

BOWLING IS A RECREATION BY REACHING THE TARGET BY HEAVY BALL DOWN A LANE TO KNOCK OVER PINS IN TARGET SPORT

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ABSTRACT

Bowling is a target sport where players roll a heavy ball down a lane to knock over pins, most commonly ten pins, with the goal of scoring points by knocking down as many as possible, with popular variations like tenpin bowling, duckpins, and lawn bowls existing. It's played in alleys (for pin bowling) or on grass (for lawn bowls) and involves strategy, like aiming for specific targets (arrows) on the lane to hook the ball effectively. Bowling is a target sport where players roll a heavy ball down a lane to knock over pins, most commonly tenpins, aiming for the highest score by getting strikes (all pins on the first ball) and spares (all pins on two balls). While tenpin bowling is most famous, it's a broad term including variations like duckpin and candlepin, and also refers to target bowling like lawn bowls where the goal is to get closer to a target ball. Bowling is a recreational game and an international sport that involves rolling a weighted ball to knock down targets called "pins." Historians are uncertain how or when bowling was invented, but it is believed that the game has ancient origins and was invented in prehistory, centuries before any written record.

KEYWORDS: Tenpin bowling, ninepin bowling, five pin bowling, candlepin bowling, duckpin bowling.

Preamble: Bowling is a target sport and recreational activity in which a player rolls a ball toward pins (in pin bowling) or another target (in target bowling). Most references to bowling are to pin bowling, specifically tenpin bowling, played in the United Kingdom and Commonwealth countries. Bowling can also refer to target bowling, such as lawn bowls. Bowling is played by 120 million people in more than 90 countries, including 70 million people in the United States alone.

John Brunswick (1819 in Bremgarten, Switzerland – 25 July 1886) wasn't the inventor of bowling, but he was a pivotal figure who industrialized and standardized it in the mid-1800s, essentially creating modern bowling by establishing the Brunswick-Balke-Collender Company, which mass-produced precision-crafted bowling lanes, pins, and balls, moving the sport from gambling dens to mainstream recreation. **Joseph "Uncle Joe" Thum** [Born: January 24, 1873, Baden, Germany; Died: January 10, 1937 (aged 73) Flushing, Queens, United

States] was an American champion bowler that owned different bowling alleys in New York City starting in 1881 (the first of which was at 401 Greenwich Street, in the Tribeca West Historic District) through the nineteenth and twentieth century. He bowled to 1911. Upon his death in 1937, he was regarded as being the "father" of the sport of bowling. **Martin Luther** (10 November 1483 – 18 February 1546) was a German priest, theologian, author, hymnwriter, professor, and former Augustinian friar. Luther was the seminal figure of the Protestant Reformation, and his theological beliefs form the basis of Lutheranism. He is widely regarded as one of the most influential figures in Western and Christian history. The "father of bowling" depends on the context: Joe Thum is called the "father of modern bowling" for organizing the ABC; Bart King is the "father of swing bowling" for revolutionizing fast bowling in cricket; and some call Dennis Lillee the "father of modern Indian fast bowling" for his influence, though no single person invented the sport itself.



Figure 1: Bowling leading groups.

Bowling balls are made from a core and a cover stock, with modern versions using advanced plastics like polyester, urethane, and reactive resin, often with added particles for traction, while the inner core can be resin-based, ceramic, or composite for balance and performance, evolving from early wood and rubber balls.

MODERN MATERIALS

Polyester (Plastic): The most basic and durable, used for rental balls, creates less hook. Polyester is a category of polymers that contain one or two ester linkages in every repeat unit of their main chain. $(-O-CO-R-)_n$ as a specific material, it most commonly refers to a type called polyethylene terephthalate (PET). Polyesters include some naturally occurring chemicals, such as those found in plants and insects. Natural polyesters and a few synthetic ones are biodegradable, but most synthetic polyesters are not. Synthetic polyesters are used extensively in clothing.

Urethane: Offers more hook than plastic but less than reactive resin, good for durability and control. Urethane can refer to the specific chemical ethyl carbamate ($C_3H_7NO_2$), a naturally occurring compound in fermented foods and a potential carcinogen used as a lab anesthetic, OR it can refer to the urethane linkage $(-NHCOOR-)_n$ that forms the basis of polyurethane (PU) polymers, which are versatile, durable plastics used in foams, coatings, and elastomers (like those in athletic shoes or industrial parts). The distinction is important:

urethane (ethyl carbamate) is a small molecule, while polyurethane is a large polymer chain.

Reactive Resin: Revolutionized the sport with microscopic pores that absorb oil, creating significant traction and hook. Synthetic resin is a chemical organic compound mainly composed of atoms such as carbon, hydrogen and a little oxygen, nitrogen and sulfur etc. combined together with certain chemical-bond. Synthetic resin, as a bonding agent, is the main component in plastic. Phenolic Resins: Aromatic rings (from phenol) linked by methylene bridges $(-CH_2-)$ or ether bridges $(-CH_2-O-CH_2-)$, creating a rigid network. Epoxy Resins: Contain strained epoxide (oxirane) rings (three-membered rings with one oxygen), which open during curing to form strong, chemically resistant bonds with hardeners (like amines). Natural Resins: Often mixtures of terpenes (e.g., pine oleoresins), they are naturally sticky liquids that harden over time, like amber.

Particle (Proactive): An extension of reactive resin, embedding microscopic particles (like glass or ceramic) for even greater lane penetration and grip.

Bowling is a target sport where you roll a heavy ball down a lane to knock over pins, most commonly the ten-pin version where the goal is to knock down all ten pins in a triangular setup for points, with strikes (all pins on first ball) and spares (all pins on second ball) earning bonus points over 10 frames, and it also refers to other games like lawn bowls or cricket's bowling action.



Figure 2: Tenpin Bowling.

Tenpin bowling is a type of bowling in which a bowler rolls a bowling ball down a wood or synthetic lane toward ten pins positioned evenly in four rows in an equilateral triangle. The goal is to knock down all ten pins on the first roll of the ball (a strike), or failing that, on the second roll (a spare). While most people approach modern tenpin bowling as a simple recreational pastime, those who bowl competitively, especially at the highest levels, consider it a demanding sport requiring precision and skill. Largest and heaviest pins, and bowled with a large ball with two or three finger holes. The game is played in 10 frames, or "boxes", with the goal of knocking down all ten pins.

Foul Line: A player must not cross the foul line during a delivery.

Scoring a Strike: If all 10 pins are knocked down with the first ball, it's a strike. The score for that frame is 10 plus the count of the next two balls.

Scoring a Spare: If all 10 pins are knocked down with the first two balls, it's a spare. The score is 10 plus the count of the next single ball.

A Ten-Box: If all three balls are needed to knock down all 10 pins, the score for that frame is simply 10 points, with no bonus.

Bonus Balls (10th Frame): In the final frame, a strike earns two additional balls, and a spare earns one additional ball. **Ten-Pin.** Ten-pin bowling is said to have originated in Germany as a religious ceremony instead of a sport.

Joe Thum: Considered the "father of modern bowling" for establishing the American Bowling Congress (ABC) in 1895, which standardized rules and organized the sport.

John Brunswick: A key figure in popularizing the sport by mass-producing bowling lanes and pins in the 1800s. An approximately 15-foot (5 m) long approach area used by the bowler to impart speed and apply rotation to the ball ends in a foul line. The 41.5-inch-wide (105 cm), 60-foot-long (18 m) lane is bordered along its length by gutters (channels) that collect errant balls. The lane's long and narrow shape limits straight-line ball paths to angles that are smaller than optimum for achieving strikes; accordingly, bowlers impart side rotation to hook (curve) the ball into the pins to increase the likelihood of striking.

There's no official minimum or maximum age for bowling, as it's a sport for all ages, but children can typically start around 3-4 years old using ramps and lighter balls, while many seniors remain active bowlers. The key is adapting equipment (like ball weight, ramps, bumpers) for kids and focusing on fun, with some alleys having age rules for adult-oriented areas like bars.

For Young Children (Toddlers - Age 5)

Can Start Early: Many toddlers enjoy pushing balls down ramps.

Equipment is Key: Use lighter balls and ramps (sometimes called "helpers") to make it accessible and prevent falls.

Focus: The goal is fun and getting the ball to the pins, not complex technique. Most kids can start bowling from around three to four years old, especially with the help of ramps and bumpers. The balls come in smaller sizes, too, lighter ones that are just right for little hands. It's a great first sport for shy kids too. There's no pressure to perform, and the environment is friendly and fun.

For Older Kids & Teens (Age 6+)

Bumpers: Can start with bumpers to keep scores up and build confidence.

Transitioning: Around ages 8-10, many kids are ready to try without bumpers as they develop strength and coordination.

Progression: Choosing the right ball weight (often 6-10 lbs) and fitting finger holes becomes important for learning proper form.

For Adults & Seniors

No Upper Limit: Adults of any age can bowl, with no upper age limit.

Senior Adjustments: Seniors might need lighter balls or adjust technique, but many maintain high averages.

Bowling Alley Considerations

Age Restrictions: Some alleys have age rules (e.g., under 18s needing adults after a certain time or being excluded from bar areas).



Figure 3: Ninepin Bowling.

Nine-pin bowling (also known as ninepin bowling, nine-pin, kegel, or kegel) is a bowling game played primarily in Europe. Uses a smaller ball without finger holes and

with pins arranged in a diamond shape. Nine-Pin. In this variation, nine pins are used instead of ten.



Figure 4: Five pin Bowling.

Five-Pin bowling: This bowling variation was invented in Canada and played in other parts of North America. Five-pin bowling is a Canadian variant with five pins (center is 5 pts, middle are 3, outer are 2; total 15) in a V-shape, a smaller ball without finger holes, and three balls per frame, making it distinct from 10-pin, with scoring bonuses for strikes and spares that involve adding points from the next frame, requiring different strategy than standard bowling. A perfect score is 450 points, achieved with 12 consecutive strikes, and it's known for being a challenging, strategic game often played in Canada. Bowling balls weigh from 6 to a maximum of 16 pounds, with the ideal weight depending on the bowler's strength and comfort, typically ranging from 10-14 lbs for women and 14-16 lbs for men, though beginners often start

lighter (6-12 lbs) to develop technique before moving up to heavier, more powerful balls for better pin action.

Children (6-10): 6–10 lbs.

Teens (11-16): 10–14 lbs, depending on strength.

Adult Women: Often 10–14 lbs, with some competitive players using 14–15 lbs.

Adult Men: Commonly 14–16 lbs, with pros often using 15–16 lbs.

Seniors: 10–14 lbs, prioritizing comfort and less strain.

Feature	Candlepin Bowling	Ten-Pin Bowling
Ball Size/Weight	Small (4.5 in diameter, max 2.7 lbs), no finger holes	Larger, heavier, with finger holes
Pin Shape/Size	Tall (15.75 in), thin, uniform taper	Shorter, wider at the centre
Pins Between Rolls	Fallen pins ("wood") remain on the lane and can be used to knock down others	Fallen pins are cleared after each ball
Balls per Frame	Three balls allowed per frame	Two balls allowed per frame (except in the 10th with a mark)

Difficulty	Considered much harder, requiring accuracy and strategy over power	More common, higher scores are easier to achieve
Perfect Game	A 300 is theoretically possible but has never been officially recorded; the highest sanctioned score is 245	A 300 (12 consecutive strikes) is a common goal for competitive bowlers

Candlepin bowling is primarily a regional pastime in the US states of Maine, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire, and the Canadian Maritime provinces. If you are interested in trying it, you can look for local alleys in those regions, such as those listed in the Boston Magazine guide to candlepin bowling or the USPS

Location Finder for general bowling locations (be sure to verify the type of bowling offered).

For those interested in a digital experience, the game is also available in video game form, such as in the upcoming PBA Pro Bowling 2026 or other mobile games.



Figure 5: Candlepin Bowling.

Candlepin bowling: Candlepin bowling is a unique, challenging variation of bowling originating in New England, played with smaller, fingerless balls and taller, thinner pins. Unlike the more common ten-pin bowling, fallen pins (called "wood") are not cleared between balls within a frame, which adds a layer of strategy to the game.

Duckpin bowling: Duckpin bowling is a fun variation where players use small, finger-hole-free balls and shorter pins, getting three rolls per frame to knock them all down, unlike tenpin's two rolls. Scoring is similar but harder due to smaller equipment, with strikes and spares earning bonus points, though getting a 300 is nearly impossible, making it a challenging but popular game for

all ages, focusing on precision over power. Duckpin and candlepin bowling differ in pin shape, ball size, and location, but both use smaller equipment than ten-pin, lack finger holes, and offer three balls per frame to knock down pins, with candlepins being tall and skinny (like candles) and duckpins being short and squat, played with slightly heavier, larger balls than candlepins, making them a middle ground between 10-pin and candlepin. Duckpin bowling is a variation of bowling using smaller, lighter balls (no finger holes) and shorter, lighter pins, played on a shorter lane, where players get three balls per frame instead of two, making it more challenging but accessible, with similar scoring to ten-pin but no bonus for a strike or spare in the 10th frame if all pins fall in three balls.



Figure 6: Duckpin bowling.

Key Differences from Ten-Pin Bowling

Equipment: Duckpins are shorter and lighter; balls are smaller (around 5 inches diameter), weigh under 4 lbs, and have no finger holes.

Lane: Shorter lane, with the foul line to pins being about 19 feet.

Rolls: Three balls per frame (instead of two) to knock down pins.

Scoring: A strike (all pins in one ball) or spare (all pins in two balls) still offers bonus points, but if all pins fall on the third ball, it's just 10 points (no bonus). A perfect game is still 300. Bowling scoring involves 10 frames where players knock down pins, with each pin equalling one point; strikes (all pins on the first ball) and spares (all pins in two balls) earn bonus points from subsequent rolls, while open frames (pins left standing) score only the pins knocked down, culminating in a perfect 300 score for 12 consecutive strikes.

Basic Scoring Rules

- Game: 10 frames, up to two balls per frame (except the 10th).
- Pin Value: 1 point per pin knocked down.
- Open Frame: Score is the total pins from two balls (e.g., 7 pins + 2 pins = 9 points).

Bonus Scoring

- Strike (X): All 10 pins on the first ball. Score = 10 + (next two balls).
- Spare (/): All 10 pins on the second ball. Score = 10 + (next one ball).

The 10th Frame (Special Rules)

- Strike: Get two extra balls.
- Spare: Get one extra ball.
- Open Frame: Game ends.



Figure 7: Bowling scoreboard.

Example Calculation

- Frame 1: Strike (X).
- Frame 2: 5 pins, then 4 pins (9 pins).
- Frame 3: 8 pins, then 1 pin (9 pins).
- Frame 1 Score: 10 (strike) + 5 (next ball) + 4 (next ball) = 19 points.
- Frame 2 Score: 9 (pins) + 8 (next ball) = 27 points (total so far in frame 2).
- Frame 3 Score: 9 (pins).

Perfect Game: Rolling 12 consecutive strikes (3 in each of the first 9 frames, plus 3 in the 10th) results in a score of 300.

CONCLUSION

Bowling is primarily an indoor game, played in alleys on oiled lanes, but versions of it, like lawn bowls or casual backyard sets, are also played outdoors, adapting to grass or other surfaces. The most common ten-pin bowling is indoors, while variants like "bowls" (lawn bowls) can be played on greens outside. A bowling pin is the target object, typically a wooden, plastic-coated solid, that bowlers try to knock down with a ball, standing 15 inches tall in a triangle formation for tenpins, with the goal of scoring points by clearing them, with specific

layouts and internal structures (like a core) affecting ball reaction, and various games using different pin shapes and numbers (like five-pin, duckpin).

Ten-Pin Bowling (Indoors)

- Played in dedicated bowling alleys with specific wooden or synthetic lanes.
- Focuses on knocking down ten pins using a heavy ball.

Lawn Bowls / Bowls (Outdoors/Indoors)

- Played on grass (bowling greens) outdoors, but also on carpet indoors (short mat bowls).
- Involves rolling biased balls (bowls) towards a smaller target ball (the jack).

Casual/Kids Bowling (Both): Lightweight plastic sets are available for both indoor fun on smooth floors and outdoor play on grass. So, while the classic bowling alley experience is indoor, the broader sport of bowling has both indoor and outdoor forms.

Key aspects of bowling pins

Purpose: To be knocked down by a bowling ball as the objective in games like ten-pin, duckpin, and candlepin bowling.

Construction: Made of wood (often maple) with a hard plastic coating, usually white with red stripes, and sometimes have internal voids to adjust weight and balance.

Ten-Pin Standard: In standard ten-pin bowling, pins are 15 inches tall, arranged in a triangular rack, with the point (headpin) facing the bowler.

Variations: Other games use different pins, such as shorter, fatter duckpins, or tall, thin candlepins, all with their own specific ball sizes and rules.

Ball Interaction: A pin's position in a bowling ball's core (the "pin" on the ball) influences how aggressively the ball hooks and reacts on the lane, affecting strikes and spares.

Scoring: Knocking down pins earns points, with a strike (all ten in one ball) and a spare (all ten in two balls) yielding bonus points.

REFERENCE

1. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bowling>