



CTF CONNECTION

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String-Pin Centres/Bowlers To Be Sanctioned Submitted by Dave Kist

We have our first full season in the books for the string pin pilot program and are pleased to report that there were no major challenges or issues regarding averages or scores.

The key issue / concern with string pin sanctioning has been a “fear” that averages and scores will be considerably higher, creating a number of fall out concerns:

- Honour score awards become devalued as it is easy to obtain one
- CTF award costs would sky rocket, as the number of awards would significantly increase
- Average integrity concerns for handicap tournaments

It has becoming evident that today’s string pin bowler in today’s bowling centres are actually at no advantage or disadvantage when competing against free-fall machine bowlers. No different than any other bowling centre in the world, the bowlers’ ability to score is driven largely by:

- the centre maintenance program
- the mechanic’s ability to maintain the machines according to manufacture & association specs
- lane pattern / oiling machine

We all know and experience variations in bowlers’ averages and scoring between centres today – in some cases as much as 20 pins is common. Why is this? It’s plain and simple, it is how the centre maintains its operations:

- Are the pins 2 or 3 years old?
- Do they oil just before a league or first thing in the morning?
- Are leagues double shifted on the same pattern?
- Are centres utilizing an easy rec shot or perhaps a more difficult one? (Example USBC has 9 levels of rec patterns – red, white and blue, with 3 in each and each pattern is progressively harder.
- Are the pins being set on spot & in accordance with the rules of bowling / manufacturers specs
- Are the lanes within proper specs

So what is the bottom line?

- String pin scoring will be slightly higher due to “string pulls”, but it is not significant enough to alter the game
- Centre maintenance will have a more significant impact on scoring than string pin does, no different than the existing environment
- Bowling centres are closing at a very rapid rate – 14% in just the last 7 years
- Centre operating costs are now a MAJOR factor
- Mechanics to fix the free fall machines are nearly impossible to come by
- Centres keeping “break down” lanes for leagues – no revenue for these lanes
- Parts continue to climb
- Centres trying to buy machines from centres closing and utilize as many parts from them as possible
- Most maintenance requirements are US\$’s – so costs have increased
- US\$ in Sept 2010 = \$1.03, now \$1.35 (Bank of Canada) a 31.1% increase, due to exchange rates – data period to line up with centre closing data above



The FACTS:

- CTF needs bowling centres for our members to play in
- Real Estate values climbing
- More profitable to sell now, then to continue operating
- Lease / Rent rates are issues
- Centre operating costs skyrocketing
- CTF needs to work WITH proprietors to do whatever we can to lower costs for centres and ultimately for our members to participate
- The question is not should we sanction string pin bowling, it is a question of when will we sanction string pin bowling
- From the 16/17 season, with an average of only 4.36 leagues per centre, 34.8 members per league and 148.3 league bowlers per centre

The String Pin Committee recommended and motioned the Board to approve the launch of sanctioning for string pin bowling coast to coast in Canada. We will need to maintain an asterisk for averages (recognized only in Canada) in order to comply with USBC until they also approve sanctioning of string pin pinsetters or we obtain USBC agreement to recognize the string pin averages.

On June 10, 2017 the CTF Board voted unanimously in favour and made history by being the first country in the world to recognize and sanction string pin bowling. We look forward to welcoming the new bowlers to our organization.