

# Improving Your Ball Motion Observation Skills through Targeted Practice

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If you want to improve your scoring, it is advisable to improve your ability to observe your ball reaction closely. This will provide you with information to make better decisions about release changes and equipment changes to play the lanes as transitions occur. In this article, I present an observation practice process to help you improve your observation skills significantly.

Being a Skilled Decision Maker Requires Excellent Observation Skills Improving Your Observation Skills

Do you watch your bowling ball closely as it travels down the lane? If so, how closely? How accurate are your observations? To make good decision you must move beyond the general motion characteristics. This is the difference from being very good to becoming an expert in the sport of bowling. Specifically, An expert in any sport is able to gather a high-level amount of complex information from viewing action in their sport. Tenpin bowling is no different.

In short, you can't "see" unless you "look". Too many bowlers just throw the ball and wait in anticipation for the outcome. Rather, elite bowlers should learn to watch their ball motion carefully. These keen observations are used by the bowler to make decisions on starting position, targeting adjustments, equipment and release changes. After reading this, you will learn how-to "see" differently and "look" more closely at what is happening with your bowling ball motion and reaction. Phases of Observation

As mentioned earlier, you need to acquire observation skills. This requires you to watch for very specific elements of the bowling ball motion. I recommend the following areas to promote an improved awareness of your ball motion. But, you need to watch very closely. Specifically, As the ball travels down the lane, watch closely for the following:

1. Initial Angle of Axis Rotation and Axis Tilt – Through visual inspection, you will be able to see your approximate axis rotation angle and axis tilt angle. This should match what you are trying to do with your release.
2. How much skid are you getting out of this ball? How far is the bowling ball getting down the lane?
3. How early does the ball "read" the lane? In other words, when is the ball beginning to encounter friction and beginning the hook phase?
4. Where does the ball exit the pattern, board and distance?
5. Where is the break point, board and distance? 7.
6. How strong is the backend reaction?
7. From skid-snap, hook-set and arc, what is the general shape of the shot?
8. Where does the ball hit the pins?
9. Where does the ball leave the pin deck (left of 8-pin, 8-pin, between 8 and 9, 9-pin, right of 9-pin)?

Each of these 9 areas provides the elite expert bowler with information to make decisions that are based on knowledge. But, you must consciously focus on improving your ability to observe. Spend time by practicing your observation skills and your ability to accurately observe. You can use video to verify. This will improve your accuracy. For coaches, I articulate a training process for team bowlers below.

You can use the following to help guide your observations. The process of watching, reflecting and answering will make you a better observer and improve your ability to read the motion of the ball. Video Vignettes to Improve Observation and Subsequent Decision Making (for coaches and elite bowlers)

Objective:

Bowlers will watch video clips of bowlers who are currently struggling. Based on the observations of the ball reaction, the observers must reflect and make recommendations to get the bowler back into the pocket.

Directions:

1. Explain to the participants that they will observe bowlers, in action. While observing, they should determine what the issues are and offer solutions on what the bowler should do next. Participants would be given information about the lane condition and lane surface.

2. Participants should be able to observe those things listed above.
3. Watch each video only once. The goal is to develop keen observation skills.
4. Participants should reflect on their observations and determine what adjustments the bowler should make in order to hit the pocket. Have the bowlers go around the table and share their recommendations. Then the group should discuss.
5. After the discussion, watch the video once again to verify the observation points.