

The Value of a Shot

by Lewis Twine Jr.

No matter in what sport you choose to participate, giving it your best each time is all that you can expect of yourself. This is no truer than in bowling as to how a bowler approaches each and every shot during league play and also in practice. Each and every shot in bowling is a learning experience, has and always will have a value, and ultimately means something in the overall context of an individual's outcome.

I have witnessed individuals intentionally miss spares, make less-than-honest efforts on particular shots, and even give up by pushing the reset button instead of completing the frame. Subsequently, their teams lost these games by less than 10 pins, and many of these bowlers would look back and wonder what might have been if the effort had just been there.

I will never comprehend the rationale behind these bowlers' performances. It simply does not make sense to give up due to a situation not going your way. This ultimately hurts not only them but also their teammates. If any person believes that the sport of bowling is easy to master or that positive results will just fall in your favor without trying, they may want to seriously ponder whether they have what it takes to be successful in the long run.

Let's face it: You pay for bowling, why cheat yourself out of a shot? It can mean the difference in winning a game, a league, or a tournament. Most of all, there is the self-satisfaction of never quitting.

I was guilty of quitting years ago and learned the hard way-or should I say the monetary way. I still miss spares, but it is not because I stepped on the approach with no intention of knocking the pin(s) down.

I teach that no matter the situation, your next shot always will be the most important and greatest challenge you face in the sport. Why? This is due to two important factors: (1) You cannot change what has happened in the past; and (2) You do not know what will take place in the future.

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You try to plan for the future, but you can only live in the present. By giving it your all in bowling each and every time, competitors eventually will grow to respect you and realize they had better not give up. This will benefit you in the long run.

The following are some suggestions on ways to implement the "one shot at a time" philosophy. Please keep in mind that these are not absolutes, so try not to place a great deal of pressure on yourself when doing these routines-and the key word here is "routines."

When it is your turn, focus only on the upcoming shot and try to make it a good one. By doing this over and over, it will become a routine part of your game.

Block out things around you and take care of yourself because if you don't, who will? In tournaments and even at times in league play, you are on your own.

Think of each shot as a step towards a result (series for the night, a total score in a tournament, etc.), but try not to think about the result itself. For example, when you drive to a specific destination, you do not think about the destination but rather where you are on the road every second while moving towards your destination. The route you take determines a lot.

By relaxing between shots or games, you allow yourself time to think about what is happening. The bowling part takes place on the lane; thinking occurs off the lane. Try stepping on the lane knowing what you intend to do, get yourself set, and then execute the shot.

To summarize: The best players on the tour and in this association know the value of each shot. Until next time, take bowling one shot at a time, make the best shot you can each time, and keep thinking.

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