



The art of bowling

by Colin Rowe

Last week I concluded what can be described as a successful season of five-pin bowling at my local alley. What started out last fall as an eclectic collection of talent and ages, developed to become contenders for the title of "Champs".

Five-pin bowling is a pass time I took up some thirty odd years ago to enhance a romantic courtship at the time but it soon developed into a passion (the bowling that is). Unlike most sports, it does not matter how awful you are, because your only adversary is you. This is a game where the worse you bowl, the larger your handicap which allows you the dignity of ending up with a respectable tally at the end of the evening. In the seventies, bowling alleys also rivalled the Legion hall for cigarette smoke and alcohol but thankfully some of this has now changed even though the legacy of smoking remains in some alleys. I must admit that I do miss the free drinks we all enjoyed from the winner of the fifty-fifty draw, which always produced a bottle or two as the prize. I guess the rivalry it created for the bar soon put an end to that.

My introduction to bowling locally started when a friend said that his league needed some more "warm" bodies. Being a guy devoid of

shyness, I turned up at the start of the season to the surprise of everyone, who thought that I was a lost high-way traveler but we all settled into a weekly routine of wins and losses. For me, the game is therapeutic because I use the occasion to shed my week's frustrations with the pins becoming the object of whatever ails me.

My choice of five-pin over the ten-pin game had more to do with convenience than anything else. The balls for that game are larger and more cumbersome to carry around. I was also turned off by the ten-pin game when I used the balls at the alley during a fun outing and ended up with an infected finger as a result of a bruising from the tight fit of the holes.

The benefits of the game of bowling are many, even though some have a hard time accepting it as a sport. First, it teaches honesty because scoring depends a lot on that trait, especially when it's done when no one else is around. I always start my evenings with a warm-up routine, much to the amusement of everyone but throwing and bending are moves that require preparation as in any other sport and rushing to the alley late and bowling as soon as you have tied your shoe laces has resulted in many a back and

shoulder problem. My favourite warm-up routine consists of stretches, a brief swinging of the arms and shoulders, waist bending and free squats. The bowling action itself helps to work on the waistline and strengthen and tighten the leg and buttocks muscles.

While this is a year round game, it sure helps to beat the winter blahs if you are not the outdoors type during that time of year. Consult your local alley and participate in a fun activity where you actually get to meet people (including me).

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