

ch #17 VIEWERS QUESTIONS

ver: 27/10/26

This is where Ben answers viewers questions.

Can you use the standard throwing technique for the kata ?

Yes if you believe it to be the best technique.

Can match bowlers use your technique for match bowling ?

Yes. This is a principle of kata bowling.

How far do woods run straight ?

According to most websites I have read, woods run straight for $\frac{3}{4}$ of the range (length of throw). However. I have thrown more than five different models of woods (different biases) and the furthest any of them runs straight is 8m for a range of 35m.

Even on official bias drawings, woods don't run straight for even $\frac{1}{2}$ the range.

I believe that mathematically a wood never runs straight however fast it is thrown but it might look as if it's running straight.

I found a website that says:

"No bowl travels in a true geometric straight line during a normal draw shot". Sounds right to me.

Does practice make perfect ?

Miffs say practice makes perfect.
Actually it makes habitual which is not necessarily perfect.

Who are Miffs ?

A miff is someone who spreads a myth.
If you repeatedly perform a technique, your muscles eventually remember the average sum execution and you will be able to replicate it without conscious thought.
This is called muscle memory aka procedural memory. It is the ability to perform a physical task automatically without conscious thought after repeating it many times.

How many times must you repeat it ?

It varies but you probably need to practice at least 3hrs per week (preferably three 1hr sessions) for at least 3months.
It's important that you repeat the correct technique otherwise you will acquire the wrong memory and it's difficult to modify it.

Some bowlers say you can overthink a technique.

Do you agree with them ?

overthinking aka paralysis by analysis aka the centipede effect is when your conscious mind interferes with an action that your body already knows how to do automatically.

ie interferes with muscle memory.

However, you have to concentrate on the technique until you have acquired muscle memory.

Some bowlers say whatever works for you is ok.
Do you agree with them ?

- 1) If they are satisfied then its ok for them.
- 2) I have coached schoolboys soccer, cricket, basketball, swimming, athletics and have read coaching books and attended coaching courses for all these sports. I don't remember the phrase "whatever works for you" in any of these.
- 3) There are differences in execution among miffs. Which particular sum execution should we teach beginners?

I've seen you bowl and you are rubbish.

And your question is ???

If your technique is correct, why are you so bad ?
Carpet devils.

What are carpet devils ?

Small swirly things that live in the carpet.

Why don't you like woods with dimples ?

Dimples are supposed to improve grip but this is not necessarily good. If a fingertip is in a dimple, it will impart an extra flick at release. Also, if your woods have deep dimples, throwing with a fingertip in a dimple can give you a sore finger. I have never felt that I needed "extra" grip.

For the above reasons, I prefer woods that have no dimples. Since I was not aware of this when I bought new woods, they have dimples - so I keep my fingertips out of them.

What is the alpha arc ?

The alpha arc is the path that your hand moves along during your forward swing. Most bowlers assume the path is a straight line but I suspect it is a curve.

Why ?

For a while, I was convinced my apogee was above the CL and I could see that the wood passed over the 1m spot, so the wood should have run along the CL for at least 5yds. However, it ran to the L of the CL after passing over the spot.

The only way I can explain this is by assuming the wood (while I'm holding it) follows a curved path until I release it.

Why do we need to know the Universal Fundamental formula ?

You don't need to know anything about it.

So why did you tell us ?

I thought you might be interested.

What is the point of speed bowling ?

It's fun to watch the woods follow each other like carriages of a train going around a bend.

I think it's good practice but unable to say why.

NOTE

It's difficult to speed bowl if you grip askew.

You might prefer to use a different grip.

What is the minimum legal bias ?

The **minimum bias** is defined by a **Master Bowl** which is made for World Bowls by Taylor Bowls Ltd in Glasgow, Scotland.

World Bowls is the international sports federation for the sport of bowls. Founded in 2001 via the merger of the World Bowls Board and the international Women's Bowling Board.

Its headquarters is in Melbourne, Australia.

Taylor Bowls told me:

There have been several iterations of a "Master Bowl" the first being in 1893 when the Scottish Bowling Association adopted the rules of the sport written by William Mitchell who was a Glaswegian lawyer. A committee of leading bowlers of the time tested bowls and agreed on the bowl that became the standard. Then in 1928 the International Bowling Board was formed and again they tested different bowls and agreed on what should be the Master Bowl. When World Bowls was formed in 2002 they again asked us to supply a Master Bowl to a slightly different bias due to the evolving nature of the sport.

All the other manufacturers who have come along since we started all the testing have had to match our standards and we supply them the Master Bowl.

If a bowler is suspected of using woods that have too narrow bias, the woods can be sent to Taylor who will compare them with a Master Bowl.

Master Bowls are not available to the public because they are owned by World Bowls who say they are only available to manufacturers who are authorised and monitored by World Bowls to maintain their standards.

Which woods have the narrowest bias ?

As far as I can determine (it's all very secret):
HENSELITE TIGER TX

What woods do you own ?

- 1) ALMARK STERLING SLIM-LINE
size: 1 (dia 121mm)
weight: HM (1.30kg)
bias: medium
grip: shallow square dimples
- 2) DRAKES PRIDE PROFESSIONAL
size: 00 (dia 116mm)
weight: medium (1.19kg)
bias: medium
grip: dimples
- 3) DRAKES PRIDE D-TECH
size: 00 (dia 116mm)
weight: M (1.19kg)
bias: narrow
grip: plain

Please explain the askew grip.

When you are in the hover position, you have to rotate your wrist to get your palm facing in the correct direction. This is an unnatural position and you might find it uncomfortable.

A compromise is to grip the wood with your fingers at an angle (but keep the running strip at the correct angle) ..

How many more throws do you make with kata bowling compared with match bowling ?

I watched a 2v2 match and they played 8 ends in an hr. That's 32 throws per bowler.

I average 40 ends per hr which equates to 160 throws.

Wouldn't stepping forward improve your balance ?

A step forward would help if you are pushed in the back but normally a parallel stance provides sufficient balance.

Stepping forward (or backward) is an opportunity to insert an error. I have tested this and I don't always step to the same position.

Doesn't stepping forward allow you to exert more force into the throw ?

Yes, but a parallel stance allows sufficient force.

Does it allow sufficient force for "firing" ?

Firing is not required for kata bowling.

There are two reasons for firing during match bowling.

- 1) To make the wood runs straight for longer.
- 2) To knock woods away from their current positions.

When I use the outside style to throw a wood with maximum force, it runs straight for 25m.

When I use the inside style with max force it runs straight for 20m. I don't think it's worth changing the style just to get 5m of extra straightness (or extra force).

What if someone finds the inside style uncomfortable ?

You should always use a comfortable position. Many bowlers are senior citizens and therefore have injuries and "contra indications". My technique assumes you are in good nick. If you have a physical problem, do whatever you find comfortable.

Why don't you include a practice forward swing ?

Tried it. Makes no difference. If it ain't needed, don't do it.

Does a practice swing help ?

Several bowlers have told me they change their minds about this every year or two. So I'm not convinced. If it ain't needed, don't do it.

Who gave you the idea of the inside style ?

The Buddhist priests in The Next Karate Kid (1994). It came into my mind the moment I asked myself what alternatives are there. I regard it as a hint from God.

Why do you hover ?

I don't hover. The wood hovers.

When you throw four woods during the kata, every element should be the same. The woods are in different positions when they are stacked.

This is unavoidable. By moving each wood to the hover position enables you to start the backswing exactly the same each time. Do the same during match bowling.

Why do you pause at the apogee ?

The height of the apogee contributes to the range. Since the kata is supposed to demonstrate every element, you pause at the apogee. If you were teaching, you would be saying "take note, this position is important".

How do you control the length ?

I have been unable to find a satisfactory method of controlling the range. The closest I've come is looking at the wood during the pause at apogee and adjusting its position relative to the back edge of the mat.

Why do you tell everyone when to breath ?

1) I find it uncomfortable to inhale when I bend down (it squashes my lungs). So I exhale while executing this element.

Inhaling lifts the wood off the floor.

If I exhale during the forward swing, the wood will return to the floor before it is released.

2) I find the rhythm of the breathing helps me remember what to do next.

3) If you have to breath, do it the same every time.

Why did you write a book ?

It helps me to sort out my ideas and get them logically consistent.

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