



Bowling lore claims that Sir Francis Drake was engaged in a bowling match as the Spanish Armada approached England. It also is claimed that with the disdain evident in this artist's conception of the scene he completed the match before sailing to meet the foe. (Photo courtesy of American Bowling Congress.)



After the match, the sight of chickens feeding on the outdoor wooden lanes was not uncommon in many areas where bowling was becoming popular. Dutch settlers brought the sport to this country early in the 17th Century, the first games being played about 1626 in New York. (Photo courtesy of American Bowling Congress.)

Automation makes ancient game of bowling a sport available to thousands at all hours

By W.W. EDGAR



Women have bowled for many years, but few with the success of Ann Setlock

The grand old game of bowling, the origin of which dates back to 5200 B.C. when people rolled stones at sheep bone joints that were made to stand upright, now is the most automated of all games.

Instead of rolling stones over gravel surfaces with ditches alongside for gutters, today's bowlers roll plastic spheres down the new style plastic lanes.

And instead of pinboys in the rear setting the pins on pegs, they now have automatic pinsetters, automatic under-ground ball returns, and automatic scorers and foul lines.

Over and above all this automation, the bowlers now have the benefit of a camera that locates the pins left standing and displays them on a screen. The only thing that isn't automated is the bowler himself.

The transition from antiquity to modern times is one of the most interesting — and amazing — chapters in the history of sport.

IN HIS BOOK "The Making of Egypt," Sir Flinders Petrie, emeritus professor of Egyptology at the University of London, tells that while examining the grave of an Egyptian child, he discovered implements for playing a game decidedly similar to our modern tenpins.

The date of the Egyptian child's burial has been authentically placed at 5200 B.C.

According to some other authorities, the place of origin of bowling can quite definitely be placed in what today is northern Italy. This activity was similar to the lawn bowling of today. It was a religious ceremony, not a sport.

This is recorded in a book, "Bowling," written by Wilhelm Pehle, a member of the German Bowling Society and the Berlin Bowling Club.

The ancient chronicles of Paderborn reveal that the first bowling was done in the cloisters of cathedrals. It was the custom of the canons to have the parishioners, in turn, place their pins at

one end of the cloister. The pins represented the "Heide," meaning heathen.

The parishioner threw his ball at the "Heide." If a hit was made, it indicated that the thrower was leading a clean and pure life and was capable of slaying the heathen. If he missed, it meant that more faithful attendance at services would improve his aim.

How do you suppose the present day bowler would feel if he had to go to church because he missed the number 10 pin?

AT THE CONCLUSION of these tests, a dinner was given and the successful bowlers were praised and toasted. It was from these dinners that the tradition of having a banquet at the end of each bowling season came about. No season is now complete without the banquet.

After a time, the spirit of these contests began to extend itself to the canons of the churches and then did bowling cease to become a religious gesture and become a sport.

In the beginning, the "sport" was confined only to the upper classes and the bowling lane was constructed alongside the mansions. These lanes were of gravel and had a trough alongside that returned the ball.

The game soon became popular all through middle Europe. And while there were many variations, such as lawn bowling and "skittles," the main point was to roll a ball at pins.

Various countries used various numbers of pins, but through the mid-European countries the favorite was nine pins with the pins set in three rows of three.

Because most of the bowling was done outdoors at picnics, some innovative soul decided that the pins should be protected and a shelter or roof was placed over them. Later on, the same sort of "roof" was built to protect the bowler against the elements.

It was not long, then, until it was decided to by-pass the old gravel surface and lay a plank from one shelter to the other.

THIS NEW STYLE was first brought to light in Switzerland around 1200 A.D. The game usually was played at a special picnic ground where bowling took place after the meal.

It was a common sight to see chickens on the approaches, gobbling up the

garbage. (What would the present day bowler say if a chicken were found eating on the approaches?)

Martin Luther, King Henry VIII, and Sir Francis Drake were bowlers. In fact, Drake was engaged in a game of bowling when informed that the Spanish Armada was approaching. He refused to leave the game, saying there was plenty of time to finish it and then defeat the Spanish fleet. And he did just that.

As the popularity of the game increased it finally was decided to enclose the entire alley. The first of these, according to the ancient chronicles, was opened in London in 1455 A.D.

The ancient game of nine pins was brought to America by the early Dutch settlers and the first games were played about 1626 in what is now known as The Battery in New York.

From the outset, the Puritans were devout enemies of the game and they refused to bowl.

Ironically, the game became so popular that it soon became a tool for the gamblers. Many of the matches were considered "rigged" and so great was the feeling of the gambling element taking over the game of nine pins that in 1841 the Connecticut State Legislature passed an act prohibiting "nine pin" bowling with the penalty of a fine not exceeding \$50. Massachusetts and New York followed suit. So far as is known, this law still is on the books.

IT WAS HERE that American ingenuity entered the picture. Some unknown follower of the game declared that the law only forbade nine pins. So, he added a tenth pin and set them in a triangle. That was the birth of modern bowling.

To safeguard against any further enactment of laws by the legislatures, the wiser of the followers got together in New York and set down a set of rules and regulations for the game. This group was the forerunner of the American Bowling Congress.

They decreed such things as the weight of the ball, which was not to exceed 16 pounds, and that all pins were to be made of solid maple and weigh not more than three pounds, seven ounces for a regulation play.

They also ruled that a foul judge be given a place built especially for him

on the side wall overlooking the lanes, so he could detect fouls. They also decreed the height of the pin.

These rules were followed closely. But by the 1940s, maple had become scarce and manufacturers had a tough time making the pins solid. The ABC eventually permitted laminated pins.

The solid wood pins, victims of wear and tear, became rounded at the bottom. At the same time the ABC also approved the use of a fiber bottom on the pin, so that it would always retain its official height. It was a Detroit, the late Ted Kimber, who produced the first fiber bottom.

WORLD WAR II brought another great change. The government asked bowling establishments to remain open 24 hours each day to provide recreation for the workers in the defense plants. This was fine, except there was a severe shortage of pin boys.

Just at the darkest hour, when it was thought the bowling lanes would have to close, a man named Charlie Schmidt, a resident of the mountains in upper New York State, announced that he had invented an automatic pinsetter.

It was shown for the first time during the ABC tournament in Buffalo, N.Y. in 1946. And the first installation of the machines that were to save the game was in the Bowl-A-Drome in Mt. Clemens.

Along with the automatic pinsetter came the electric foul judge that took the "old men" from their roosts on the side walls. And later came the under-ground ball return and only recently the automatic scorer.

This automation saved the game and brought on one of the greatest expansions of any sport.

Because the lanes were available at all hours, more and more folks took the lanes. Women gave up their housework in the morning to form leagues at the neighborhood establishments. Teenagers were welcomed. School leagues were formed.

As a result of these automatic innovations, membership in the various bowling associations grew. Today the Greater Detroit Men's Association has a membership of more than 160,000 and the Detroit Women's Bowling Association boasts a membership above 130,000.

Take your choice of 33 sites

Spread across the O&E circulation area from Canton to Rochester and Troy are 33 bowling establishments with 1,190 lanes.

Each is equipped with automatic pinsetters and much of the latest equipment.

This includes the electric eye foul detector, automatic scorers, underground ball returns and even electric eyes that tell the bowler of any pins left standing — a machine that eliminates the old "sleeper" pin that harassed many bowlers.

Because of the automatic pinsetter that makes bowling possible at any time of the day or night, each of these establishments averages about four leagues each 24-hour day.

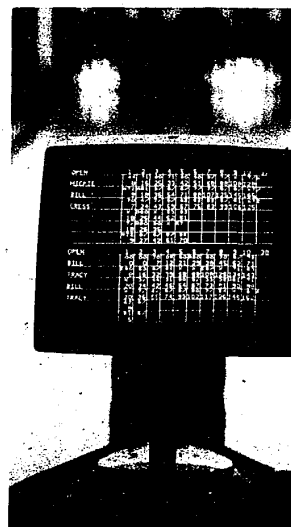
This average is attained by taking the open bowling and junior leagues on weekends and adding those lines to fill any gaps in the league schedules during the five week days.

This means that each day 23,800 persons in the O&E circulation area take their turn at the pins. And it is this large number of sanctioned bowlers that enables metropolitan Detroit to boast the largest men's and women's associations in the country.

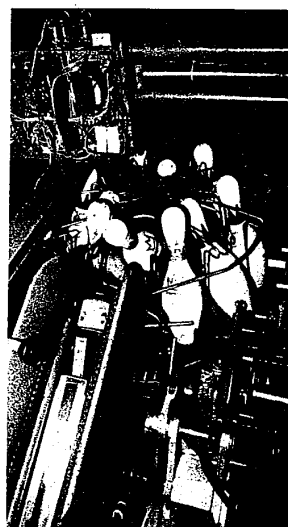
HERE IS THE LIST of establishments in the O&E circulation area and the number of lanes in each. They are listed in alphabetical order.

- | | |
|--|--|
| Ark West Lanes (48)
28435 Northwestern
Southfield | Cloverlanes (64)
28900 Schoolcraft
Livonia |
| Beech Lanes (16)
15492 Beech-Daly
Redford | Country Lanes (32)
30250 W. Nine Mile
Farmington |
| Bel-Aire Lanes (24)
24001 Orchard Lake
Farmington | Drakeshire Lanes (40)
35000 Grand River
Farmington |
| Cherry Hill Lanes (52)
300 N. Inkster
Dearborn Heights | Farmington Lanes (16)
32315 Grand River
Farmington |
| Fiesta Bowl (32)
38250 Ford
Westland | Plymouth Bowl (32)
40475 Plymouth
Plymouth |

- | | |
|--|---|
| Garden City Bowling (12)
5653 Middlebelt
Garden City | Redford Lanes
25851 Grand River
Detroit |
| Garden Lanes (32)
29145 W. Warren
Garden City | Redford Bowl
22150 Grand River
Detroit |
| Gold Crown Lanes (40)
1639 E. Fourteen Mile
Troy | Super Bowl (60)
45100 Ford
Canton Township |
| Hawthorne Valley (12)
31002 W. Warren
Westland | Southfield Bowl
23050 W. Eight Mile
Southfield |
| Livonia Lanes (16)
31630 Plymouth Road
Livonia | Strike-N-Spare (52)
4965 W. Maple
Birmingham |
| Mayflower Lanes (32)
26600 Plymouth
Detroit | Town & Country (40)
1100 Wayne
Westland |
| Merri-Bowl Lanes (40)
30950 Five Mile
Livonia | Thunderbird Lanes (46)
400 W. Maple
Troy |
| North Hill Lanes (32)
150 W. Tienken
Rochester | West Bloomfield (48)
6800 Orchard Lake Road
West Bloomfield |
| Norwest Lanes (16)
32905 Northwestern
Farmington | Westland Bowl (60)
5940 Wayne Road
Westland |
| Oak Lanes (34)
33775 Plymouth Road
Westland | Woodland Lanes (32)
33775 Plymouth Road
Livonia |
| Plum Hollow Lanes (24)
21900 W. Nine Mile
Southfield | Wooderland Lanes (20)
28455 Plymouth Road
Livonia |
| Plaza Lanes (40)
42001 Ann Arbor Road
Plymouth | |



Automatic scoring machines eliminate all human error



Around-the-clock bowling came with the automatic pinsetters