

It has been said that from within lies true greatness. When it comes to the sport of bowling, I have had a wellspring of success. The days of my youth have passed into history, but the youthful spirit continues to burn in my heart, my mind, and my soul. Even though I am almost forty years of age, I feel that I am just getting started!

Bowling has become a microcosm of the ever-evolving, competitive world of today. New technologies continue to be introduced, and with them come new methods and new ideas. Over the past quarter century I have experienced such changes, and one of my greatest strengths is knowing how to integrate the new with the old. Blessed with college thinking, I not only attempt to outperform my competition each and every day, I try to outthink it as well. I am not a power player in the physical sense, only a cerebral one!

In order to be a great kegler, one must know the equipment, the topography, and the various oil patterns. However, I feel that a few other key factors remain: knowing and **believing in yourself**. Be aware that deep inside of you, a bowler exists, and it is essential to understand and trust that character from within. You must know how to use the lanes to your advantage with the right tailor-made tools. You must understand the tools themselves, to have a symbiotic relationship with your arsenal. You must discover ways in overcoming any limitation or obstacle. Keep a positive mental attitude, and understand that the learning trek will be filled with peaks and valleys. You must understand pressure, to know how to keep a cool, calm, no-holds barred attitude in those clutch situations. Also, understand that fine line between failure and success, for bowling has become high risk, high reward with today's high-tech reactive resin balls. Finally, you must have unshakable confidence in your game. It will make you stand out from the rest of the pack.

When I am not at work on the alleys, I eat, drink, sleep, and dream bowling. Over and over again I envision the perfect shot from preparation to the pit. I first take a deep breath and wipe my rock with a microfiber towel. I think about my routine before I execute the shot, fully aware that my timing, balance, and leverage will dictate what happens in the next sixty feet. Depending upon the lane condition, I contemplate how much speed, revolution, and axis tilt I want to impart on the ball. In addition to the optimum trajectory, I pay close attention to how the ball reads the lane. I see it going through the phases of skid, hook, and roll before heading toward the pocket... through the rack... and into the pit!

I put my thinking and skills to the test back in April 1998 when I decided to enter a PBA Regional event as an amateur at Southwyck Lanes in Toledo, Ohio. After a disappointing 172 average in the morning block, I made radical changes in both equipment and trajectory for the final five games. Playing the extreme outside of the lane, I averaged 232 and rolled a near-perfect 297 game in the penultimate game. I averaged over 204 in my PBA debut. Two years later, I became a full member of the Professional Bowlers Association.

On September 30, 1998 I set a then-series record of 791 at Mor-N-C Lanes in Morenci, Michigan with games of 299, 267, and 225. That same season, I set a mark of 217.01 for seventy-eight games. It is a record that stands to the present day!

My dream to bowl a PBA National event was realized when I competed in a major: the 2001 PBA National Championship at Toledo's Southwyck Lanes. I didn't bowl all that well, averaging 180 and finishing near the bottom! It was a struggle, but it

was also a priceless learning experience. In all, I enjoyed it to the full, bowling alongside idols and heroes of my youth!


I left the PBA in 2002 and went into coaching. I have a Level I certification, and I led the Port Clinton Middle School boy's team to an 8-0 record for the 2004-05 season. But by 2006, a pending divorce took the focus away from the alleys. In 2007 I remarried, bought a home, and had a son. Success and time spent bowling was limited, and I tried to stay on the horse. By late 2009 it seemed that the focus was completely gone!

However, what I discovered was that my bowling was in need of refinement. I had taken pride in being a self-taught kegler, but I found myself blindly experimenting with different ideas that actually hurt my game even more. The newer equipment was being made stronger and stronger, and finding a comfortable norm was difficult, especially since I was bowling on a part-time basis. I checked my positive axis point, worked on different spans and pitches, and even played with surfaces via the Abralon pads. It was apparent that I needed someone to push me in the right direction!

So, I worked with former PBA champion Jeff Lizzi on ball drillings and desired reactions. After hearing him for a few minutes, I quickly realized that I did not know as much as I thought about choosing and setting up equipment to match the lane condition! I was introduced to ideas and suggestions I would have never dreamt possible. The one-time coach had become the student, and under Jeff's tutelage I felt that a new phase of my career was beginning to take shape. Now, I am eager than ever to rise to the top again! As I said earlier, I am just getting started...

My twenty-year career has netted fifteen perfect games, numerous 700 series, one sanctioned 800, and eighteen league high average titles. Like whiskey, I believe my kegling will improve with age. I want to pass on what I have learned to younger generations and eventually achieve hall-of-fame success when I leave the sport. To paraphrase Steve McQueen: Bowling is life, and anything that happens before or after is just waiting.

From within lies true greatness... and I believe that I AM the next bowling prodigy!



Ryan Peebles
8/29/2010