



Our Vision
To be the leading authority
to the sport, servicing the
needs of bowling.

**A Future FOR
THE Sport®**

MEMORANDUM

To: Bowling Ball Manufacturers
Date: January 16, 2018
Re: Updated Notice of Proposed Specification and Rule Revisions

This letter is an update to USBC's November 3, 2017, notice of proposed specification and rule revisions.

Following the manufacturer comment period and further analysis, the USBC Equipment Specifications Committee ("ESC") is now proposing updated proposed rule changes to address RG differential and oil absorption of USBC approved balls.

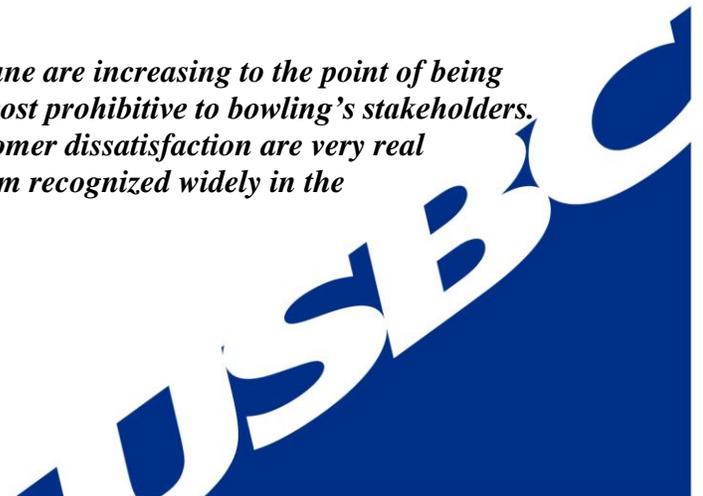
We appreciate the dialogue and information exchange that has occurred in this process. In addition to feedback about the proposed rule changes themselves, several manufacturers asked specific questions about the ESC's rationale for the proposed changes. We want to share this statement from the ESC:

The interaction of the oil pattern, ball technology and the playing surface has progressively become out of balance creating an integrity issue for the sport.

Lane conditions today feature an increasing volume of oil that combined with the advancing ball technology and higher revolution bowling style is breaking the oil pattern down quicker. This is leading the competition environment to change too fast, with less consistency and greater manipulation than we have ever seen before. All of this threatens the integrity of the sport.

The sustainability and integrity of the current environment long-term is the chief concern.

For example, the levels of oil applied to the lane are increasing to the point of being unmanageable within our competitions and cost prohibitive to bowling's stakeholders. In addition, equipment degradation and customer dissatisfaction are very real sustainability concerns and a growing problem recognized widely in the bowling industry.



The Committee believes the technology of the bowling ball is in the hands of the consumer dictates how much oil is on the lane. This is why the proposed rule changes focus on the ball. Now with more history and years of research data in this area, USBC is able to regulate with more specificity - - becoming more proactive than reactive.

For the good of the sport, emerging technologies should be further understood and regulation continually considered.

We trust this statement from the ESC will better clarify the rationale and need for the proposed changes. With this context and in consideration of comments submitted, the ESC proposes the following updated and additional proposed changes:

Updated Proposed Change #1:

USBC proposes the following changes to Drilling Specifications:

- Increasing the balance tolerances for static weight (side weight, thumb/finger weight and balls without holes) to 3 ounces (for balls weighing more than 10 pounds).
- Elimination of all balance holes.

Proposed timeline:

- Balance tolerances for static weight effective January 1, 2020.
- Elimination of hole for balance purposes in USBC certified competition effective August 1, 2020.

Additional information:

This updated proposed change creates a similar reduction in maximum RG differential as the previous proposal without changing the current manufacturing specification of .060 inches.

USBC's 2011 study publication on Static Weights indicated an unwanted fourth phase of motion can occur with increased static weights. USBC supports the validity of the 2011 research, however, this unwanted motion occurs with extreme imbalance at slow delivery speeds. Proper drilling should generally mitigate this risk.

USBC is conducting additional tests to further validate the updated proposal and identify any unintended consequences. We welcome feedback on this issue and additional data from the manufacturers. USBC reserves the right to make minor adjustments to the final specification.

While this updated proposed change maintains the current manufacturing specification for maximum RG differential of a USBC-approved ball at .060 inches, USBC still fully reserves the right to reduce the manufacturing specification for RG differential in the final specification or in the future.

Updated Proposed Change #2

USBC proposes creating a new specification for oil absorption using USBC's new Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for oil absorption testing. USBC collaborated with manufacturers on this new SOP to ensure its workability. USBC proposes a new specification requiring approval samples for a ball model to have no individual sample ball with an oil absorption rate less than two minutes and 15 seconds (2:15).

Models averaging an oil absorption time less than 9 minutes and 30 seconds (9:30) would require additional test ball submissions as previously proposed, however the 9:30 average control number would not be a required approval specification.

USBC proposes a phased implementation approach to allow for continued collaboration on the new specification.

Proposed timeline:

- Effective August 1, 2018 - Manufacturers will be required to submit oil absorption data as part of the ball approval process. Manufacturers will provide their oil absorption test results for the balls submitted for approval as part of the approval form. USBC will test the same balls and communicate back its approval test results. The requirement to submit additional test balls based on the 9:30 average will also be effective August 1, 2018.
- Effective January 1, 2020 - New ball approvals must adhere to the specification requiring no ball samples under 2:15 limit. Enforcement through spot checking for the oil absorption specification will begin.

Additional information:

As USBC previously communicated, the SOP for oil absorption testing has been independently confirmed as a valid measurement process. USBC has shown through a scientific and statistical study that oil absorption of a coverstock can be measured with acceptable repeatability and reproducibility. After reviewing manufacturer comments and the test data, the ESC is fully confident in the validity of the testing measurement.

The ESC found manufacturer comments requesting additional time to better understand manufacturing processes and controls related to oil absorption reasonable, especially given oil absorption of the coverstock is a new area of regulation. The additional months of data exchange prior to specification enforcement can allow manufacturers to individually consider potential process changes related to the specification and continue to provide feedback on the USBC SOP for oil absorption testing.

Proposed change #3

USBC proposes a new rule allowing only a “dry towel” to be used to clean bowling balls during competition and prohibiting liquid cleaners of any kind to be used during competition.

Additional information: This proposal remains unchanged with a proposed effective date of August 1, 2019.

Updated proposed change #4

USBC withdraws previously proposed change #4.

Additional information: USBC previously proposed a new rule prohibiting a bowler from changing the static weight of a ball during competition. Updated proposed change #1 addresses this issue.

Proposed change # 5

USBC proposes a streamlined approval for international models, that are substantially similar to models already approved and released in the U.S.

For approval, the manufacturer would stipulate the international model:

- Uses the same core shape as the domestic release and same density for all core pieces
- Uses the same shell material as the domestic release (except can change colors)
- Continues to pass all current ball specifications

A 15-pound sample ball must be submitted to USBC for the purpose of adding it to the ball approval list. USBC has the right to test this ball to verify the similarity to the domestic model. There is no testing fee for this approval. All spot checking rules still apply.

Proposed timeline: Effective upon publication of a final set of standards in the USBC Equipment and Specifications Manual - likely in mid-2018.

Proposed change #6

Elimination of additional fees for balls needing additional testing prior to approval.

Proposed timeline: Effective upon publication of a final set of standards in the USBC Equipment and Specifications Manual - likely in mid-2018.

Comment period

You are encouraged to review the proposed changes to the USBC Equipment and Specifications Manual and a copy of the proposed revisions/standards is attached.

USBC intends to again gather input in the following manner:

1. USBC staff is available by phone for manufacturers to provide preliminary, informal input.
2. Manufacturers may request an in-person, informal meeting with USBC staff.
3. Manufacturers may provide written comments or statements they wish USBC to consider, and to submit same by March 15, 2018. Send any information to:

Danny Speranza
USBC Senior Director of Certification
And Specification
United States Bowling Congress
621 Six Flags Drive
Arlington, TX 76011
OR
By email: Daniel.Speranza@bowl.com

USBC Staff and ESC will review and consider all submissions and input. USBC asks that industry comments be directed to the USBC staff and ESC through Danny Speranza. Industry stakeholders may also copy Chad Murphy on their submissions, but this is not required. USBC anticipates that its review will continue and that it will likely publish a final set of standards in the USBC Equipment and Specifications Manual in mid-2018.

Thank you for your engagement and cooperation throughout this process.

Chad Murphy
USBC Executive Director
On behalf of the ESC and USBC Staff

Signed: 
Chad Murphy