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SUKAN TERAS
Bowling's Greatest Development Programme
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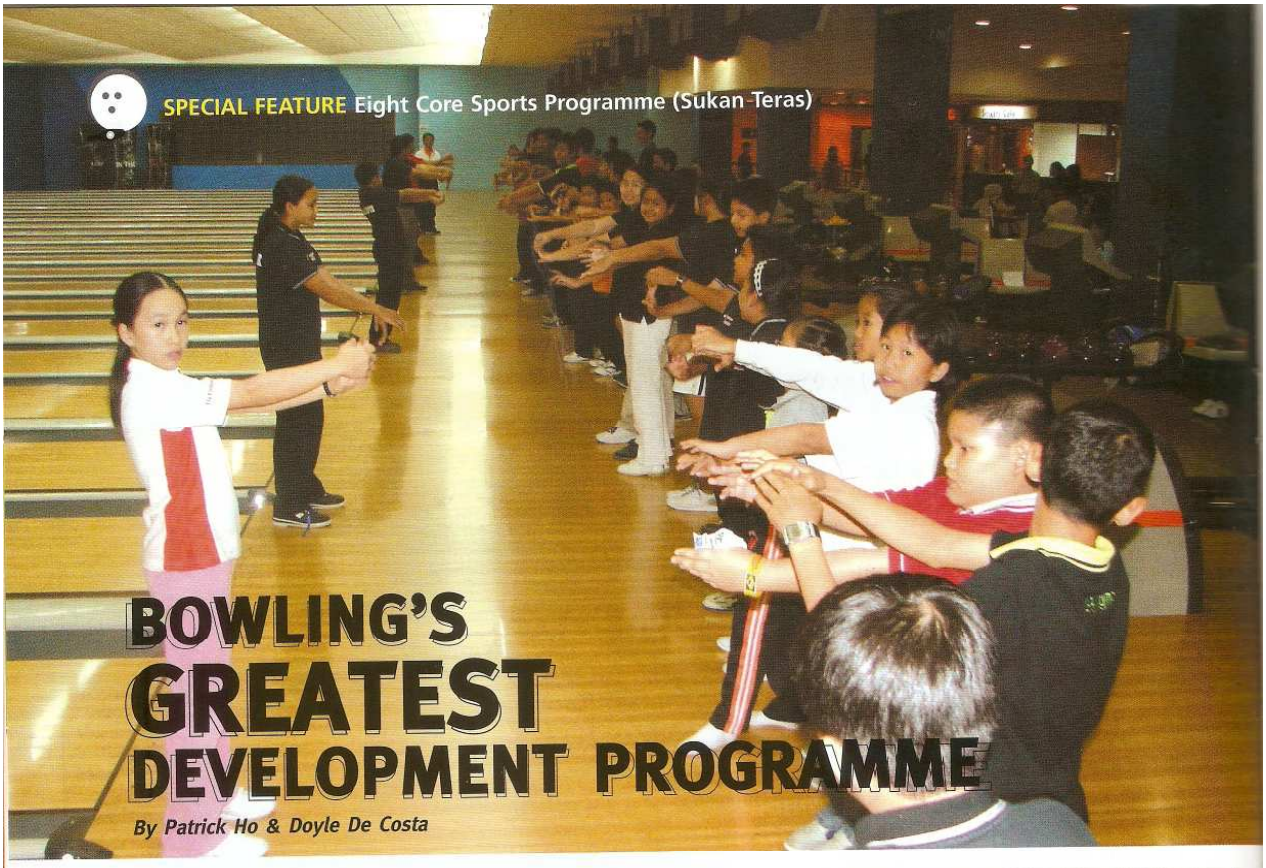


BOWLING'S GREATEST DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

By Patrick Ho & Doyle De Costa

What makes Malaysia's bowling development tick? Asian Bowling Digest managed to squeeze into the busy schedule of national director of bowling, Joe Slowinski, for an insight

When the green light was given by the government to develop the eight core sports (Sukan Teras) in 2005, little did we know how far-reaching or how successful it would be. On the list were badminton, bowling, gymnastics, aquatics, hockey, squash, athletics and football.

Bowling in the past has consistently yielded golden results for the nation. Therefore, it was not surprising that the government of Malaysia has placed much emphasis on the sport's development.

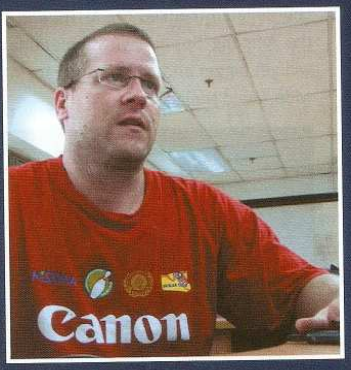
"It's truly amazing. It is the most supported youth development programme in the world by far," said Joe Slowinski, the American national director of bowling. "The budget is approximately RM7million, which covers lane fees, salaries to have this extensive programme. This is just an indication that Malaysian bowling has been improving and improving. So, now you gain support at the local level to continue their move towards becoming one of the leading countries in the world."

The programme now has approximately 87 part-time coaches, 13 chief coaches on the state level and who are involved with the MSSM. In fact, when the wheels of the Sukan Teras were first rotated, it was the first core sport to have all the key positions filled, i.e. coaches, administrators, funding resources and coaching manuals.

The programme curriculum and budget (RM6.9 million) is new, as is the level of coaching.

Initially, before the Sukan Teras programme, MSN did have a youth programme since 1988. Shalin Zulkifli and Azidi Ameran were the first off-springs of the first programme, when Allan Lee was chief coach.

At that time, the whole development structure went from one programme site with 22 bowlers to over 40 programme sites



"I am here because I'm passionate about bowling and I want to help Malaysia be the best programme of youth development in the world"

– JOE SLOWINSKI –
National Director of Bowling

with more than 1,500 bowlers.

Today, the programme has well over 1,700 participants under the Sukan Teras programme.

Incidentally, Slowinski has implemented a totally new curriculum with some elements from the previous programme.

Before, there was no Under-12 level and was started last year over six months and implemented nationwide.

However, apart from being a programme to identify, develop and produce world class athletes, the bowling Sukan Teras programme also incorporates developing and training coaches nationwide.

"I'm happy with the results because statistically, randomness you cannot have that much success," explained Slowinski, 40. "I think we're proving the fact that it's a good curriculum, its effective and the bowlers have been successful."

Last November, a one-week Super Camp was held with two of the best bowlers from each state (two boys and two girls). Slowinski taught the Under-18 curriculum like a seminar. It was both a coaching and player development session, as it was an introduction to the new Under-18 curriculum.

The coaches were given a refresher course by Slowinski who introduced the programme. Apart from bowling as the main focus, the camp had team building activities and mental skill development.

The coaches than worked with the children on the lanes and results were almost instantaneous. The Super Camp juniors won seven out of eight Under-16 events right away. Other Super Camp participants have gone on to win and break records at MSSM level.

"We've had huge success with the Under-18 curriculum, especially participants from the Super Camp and got big results right away," said Slowinski who has been bowling for the past 37 years. "We got a winner in the MILO Invitational, and also had qualifiers from the boys and girls open from the Super Camp."

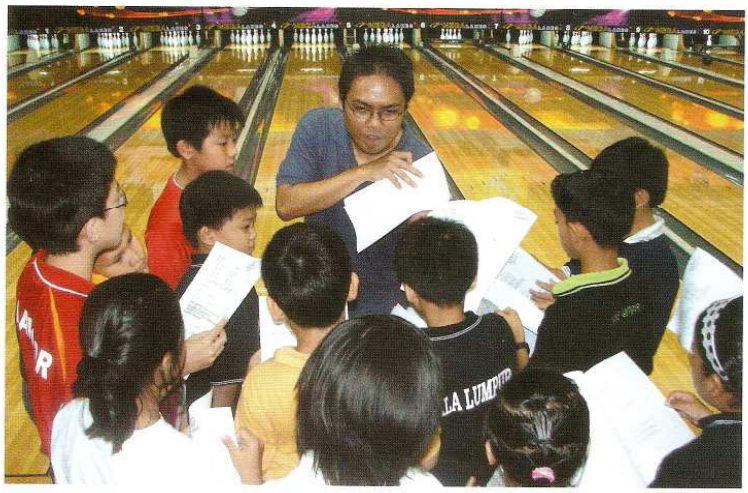
Slowinski arrived in Malaysia in May 2006 and already has settled-in comfortably with the National Sports Council set-up and the Sukan Teras programme.

"I'm very excited to be here. The financial support and the commitment from the public is there," he said. "For me, it's very exciting because I think we have the potential to do something which has never been done in the sport before. We can become the creator of new bowling knowledge."

Slowinski added, "I am here because I'm passionate about bowling and I want to help Malaysia have the best programme of youth development in the world."

He also stressed, "And, I want to help these coaches become the best in the world and that will help our players become great players. There's no reason why we should not have hundreds and hundreds of players at the national level that could compete to be on the national team."

Slowinski started coaching at just 17-years-old when he first received his coaching



A part-time coach ensuring that he has the attention of the Under-12 children at Endah Parade

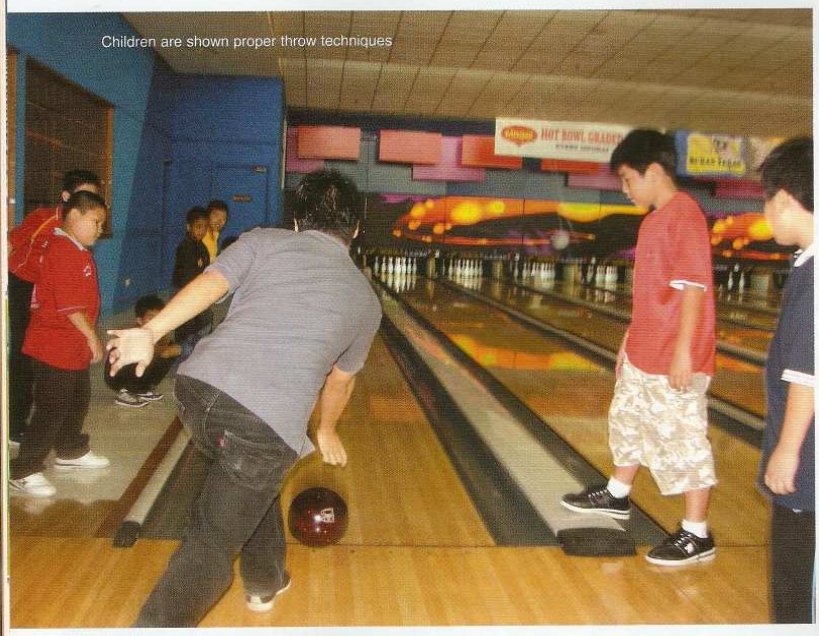
WHAT PARENTS SAY

"It is a good programme. My daughter is in the Under-12 programme and she learns discipline and knows the game better"

– RICKY YAP, 50 –

"I have two children who joined the Sukan Teras programme last year. My 10-year-old has moved-up to the Under-15 category and I believe it is good and offers opportunities for youth"

– ISMAIL BIN NIMAT, 53 –



Children are shown proper throw techniques

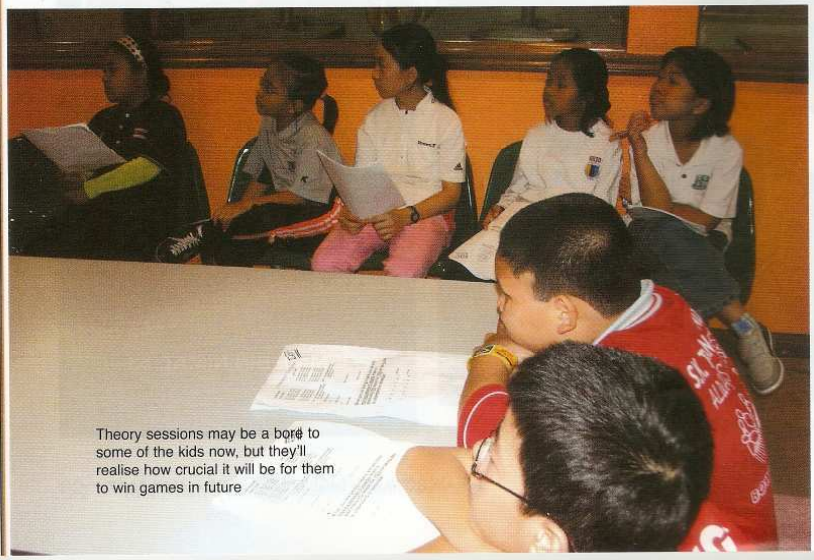
certificate from the then Young American Bowling Alliance, which was part of the Bowling Headquarters (today, United States Bowling Congress) in Wisconsin.

Apparently, the energetic American has proposed a new three-pronged model for coach development for 16 bowlers. An ideal centralised training programme that covers nutrition, fitness, psychology, bowling knowledge, use of technology, individual portfolio development of every players skills and weaknesses.

"The whole idea is to create a programme that is ideal not only to train bowlers but also to model for coaches who comes in an apprentice under the programme," Said Slowinski. "The whole idea of this programme is not only meant for centralised training but also for coach development."

According to Slowinski, if they (coaches) see a world class model, it's going to change how they view coaching. Furthermore, his foresight goes beyond the current.

"We need to make sure that we have mentorship and apprenticeship opportunities for long term benefits," he said.



Theory sessions may be a bore to some of the kids now, but they'll realise how crucial it will be for them to win games in future

WHAT PARENTS SAY

"This is not only about training. The programme offers opportunities and exposes young children to tournaments"

– ROZAIMEE ABDUL RAHMAN, 47 –

"My children's overall score have improved. However, there is more room for improvement in the programme. I believe it needs more coaches and more lanes to accommodate to the number of students"

– MAISARAH ABDUL RAHMAN, 44 –

Shirley Tan, a coach from Penang (2nd from left), and Dave Tan from Melaka (seated) during the Super Camp last year

SUKAN TERAS

3-LEVEL CURRICULUM

UNDER-12 (6 to 7 years-old)

Takes a bowler from beginner level, and takes them through basic skill development, balance free swing, sliding and timing.

From the beginning following drills all the way to a five-step approach, the participants learn beginning lane play, how to target and adjust, and they learn a spare system.

Designed to give fundamental elements of the sport of bowling

UNDER-15

The young bowlers move into advanced releases, plus exploration and additional factors that affect ball reaction, i.e. finger placement and wrist placement. They also learn advanced targeting system and an advanced spare system in addition to some mental sports psychology work.

UNDER-18

The Under-18 curriculum provides the juniors with the skill to have over 1,000 ball reactions to control the amount of skid, the shape of the shot and how strong the backend reaction is. It's a building process from the beginning and classified as world class bowling knowledge.

When the juniors finish the Under-18 programme, they possess the knowledge to play on the extreme outside and inside with confidence.

WHAT PARENTS SAY

"The programme is great for character building. When more coaches and more lanes are added to accommodate the children, I am sure there will be further improvement"

– NATASHA ABDULLAH, 44 –

"My son never played before joining the programme and I observed a lot of improvement in the monthly roll-off. I think more theory sessions are needed for them to learn more"

– TERENCE LEE, 43 –