new patterns.