

THE BAKER SYSTEM: AN ALTERNATIVE
FOR LEAGUE BOWLING

by

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

In order to set the tone for this study, a look at the origin and development of the game of bowling is necessary. In addition, the philosophy of competition will be addressed. A statement of the problem, delimitations, limitations, and definitions will also be presented in this chapter.

Bowling

While examining a grave of an Egyptian child believed to have died in 5200 B.C., Sir Flinders of Petrie discovered equipment used in playing a game very similar to our modern tenpins. His discovery consisted of nine variously shaped pieces of stone, used as pins, and a round stone which served as the ball.¹

Throughout history, various forms of pin games flourished. These games spread through all parts of Europe. Each area had its own rules and type of equipment for playing the game. As few as three pins and as many as seventeen pins were used.²

In America, the first reference to bowling was found in Washington Irving's Rip Van Winkle in 1818. By the 1850's bowling

¹National Bowling Council, The Bowling Instructor's Handbook, 1974, p. 10.

²Ibid.

had become so popular in the United States that indoor lanes were built in areas of large German populations.³

In order to establish some standards for the game in regard to playing rules and equipment, an organization called the National Bowling Association was formed in 1875. However, this group was unable to gain needed support. In 1890, the American Amateur Union tried to govern the organizational aspects of the game, but also failed.

On September 9, 1895, the American Bowling Congress was organized in New York City. Standardized rules and equipment specifications were developed and accepted. To this date, bowling is still played by the guidelines which were set up over eight decades ago and the American Bowling Congress (ABC) continues to be the ruling body for the game.

The game of bowling continued to grow in popularity during the early 1900's. In 1916, a group of women met in St. Louis to form an organization called the Women's National Bowling Association. This organization was established to promote interest in women's bowling. The Women's National Bowling Association has evolved into the Women's International Bowling Congress (WIBC), the current organization for women's bowling.

Total participation in the game of bowling is quite wide spread. A Nielsen survey indicated that 44.4 million people participated in bowling in 1976. This ranked bowling fifth in total sport participation behind swimming, bicycling, fishing, and camping.⁴ A Harris survey taken

³Ibid., pp. 10-15.

⁴"How Americans Pursue Happiness," U.S. News and World Report, May 23, 1977, p. 63.

in 1975 showed that 65 million people bowled at least once that year. This represented a twenty-five percent increase over Harris' 1971 survey. In addition, bowling was selected as the leading year-round, all-weather participation sport by Americans eighteen years of age and over.⁵

Even though an exact total participation figure is quite difficult to ascertain, it is obvious that many Americans participate in the game of bowling. It is not surprising, then, that organized leagues have grown throughout the years. ABC membership reached the three million figure in 1957 and hit four million two years later. A peak in ABC membership was reached in 1964 when 4,575,000 men participated in organized league bowling. A downward trend was seen until 1971 when a turn-around began. An increase has been realized since then with the 1976-77 season reaching a new high of 4,583,460 members. WIBC also set a new all-time membership high in 1976-77 with 4,043,631 members. Following suit, the American Junior Bowling Congress (AJBC) had a record membership during the same season. By combining the ABC, WIBC, and AJBC membership figures for 1976-77, it is seen that nearly 9.5 million men, women, and children participated in organized bowling.⁶

League bowling is the backbone of the bowling business, and proprietors attempt to draw league bowlers to their centers for league play week after week and year after year. Not many years ago the ABC and WIBC recognized only men's and women's leagues and considered mixed leagues under the "other" classification. However, in the past few years,

⁵"Survey for NBC Shows Bowlers Growing Group," The Woman Bowler, February, 1976, p. 44.

⁶"ABC Membership Reaches Alltime Record," Bowling, October, 1977, p. 16.

the bowling industry has found that mixed leagues make up the greatest percentage of sanctioned leagues. Mixed leagues have resulted in a great boost for the game of bowling. The rise of mixed leagues seems to indicate that people bowl more for the recreational value of the game than for the competitive value.

Steele surveyed two hundred forty-one regular league bowlers as to why they bowled and found the following:⁷

Cartharsis	38%
Relaxation and recreation	32%
Identity generation, reinforcement, and expression	46%
Affiliation	77%
Separation	15%
Status and prestige	5%

It can be seen that bowling is quite wide-spread as a leisure activity in the United States. The importance of leisure is obvious in today's society. In 1977 Americans will spend nearly 160 billion dollars on leisure and it is estimated that 300 billion dollars will be spent in 1985.⁸ The bowling industry will be sure to prosper if Americans continue to spend their money in pursuit of leisure.

There is concern that the league format used in men's, women's, and mixed leagues is too much the same on all levels. The traditional league format involves each bowler rolling a complete game, consisting of ten frames. The individual games of each bowler are then added together in order to reach the team total. The emphasis with this format

⁷Paul D. Steele, "The Bowling Hustler: A Study of Deviance in Sport," Social Problems in Athletics, ed. Daniel M. Landers (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1976), p. 89.

⁸"How Americans Pursue Happiness," U.S. News and World Report, May 23, 1977, p. 62.

is on the individual. Competition is a key element of traditional league bowling.

Frank K. Baker devised the Baker system of scoring in the 1950's while he was Executive Secretary of the American Bowling Congress. This system involves the lead-off person bowling frames one and six, the second person bowling frames two and seven, and so forth. Baker developed his system after the professional National Bowling League failed because of its lack of spectator appeal. It was felt that the traditional system was too tedious for the average spectator to follow. Baker also felt that the five-person team concept in league play was deteriorating.⁹

After developing his new system, Baker confronted the Professional Bowler's Association regarding the possibility of forming a new league using the Baker system but was unsuccessful in his attempt. Similarly, the American Bowling Congress did not consider utilizing the new format. Thus, the unused Baker scoring system was set aside.

In the early 1970's, the National Bowling Council initiated plans for a Bowling Spectacular, involving professional, amateur, collegiate, and military bowlers. The Baker system was given consideration as a format to be used in the Collegiate Division of this tournament. In 1974, various colleges and universities, including Kansas State University, experimented with the Baker format in order to assess reactions to this untested, twenty year old system. As a result, the unique Baker format was accepted and was used in the 1975 Bowling

⁹Mort Luby, Jr., "Remembering F. K. B.," The National Bowlers Journal and Billiard Revue, June, 1975, p. 49.

Spectacular during the final twelve games to determine the National Collegiate Team Champions.¹⁰

The bowlers felt that the Baker system emphasized the idea of performing as a team by capitalizing upon each other's strikes and spares for team count. They felt that the system brought out the best in each bowler for the good of the team.¹¹

The Baker system was again used in the 1976 and 1977 Bowling Spectaculars to determine the Collegiate Team Champions. However, there are no indications to date that the Baker system has ever been used in a league situation.

Competition

The cooperation among team members is essential to the success and enjoyment of the Baker scoring system. Success and failure during competition often depends upon the social nature of the particular activity. Sherif contends that the social interaction of participants lessens the competitiveness of an activity. In fact, the word competition comes from a Latin verb meaning "to seek together."¹²

On the other hand, competition, by its nature, produces as many losers as winners. People who lose consistently have a tendency to drop out of a particular activity. It is often said that a person gains psychologically through winning but very little is said about the

¹⁰"Now, For a Change of Pace," The National Bowlers Journal and Billiard Revue, June, 1975, p. 49.

¹¹"'Wow' is Reaction of Collegians," The Woman Bowler, May/June, 1975, p. 52.

¹²Carolyn W. Sherif, "The Social Context of Competition," Social Problems in Athletics, ed. Daniel M. Landers (Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, 1976), p. 19.

negative effects of losing. It follows that further assessment of the win/lose idea of competition is needed.¹³

Due to the psychological effects felt in competitive sport, individuals seek competition on their own level. During the learning stages, for instance, noncompetitive situations are often sought out in an effort to increase ability. Success in competition increases a person's desire to participate, while failure decreases that desire. Competition becomes more intense when extrinsic rewards are at stake. Also, in groups in which the abilities of the members are quite different, the intensity of competition will lessen.¹⁴

Statement of the Problem

The development of a bowling league format which utilizes a team rather than individual effort, and the comparison of team results and individual averages between the traditional and Baker league systems are the purposes of this study. To accomplish these purposes, the Baker system of scoring will be utilized in a handicap league format.

The new league format will hopefully meet three objectives. First, it will give a bowler another alternative to league bowling. Next, the system will allow for closer team standings, thereby diminishing the likelihood of teams dropping lower and lower in the standings and losing interest in bowling altogether. Finally, because of the manner in which the Baker system is set up, individual pressure and individual

¹³"The Competitive Question," Parks and Recreation, August, 1975, p. 15.

¹⁴Rainer Martens, "Competition: In Need of a Theory," Social Problems in Athletics, ed. Daniel M. Landers (Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, 1976), p. 15-16.

recognition will be reduced which will foster socialization rather than competition.

Delimitations

This study utilized the K-State Union Recreation Area Lanes. The league consisted of eight teams which bowled a single round robin schedule. Teams were made up of five bowlers, three men and two women or three women and two men. League competition took place once a week for seven consecutive weeks. The Baker scoring system was used with handicaps figured on seventy percent of the difference between team per game averages.

Limitations

Participants were bowlers who signed up for this particular league on an individual or team basis. There were no guidelines as to bowling average or bowling experience. The researcher had no control over having the same forty people present for each league session.

Definitions

The following definitions should be kept in mind in order to fully understand this study:

Baker scoring system: Each of the five team members bowl two frames of each team game which consists of ten frames. Rotation will be as follows:

First bowler.....Frames 1 & 6
Second bowler.....Frames 2 & 7
Third bowler.....Frames 3 & 8
Fourth bowler.....Frames 4 & 9
Fifth bowler.....Frames 5 & 10

Handicap league: League in which the lower average team in each match receives additional pins (a handicap) for each game in order to equalize team abilities.

Traditional league: Each person bowls a complete game and these individual scores are added to reach a team total.

Summary

Bowling has been traced back to 5200 B.C. when pins and balls were made of stone. Today, millions of people enjoy the sport on an occasional basis with 9.5 million people bowling in sanctioned leagues. The traditional system of scoring has been used over the years in league competition. The use of the Baker scoring system in tournament play may be the impetus needed for further use in weekly league competition. This competition should not be viewed simply as a win/lose venture, but instead as a means of social interaction and enjoyment.

Chapter 2

PROCEDURES

The procedures followed in this study included the development of a workable format for using the Baker scoring system in league competition so that weekly team standings and final individual averages could be compared to corresponding figures of the traditional league format. Also, a post league survey of the participants was developed.

Baker League Development

A workable format was devised which incorporated the Baker scoring system into league play. Five people comprised a team with each person bowling two frames per game as follows:¹

First Bowler.....	Frames 1 & 6
Second Bowler.....	Frames 2 & 7
Third Bowler.....	Frames 3 & 8
Fourth Bowler.....	Frames 4 & 9
Fifth Bowler.....	Frames 5 & 10

In order to comply with the traditional league play format, each person bowled thirty frames per league session. This equaled three traditional games per person. Teams bowled fifteen games each meeting.

A procedure was devised to utilize the eleventh and twelfth frames of each game in order for each person to bowl only thirty frames during a league meeting. The bonus balls which are normally awarded for a strike or spare in the tenth frame were standardized for all

¹"LaCrosse, Rich in Tenpin Tradition, Wins College Title," Bowling, June, 1975, p. 35.

teams. This involved giving a team a seven/spare after a tenth frame strike, or a seven pin count after a tenth frame spare.

In order to award teams points for wins, a point system was devised for assessing team standings such that one point was awarded for each game won. A total of fifteen points was at stake during a team match.

In order to determine individual averages, a system had to be devised which was simple enough for the bowler to figure himself and accurate enough to be recognized as a legitimate and usable average. To accomplish these goals a system utilizing strikes and spares was developed. Actual scores of games bowled with the total number of strikes and spares for each of the games were recorded.

Strikes and spares were counted as one mark each for the purpose of this system. Marks were not taken away for poor counts after strikes and spares, nor were bonus marks given for two or more strikes in a row. It was hoped that by recording enough actual scores/marks in each scoring category, trends would develop so that poor pin counts and two or more strikes in a row would be factored into the actual total marks for a particular average range.

After recording hundreds of score/mark totals, the scale found in Figure 1 was established.

AVERAGE	MARKS PER GAME
75 and below	.99 and below
76-85	1.0 - 1.99
86-95	2.0 - 2.49
96-105	2.50 - 2.99
106-115	3.0 - 3.59
116-125	3.60 - 4.55
126-135	4.56 - 5.34
136-145	5.35 - 5.79
146-155	5.80 - 6.36
156-165	6.37 - 7.24
166-175	7.25 - 7.70
176-185	7.71 - 8.50
186-195	8.51 - 9.30
196 and over	9.31 & over

Figure 1

Average/Marks Per Game Scale

By using the above scale, averages for individuals were figured.

In order to account for vacancy (blind) scores, a procedure was established similar to traditional league vacancy policies. This procedure involved taking the average of the absent bowler minus ten pins. For example, if the absent bowler had a 140 average, ten pins were subtracted which made the vacancy score 130. To record this score on a frame by frame basis, a 3/spare was given to this particular bowler each time it was his turn to bowl. If a team did not have a bowler with an established average for vacancy score purposes, a score of 120 was used. This was scored 2/spare.

For the purpose of recording team scores, traditional telescore sheets were used. A new format was developed for the recap sheet which is turned into the league secretary. Also, the league and individual standing sheet and the team and individual record sheet were revised.

The recap sheet had to be revised for two reasons, to record the total number of marks for each bowler and to record the fifteen team games. Figure 2 shows the recap sheet which was developed.

DATE _____ LEAGUE _____ LANES _____

TEAM _____ HANDICAP PER GAME _____

AVE	BOWLER	MARKS	game	1	2	3	4	5	
									(circle points won, slash points tied)
			6	7	8	9	10		TOTAL POINTS WON

			11	12	13	14	15		
	captain _____								

TEAM _____ HANDICAP PER GAME _____

			game	1	2	3	4	5	
									(circle points won, slash points tied)
			6	7	8	9	10		TOTAL POINTS WON

			11	12	13	14	15		
	captain _____								

Figure 2

Baker League Recap Sheet

As for the weekly league standing and individual average sheet,
a revised format was also established. As example of this is shown
in Figure 3.

LEAGUE NAME _____
LEAGUE PRESIDENT _____ PHONE _____
LEAGUE SECRETARY _____ PHONE _____
WEEK OF _____

Team Standings	Hi Game	Hi Series	Won	Lost	Games	Total Pins	Average
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							
8							

Name	Average	Total Marks	Games	Marks Per Game Ave.

Figure 3
Baker League Standing and
Individual Average Sheet

The record sheet which the league secretary used to keep track of team and individual results was also adapted. A sample can be seen in Figure 4.

Team or Individual

Name _____

Date	Ave.	Marks	Cum. Marks	Mark Ave.	Games	Pins	Total Pins	High Game	High Series

Figure 4

Baker League Record Sheet

Once league procedures were set, individuals were recruited to bowl. The league was advertised as an experimental league using a new format. The Baker scoring system was explained to each person who inquired about the league. The handout given to interested people can be seen in Figure 5.

The following are special rules which will be used in the University Mixed II league.

1. Teams will consist of 5 bowlers - 3 men and 2 women or 2 men and 3 women.
2. Each team will bowl fifteen team games per night of bowling.
3. Each bowler will bowl two frames of each game or a total of 30 frames per night. (This is equal to three games per night).

First bowler bowls frames 1 & 6
 Second bowler bowls frames 2 & 7
 Third bowler bowls frames 3 & 8
 Fourth bowler bowls frames 4 & 9
 Fifth bowler bowls frames 5 & 10

4. Any time a bowler strikes in the tenth frame, the 11th frame will be scored 7/spare. Any time a bowler spares in the tenth frame, the 11th frame will be scored 7.
5. A total of 15 teams points will be available each night of bowling. There will be no points awarded for total series.
6. This is a handicap league.
7. Have a question? See Terri or Bob.
8. Try this new league format, you'll like it!!

Figure 5

University Mixed II League Rules

After recruiting enough bowlers to fill the league, a league meeting was held prior to the first night of league bowling. At this meeting bowlers were informed of the background information regarding the development of the Baker scoring system. So that the bowlers would have a copy of the written guidelines of this league, the information sheet found in Figure 6 was distributed and explained at the league meeting.

1. Teams will consist of 5 bowlers (3 men, 2 women or 2 men, 3 women).
2. Each team will bowl fifteen team games per night of bowling.
3. Each bowler will bowl two frames of each game or a total of 30 frames per night. (This is equal to three games per night).

First bowler bowls frames 1 & 6
 Second bowler bowls frames 2 & 7
 Third bowler bowls frames 3 & 8
 Fourth bowler bowls frames 4 & 9
 Fifth bowler bowls frames 5 & 10

4. Anytime a bowler strikes in the tenth frame, the 11th frame will be scored 7/spare. Anytime a bowler spares in the tenth frame, the 11th frame will be scored 7.
5. A total of 15 teams points will be available each night of bowling. There will be no points awarded for total series.
6. Handicaps will be figured on a team basis as follows:
 - A. Add the averages of the five team members on each team.
 - B. Subtract the lower team average from the higher team average.
 - C. Divide this number by 5.
 - D. Multiply this number by 70%.
 - E. This is the per game handicap for the team with the lower team average.

EXAMPLE:	TEAM A	TEAM B
	130	110
	120	150
	150	110
	110	170
	150	160
	660	700

$$\begin{array}{r} 700 \\ -660 \\ \hline 40 \end{array}$$

$$40 \div 5 = 8$$

$$8 \times 70\% = 5.6$$

The handicap for Team A is 5 pins per game.

7. Vacancy (blind) bowlers will be scored as follows: average of regular bowler minus 10 pins.

$$\begin{array}{r} \text{Example:} \quad \text{Average} = 140 \\ \quad \quad \quad \quad \quad \quad \quad -10 \\ \quad \quad \quad \quad \quad \quad \quad \hline \quad \quad \quad \quad \quad \quad \quad 130 \end{array}$$

This particular bowler would receive 3/spare each time it is his/her turn to bowl.

8. If a team does not have enough bowlers on its roster for a full line-up, a blind score of 120 shall be used. This will be scored 2/spare.
9. In filling out the recap sheet, please fill in all spaces.
10. The column labeled "marks," must be filled out at the end of each night. This is extremely important so that I can figure averages for each bowler.

Each strike and each spare shall be counted as one mark. Averages will be determined by using the following marks per game scale:

AVERAGE	MARKS PER GAME
70	.99 and below
80	1.0 - 1.99
90	2.0 - 2.49
100	2.50 - 2.99
110	3.0 - 3.59
120	3.60 - 4.55
130	4.56 - 5.34
140	5.35 - 5.79
150	5.80 - 6.36
160	6.37 - 7.24
170	7.25 - 7.70
180	7.71 - 8.50
190	8.51 - 9.30
200	9.31 & over

DATE 6-1-77 LEAGUE UNIV MIX II LANE 1 & 2

TEAM No-Names HANDICAP PER GAME 5

AVE	BOWLER	MARKS
130	Sue Jones	15
120	Bill Jones	13
150	Jean Gray	18
110	Sam Gray	10
150	Joan Anderson	19
660	captain Sue Jones	

game	1	2	3	4	5
	136	153	110	172	<u>153</u>
6	135	<u>126</u>	102	<u>112</u>	<u>172</u>
11	<u>143</u>	12	13	14	15
	<u>172</u>	<u>172</u>	112	153	<u>146</u>

(circle points won, slash points tied)
 TOTAL POINTS WON
9

TEAM	The Others
110	Craig Bills
150	Judy Johnson
110	Fred Lane
170	Sue Bills
160	John Johnson
700	captain Fred Lane

game	1	2	3	4	5
	<u>145</u>	<u>162</u>	115	167	155
6	148	125	<u>117</u>	115	160
11	143	12	13	14	15
	152	<u>121</u>	<u>180</u>	<u>136</u>	

(circle points won, slash points tied)
 TOTAL POINTS WON
6

Figure 6

Guidelines for University Mixed II

League Comparisons

After developing the Baker scoring system into a league format and organizing the bowlers to bowl in this league, a procedure was developed which allowed the team standings of the Baker league to be compared to the standings of the traditional league system. In order to accomplish this, frame by frame scores were transferred from the Baker league telescore sheets to other score sheets using the traditional scoring method. These scores were transposed bowler by bowler and frame by frame in order to determine traditional scores and results. Because each bowler had bowled thirty frames each league session, a procedure was set up to score the eleventh and twelfth frames as was used with the Baker scoring system. This involved giving a bowler seven/spare after a tenth frame strike or a seven pin count after a tenth frame spare. This allowed the use of exactly the same scores bowled in the same sequence in comparing the Baker system to the traditional system.

As for looking at the team results of the traditional league competition, one point was given to the winning team of each game and one point was given to the team which had the highest total series. Four total points were at stake during each league session. Handicap was given to the team with the lower team average with that team receiving seventy percent of the difference between the total averages of the five bowlers of each team.

Individual averages were also kept on a week by week basis by transposing the Baker results into the traditional format. These individual averages were compared to the Baker system averages at the end of the seven weeks of bowling.

Post League Survey

In order to assess the feelings of the bowlers involved in the Baker league, questions were asked of thirty bowlers after the final week of bowling. These questions served as a guage by which to determine the participants thoughts regarding the use of the Baker scoring system in a league situation. A copy of this survey can be found in Figure 7.

Tonight ends the first attempt to use the Baker Scoring System in a league situation. Please complete the following questions so that we can get your reactions to this new league format.

1. What is your bowling average? _____
2. For how many years have you bowled? _____
3. For how many years have you bowled in league situations? _____
4. What is your competitive nature?
 - _____ highly competitive
 - _____ moderate
 - _____ non-competitive
5. What are your feelings toward using the Baker Scoring System?
 - _____ very favorable
 - _____ favorable
 - _____ neutral
 - _____ unfavorable
 - _____ very unfavorable
6. How do you feel about the Baker type league compared to traditional leagues?
 - _____ Baker System stresses competition
 - _____ Baker System is less competitive
 - _____ Both are equal in competitiveness
7. Would you bowl in a Baker type league again?
 - _____ Yes
 - _____ No
 - _____ Not Sure
8. Would you recommend a Baker type league to your friends?
 - _____ Yes
 - _____ No
9. Do you feel that a Baker type league is an alternative to traditional league bowling?
 - _____ Yes
 - _____ No
 - _____ Not Sure
10. What did you like most about the Baker type league?
11. What did you like least about the Baker type league?
12. Please list any additional comments or suggestions.

Figure 7

University Mixed II Post League Survey

Chapter 3

RESULTS

The results of this study can be determined by looking at the week by week league standing comparisons and the final individual average comparisons of the Baker system and the traditional system, and the responses to the league survey.

League Standings

One of the objectives stated in Chapter One called for the Baker system to result in closer team standings. In order to determine the difference between the Baker system team standings and the traditional team standings, a week by week comparison of the percent of wins in each system was completed. This percent of wins tabulation is listed on a week by week cumulative basis in Table 1.

Table 1
League Standing Comparisons

Traditional System	Baker System
Week 1	
Team b 75%	Team b 60%
g 75	g 60
c 75	c 60
f 50	f 53
e 50	e 46
h 25	h 40
a 25	a 40
d 25	d 40
Range = 50	Range = 20
Week 2	
Team g 87%	Team g 60%
c 75	c 60
e 75	b 60
b 50	h 56
d 50	f 46
a 25	a 40
f 25	d 40
h 12	e 36
Range = 75	Range = 24
Week 3	
Team c 83%	Team c 62%
e 83	b 57
g 58	h 57
f 50	f 55
a 50	g 51
b 33	a 40
d 33	e 40
h 8	d 35
Range = 75	Range = 27