



## Entering Averages

The purpose of an entering average is to provide for handicapping while the bowler is establishing an average in accordance with the league rules.

League rules should address the number of games required to establish an average. Common options for a league to adopt are:

1. Number of games the bowler must bowl.
2. Number of sessions the bowler must bowl.

**NOTE:** When using sessions to establish an average, it means the bowler establishes an average no matter how many games are bowled during the each session.

Be mindful of exactly what the league is stating when it adopts either option. In extreme cases it could take a bowler six sessions to bowl six games. Similarly a bowler may only have two games bowled in two sessions.

The league should consider which criteria best represents the true ability for all league bowlers and is fairest to the league as a whole. Think about the criteria for returning bowlers and new bowlers.

Many leagues only use averages established in leagues within the association under which the league is certified. These are commonly called "book average". Using an entering average from one association, may not be a true reflection of the bowler's ability. This is why USBC recommends leagues use the bowler's highest USBC 21 or 12 game average for adults or youth league respectively. Averages can be verified by going to the [Find A Member section](#) of BOWL.com.

Another thing to remember is previous season averages also include summer, unless the league rules specifically state summer averages do not apply.

Sample entering average rule found commonly in league rules:

The league entering average shall be:

1. Last year's average of 21 games or more in this league for returning bowlers, including substitutes. Any bowler who does not meet this entering average criterion is considered a new bowler for this league.
2. New Bowlers.
  - a. Last year's highest USBC 21 game average.
  - b. If the bowler does not have a USBC 21 game average from last year the bowler will establish an average the first session.

**NOTE:** If first session is not referenced in the league rule, then the bowler must bowl the number of games required to establish an average in accordance with the league rules. See Rule 118c and the Commonly Asked Question below.

## Enter Average Rule Options and Considerations

### Number of games

The above example does use the USBC recognized average of 21 or more games, but a league can adopt another number greater or less than 21.





### **New bowlers**

An additional option would be to use highest current average of 21 games or more in a current season USBC league.

Rather than using options "a" and "b" above in the sample, the league could assign an entering average. The assigned average is convenient, but may not be a true representation of the bowler's ability. For example a league adopts an assigned average of 165 for all new bowlers. A new bowler establishes an average of 210, but was handicapped on 165.

Another consideration for new bowlers, especially those who have not bowled in a few years is to add additional season averages to be considered as an entering average.

### **Returning bowlers**

To ensure a returning bowler's average is reflective of his/her true ability, a league may want to consider the following options when adopting the entering average rule.

- a. Use option 2-a in the sample above for all bowlers, highest USBC average of 21 or more games.
- b. If using the average from the same league, add unless the bowler has:
  1. A higher 21 or more game average in another USBC league from the previous season.
  2. An average 10 pins (can change the number of pins) or more higher in another USBC league from the previous season.

## **Commonly Asked Question**

**Q: If the league does not use entering averages and requires three games to establish an average what happens if a bowler only bowls two games the first night.**

A USBC Rule 118c states a bowler who does not have an entering average or until they meet the requirements defined in the league rules, average is determined by dividing the total number of pins by the total number of games bowled the first night.

The bowler would establish a two game average based on the games bowled the first night. The bowler's handicap for the first night and the bowler's absentee score would also be based on this two game average.

When the bowler returns the next week his/her average and handicap for the first game would still be based on the two game average. After the bowler completes his third game the bowler's average and handicap would be recalculated per the league rule. Any remaining games of the series would be based on this average.

