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BARENAKED LADIES **Team USA star** graces Body Issue. TECHNIQUE The importance of adjusting your

**HEALTH & WELLNESS** Shouldering the load.

launch angles.

6

8

# Strike Force

Liz Johnson's nine consecutive strikes paced Team USA en route to gold at the World Women's Championships.

CONTENTS

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### **NATIONAL NEWS**

Over the 58-year history of the World Tenpin Bowling Association World Women's Championships, Team USA has enjoyed incredible success, collecting nearly twice as many total medals as the next closest competing country. Still, the disappointment of not having won the coveted team gold since 1987 has left the U.S. squad unfulfilled. That all changed at the 2011 Women's World Championships in Hong Kong, when Team USA (Liz Johnson, Kelly Kulick, Carolyn Dorin-Ballard, Shannon O'Keefe, Shannon Pluhowsky and Stefanie Nation) defeated Singapore, 1,210-1,140 in the gold-medal match. Team USA trailed early in the final, but used a 15-strike run late in the contest to vault past Singapore. Johnson opened with nine consecutive strikes and finished with 279 to lead the Americans. "We've always had great teams," said Kulick, who last bowled in the 1999 championships. "It's an honor to be able to say I was on the team that did it."



**GOLDEN GIRLS:** Team USA wins first team gold in 24 years at world championships. CLICK ON THE PLAY BUTTON ABOVE FOR A VIDEO CLIP FROM HONG KONG



#### 2015 USBC Open Championships Awarded to El Paso

The 112th edition of the USBC Open Championships will be staged in El Paso, Texas, marking the first time in a decade the championships will be held in a new host city.

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#### **USBC Hall of Famer Remo Picchietti Dies At 81**

Remo Picchietti, a USBC Hall of Famer and one of the sport's leading authorities on lane maintenance, died at his home near Chicago, Sept 26. Picchietti was 81.

**CLICK HERE TO READ MORE** 



#### League Officers Offered Online Certification Program

USBC Rules offers now offers online training programs on the duties and responsibilities of league officer for current officers as well as bowlers wishing to become officers.

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**Entries Being Accepted For Women's Championships** 

Entry forms and online registration for the 2012 USBC Women's Championships in Reno, Nev., are available at BOWL.com/womenschamp.

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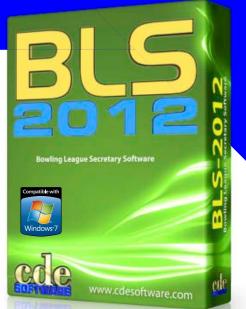
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NEWS, NOTES AND HAPPENINGS FROM THE WORLD OF BOWLING /// OCTOBER 2011

Bulletin Board

the first two years they'd done the Body Issue, and it wasn't all size 2's and models. It was an honor to be asked."

Kulick will be one of 20 athletes featured in the Oct. 7 edition of the magazine, including soccer goalie Hope Solo, football star Stephen Jackson, basketball's Blake Griffin, snowboarder Gretchen Bleiler and gymnast Alicia Sacramone.

Before agreeing to be photographed, however, Kulick put in calls to the PBA and her primary sponsor, Ebonite International, for their blessing.

"Both were excited for the opportunity I had, so I called back and

agreed to the shoot," said Kulick.

Originally, the magazine asked Kulick to pose in March, but in part because of her bowling schedule, she asked if they could reschedule for June.

"I also felt like I needed an extra window to get in better shape," Kulick confided. "I already have a pretty good nutrition and workout routines, but I wanted to get a little more definition."

Kulick said she was surprisingly comfortable during the shoot, which took place at a private studio in Manhattan. "There were only four people in the studio," she said. "I wore a bikini and sports bra to get the poses set, then disrobed for the photos. It's a matter of trust with the photographer. After a while I didn't even bother putting my robe back on."

Realizing how vulnerable the athletes make themselves for the project, ESPN the Magazine editors allow the athletes to look at the

> photos and reject ones they're not comfortable with.

"It's black-andwhite photography, and it's all about lighting and shadows," Kulick said. "The photos were all great. They had me in the slide position and also with the ball at my chin,

which showed the definition in my arm.

"The photos all accentuated the strong points of my bowling form."

Kulick added she was excited to see the end result.

"Believe me, I wish I had six-pack abs, but I don't," she joked. "My form and athleticism reflect who I am as a person, and I'm comfortable with that.

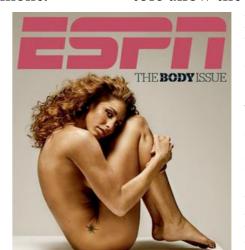
"But I don't expect any phone calls from Hugh Hefner," Kulick added. "I guess you could say I'm just doing what I can to bring more 'exposure' to the sport!"

### Bowling Star Kelly Kulick Exposed In 'Body Issue.'

SPN the Magazine's annual Body Issue touts itself as an "exploration and celebration of the athletic form." The issue features a section called "Bodies We Want," in which male and female athletes from a variety of sports pose nude in a stance reflective of their particular sport.

This year ESPN the Magazine wanted the body of a bowler. Kelly Kulick's body, to be precise.

"They contacted me back in February," said Kulick, the only woman ever to win a PBA title. "I'd seen



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#### LIFESTYLE AND BOWLING TECHNIQUES TO MAKE YOU A BETTER BOWLER /// OCTOBER 2011

Technique

# LAUNCH PAD

## How you set up on the approach is just as important as your delivery

ne of the most common problems facing average and above-average bowlers also is one of the easiest problems to fix.

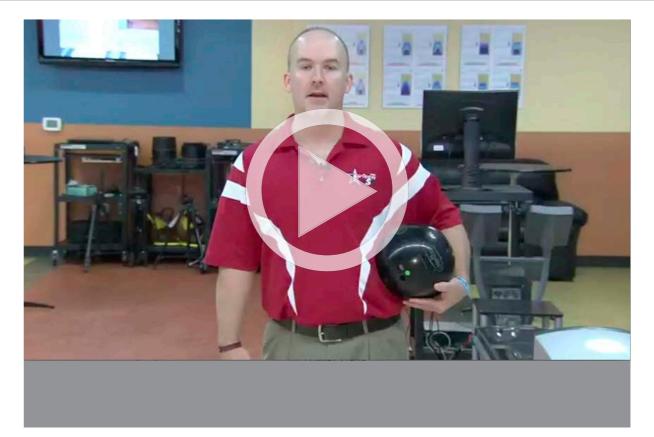
Very few league bowlers stop to think about presetting their launch angles, and it's amazing how much that simple step can help your game.

During the course of a league night, it's likely you are going to move a bit on the lanes and change your angle to the pins. It stands to reason, then, that your body must adjust to those changes so that the ball comes off your hand at the proper angle. That's what we mean by "launch angles."

The great thing is that the key to correcting inconsistent or improper launch angles is simply a matter of awareness. It's an easy fix because it's something that is established before you're in motion. There's no muscle memory attached because it is done during your setup. When you are setting your body on the approach, you set the angle of your feet, hips and shoulders with the intended projection angle. By doing this, your swing will come through smoothly and accurately.

Let's say the lanes are really tight and you're playing pretty far to the right and want to keep your ball tight to the gutter up the lane. To effectively do that you need to keep your feet, hips and shoulders at the same angle in terms of openness up the lane. In this case, the ball has to go straight off your hand, so you want to make sure you close down those angles when you're in your setup.

Conversely, as the lane starts to break down you may move your feet seven or eight boards to the left and your target two or three boards to the left. Now, you have opened up that angle and you're going to have to belly the ball out a bit. You've changed the angle that the ball will come off your hand, so you want to make sure that before you ever get your feet in motion on the approach you open your feet, hips and shoulders to preset your new angle. The angle of your body will



**READY TO BLAST OFF:** Click on the play button (above) to view ITRC Assistant Coach Bryan O'Keefe discussing the importance of launch angles.

dictate the angle that the ball is going to come off your hand.

The most important thing to remember when presetting your launch angles is that these angles must all be in synch. The feet, hips and shoulders all should be lined up the same way. If one of those angles is different than the others, your body will get twisted and you will be forced to change your swing to compensate.

The most common problem with league bowlers is that they will set up on the approach with their feet open, their hips less open and their shoulders completely closed. Your feet and hips are going to want to project the ball out to the right, but your shoulders are going to want you to keep the ball straight up the lane.

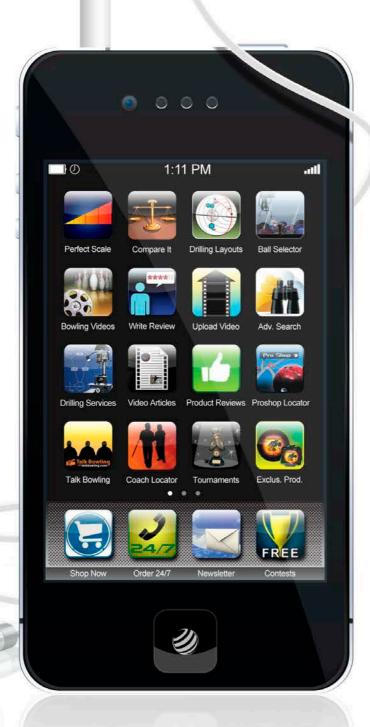
Remember, when you move closer to the gutter on the right, close down your preset launch angles. As you migrate toward the middle of the lane and the ball is going to be traveling away from the pocket, you need to open up those angles.

Properly presetting your launch angles during your setup is simple, but really important. The key is to focus on making sure all three angles are lined up in the same direction.

— Bryan O'Keefe is Assistant Coach and Facility Manager at the International Training and Research Center in Arlington, Texas.



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9 USBOWLER OCTOBER 2011

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### Health and Wellness

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### FITNESS

### **OFF THE CUFF** Shoulder instability can be a pain

### By Nick Bohanan

t's no secret that bowling is a physically taxing sport. It involves a heavy object, requires a good degree of athleticism and puts your body through repetitive motion, all of which can lead to injury if you aren't careful.

One of the more common ailments with bowlers is shoulder pain. Your shoulder is a ball-andsocket joint and a number of the small muscles that act on the shoulder are attached to the shoulder blade. In order for those muscles to work effectively, the shoulder blade has to move in a certain motion. These stabilizing muscles make sure the shoulder blade locks in place when it's supposed to and allows it to move freely when it's supposed to.

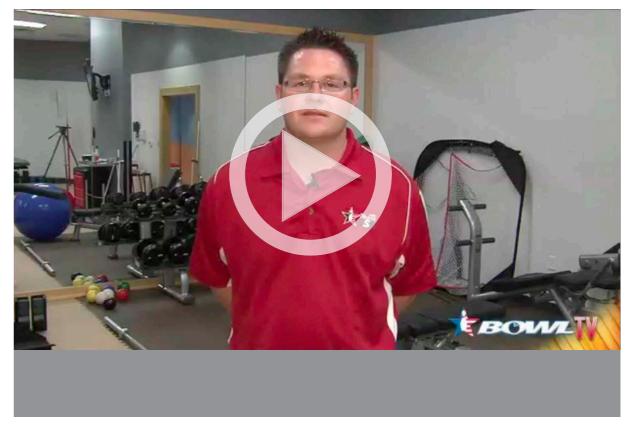
There also are four small muscles that make up the rotator cuff. Those muscles are important in accelerating and decelerating your arm, particularly in an overhand motion. Overuse of the rotator cuff in overhand motions, like throwing a baseball, can lead to muscle tears, but that does not appear to be a major issue with underhand motions.

On the follow-through in bowling, these muscles actually pull down on your arm to regulate how far your arm will go. They help anchor the arm down.

People who have weak shoulder stabilization muscles don't get that "anchoring down" from the muscles, and the muscles aren't as efficient. That can affect the tendons and nerves under the collarbone, causing an impingement or inflammation in the joint. That makes it difficult for bowlers to get their arm all the way up.

Getting full extension without impingement takes stable muscles, and the best way to strengthen that area is by doing the "I, Y and T."

All three of these exercises start with your stomach over the top of a stability ball (also called a physio ball). Lengthen your legs and stretch your heels behind you. Your hands should be under your shoulders. Without arching your lower back, perform the following exercises:



**STABILIZED:** Click on the play button (above) to view USBC Coaching Specialist Nick Bohanan discussing exercises to strengthen shoulder stability.

I: Slowly bring both arms overhead and in line with your torso, or the "I" position. Keep your arms straight out ahead of your body, with your thumbs pointed toward the ceiling. Focus on squeezing the shoulder blades together as much as possible. Feel them pinch. Hold that position for five seconds.

Y: Slowly bring your arms overhead into a "Y" position. Again, thumbs up. Squeeze your shoulder blades, and hold that position for five seconds. T: Slowly bring your arms out to your sides into a "T" position. Once again, thumbs pointed to the ceiling, squeezing your should blades together. Hold for five seconds.

Repeat this sequence 6-10 times.

As you become more comfortable, hold small weights (1-5 pounds) in your hands when doing these exercises.

— Nick Bohanan is United States Bowling Congress Sports Performance Specialist.

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### How one step sent Shannon Pluhowsky on her way to four gold medals

o say Team USA bowler Shannon Pluhowsky enjoyed success at the 2011 World Tenpin Bowling Association World Women's Championships in Hong Kong would be like saying Earl Anthony was a decent bowler.

All the 29-year-old lefty from Kettering, Ohio, did in Hong Kong was become the first bowler in the history of the world championships to earn four gold medals. She stood on the medal stand's top step following doubles, trios, team and masters competition.

The exclamation point to Pluhowsky's week-long run was a 3-1 triumph over Singapore's Daphne Tan in the Masters finale, in which she tossed 300 and 299.

Given the fact Team USA's world championships sextet included such high-profile bowlers as Liz Johnson, Kelly Kulick and Carolyn Dorin-Ballard, Pluhowsky might not have been the most likely candidate for a dominating individual performance.

Not that she was surprised, mind you.

"I wouldn't say I was surprised by how well I did," Pluhowsky said without the slightest hint of bravado. "I know I can bowl well, and I've bowled well before in major competition. I know what I'm capable of."

True, Pluhowsky, who has been a Team USA member for a decade, has an impressive resume. She's the only bowler to win three consecutive U.S. Amateur titles, and won the USBC Queens crown as an amateur in 2006. Pluhowsky also has three Professional Bowlers Association Women's Series titles to her credit, including back-toback wins in 2009.

Still, her incredible success in Hong Kong probably seemed unlikely near the end of the team's formal training camp at the International Training and Research Center in Arlington, Texas, in July.

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"I focused a lot on my physical game there," Pluhowsky recalled. "It seemed like every couple of shots I'd throw it bad and I didn't know why. That's the most frustrating thing as a bowler.

"Right before we were getting ready to leave, [Team USA Assistant Coach] Kim [Terrell-Kearney] and I were working together and we drew onto something that we had been missing. I was pushing the ball away too late."

"Occasionally, Shannon battles her start," said Terrell-Kearney. "She gets her pushaway started too late, and it affects her balance, leverage and accuracy."

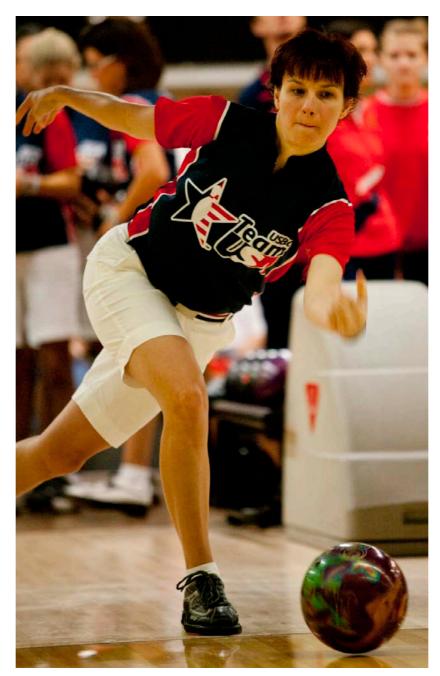
# *"One of the signs that you're chasing your feet is that you turn your hand early."*

"I use a four-step approach," noted Pluhowsky, "and I was pushing the ball away on my second step. When you do that, your foot is getting ahead of the ball so your swing is always behind. Then the problem gets compounded because the only way to catch up is to pull down from the top, which winds up making you throw the ball all over the place.

"Mentally, I know that is a problem area for me. Throughout my career, if I'm struggling that's the first spot I'm going to look. And more times than not that's where my flaw is going to be.

"Physically," she continued, "I used to try to over-exaggerate it. If my swing starts two seconds later than it's supposed to, I would try to start two seconds earlier than it's supposed to. I'd try to correct the problem by overcompensating."

The average league bowler, who doesn't always have the luxury of a coach looking over his shoulder, can still detect and correct a tardy pushaway.



"One of the signs that you're chasing your feet is that you turn your hand early," said Pluhowsky. "And everyone knows that when you turn it early it makes the game a lot harder because you get more hook and a lot less accuracy.

"The loss of accuracy comes from muscling the ball. With a four-step approach, your approach is only six seconds or so, so when you push away late there's not a lot of time for your swing to catch up with your feet. To speed up your swing you tend to pull down from the shoulder, which

13 USBOWLER OCTOBER 2011

is muscling the ball down to get it back into synch. But by muscling the ball you grab it at the bottom, which causes over-hook and a loss of accuracy. It's hard to repeat shots that way."

"So, a loss in accuracy might be a warning sign that your pushaway is an issue.

"Being out of synch with your feet and pushaway will also affect your balance and leverage. It's harder to stay on balance when you're muscling the ball. You tend to fall off, and you're not able to stay in the shot."

Pluhowsky solved her pushaway dilemma by drawing on a childhood fairy tale.

"In my mind I always say to myself, 'Pinocchio," she admitted. "Pinocchio's movements were controlled by a string. When you pull the string to move his arms, his legs move too. They moved together. Mentally, I pretend that my arm and foot are pulled by the same string, so if I want to take a step my arm has to move as well.

"The Pinocchio idea helps paint a mental picture for me and gives me a feeling that it's something I can repeat."

Following training camp, Pluhowsky spent the next two months channeling her inner Pinocchio in preparation for the world championships. Once in Hong Kong, she continued to work with the Team USA coaches to make sure her game was in synch.

"Once the competition started, there were a few times I consciously thought about it," Pluhowsky said. "But once it's engrained in your head and you get into a groove, you don't really think about details. And once you get comfortable and trust that your rhythm is right, you can concentrate on simply making a good shot. It's when you mess up that you start thinking about every little thing.

"Physically, I felt really good in Hong Kong." And that's no lie!

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# **GOLDEN MOMENTS**

### Team USA Wins Four of Six Gold Medals

It's no secret the primary mission for Team USA at the 2011 WTBA World Women's Championships in Hong Kong was the gold medal in team.

But as Shannon Pluhowsky pointed out, a strong lead-up to the team event can help.

"Obviously, the more success you have during the week, the more success you're likely to have as a team," she pointed out. "The team gold was the most important thing, but we had a goal during the week of winning as many medals as we could."

The goal-oriented Pluhowsky certainly did her part, medaling in five of the six divisions.

Ironically, the American squad opened the proceedings at Hong Kong Bowling City on a less-thanimpressive note. Only one member of Team USA, Shannon O'Keefe (eighth), finished in the top 24 in singles, which featured 171 bowlers.

From that point on, Team USA would be on the platform at every medal ceremony.

In doubles, Pluhowsky paired



SHOWING THEIR STRIPES: For the first time since '87, Team USA claimed the team title at the World Women's Championships, with (I-r) Shannon Pluhowsky, Stefanie Nation, Shannon O'Keefe, Liz Johnson, Kelly Kulick and Carolyn Dorin-Ballard claiming gold. (Pluhowsky, Johnson and Ku-All-Events, with Pluhowsky ear

with Liz Johnson to capture Team USA's first gold, relegating teammates Carolyn Dorin-Ballard and Kelly Kulick to bronze in the semifinals, then besting Singapore's Jazreel Tan and New Hui Fen in the final.

Team USA earned gold and bronze again in trios, as Pluhowsky, O'Keefe and Stefanie Nation outshot Japan's Natsuki Sasaki, Haruka Matsuda and Kanako Ishimine in the final. Japan had narrowly beaten Team USA's trio of Dorin-Ballard, Johnson and Kulick, 668-661, in the semifinals. In the all-important team event, Team USA rallied from sixth place after the first three-game block to slip into the top four after the second block, earning a spot in the semifinals. There the U.S. struggled against Germany, but prevailed, 1,080-970.

The title match saw Team USA, led by Johnson, who ran off the first nine, string together 15 consecutive strikes late to race past Singapore, 1,210-1,140, for the gold.

Johnson finished with 279, followed by Pluhowsky (256), Kulick (244), O'Keefe (226) and DorinBallard (205).

(For more info and a video of Team USA's performance, see page 4.)

"We were down early, but never panicked," said Pluhowsky. "Everyone was throwing good shots. Around the fifth frame we were all lined up, and the strikes started coming. When we put together 15 straight strikes, each bowler had a turkey.

"It was exciting and rewarding at the end. And it's always more fun winning with a team. It was really cool."

Three U.S. bowlers (Pluhowsky, Johnson and Kulick) finished in the top 16 in All-Events, with Pluhowsky earning bronze, to earn spots in the Masters. While Johnson lost in the round of 16 and Kulick bowed out in the quarterfinals, Pluhowsky defeated Germany's Patricia Luoto (3-2), Indonesia's Tannya Roumimper (3-0) and Germany's Nadine Giessler (3-2) to reach the gold medal match.

Pluhowsky (300, 219, 299, 223) cruised to a 3-1 win over Daphne Tan (226, 238, 234, 191) of Singapore in the title match on the strength the first 300 in a Masters final.

"Obviously, this tournament was the highlight of my career individually," Pluhowsky added.

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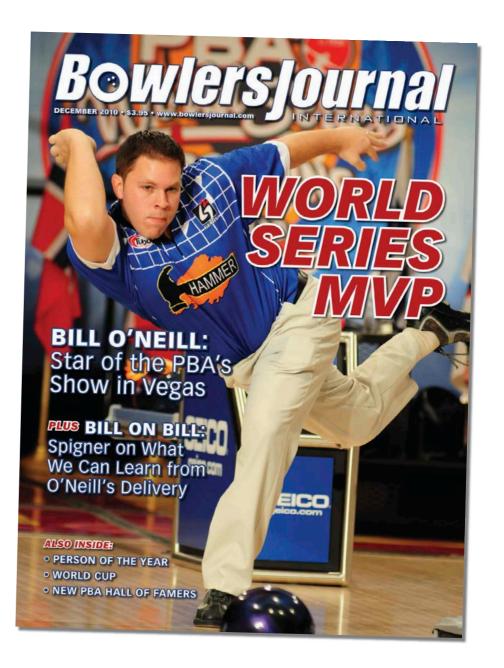




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