

USBC forms task force to address bowling ball issues

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United States

Initial meeting Oct. 1 in Greendale



A new task force formed by the United States Bowling Congress will address bowling ball performance issues and their impact on the credibility and integrity of the sport. The **USBC Bowling Ball Specifications Task Force** - comprised of USBC representatives and technical volunteers from several bowling ball manufacturers - will hold its first meeting at 9 a.m., Saturday, Oct. 1 at USBC Headquarters in Greendale, Wis.

Representatives from the following bowling ball manufacturing companies have volunteered to join the task force: Brunswick, Circle Athletics, Columbia Industries Inc., Dyno-Thane, Ebonite International, Hammer, Lane #1, Lane Masters, MoRich Enterprises, Roto Grip, Storm Products Inc., Track Inc. and Visionary Bowling Products.

Among the items on the agenda:

- Thorough study of bowling ball motion
- Review of some existing bowling ball specifications
- Possible modification or elimination of existing bowling ball specifications
- Possible recommendation of additional bowling ball specifications
- Discussion and investigation into the possible adoption of dynamic bowling ball performance measures

Over the past 20 years, bowling's credibility has been compromised in part due to a failure to control various technological advancements. Following an Industry Forum in Orlando in June, USBC received welcome input from industry leaders stating a need for further study of bowling ball specifications. At the forum, USBC agreed to focus any potential specification modifications on the design phase of bowling ball technology, not the drilling phase. Through the formation of this task force, USBC will work with the bowling industry to determine solutions.

"USBC is concerned with the degree of influence technology is having over true player skill as a main factor for success in bowling today at all levels of competition," said USBC President Michael Carroll. "These concerns include advancements in bowling ball design, materials and performance capability. This task force was created to address these issues of bowling ball performance."

As the sport's national governing body, USBC is committed to maintaining the highest standards for credibility and integrity for bowling. In fulfilling that pledge, USBC is launching a re-evaluation of all components of the System of Bowling, which includes lane surfaces, lane conditions, bowling balls and pins.

"Through research, cooperation and conviction, USBC will evaluate new technology to ensure that it does not overshadow player skill," said USBC Chief Executive Officer Roger Dalkin. "For the good of bowling, USBC will manage - but not stop or control - new technology."

As an advisory body, the task force will work in tandem with the USBC Equipment Specifications Committee, which has final authority on any proposed equipment specification changes.

The USBC Specifications and Certification testing facility, opened in 1977, is an eight-lane center in a climate-controlled building where team members regulate and standardize bowling equipment by concentrating on pin and product testing, research work, bowling center certifications and lane dressing inspections. The staff provides lane-conditioning support for a variety of tournaments and Sport Bowling events. The Specifications and Certification team consists of engineers, technicians and support staff.

Since the mid-1980s, Specifications and Certification has been the only facility recognized to approve products for international competition such as the World Tenpin Bowling Association (WTBA) and the Federation Internationale des Quilleurs (FIQ).