

## RON STAUB: ONE OF BOWLING'S BEST-KEPT SECRETS

Most people don't realize it, but 30 to 40 years ago, Thunderhead Lanes actually had its brand on two bowling establishments in the Carroll County area – Thunderhead Taneytown and Thunderhead Westminster. The Westminster “Alley”, which resided in the Village Shopping Center, is gone now, but fortunately, “Taneytown” is still hanging in.

Most of Thunderhead Bowl and Grill's leagues are unsanctioned, which tends to render a number of its skilled players as being overlooked by their peers. One such bowler is New Windsor, Maryland's Ron Staub.

Staub cuts quite an impressive figure as an athlete, and has a bowling style to match, which has endured the test of time. The 79-year old phenom has been a solid bowler for decades – actually the “2020”s is the 7th decade in which Ron has been bowling, and he traditionally has hovered around the 135-140 mark for most of the prime years of his career. Even when Staub reached septuagenarian status, he typically carried in the 130s for an average.

Ron is a long-time member of the Monday Morning Seniors league at Thunderhead Bowl and Grill, and despite facing challenging health issues as of late, he has held the high average for the substantial majority of the league's bowling season, as it heads into its final third of the year.

During his heyday in the duckpin game, Staub put up some impressive numbers at Thunderhead Lanes, which includes both the Westminster

and Taneytown links in the establishment's chain.

Staub started bowling in 1962, so he's seen the transition from wooden to plastic pins. He was in an automobile accident in 1973, which sidelined him from the game for a period, but he made a return to the lanes in 1976. In 1980, he began to hit his stride, receiving acclaim for his efforts in the local newspapers. In 1981, Ron had the anomaly of rolling two '202' games in leagues at Thunderhead Taneytown. Then in mid-December of 1982 in the Thunderhead Westminster Thursday Night Major league, Staub shot games of 150, 152, and a 198 (with a 5-bagger) to post an even “500” for his series total.

The bowling centers at Thunderhead have traditionally been 'true' scoring bowling houses, but weren't generally revered by the bowlers looking for high scores. However, Ron never has minded a challenge and was soon rewarded for his tenacity. On March 31, 1984, Staub set the house record at Thunderhead Westminster when he rolled a three-game series of 560, including games of 191, 159, and 210 – a set that featured a 4-bagger and two triple-headers. That record lasted up until the bowling establishment later closed its doors for good.

Ron's overall game is quite fundamentally sound. Despite being close to 80 years of age, he has a bruising style, plays a tight line to the headpin, and still has a lot of 'stuff' on the ball – but he doesn't



*New Windsor's  
Ron Staub*

overthrow the ball, which would account as a primary reason for his longevity in the sport at such a premium level.

Ron worked for Hahn's meats before he retired from the work force. His wife, Nancy, is also an avid and solid bowler, carrying the high average on the women's side of the ledger in the Monday Seniors league. She even appeared on the popular TV telecast, “Bowling for Dollars” on one occasion. Off the lanes, Nancy has an interest in ornithology.

Ron and Nancy are fixtures at Thunderhead Bowl and Grill during the week, staying sharp and fit with a steady routine of league and open play sessions.

## Editor's Choice: A TRIBUTE TO EARL ANTHONY



Tenpin Bowling's legendary Earl Anthony was one of the most influential figures in all of sports. He wasn't known for being demonstrative, but his impeccable style when it came to bowling was second to none across all athletic venues.

There's a good bit of his background of which a lot of people aren't aware, that might be especially interesting to Marylanders. Anthony was a prospect for professional baseball in the early part of his athletic career. After getting out of the service, he pitched in spring training for the Vancouver Mounties. Afterward, he was a pitcher on the Orioles minor league team. He could hurl a ball 90 mph before an arm injury halted his AAA class career.

Anthony started bowling at the age of 21 when he joined a work league. He carried a 165 average in that first season. He joined the pro tour full-time in 1970 at the age of 31. Over the next 20 years, he won 41 titles. Earl was the first bowler

to reach \$1 million in earnings on the pro tour, and was also the first player to win \$100,000 with a bowling ball in a single year. In bowling, he never pretended to be a role model, but his professionalism made him into one.

"Pride made me work very hard on my game. I've always been a competitive person. If I'm going to do something, I do the best I can, or I won't do it at all.", Anthony stated.

Earl really was something extra special. For me, when he was a commentator on bowling telecasts for ESPN in the 1990s, it was extremely enjoyable to listen to him because you knew that when he was giving his analysis and commentary, it wasn't just to fill time with idle chatter – he really had a lot of insight into the game, and he could explain things in an orderly manner in which everything made sense. Once, I remember him explaining why it is that the bowlers get tapped with the corner pins, that is, leaving the 10-pin for a right-hander, or the 7-pin for a lefty – he referred to "entry points", in regard to the ideal angle for the ball to hit the pocket.

### BOWLING TIP FROM EARL ANTHONY

It seems only fitting that this week's "Bowling Tip" would be one that I learned from one of Earl's instructional videos. On the subject of 'General Practice', Anthony recommended that for the player who is seriously working on his/her game to improve scoring, he said that a person should practice until s/he begins to feel a little tired, and then to stop for the session. If I remember correctly, he alluded to muscle memory in conjunction with this tip, so I'm presuming that he meant that when a person bowls too much when s/he is fatigued, bad habits might ensue due to the body not being able to exert itself fully.

## FROM THE COLLECTION



One of my prized possessions is this bowling pin, which was signed by the late, legendary Earl Anthony. At the time of his passing, Earl had the most pro tour wins of any player in the history of the game. He was a gentleman on and off the lanes, and a real icon for sports figures.

*Ever wonder how a  
bowling ball is made?  
See page 4 for the Part 1  
of a two-part series*

## SENIORS: LIVING IN THE 21ST CENTURY

The world changes. Time moves along. This is a trait of technology and progress.

Being a part of the progress of time, doesn't mean that we need to focus on it, but rather that we should think of ourselves as an active part of history. Everything that everyone does, contributes to it.

When it comes to people, the decade of the 2020s is essentially no different than that of the 1820s or the 1920, nor the millenia that preceded such. Each century has a "Now" generation. One ideal that is paramount in the consideration of this "Now" generation of the 2020s, is the recognition that has been a reality since the beginning of time – and that is the fact that elderly people are no different than young people.

We've heard the term, "Been there, Done that". In many ways, this is the unwritten motto of the senior population.

Seniors are mirror images of their young counterparts, for the seniors have already experienced the same types of obstacles as the young generation. The elderly of today in their youth were just as athletic and fun-loving when they were coming along, as today's youngsters. The main difference, aside from the nimbleness of an unworn body, is that the younger population is growing up with modern technology, whereas the senior community is exposed to it, but they're temporarily hindered by the knowledge of past innovations and the way those inventions functioned. It can take time to either unlearn that to which you're accustomed, or to readjust your thinking to conform to newer ideas and 'thought trains', which


would require moving that former knowledge into its own corner of our brains to make room for newer tools, methods, and lines of thinking. If that can be successfully done, then the senior has an added advantage, because now they're armed with today's info as a type of epidermis, layered on top of the memories of marvels of previous generations.

There should be no feelings of irrelevance if you ever get frustrated with not being able to figure out how today's things work. That's only natural. All the innovations that are currently out there in today's world can seem overwhelming when it comes to trying to make sense of it all. The key to getting a grip on understanding is not in determining how 'something new' works, but rather what this new device is good for. This lack of pertinent info is not the fault of the elderly, or the uninformed, but more so on today's methods of advertising. Technology moves fast, and often it's forgotten that people need a proper introduction to a new approach.

Community workshops are a great idea, if you've got the time to invest in them. It might take some digging, but if you find a class at a nearby community center or similar venue, this would be a good starting point in learning how that smartphone or tablet works.

From my own personal experience, I tend to be set in my ways, and sometimes it takes several attempts to get the hang of a modern electronic machine or software application. It does take time to understand things correctly, and learning is best done at your own pace.

## SPARETALK CONTEST REVEALS THE CHALLENGE OF DUCKPINS



Last week on the SpareTalk website, a free contest was introduced to over 300 bowlers on the World Leagues network. "The Eliminator" is a 'just for fun' tournament-type event that will run over the course of several weeks, in which the idea is for a bowler to remain in the tournament as long as s/he can, without being eliminated. The player must simply avoid the prospect of bowling '10 pins or more under your average'. The tournament began in Game 2 of the bowlers' weekly sets across 11 leagues.

In just two games, about 45% the field felt the effect of the 'ups and downs' of the duckpin game. Out of 336 players, 155 were eliminated from the competition (myself included).

When I was a league secretary, about 20 years ago, this extra incentive tourney was implemented as a 'lark', just to see how people would react. The odd thing was that many of the people who were eliminated quickly, clamored for another tournament to run, as soon as the current one ended, which spanned about 11 games. If memory serves me correctly, we ran 4 of these events in one season, so the bowlers had a lot of fun with it.





# THE MAKING OF A BOWLING BALL

Ebonite International, Inc, has been building bowling balls for more than 100 years. From wood to rubber to plastic to today's complex balls, Ebonite International has been responsible for some of the most successful products in the industry. The company is recognized as an industry leader in terms of ball design, manufacturing and industry support. Their mission statement, "Building the Best Brands in Bowling," is clearly evident in everything they do and it permeates each step of the manufacturing process. The company is home to four bowling ball brands, Ebonite, Hammer, Columbia 300 and Track. Balls from these brands are typically classified in two ways, performance balls used by competitive bowlers, and balls used by social bowlers.

## Overview of Bowling Ball Production

*\*Denotes details are proprietary information and cannot be revealed.*

Bowling balls are made of basically two elements: the core (both inner and outer core) and the cover. The core serves two functions in the manufacturing process. First, the core is a vehicle used to make various weights in bowling balls (from 6 - 16 pounds). Second, and most importantly, the core also determines the shape of the arc the ball makes on the lane.

The cover determines where on the lane the arc is made. For example: on a lane of 60 feet in length and 40 inches in width, a given ball might arc several inches at 50 feet. The goal is to use the ball which is going to give you the best angle to reach the strike zone, or pocket area of the pins. The amount and placement of lane conditioner

(oil) on the lane (which is determined by the bowling center) also may affect the ball's performance. An experienced bowler can match the right ball to the right lane condition to increase his striking opportunities. The goal is to knock down all ten pins in all ten frames for a possible total score of 300.

The Research and Development team is charged with marrying the correct cores and coverstocks for each ball. There are unlimited possible combinations, all of which produce a different end result. However, through extensive research, we have been able to determine which combinations are most effective for the greatest number of bowlers on the greatest number of lane oil conditions.

In addition to experienced scientists and ball design engineers, Ebonite International also employs computer aided ball tracking software to measure various combinations of cores and coverstocks. Using a digital video camera, BowlersMAP and DigiTrax analyze both the ball and the bowler to insure the core and cover combinations are effective. Both of these software programs are owned and exclusively used by Ebonite International when manufacturing bowling balls.

Ball evolution has been an upward progression from basic, non-complex geometries to today's carefully-crafted designs which have been developed to exploit the core's full inertial potential. Likewise, the cover (veneer) of balls used early on (i.e. rubber, polyester, urethane) was based on simple chemistry-type polymers but has evolved to complex mixtures of polymeric materials.

## Inner Core Production Steps

Raw materials arrive at the factory in bulk. These materials include various types of particles and fillers that are mixed to create the desired density. This liquid material is then poured into a specified shape mold, which hardens quickly to create the inner core shape.

Once the core is hardened, it is removed from the mold and the surface is prepared for the next step\*. The core is measured to determine the principal XYZ axes, and a hole is drilled to mark this axis. During the manufacturing of performance ball cores, a locator pin is then placed into the drilled hole, and remains throughout the manufacturing process for core alignment purposes. Performance ball cores are designed in such a way that the orientation of the shape of the core will affect the way the ball rolls. These location devices embedded in the core will help pro shops determine proper placement of finger and thumb holes in the final product. This is the means to get the best performance to fit the bowler relative to the lane condition he is bowling on.

... To be continued next week

---

## HOUSE SPECIALS FOR JANUARY 2023

For senior citizens, the special rate of \$3.00 per game is in effect on Mondays, Thursdays, and Fridays, up until 6:00 PM.

This is for both Tenpins and Duckpins

Thunderhead Bowl & Grill  
4337 Old Taneytown Road  
Taneytown, MD 21787  
410-751-1750