



Up Your Average

by Rolf Gauger

Instruction to Help Raise Your Scores

The Triax Spare System, Part 1

In February 1999 I first published the main points of my then recently developed "Triax" Spare System in Bowling This Month magazine. This system became so successful and popular so rapidly, that the e mail requests for more info soon numbered well over a hundred. I realized I would never be able to answer that many readers individually, so this month's description should satisfy my newspaper readers, in whatever state they reside.

There has been so much interest generated by the success of this spare system with those bowlers who use it, including some professionals, that there is a possibility of a book. When and if the book does appear, many aspects of the subject, which can't be covered in a few pages, will come to light.

Systems

As to the importance of spare converting, Hall of Fame "Coach of the pros" John Jowdy's occasional articles in issues of most US bowling newspapers, list his all time "All Miss" team. It points to a number of outstanding PBA strike shooters who had to leave the tour because they couldn't win.

Why? Poor spare shooting!

As we all know, any system is better than none. But most systems I've seen are complicated enough to discourage the majority of bowlers. The Triax System is specifically designed to simplify efficient spare converting to the utmost possible degree.

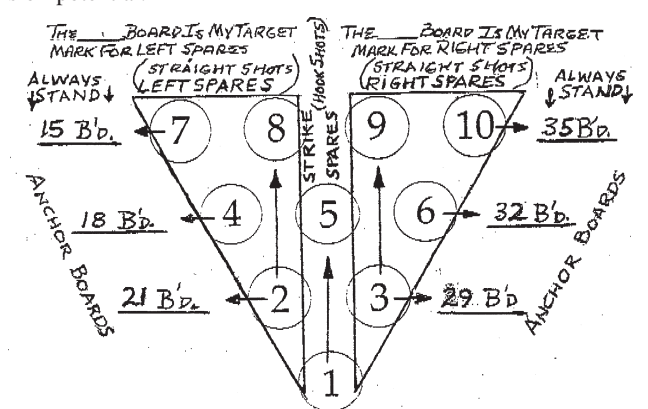
Believe it or not, there are 1,023 mathematically possible spare combinations in a rack of ten pins. Probably at least a third of these are so unlikely you'll never see them. But that still leaves enough to make a simplified, efficient spare system critical.

Triax

The first rule of spare shooting is universal, "In any spare, the front pin must be hit!" We'll refer to this as the "key" pin.

This leads us to the first simplification rule of the Triax system. That is, that the bowler is assigned to stand on a specific starting (anchor) board as shown, for each of the six pins in the front "V" of the pin rack, not including the head pin (see illustrations).

In this system the feet may NOT be adjusted to different boards from those assigned! So to convert the 10, 6 or 3 pin right of center, as well as the 7, 4 or 2 pins on the left (the pins inside the triangles), the bowler must stand on the specific anchor board shown in the diagram. This simplifies the system, by reducing the number of foot positions to a bare minimum, while greatly increasing spare conversion potential.



Two rules to be published later, will tell us how to hit the key pin somewhere off center to convert other standing pins, splits, avoid cherry picking, etc. But for now, we'll stick to the basic system itself.

So...we will think of all spares in which the key pin is right of center (in the right triangle) as "right side spares", regardless of where any accompanying pins may be located, and those key pins left of center (in the left triangle) as "left side spares".

Incidentally, the Triax System is designed so that all right handed bowlers use the left foot for anchor board placement and left handers the right foot! This is to keep from possibly standing against the ball return on corner pin shots. (If anyone insists on using the other foot, OK, as long as you can stay away from that ball return.)

Now, by regulation, all lane beds are the same width...41 1/2 inches, plus or minus 1/2 inch...and all current lane beds are being manufactured with 39 boards. Therefore, since the arrows are always 14 to 15 feet from the foul line, current lanes are virtually standard throughout the US and most of the bowling countries on earth.

What this means to spare shooting, is that the assigned starting (anchor) board on each side changes by exactly three boards for each successive pin on that side. That's nothing new. It's been that way for many years. It works because, according to the math, as long as the same target board is used for shooting at any key pins on that same side, the three board foot move brings a ball which hits the mark to the desired key pin every time.

The Target Board (Mark)

Now we have arrived at the point where there's only one thing left we don't yet know...what will be the mark? That information you must discover for yourself, by trying it with a few experimental shots. This is because the mark can, and often does, vary with the individual bowler. However, whatever board your mark ends up being, it must be at the arrows, or the system won't work!

But usually the marks don't change by more than three or four boards from bowler to bowler, so I can provide a reasonably educated guess, as follows:

To find your specific mark (right handers), try for the 10 pin first, by standing on the 35 board with your left foot, as shown. Next, throw as straight a ball as possible to approximately the 18 board. If the 18 board shot misses the 10 pin, change your mark a board or two right or left and try again. Keep experimenting with mark changes until you hit that 10 pin. When you do, that becomes your mark for all the pins on that side!

Left handers, shoot for the 7 pin by doing the same as above on your side...the exact mirror reverse of the right handers.

Note that in the upper left and right sides of the diagram, the illustration shows a blank space for you to write your target board,

once you've determined what it is. If you make copies of this illustration with those spaces left blank, you can enter your own board numbers and use the copy, without having to mark up this article, which you should keep. Use pencil for that.

Remember, while unlikely, it is possible that your target board may change as you adjust your approach over time. Until you memorize the board numbers, you may want to carry a copy of the diagram with you for reference, while bowling. My students are each given pre-cut copies to use during play whenever necessary.

The Straight Spare Shot

This is critical. Trust me, ball manufacturers wouldn't bother to make spare balls if they weren't profitable. Oil conditions change at different points on the lane, so hook shots on off center spares are dangerous. The straight shot is the only sure way to take lane conditions out of the game.

Obviously, hook shots are necessary for center spares, where a strike shot (or Brooklyn) is called for.

Incidentally, in this Triax system, treat the 8 pin as if it were a 2, and the 9 pin as a 3. A reasonably accurate straight shot will work. It need not be absolutely perfect. You don't have to be deadly accurate in this system (except for splits, of course, which we'll cover later). Normally, a slight miss will still convert that key pin.

Exceptions

There are always exceptions, of course. But in this system, only a few:

The 3-6-9-10 (right handers). Instead of the 3 pin straight shot the system calls for, stand for a 6 pin shot and hook the ball at your 6 pin mark. Deadly accuracy needed for this shot, but it is the best way, statistically.

Left handers, mirror reverse (the 2-4-7-8). Stand for a 4 pin and hook the shot.

The 2-8 or 2-4-8. Instead of the usual 2 pin straight shot, throw a Brooklyn strike shot. Left handers do the same for the 3-9 or 3-6-9. (Note: if the 5 pin stands with the above spares, such as in a bucket, do not use the Brooklyn shot. Instead, use the straight shot at the key pin, which is what the system calls for.)

The 4-5-7 split. Stand 1/2 board left of your normal Brooklyn position and throw a normal Brooklyn shot. Left handers, same for the 5-6-10 split, standing 1/2 board right of your Brooklyn position and throwing Brooklyn.

Having said all this, I will acknowledge that some right handers may want to throw a hook at the 3-9 (lefties at the 2-8) but I discourage that, due to oil variations. Statistics indicate that the straight shot converts more of these than a hook.

The Bottom Line

The success of Triax is pretty far flung. A former Student, Bill Sutura, won the Arizona State Strike Force Championship with it only a week after having learned it. Lane conditions were difficult for that tournament and nobody was able to strike consistently. Sutura won it by missing only one spare in 12 games (not counting three splits)

Another example is a Super School student of mine with an average in the 170s, who won a local tournament the very night he had learned the system, with a 246 average. If I hadn't seen the readouts I wouldn't have believed it.

As I said, no system, even as simple and successful as this one,

can be completely understood with just three or four pages in a couple of articles. Nothing can beat one on one instruction on the lanes. But if the possibility of a book comes to fruition, I'll be able to not only cover all aspects of the system thoroughly, but also get into subjects such as making spare shooting easier by increasing pin fall with a better strike shot, avoiding splits, and so on.

Remember John Jowdy's comment, "Strike for show and spare for dough!"

PS - Next month there will be room for me to cover rules 2 and 3 of this system...split shooting and chop avoidance...two important parts of successful spare converting.

Rolf's Winning Bowlers of the Month

Rafaela Ruby, 1st place Doubles, Maricopa County Senior Tournament, Bell Lanes, October 29th. Also, 2nd place, All Events

Shirley Braverman, 1st place Singles, including a 299 game, 792 series, same tournament as above. Shirley also won 1st place, All Events. Becca Reguero, 4th place, Tracy Warren Memorial Tournament, AMF Deer Valley Lanes, October 14th.



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Please send all applications to CUSBC Nominating Chairman, Ed Blomdahl, 3425 Poppy Patch Dr., Modesto, CA 95354.

Looking for something fun to do after bowling?

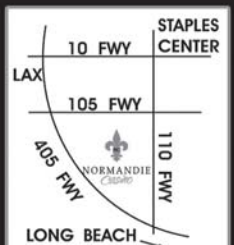
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Up Your Average
by Rolf Gauger
Instruction to Help Raise Your Scores

The Triax Spare System, Rules 2 & 3 Avoiding Chopping and Converting Splits

Last month we covered the Triax Spare System fundamentals. As promised, this month we'll discuss the needed parts to complete the methods of converting multi pin spares without chopping (cherry picking) as well as splits.

As rule 1 states (see last month's article...I hope you saved it as I suggested) the "key" pin in all spares is the one that must be hit. *That's the pin in front.* But that doesn't cover what adjustments need to be made so the system can be used for hitting that key pin on *one side or the other*...which is what is needed to successfully convert multi pin spares without chopping (cherry picking) and leaving an open frame.

Rule 2

Rule 2 covers this common situation effectively. This rule states the following:

"To convert all multi-pin spares, *except splits*, you must hit the 'key' pin on whichever side will cause the *ball itself* to deflect into the accompanying pins."

Based on the system as described last month, this is accomplished easily. Merely adjust your feet one board right (or left) of the normal board you would stand on to convert that key pin, then shoot for the same mark as usual, for that pin to be hit on the desired side.

Here's how that works, and it's easier to understand with some examples, as follows:

For a 3-6-10 spare, stand one board left of your normal Triax position for the 3 pin. This causes the ball to hit the 3 pin on the right side, thus deflecting the ball into the 6, also taking out the 10. However, for a 3-5 (or a 3-5-8), you would stand one board right of that 3 pin foot position, because now you want the ball to hit the left side of the 3 pin and deflect into the 5, taking the 8 with it.

For a 2-4-7, or 2-4 5-7, stand one board right of your 2 pin position and shoot for the 2 pin mark. Again, this causes the ball to deflect in the desired direction...off the left side of the 2 pin...thereby making the 2 deflect to the right and hit the 5, while the ball itself deflects left, thereby taking out the 4 and 7 pins. (Take the time to visualize these, to be certain they're understood).

On the opposite side of the rack, for a 3-6-10 or 3-5-6-10 you would stand one board left of your normal 3 pin position and shoot for the 3 pin mark. This makes the 3 deflect into the 5, while the ball deflects right and takes out the 6 and 10 pins.

Using this rule, it makes no difference whether you are right handed or left handed. That's because you must always stand one board *left* of your normal "key" pin position to make the ball hit the *right* side of that pin and deflect right. Or stand one board *right* of that position to hit the key pin on the left side, thereby deflecting the ball *left*.

Why This Works

Last month I briefly referred to the measurements of the lane layout as being the reason a 3 board foot adjustment works to get the ball from one key pin to the next, but I didn't have enough room to explain why.

For this, look at illustration 1, then read on. Notice that the front row (V) of pins is laid out so that laterally measuring from center to center of each pin shows spaces of 6 inches each.

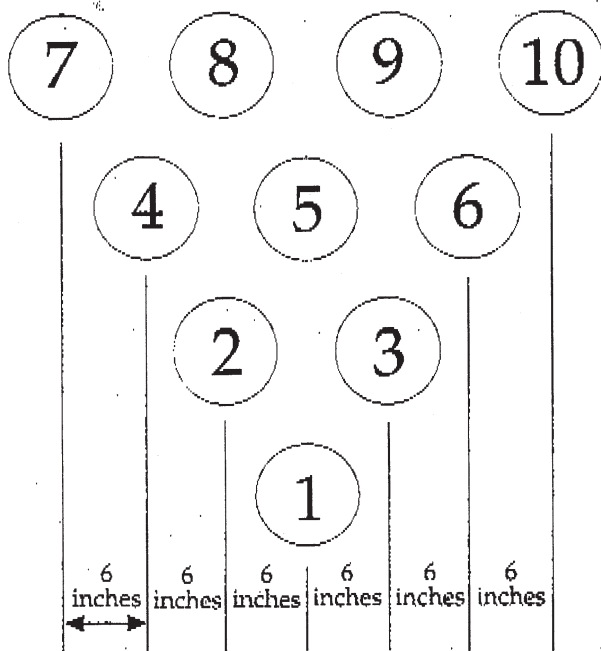


Illustration 1

By regulation, the lane bed is 41 1/2 inches wide (plus or minus 1/2 inch) so all lanes are virtually the same width. Also, the arrows are 14 to 15 feet past the foul line. Put all this together, do a little geometry and you'll come up with the following very important practical results for shot making:

Standing on the same board at or near the rear of the approach, if you accurately throw a ball to a certain mark repeatedly, the ball will arrive at the same point at the pins every time. The result, (based on the above measurements) is as follows:

If you move one board left and throw the same shot to the same target at the arrows, *the ball will arrive at the pins almost exactly two inches right of the previous ball.* Also, *if you move a board right, it will arrive two inches left of the previous shot.*

Therefore, we can postulate the following:

- A 1 board foot adjustment = 2 inches at the pins;
- A 2 board foot adjustment = 4 inches at the pins;
- A 3 board foot adjustment = 6 inches at the pins.

That, then, is the reason why a 3 board foot adjustment gets your ball across that six inch wide space from one pin center to the next. It is also the reason straight shots are so important for almost all off center spares...it takes lane oil variations completely out of the picture.

This also helps understand why the above explained single board adjustment will, with an accurate shot, eliminate costly chopping.

(Incidentally, if you think ahead just a bit, it becomes obvious that knowing about this 2 inch per board difference can also improve foot adjustment decisions when it becomes necessary to correctly adjust for more accurate strike shots to the pocket.)

Accuracy

Naturally, accuracy is more important for multi pin spares than single pins, because it takes a bit more perfection to hit one side or the other of a pin than to just hit it. Remember, for a single pin spare you have 21 1/2 inches of leeway before you'll miss that pin. If that seems incredible, figure it this way; the ball is about 8 1/2 inches wide and it doesn't care which side of it hits the pin...so that's twice 8 1/2, or 17 inches. The pin is about 4 1/2 inches wide, and it doesn't care which part of it the ball hits. Well, 8 1/2 times 2 equals 17, plus 4 1/2 adds up to 21 1/2, so there you have it.

Yes, it is true that 7 pins and 10 pins may not give you quite as much leeway as the other pins, but it's still quite a lot of margin for error on single pin spares.

If you read last month's full description of the basic Triax spare system, you're also aware of the very few exceptions to the straight ball rule for off center spares. If you don't have last month's issue of this newspaper, simply order it as a back issue. In view of the well over a hundred e mail requests I got for information about Triax within just three weeks of mentioning it, I suggest every reader have that issue as well as this one to refer to as a text. At least until the entire Triax concept has been memorized.

The Pin Itself

For further understanding of the overall concept of foot adjusting to hit different parts of a pin, see illustration 2.

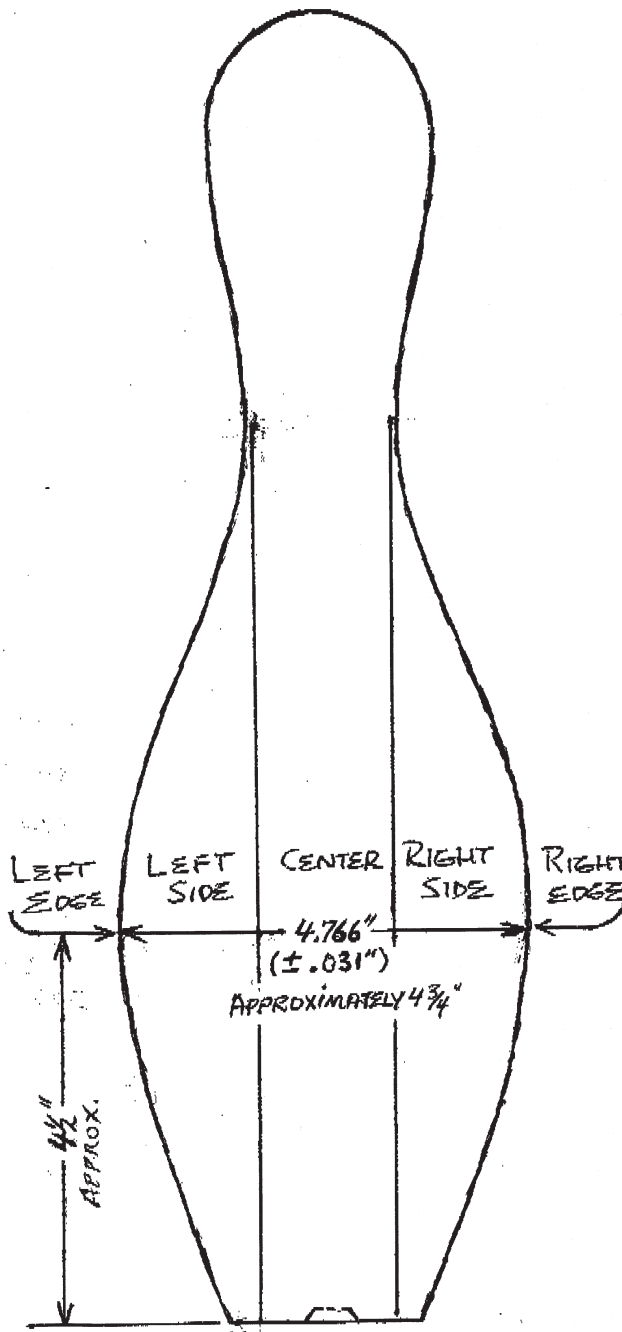


Illustration 2

Notice that at its widest point, the pin is about 4 3/4 inches wide. If you were to draw a line downward from the narrowest part of its neck, as shown, you can visualize that pin as having three main lateral sections, left side, center and right side. Visualizing the pin dimensions in this way, it becomes more obvious how that one board foot adjustment works to hit that pin on one side or the other, which is the main point of this month's discussion.

Split Conversion

Here I will briefly mention the main concept of split shooting just so all of the Triax concepts can be listed together.

- A - Baby Splits:
 - Always shoot for the *missing middle pin*. A few examples: For the 3-10, shoot for the 6. For the 4-5, shoot for the 2. For the 7-8, shoot for the 4 and so on. So whenever you leave a baby split, simply stand on whichever board the Triax system says is correct *for that missing middle pin*.
- B - Wide Open Splits:
 - Always stand and shoot for what is called the "phantom" pin. Again, some examples: For the 4-7-10 split, stand and shoot for the 7. But if you leave only the 4-10, shoot for the 7 anyway. That's why it is called the "phantom" pin...because you shoot for it *whether it is standing or not*. This means that for a 2-10 or a 2-9 you stand and shoot for the 4. For a 5-10, shoot for the 2, and so on.

The Bottom Line

As I said, this is by no means a complete explanation of split shooting, although the necessary basics are all here. So unless you either attend Bowling This Month magazine's next Super School in Taylor, Michigan in August, where I'll teach it, or hold out for the possibility of my book on the subject, this should answer all the requests I've had to cover the Triax Spare System.

KIETZ KOMMENTS

Looking Back 90 Years

by Frank Kietz

LAKE FOREST — This writer hit the big 9-0h Saturday, December 23, 2006. Perhaps, it is a good time to look back to 1916, one of the 1914-1918 "War Years". The war to end all wars in Brooklyn, New York. Lived through the 1918 Flu Epidemic.

My wonderful family, Vicki, Mike, Ellen, Erin, Scott, Hank, Dick, Joan, cousins so on, thought it was a good idea. A party at Forest Lanes featuring a gourmet Mexican dinner, livation, bowling, bit of eight-ball pool, plenty of friendly reminiscing. Oh yes, I set pins, worked at Lynwood Academy or was it Beacon Bowl, no Trianon Lanes (old ballroom) in South Gate, Huntington Park, Compton after naming many alleys which became centers, from Los Angeles to Orange County.

All total more than 70 wished me a happy birthday. I didn't believe it; most were people that helped me earn a living printing, be a politician, read my bowling stories, attend bowling conventions, get discount airline tickets to travel throughout the United States and the world.

Yes, I was lucky. Among the well-wishers were medics, nurses, caretakers, lovers, plain people, who kept me well when I was sick, smoked, got cancer, ate too much greasy food, got hepatitis, sun burned my skin and a heart attack...you name it, I got it.

I started bowling in 1928. You see, my father and his friends constructed a building that housed the first eight-alley academy, no kids, no women, no booze, only Caucasians could learn to bowl, play billiards, cards, that is where I learned the basics setting pins — I, and fellow setteers, were the richest kids in Lynwood.

Got a driver's license when I was 14, in 1933 worked in Lynwood's first Beer Garden, had enough money to buy gasoline to drive my friends down Long Beach Blvd. to the Long Beach Pike (amusement zone) swim in a Salt Water Plunge, get on all the rides and play all the games.

After graduating from Compton Junior College, got a job printing at the Commercial News Press located on the corner of Sixth and Main, Los Angeles. From there in 1939, left "Skid-row" for the Long Beach Independent where I learned politics, (union, civic, state and national). In those days, newspapers were the life-blood of politics. I was in my glory.

Getting closer to home, Lynwood, after WWII I transferred to the Huntington Park Signal. Besides being a printer I became a "Stringer" selling bowling stories by the column inch.

Automatic pinsetters created a bowling boom. The local bowling association membership went from 800 to 40,000 members. Being a bowling writer and seniority, I got all the perks, grand opening or tournament invitations almost every weekend; carried a pocket full of gold cards.

Like the good old days, a free lunch was the only way to go. In 1968, this writer found out about international free lunches, from Mexico to Japan, then Denmark, England, France, total of 23 Bowling World Cups, charter member of the World Bowling Writers, President and Hall of Fame member of the Bowling Writers Association of America, wall full of writing awards, and many international friendships.

The bombing in New York, 9-11, curtailed a great deal of my traveling. It was fun while it lasted.

The 90th birthday party at Forest Lanes woke me up; made me think what bowling did for me. I had a saying, "I don't want to be a millionaire, I just want to live like one."

It's true, I am very rich with all those memories, those friendships. I still bowl. I think bowling has kept me alive. I had a heart attack a short time ago, and used bowling as a rehab so I'll keep bowling.

I have a loving family, wonderful relatives, great Forest Garden neighbors and bowling friends. For sure they all watch over me.

USBC Lauches Ambassador Speakers Bureau Program

Bowling Stars and USBC

CEO Roger Dalkin available for special events

GREENDALE—Organizations looking to add drawing power for their special events can now request a bowling celebrity through the new United States Bowling Congress Ambassador program.

The USBC Ambassador program is a speakers bureau that can provide a star bowler as the headliner for hall of fame banquets, awards dinners, youth programs, bowling center grand openings or any other function where a guest speaker would enhance the event.

USBC has enlisted some of the Professional Bowlers Association's top stars along with the sport's top women players who include: Norm Duke, Parker Bohn III, Tommy Jones, Walter Ray Williams Jr., Tony Reyes, Chris Barnes, former tour veteran and champion Bob Learn Jr., Kelly Kulick, Carolyn Dorin-Ballard, Cathy Dorin-Lizzi, Kim Terrell, Diandra Asbaty and Stefanie Nation. Also part of the bureau is USBC Chief Executive Officer Roger Dalkin.

Any organization requesting an Ambassador will be able to choose from the above menu of speakers but all requests are based on the Ambassador's availability. The hosting organization is responsible for all related travel expenses and the appearance fees which must be negotiated directly with the Ambassador. USBC will contribute \$500 per appearance to help offset expenses.

"USBC is committed to promoting the sport and the organization through a program that showcases the sport's stars," Dalkin said. "This program will enable this great lineup of bowling personalities to connect with bowling fans at the grassroots level and promote the sport we are passionate about."

USBC has instituted a simple three-step process to request an ambassador which is as follows:

1. The hosting organization should submit a request for an Ambassador to USBC Headquarters using one of the following methods, giving as much detail as possible about the event including dates, places and times, etc.:

- * E-mail (ambassador @bowl.com)
- * Call toll free (800) 514-2695, ext. 3236
- * Fax (414) 421-8560

* U.S. mail: USBC Ambassador Program, United States Bowling Congress, 5301 S. 76th St., Greendale, WI 53129.

2. USBC will forward all requests to the Ambassador of choice letting him/her know an organization has requested their services for the appearance. The hosting organization will then work directly with the Ambassador (or agent) to determine appearance and expense fees. USBC will not negotiate on behalf of the Ambassador or the hosting organization.

3. USBC will then pay the hosting organization \$500 following the event (organization must submit a W-9 form before USBC can issue a check) to assist in offsetting expenses. In addition, USBC will provide the hosting organization with Ambassador photos and autograph cards.

NOTE: Appearance fees for Roger Dalkin and Bob Learn Jr. will be donated to the Bowlers to Veterans Link (BVL).

Some other ways to offset the cost of having an Ambassador are by obtaining event sponsorship, sharing the cost by partnering with other participating bowling organizations or by adding a nominal charge to the ticket price of the event. For Ambassador bios and additional information, visit the bowl.com home page and click on the USBC Speakers Bureau link on the left side of the page.