

USBC proactive in facility, equipment standards group

01/11/08

USBC Equipment Specifications and Certification

Ridenour's membership in ASTM helps bowling grow in sports science field

As bowling's national governing body, the United States Bowling Congress must stay current on all sports trends such as facilities and equipment standards. One way it does that is through membership in the American Society of Testing and Measurement.

ASTM is an organization that discusses some of the most challenging issues facing sports facilities and equipment. It has volunteers from private businesses, sports organizations, universities and governmental agencies.

"ASTM members are safety experts," said USBC Research Engineer Paul Ridenour, an ASTM member since joining USBC in December 2006.

"We are trying to stay proactive in our safety specifications so that our membership has a safe and fun time when they are on the lanes."

The recent requirement that bowling lane conditioners (oil) must now meet federal safety guidelines before it can be considered for approval and use in USBC-certified competitions is a direct result of USBC's work with the ASTM. USBC's allowance of a warning statement to be placed on lane beds to notify bowlers not to cross the foul line also resulted from its ASTM relationship.

In addition, USBC and its predecessor organizations have used ASTM testing standards for coefficient of friction (a number that represents the friction between two objects) and coefficient of restitution (the energy transfer between two objects upon impact). In bowling, this relates to the testing of balls, pins and lanes.

"It's important for us to belong," Ridenour said. "Being part of the international community we need to do that. We are sports scientists back here. We have to grow as sports scientists in the Olympic community."

Ridenour sits on the Miscellaneous Playing Field subcommittee which covers sports facility surfaces such as basketball and tennis courts, fencing and indoor sports floors like bowling. The subcommittee reports to the Sports Equipment and Playing Fields committee.

"It's important to stay active besides the bi-annual meeting," Ridenour said. "I want to go to at least one sub-committee meeting a year."

The ASTM was founded in 1898 originally to set standards in industries lacking a national governing body. Today, it serves industries whether they have an NGB or not.