

# THE FACTS ABOUT HANDICAPS

The United States Bowling Congress (USBC) defines handicapping as the means of placing bowlers and teams of varying degrees of bowling skill on as equitable a basis as possible for their competition against each other.

## **Hasn't this been accomplished in leagues, which use a handicap in their competitions?**

FACT: The results of an extensive four year study of all types of handicap leagues – mixed, all women and all men – disclosed that the handicap percentages most widely used today – 75%, 80% and 70%, with 66 2/3 a distant fourth – do **NOT** achieve this goal as illustrated by the results obtained in the study as follows:

<u>Handicap Percent</u>	<u>Championship Won by Team with Average Below Median in the League</u>	<u>Championship Won by Team with Average Above Median in the League</u>
66 2/3	0 out of 100	100 out of 100
70	0 out of 100	100 out of 100
75	0 out of 100	100 out of 100
80	0 out of 100	100 out of 100
85	6 out of 100	94 out of 100
90	11 out of 100	89 out of 100
95	24 out of 100	76 out of 100
100	30 out of 100	70 out of 100

**It seems to me that the ultimate handicap allowance would be 100% and at that percent, every team should have a 50-50 chance of winning.**

FACT: Even at 100% handicap, as the chart shows, the higher average teams or bowlers still have a decided edge. An exact 50-50 distribution of league championships would result only if a 116% handicap was used.

**But isn't it a fact that when 75% handicap is used, the higher average team is giving it's lesser competitor 75% of the difference in team averages when they bowl against each other?**

FACT: True! But what of that **other 25%?** That is the real handicap, and it is given by the weaker team, to the stronger one! (The same "reverse handicap" situation is true at any figure less than 100%, which is why it is not until the handicap reaches 85% that lower average teams can win at all).

**If a handicap percent of 116% would result in absolutely equalizing competition in handicap leagues, then why doesn't the USBC advocate the use of that percent of handicap to the exclusion of all others?**

FACT: Nobody wants to deprive the more skillful of the benefits of their superior skill. If the more proficient bowlers have an edge, it is one they've **earned**. It is a premium, which comes from more diligent efforts to improve their capabilities. That incentive should not be taken away, regardless of the level at which a bowler competes.

**Is there any way I can check out the information you have furnished about handicapping without going through a lot of extra research on my own?**

FACT: Any study of this kind requires voluminous records involving a large number of leagues. However, you could check the final standings in handicap leagues where you bowl to see how the lower average teams fared. Or, better still, take your own league records, week by week, and determine what the standings would have been at 100% (which is the simplest percent to work with).

You'll be surprised at the results. And we know for a fact that your entire league will be pleasantly surprised at the increased competitiveness that will result throughout your entire league season if you change to the higher handicap percentages to decide the outcome of your league's matches.