



# Romeo High School Bowling...secrets to success 2011

One of this season's primary goals is to become the best spare shooting team in the state of Michigan! Matches are won and lost by which team makes the most mistakes – namely – missed makeable spares. A makeable spare is a single pin or two pin (close together) combinations.

There are a number of systems that can be used. We will focus on the systems in this document.

Coach Paul



Source: TenPinBowling.org

## The Game » Spare Systems

In this text I want to discuss the different spare systems that are most common to bowlers. You can use one of these systems to make it easier for you to spare, but you need to have a quite constant aim or else the spare systems are not much help to you. There are three systems that are very known and mostly used by bowlers, namely the 3-6-9 spare system, the 2-4-6 spare system and the KISS spare system. The text is written for a right-handed bowler, but if you are a left-handed bowler, right is left and left is right.

### 3-6-9 spare system

With this spare system the target will stay the same, only the starting position will change depending on what spare you must make. There are two starting positions on the approach used with this system, namely the strike starting position and the 10-pin starting position. You will also use two aiming targets on the lane, the strike aim and the 10-pin aim, for all the spare combinations. Below I will discuss how this spare system works in more detail.



For spare combinations in the center, you must do the following actions depending on the key pin.

- The headpin is the key pin, use your strike starting position and strike aim to spare.
- The 5-pin is the key pin, use your strike starting position and strike aim to spare. Note that if you bowl with a large hook, you will have to move a half to a whole board to the



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left to spare (a combination with) the 5-pin as the key pin. If you don't do this, you might chop or miss the spare.

For spare combinations on the left, you must do the following actions depending on the key pin.

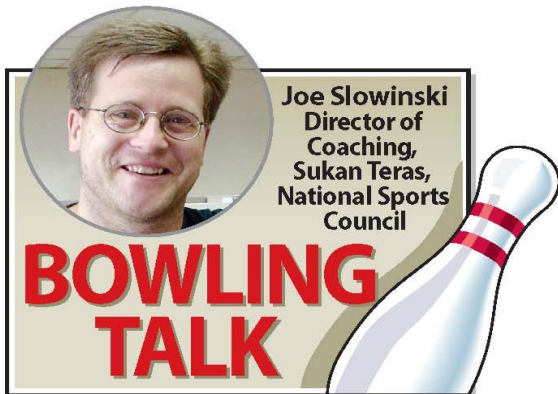
- The 2-pin is the key pin, move three boards to the right of your strike starting position and use your strike aim to spare.
- The 4-pin is the key pin, move six boards to the right of your strike starting position and use your strike aim to spare.
- The 7-pin is the key pin, move nine boards to the right of your strike starting position and use your strike aim to spare.

For spare combinations on the right, you first need to find your 10-pin starting position and 10-pin aim (e.g. the third arrow). When you have found these, you must do the following actions depending on the key pin.

- The 10-pin is the key pin, use your 10-pin starting position and 10-pin aim to spare.
- The 6-pin is the key pin, move three boards to the right of your 10-pin starting position and use your 10-pin aim to spare.
- The 3-pin is the key pin, move six boards to the right of your 10-pin starting position and use your 10-pin aim to spare.



Source: Malaysian Today: Shooting An Advanced Spare



**W**ELCOME to Bowling Talk! Bowling Talk is a new help column designed to help youth bowlers in Malaysia become better in the great sport of tenpins. So, send in your questions via e mail. Send your questions to *Joseph Slowinski@yahoo.com*. And, most importantly, give these tips presented in Bowling Talk a try. But, be patient. It will take some time to improve.

IN this week's Bowling Talk, I present an advanced spare system and remind readers of effective spare methods. If you want to be a better bowler, begin with improving your spare shooting. As a rule of thumb, you want to throw a plastic ball hard and straight to convert spares. And as we say in the USA, strike for show – spare for dough (money). And, spares are clearly important at all levels. Consider the fact that Walter Ray Williams Jr. converted 87.4% of all of his spare attempts in PBA match-play in 2006. His conversion rate was the highest

among all professionals. And, he has the most wins in the history of the PBA.

## **ESTABLISH A BASELINE SET OF SPARE SHOOTING DATA**

Before you use this advanced spare system, establish a baseline set of data of your spare performance by collecting spare data over your next ten games. Determine your overall spare performance which should consist of all spare conversions divided by all spare attempts, including splits. In addition, determine your single-pin and multiple-pin spare conversion percentages. You need this baseline to evaluate how you progress over time. Use this set of data to establish a spare improvement goal. I recommend that you collect data over time to track progress.

## **LEARN TO THROW STRAIGHT**

To be a great spare shooter, you must learn to throw the ball straight. To accomplish this, spread your little finger (pinky) wide and keep the index finger in tight. This will move the distribution of weight toward the



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inside of your hand, toward the center of your body, promoting more roll on the bowling ball. In addition, break your wrist slightly downward. Literally, this makes it easier for you to throw the ball straight. Try to lead with the little finger toward your target. Ideally, you want to see the ball rolling end-over-end. If this doesn't help you throw straight, try leading with the elbow toward the target. If you lead with your elbow, you can't rotate your hand around the ball. Consequently, this along with the pinky spread will get the ball rolling straighter. But, you need to practice and master this technique.

Use a Plastic Ball



## USE A PLASTIC BALL

For most spares, you will increase your margin of error by using a plastic bowling ball.

Plastic bowling balls include the Columbia 300 White Dot, Brunswick Target Zone,

Ebonite Maxim, etc. A plastic ball is more forgiving if you don't throw absolutely straight as compared with other coverstock materials. The plastic cover of the ball will enable it to skid further than any ball. In addition, the ball will not act aggressively on lane surfaces. Throwing straight with a plastic ball ensures that you maximize the amount of room you can make a mistake. Now, that is insurance. And, the beauty of a plastic ball is the low cost and long durability.

## SPARE REALITY

You should rarely miss a single pin. With any single pin except the 7 and 10, you have a huge margin of error if you throw the ball straight. Consider this, a bowling ball is approximately 9 inches in diameter and a bowling pin is approximately 3 inches at the widest point of the base. So, add it up. A bowler would have half of a bowling ball on either side as well as the width of the pin. Consequently, you have nearly 13 boards of room at the pins to convert a single pin. Yes, seriously, you have 13 inches of error room on the lane surface. The lane is only 42 inches wide. So, a bowler has 25% of the lane to convert a single pin, non 7 or



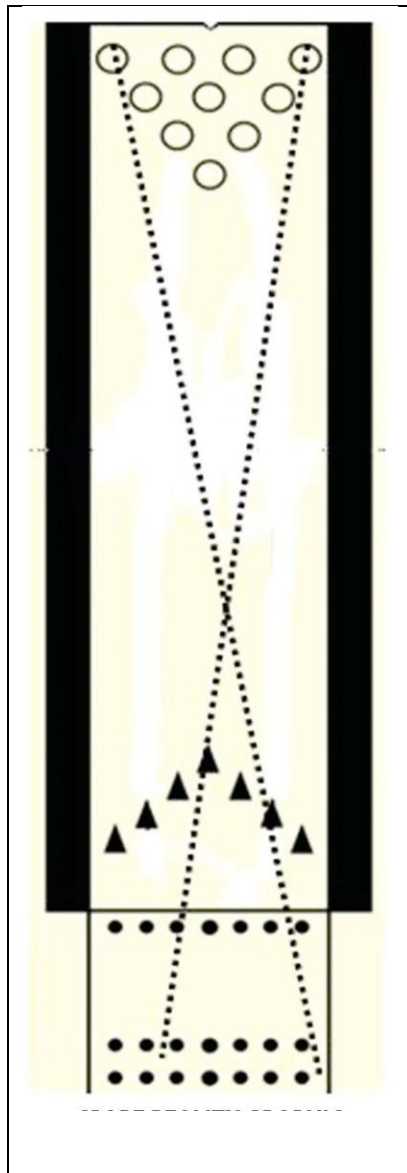
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10, spare. This is nearly the equivalent of 3 arrows. This is why Walter Ray Williams Jr. converted all 475 attempts at single pins in the 2005-06 season, last year, for a record 100%. You, too, can become a spare master. And, I recommend that you start with the following system. But, beware, it is based on throwing the ball

## **ADVANCED SPARE SHOOTING SYSTEM**

You want to shoot 99% of your spares, straight across lane. This will increase your margin of error and improve your overall spare shooting. Here are some general guidelines to improve your spare shooting percentage. And, I provide a spare shooting chart to guide your spare attempts. 1. In the stance, break your wrist slightly down to promote throwing the ball straight. And, spread the little finger wide with the index finger in tight. Hold the ball about chest height. 2. To use the advanced spare shooting system, begin by establishing your

sparing line-up base by throwing the 10-pin over the fourth arrow and the 7-pin over the second arrow. Left-handers, you will do the opposite. I recommend beginning around the 38th board for the 10-pin and board 5 for the 7-pin. Be sure that your shoulder and hips are perpendicular to the target and the shoes are parallel with the target line. 3. After establishing the base of the 7 and 10, you will move inward off of these bases while keeping the target the same. In this advanced system you move 2, 3 or 4 boards. You will always move toward the center of the lane with your adjustments (see the table). 4. After you move, according to the chart, be sure to reset your body position with your shoulders and hips perpendicular (90 degrees) to the target line with your feet parallel with this line. Look down at your feet and then align your body. 5. Use the advanced spare shooting system guidelines to convert more spares.



ADVANCE SPARE SHOOTING SYSTEM		
Right-Handed	Left-Handed	Guidelines
10	7	Stand cross-lane, perpendicular with your shoulders and hips, throwing straight across lane to establish your base with the 4th arrow as your target. Remember to break the wrist and spread the little finger wide. Start on 38 as an initial test. Then, move from their to set-up the base.
6-10	4-7	2 Boards Right/Left
6	4	3 Boards Right/Left
3-6-10	2-4-7	4 Boards Right/Left
3-10	2-7	4 Boards Right/Left
9	8	4 Boards Right/Left
5	5	Throw straight down the 4th arrow. Line-up on 27 and be sure your shoulders and hips are square to the foul line
2,8,2-8,2-4-5-8	3,9,3-9,3-5-6-9	Move right off Strike Line
7	10	Throwing straight cross-lane to establish your BASE with the 2nd arrow as your initial target. Start on 5 as a beginning test. Then, move accordingly to set-up your base.
4-7	6-10	2 Boards Left/Right
4	6	3 Boards Left/Right
2-4-7	3-6-10	4 Boards Left/Right
2-4-5	3-5-6	To avoid a chop, use the 5th arrow and throw it straight (shoulders should be square to the target by walking straight). I recommend that you look half-way down the lane to increase accuracy.
3-6-9-10	2-4-7-8	Cross-Lane with Strike Release