

You'll be interested to know that —

American Bowling Congress specifications require lanes to be within 40/1000s of an inch of perfect levelness. This is less than the thickness of a dime.

To withstand the millions of tons of pounding and stress they will undergo in their lifetime, lanes are so nailed that about one inch of wood is usable as playing surface. Lanes carefully and intelligently maintained can provide a quarter century or more of use.

Resurfacing lanes actually lengthens their usable life. Excessive buildup of finish and inattention to periodic damage can lead to costly repairs and needless extra deep sanding to get down again to a usable surface.

Until the harder lacquer-based finishes were introduced following World War II, shellac was the prevalent lane finish. For resurfacing, it was usually scraped off by hand or with a hand plane. A sanding machine made expressly for bowling lanes was introduced in the late 1930s.

Conditioning a lane isn't a simple matter of pouring some dressing and spreading it around. There are several variables that make it impossible to develop a universal conditioning procedure. Geographical location is a big factor because dressing evaporates much faster in the dry Southwest than in the humid Great Lakes states. Humidity control varies depending on whether it is the heating or the cooling season. The amount of dirt in the air is an unseen but important factor and so is the flow of air currents. The amount of lineage makes a difference in conditioning procedures. Perhaps the most important factor of all is maintaining a good lane surface. Dressing can't do it alone.

Never use steel wool on an approach. It is impregnated with oil and will discolor the wood. The steel fibers can become imbedded in the approach and bowlers' shoes.

It is inadvisable to try curing a slippery approach problem with a dampened cloth. This could aggravate the situation and even cause a nasty fall. Any type of moisture on the approach should be removed immediately.

Coating approaches with finish was unknown in most bowling centers until the 1930s. The wood was left bare. Problems of haphazard slipperiness and sticking in the slide area were common.

90 games per lane a day call for rigid maintenance procedures at ABC tournament

During the average ABC tournament, nearly 300,000 individual games — 90 per lane per day — are bowled. In the average 40 lane commercial bowling center, it takes about six months to accumulate that many games.

Following are the maintenance procedures used during the 1976 ABC tournament in Oklahoma City. (ABC lane installations are made on alternate years by AMF Inc. and Brunswick. The 1976 installation was made by Brunswick, hence the reference to Brunswick products in the maintenance schedule.)

1. Mop dust all capping, divisions and gutters.
2. Run all lanes with lane duster — place lane duster down at the Star Shield, push off pins with duster and drag to foul line.
3. Wash lanes with Brunswick precoat cleaner from 42 feet through pin decks — all lanes every night.
4. Cross buff all lanes nightly with rotary buffer using rug remnant under rotary to spread existing oil evenly across each lane. Cross buff starting at foul line and cross buff to 42 feet (the distance of full travel of Brunswick B-90 lane conditioning machine). At completion of cross buffing at 42 feet, the rotary is returned to foul line holding to board no. 8 on the right side.
5. B-90 Lane Conditioning Operation. With machine operating on medium oil application setting, one pass is made through the 16 foot splice, returned to foul line and on the second pass, oil is applied to 32 feet and buffed only to 42 feet. Oil application per lane — ¼ ounce.
6. If noticeable excess amount of oil on lanes after B-90 operation, lanes are wiped or run with lane duster from 42 feet to foul line.

MAINTENANCE PROCEDURE DURING DINNER BREAK

1. All lanes run with lane duster as in step 2 above.
2. All rubber and ball marks removed from approach slide area with black nylon pad under foot.
3. Gutters dusted at foul lines with mop swaps to remove residue and dust left by bowlers and lane duster.
4. Dressing reapplied to all lanes with oil saturated towels. Towels are applied to each lane at the seven (7) foot fibre dowels — pushed without pressure to the foul line under 42 inch wide applicator and with gentle pressure dragged slowly from foul line to 30 feet. By folding into quarters, one towel is used for each eight lanes by reversing and refolding to expose new area on each lane, five (5) towels used for the 40 lanes. See below for towel preparation.
5. All approaches are dusted with towels under brooms.
6. Settee area dusted in same procedure.

TOWEL PREPARATION

Dry, clean towels each weighing approximately eight ounces are saturated with 13 ounces of lane dressing. The total of 21 ounces is held daily by hand spraying each towel to replenish used oil.

This application uses approximately ¾ to one ounce of oil for each eight lanes, a little less than ¼ ounce per lane. Towels are weighed each evening after each use and then hand sprayed to replenish the used oil, checking several times to maintain the 19 ounce level. Towels then are folded lengthwise into quarters, rolled up very tightly from end to end and placed into bucket to saturate evenly for the next day's application.

NIGHTLY APPROACH MAINTENANCE

1. All approaches are towed under a broom after cleaning of lanes, gutters, divisions and track capping.
2. Following the B-90 lane conditioner, the approach slide area (approximately four (4) feet from the foul line) is buffed with a nylon biege pad squirted with about a tablespoon full of Brunswick Approach Restorer per each pair of lanes. This is to remove all ball marks or scuffs and to apply a trace of powder left from the restorer.
3. The restorer is allowed to dry and then all approaches are buffed to loosen the dry restorer. Buffing is done with two clean biege pads on 40 approaches, 10 lanes each side.
4. Lanes are towed again for final operation.