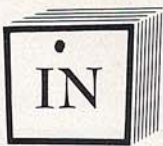


"THE DOCTOR" is



People argue whether professional bowlers are athletes. What difference does it make? Let's argue whether mathematicians are good accountants or doctors good lawyers, or whether the opinions of movie stars are valuable. One thing we can be sure of is that the successful professional bowler is a person of considerable physical and mental ability. Bowling is extremely difficult to master and, I believe, hard to learn.

The apparent simplicity of the game reflects a fundamental truth of bowling. Most of the basic principles are very simple. Apparently you just pick up a ball and roll it at a bunch of plastic-coated pins. But this doesn't reveal much about how to go about it or how the ball should roll to knock down the most pins. The game looks deceptively easy and some early success will support that impression. But the illusion soon fades into unexpected frustration and confusion.

I said the *principles* are simple. I didn't say they are obvious or easily applied. The motions of bowling are somewhat foreign to one's normal experience and are thus hard to develop and use. This is true of any highly disciplined individual sport—karate and golf are good examples.

Bowling is a subject most difficult to explain. Maybe this is because each person has his own bowling style. Maybe the experiences of the sport are so special to it that they are not easily related to other activities. Maybe it is because there is so much misinformation in popular folk wisdom. Maybe most people want an easy way, a shortcut they can take because they are special. Many people believe that the simple is not difficult and the difficult not simple.

Bowling is one of the subtlest and most personal of pursuits. The patterns are far from obvious. Strike patterns vary with lane conditions. Lane conditions vary with time as well as from house to house. You can't *see* the oil on the lanes but must experiment with dependable tools (a solid physical game, experience, and understanding) to find out what the conditions and strike patterns are. Then you must execute your skills well without lapse and with an open mind, ready for changing patterns and the possibility that a better strategy could exist. This is a great challenge.

To know that the game of bowling can be deep lends a certain dignity to its pursuit, but at any level it can be great fun. I have enjoyed the whole trip so far. Everyone loves to learn and to use their skills.

Next month I'll help you find some bowling truths. 'Till then . . . bowl in good health and spirit.

GREG GOETZ 