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*Bowling coach*

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*Writer*



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**by A.J. Forrest and Lisa Iannucci**



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# *About the Authors*

Over his 15-year amateur bowling career, **A.J. Forrest** has racked up a host of accomplishments, including a total of twelve 300 games, eight 800 series, multiple 299 and 298 games, and 20 games where he bowled 11 strikes in a row. In 1996, he was a member of the Region 15 College Team, and in 1997, he was on the National Junior College Athletic Association All-American Bowling Team. He qualified for and participated in the Empire State Games, New York's Olympic-style amateur athletic program, and has been a coach for the Empire State Games bowling team since 2006. In 2006, A.J. was the Dutchess County/Putnam County All-Events Bowling Champion, the Dutchess/Putnam Singles Bowling Champion, and the Dutchess/Putnam Doubles Champion. In 2008, the Hudson Valley chapter of the United States Bowling Congress presented A.J. with its Award of Distinction, and in 2010, he was a recipient of the Shaker Award, given by the Greater Southern Dutchess Chamber of Commerce.

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# *Dedication*

**From A.J.:** I dedicate this book to my boys — 2-year-old Tyler and 6-year-old Baylee. They're young and yet already bowlers. Helping them has been so much fun and has shown me how much fun it would be to help others, so they're my inspiration for writing this book. I'd also like to dedicate this book to my mom, Barbara Forrest. She has always been a positive influence and inspiration.

**From Lisa:** When I wrote my first book, my kids — Nicole, Travis, and Samantha Brinkley — were 6, 4, and 2. Today, 11 years and many books later, they're slowly making their way out into the world, yet they still inspire me every day. Thanks to my mom, Patricia Quaglieri, who not only modeled for this book but is also my hero. The family that bowls together stays together, and we're a bowling family.



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# Introduction

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Anyone can bowl — whether you're 2 or 102, a league bowler or someone who has never picked up a bowling ball before — and we want you to have just as much fun with bowling as we do. And at a time when many folks are looking for an affordable activity that's closer to home, bowling is an outing an entire family can enjoy for less than the cost of heading to the movies and springing for overpriced popcorn, soda, and candy.

If you've never bowled before, you'll wonder why you waited so long to have so much fun, and we guarantee you'll come back again. If you've been away from bowling for a while and need a refresher course, welcome back, we've missed you. And if you've been bowling for a few years and want to raise your game to the next level, then get ready to bowl better and achieve higher scores with the information we present in this book.

## About This Book

Bowling isn't a complicated sport. All you need to know to start knocking down some pins are the basic rules of the game, a few tidbits about scoring, and some simple tips on how to throw the ball. Getting started bowling really is that easy, and this book is just as easy to understand. *Bowling For Dummies* takes you through every aspect of the game with simple terminology, as well as illustrations and photographs to help you understand more complex points.

*Bowling For Dummies* starts with an overview of bowling and then moves into the specifics, including how to move your body, how to throw a hook shot, and how to throw strikes and pick up spares. We go on to share how you can get kids excited about bowling and what you can do to keep yourself in tiptop condition (and what to do when an injury slows you down or age catches up with you).

The great thing about *Bowling For Dummies* is that it includes something for every skill level. If you're new to bowling, you find out about the proper shoes and equipment to start with. If you're more advanced, we give you tips for picking up difficult shots and fill you in on what you can do to improve your score. Regardless of your bowling expertise (or lack thereof), we're certain you'll discover something helpful in the following pages.

## Conventions Used in This Book

We use the following conventions throughout the book to make things consistent:

- ✓ All Web addresses appear in `monofont`. (Note that we haven't inserted any extra punctuation if an address breaks across a page. Just type it in exactly as you see it.)
- ✓ New terms appear in *italics* and are closely followed by an easy-to-understand definition.
- ✓ **Boldface** is used to highlight the action parts of numbered steps and keywords in bulleted lists.

You'll also find that we refer consistently to bowling centers rather than bowling alleys. Years ago, bowling alleys were called alleys because they were just for bowling and bore a resemblance to a back alley. Bowlers smoked, ate, drank, and bowled; they didn't have any other activities available to them. Today's bowling facilities are now smoke free, and many have even been expanded to include additional fun activities such as rock climbing, paintball, and arcades, as well as fancy restaurants. Some state-of-the-art centers even resemble night clubs with catering services and big-screen televisions. So now that bowling alleys offer more than just bowling, people refer to them as bowling centers.

Additionally, in some of the photos throughout this book, it may look like the bowlers are standing at the foul line as they're preparing to make their shot. Rest assured, they're not; they're standing in the right place to begin their approach. The photos were taken at a bowling center that has two different shades of flooring, which makes it look like the pictured bowler is already at the foul line.

As a final note on the convention front, we recognize that every bowler is different, so we kept that in mind when writing this book. Even though it may seem that what we tell a right-handed bowler to do is pretty much just the reverse of what we tell a lefty, we often provide the instructions for both right-handed and left-handed folks.

## What You're Not to Read

Whenever you come across sidebars (the information in gray-shaded boxes), trust that the material in them is interesting but not essential to your understanding of bowling basics. Feel free to skip over sidebars for now (or forever!).



## *Foolish Assumptions*

We know the old saying that you shouldn't assume anything about anyone because you make an . . . well, we'll assume you know that saying. However, we did have to make some assumptions about you while we were writing. Here's what we came up with:

- ✔ You've either never been inside a bowling center and bowled a game or you've bowled years ago and are just now thinking about returning to the sport.
- ✔ You want to take your bowling skills to the next level, improve your average score, and pick up perplexing spares.
- ✔ You've seen advanced bowlers throw amazing hook shots, and you want to know how to throw one just like 'em.
- ✔ You understand that practice is the only way to get better in any sport, so you're ready to practice on your own, with friends, or both.

## *How This Book Is Organized*

*Bowling For Dummies* is divided into six parts that group together important information so you can easily find what you're looking for. Following is a short rundown of what the different parts cover.

### *Part I: The Opening Frame*

Here's where you discover what bowling is all about, from why it's so popular and how it's played to how it's scored and what equipment you need to get started. Not only do we walk you through an actual bowling center so you know what to expect when you arrive but we also give you some insight into the many health and social benefits bowling offers and fill you in on how to buy your own bowling ball, bag, shoes, and other equipment. By the time you're done with this part, you'll be ready to bowl.

### *Part II: Body Basics: Throwing Yourself into the Game*

The secret to bowling well lies in your form, which is why this part gives you step-by-step instructions on holding the ball, starting your approach to the lane, and throwing the ball. We show you where to aim and explain how to

get your ball to go to the sweet spot that makes a strike a sure thing. Whether you're a lefty, a righty, a hook bowler, or a straight bowler, we cover it all right here. We also help you troubleshoot any problems you may be having, such as too much of a hook, too little of a hook, and not hitting your target.

## ***Part III: Time to Get Rolling: Making Your Shot***

Bowlers love high scores, and strikes are what make those high scores possible. This part shows you how to knock 'em all down and helps you understand how the angle of your throw affects the number of pins you knock down. And because most people can't bowl a strike every single frame, we also show you how to pick up spares (which is when you knock down all the pins with your second throw) and splits (which are what you have when the pins left standing after your first throw have a varying amount of distance between them). This part is a great guide to refer to over and over again during your game so you can ace every throw, especially if you want to score strikes, pick up spares, and convert splits.

## ***Part IV: Staying on Your Game***

Lots of factors can affect your game, from the oil on the lanes to your own mental state. In this part, we show you how each lane is different, explain how the oil that's used to condition the lanes affects how your ball travels toward the pins, and give you tips on adapting to potential game-changing factors. This is also the part where we get into your head and show you how to keep a positive attitude and stay injury free, both of which will improve your game. And if you think you need some extra help to better your game, this part even tells you all you need to know about finding and working with a bowling coach. We also review cautions for those bowlers who are pregnant or have other special considerations that may cause them to adjust how they normally bowl.

## ***Part V: Joining Others at the Center***

Bowling is a social sport, and this part helps you find others to play with. First, we reveal everything you need to know to take the kids bowling, including the type of equipment they need and how to sign them up for a youth league. Of course, adults deserve a little playtime too, so this part also addresses adult bowling leagues, including league rules and costs as well as how the scoring differs from traditional scoring. It also covers bowling tournaments and how to sign up for one.

## Part VI: The Part of Tens

This part is short and sweet but filled with a great deal of helpful information. It contains three chapters that are chock-full of ways to improve your score, throw a better hook, and make bowling even more fun. Refer to these chapters often for quick tips on improving your game or making bowling a bigger and better part of your life.

We also include a glossary containing some familiar and some not-so-familiar bowling terms. You can turn to these pages when you need a refresher about a word's meaning.

## Icons Used in This Book

Even though all the information in this book is useful, we mark especially important text with an icon. Here's a key to what each icon represents.



If you take nothing else away from your read of *Bowling For Dummies* but the information marked by this icon, then you'll have a solid foundation for years of bowling fun.



Text marked with this icon includes suggestions for different things you can do to improve your game. You don't have to follow them, but if you do, you may wind up having an easier time with bowling.



When you see a paragraph marked with a Warning icon, pay attention because you're about to absorb something you need to know to avoid harming your game and stay safe (or keep others around you safe) while you're bowling.

## Where to Go from Here

Excited about throwing a hook? Then jump to Chapter 9. Interested in signing up for a league but want the inside scoop before the first week? Jump ahead to Chapter 18. Where you decide to start reading is up to you. However, if you're not sure where to start, especially if you've never bowled before, we recommend that you start right at the beginning. That way you can progress with your bowling as you go through each chapter.

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## Bowling For Dummies

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# Part I

# The Opening Frame

The 5<sup>th</sup> Wave

By Rich Tennant



"Oh, quit looking so uncomfortable! It's a bowling party! You can't wear a cape and formal wear to a bowling center!"

## *In this part . . .*

**T**his part is your opportunity to take a closer look at the sport of bowling, including how and where it's played. We get you familiar with the rules and scoring and reveal that those little marks on the lane aren't just there for decoration — they're actually there to help you become a better bowler. We also run through the equipment you need to get started, from your very own bowling ball (should you want one) to bowling shoes (they're not all ugly, we promise).