

Ninepin Bowling

Ninepin Bowling is a sport in which players attempt to score points by rolling a special bowling ball along a smooth surface to knock down the nine pins standing at the other end of the bowling lane. It is related to tenpin bowling: in traditional ninepin bowling there are nine pins, and in the more modern game of tenpin bowling there are ten pins.



History of Bowling

Evidence of the development of bowling can be found throughout history, for it is one of the best known and oldest sports in the world. Where do the roots of the game of bowling really lie?

Antiquity and Germanic Times

It is certain that the origins of bowling date as far back as the civilization of the ancient Egyptians. Archaeologists have found implements for a child's game of bowling from 3500 B.C. as well as wall-paintings in Egyptian tombs (Nahada culture in Luxor). The prototype of the present-day game of ninepins was probably a game played by Germanic tribes in which stones were thrown at three, seven or nine bones.

Middle Ages

In 1157 bowling is described as a popular form of entertainment in the chronicle of Rothenburg ob der Tauber. However, at that time it was not the sporting aspect which had priority but rather the fact that people were fascinated by the placing of bets on the outcome.

A manuscript from Xanten on the Lower Rhine from the year 1265 proves the existence of a bowling guild there. The enrolment fee had to be paid in goods. Other chronicles and old manuscripts show that there were no set rules for bowling. Stones or balls were thrown or rolled at a number of objects which could vary from one to eleven.

Bowling, which was often scorned upon, first became socially acceptable within a group where it might have been least expected: within the seclusion of the monasteries monks became bowling players. There the game was usually called "heathen killing".

Outside of the monasteries bowling was banned at various times e.g. also in England (by King Richard II in 1388). Church parishes in Germany were the first groups of people to have their own bowling lanes. At the time of the Reformation the protestant authorities attempted to regulate existing bowling practices. One of the first reforms, which was passed in Basel in 1529, was a ban on playing bowling in the mornings on Sundays and holidays. In Germany the game of bowling was banned by the authorities at various times and in different regions. When bowling was allowed again, balls were always aimed at all of the nine pins. Since standing all the pins up again was too strenuous for the pin boys, however, it soon became common to wait until all nine pins had been knocked down before setting them up again. This was the beginning of the form of the game in which all nine pins must first be cleared before they are all set up again.

18th and 19th Centuries



Well into the 18th century the game of ninepin bowling was always played outdoors. It was a feature of every local fair and larger wedding party. Here sporting success generally took second place and possessions and money were often at stake. It is mainly reported, however, that public bowling competitions were harmless affairs at these folk festivals.

In 1786 Johann Georg Krünitz, a doctor and scholar from Berlin, wrote in his encyclopaedia of „13 rules for the game of ninepin bowling“, some of which are still valid today, e.g. that overstepping the foul line is forbidden and that balls must touch the ground before a certain mark. The classical writers Friedrich Schiller and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe were keen supporters of the game of bowling.

German emigrants took the game of bowling with them wherever they went. Very soon deal-board lanes from the south of Germany were to be found in Banat, Transylvania and Herzegovina. Scissor-type lanes became popular in Brazil and even Australia. English and Dutch immigrants brought the game of bowling to the New World.

Ninepin bowling very quickly became popular in the USA. Here it came into conflict with the law, since it tended to attract crowds of undesirables and to be played by gamblers. In 1837 a law introduced in Hartford/Connecticut to ban the game resulted in bowling history being written: since it was now forbidden to bowl at nine pins arranged in a diamond pattern, from now on an extra pin was added and the pins set up in the form of a triangle. This was quite possibly the start of the modern game of tenpin bowling.

The radical changes in western society in the middle of the 19th century resulted in the establishment of the first proper ninepin bowling clubs. At first these mainly focused on supporting people in need, but very soon the emphasis came to be on the sporting nature of the game – this was the beginning of the sport of ninepin bowling. It is at this time that bowlers started playing according to set rules and regulations on standardized indoor lanes.

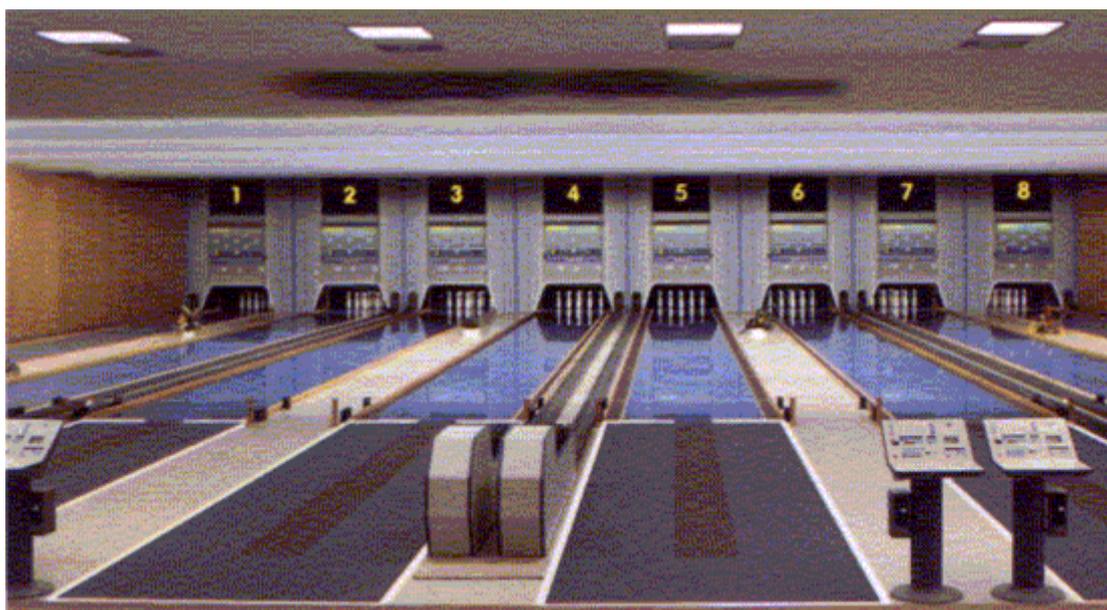
20th Century

By the turn of the 20th century the sport of ninepin bowling had become very popular. After the founding of the German Ninepin Bowling Association, national ninepin associations were established in many other European countries and in North America. The World Ninepin Bowling Association (WNBA), which represents all countries and ninepin bowling associations (Classic, Bohle and Schere), was founded in 1973.

Different Types of Bowling Lanes

In Germany bowling is played on four different kinds of lanes: asphalt (classic), deal-board (Bohle), scissor-type (Schere) and tenpin bowling lanes. Championships, league games, cup trophies and tournaments are held on each one of these different types of lanes. In addition there is an annual German Three Lane Championship, in which players have to prove their ability on the deal-board, scissor-type and asphalt types of lanes by applying quite diverse bowling techniques on each kind of lane.

For all types of lanes the object of the game is the same: to knock down as many pins as possible. Another variation of the game consists of knocking down certain pin combinations.



Asphalt Lane (Classic)

The approach and delivery board (5.50 m long, 0.35 m wide) are made of linoleum. The surface of the lane itself is made of asphalt or synthetic material and has a width of 1.50 m throughout its entire length of 19.50 m. The surface must be completely smooth and absolutely horizontal. This type of lane is predominant in the south of Germany, but it is also widely used in 14 other countries (including Austria, Switzerland and Liechtenstein).

In league matches players bowl 25 times on one lane at the full set of pins each time, i.e. regardless of how many pins have been knocked over, the full set of pins is replaced and aimed at again. For the next 25 deliveries on this lane, those pins which have been knocked over are not replaced i.e. after bowling first at the full set of pins, players must then bowl at any remaining pins until all the pins have been knocked over. Only then are all the pins replaced and aimed at again until all the pins have been knocked down again.

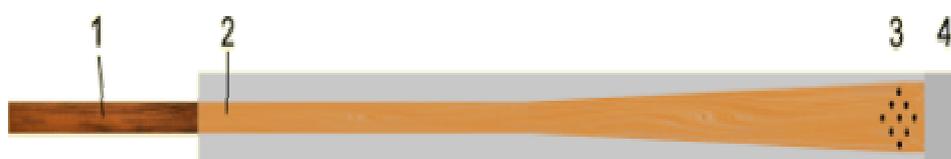
Deal-Board Lane (Bohle)



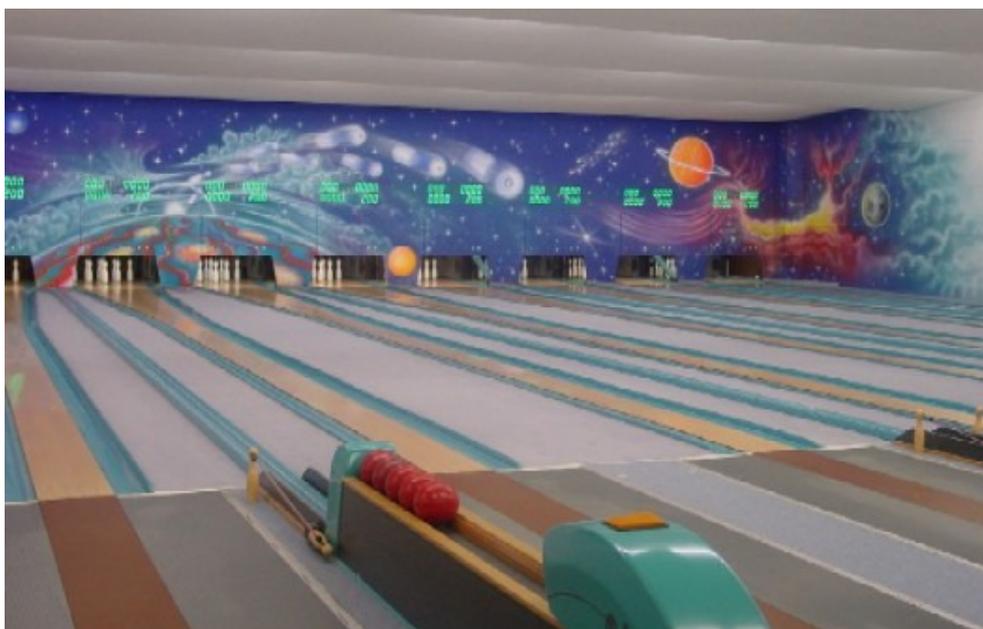
The approach and delivery board (5.50 m long, 0.35 m wide) are made of linoleum. The surface of the lane is made of wood or synthetic material and has a channel in the centre. Like the scissor-type lane, the deal-board lane also has an incline of 10 cm from the beginning of the delivery board to the pins. Because of the size of the bowling channel in the middle of the lane (23.50 m long and 0.35 m wide) it is not possible to knock down any remaining pins and therefore only full sets of pins come into play. Ninepin bowling is mainly played on deal-board lanes in the north of Germany as well as in Denmark, Poland and Namibia.

A peculiarity of the game of ninepin bowling on this type of lane is the rule that the bowling path must be changed after every 25 deliveries, i.e. the ball must be played in the path between pins 1 and 2 and then in the path between pins 1 and 3. If the wrong pin is knocked over by direct contact with the ball no points are scored.

Scissor-Type Lane (Schere)



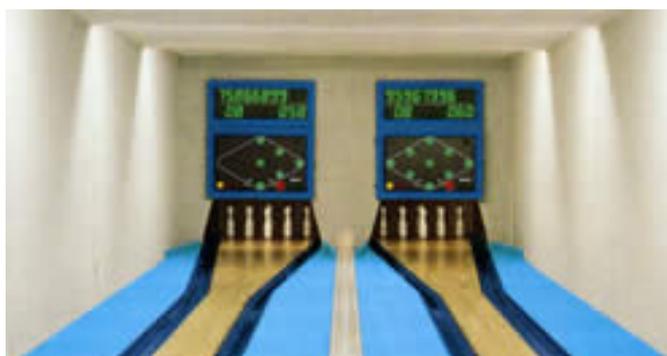
The approach and delivery board (5.50 m long, 0.35 m wide) are made of linoleum. The surface of the lane is made of wood or synthetic material and has a channel in the centre. It has an incline of 10 cm from the beginning of the delivery board to the pins. The bowling channel has a width of 0.35 m for a length of 9.5m from the delivery board and opens up to a width of 1.25 m over a further length of 8.5 m. Scissor-type lanes are common in the west of Germany, Benelux, France, Italy and Brazil.



The game of ninepin bowling on scissor-type lanes combines bowling at the full set of pins, at the remaining pins and also the rule of changing bowling paths. For instance, the first 15 deliveries are made at the full set of pins each time along the left-hand bowling path. The next 15 deliveries are then made at the remaining pins along the right-hand bowling path. A peculiarity here is that all the pins are replaced when pin number 5 (the so-called kingpin) is the last pin left standing.

Tenpin Bowling Lane

A tenpin bowling lane is completely different from the above-mentioned ninepin bowling lanes. Ten pins are used instead of nine pins. The delivery board consists of the entire width of the lane, and the approach area and the lane itself are usually made of parquet. The lane has a horizontal surface, a length of 18.30 m and a width of 1.05m.



The Sport of Ninepin Bowling

Ninepin bowling is usually played as a team game. A team consists of 6 players, in some lower classes it can also be made up of 4 players. Singles, doubles and mixed championships are also held.

100 / 200 Deliveries in the German Ninepin Bowling Association (Deutscher Kegelbund)

The playing method practiced by the German Ninepin Bowling Association on classic lanes consists of games for teams of up to 6 players. For women and in the lower men's classes, a player has to bowl on two lanes for a total of 100 times. From district league level and upwards men bowl on four lanes for a total of 200 times. There is a time limit of twenty minutes for each round. Each player has a combination of 50 deliveries per lane (first aiming 25 times at the full set of pins each time and then 25 times clearing away the remaining pins). The players change lanes after bowling a round of 50 deliveries. The results of all the team members are added together and compared with the opposing team's results. The team which has knocked down most pins is the winner. If both teams knock down the same number of pins the game ends in a draw.

120 Deliveries in International Games

In international games a combination of 120 deliveries has been introduced (30 deliveries per lane: 15 times aiming at the full set of pins each time and 15 times clearing away the remaining pins) on 4 lanes with 6 players per team. Each player plays against a certain member of the other team. 120 deliveries are played by both men and women in all age groups.

These new regulations have been introduced to establish a standardized system of playing which can be played by all bowlers of both sexes in every age group. Beforehand every country had a different number of deliveries and different scoring systems. Furthermore it is a more exciting way of playing, since a point is played for in every round and even if a team knocks down more pins than their opponents the players can still lose overall or have to concede a draw. 120 deliveries are played in the world championships, the European Cup and international cups and championships etc.

Results

At the end of a game an average player can achieve about 420 pins from bowling 100 times, whereby individual results can vary by as many as 150 pins. Good players can score 460 pins and more. When bowling 200 times an average player can achieve about 850 pins and good players can score 950 pins and more.

When bowling 120 times, an average woman player can achieve about 500 pins and a man about 520 pins. The total number of pins depends, of course, on the lane maintenance and the pins used.

Pins Formerly pins were made of hornbeam. Nowadays they are made of synthetic material.

They are all 40 cm high but differ in weight:

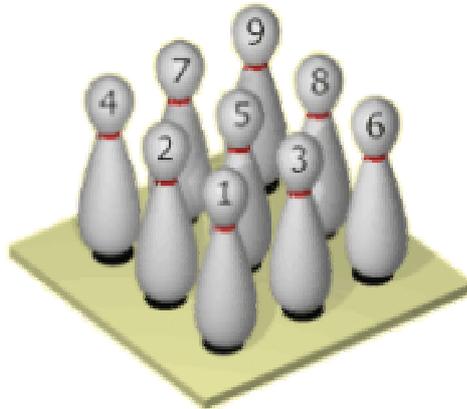
pins 1 - 3: 1750 - 1770 g

pins 4 and 6 - 9 : 1750 - 1800 g

pin 5 : 1850 g

Names and numbers have been assigned to the different pins so that special bowling combinations can be described more easily.

The pins are numbered as follows:



1: Front corner, front pin

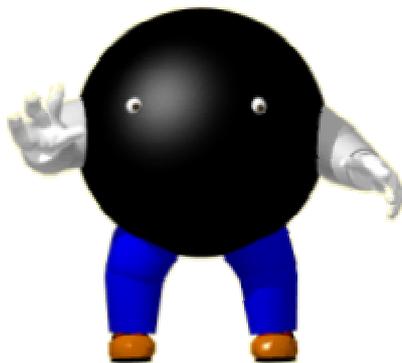
4,6: Jack

2,3,7,8: Queen

5: King

9: Back corner, back pin

Balls



Balls used by league players are made of synthetic material, weigh 3095 to 3150 g and have a diameter of 16 cm.

Balls for younger players have a diameter of 14 cm and weigh 1890 to 1930 g.

Hobby bowlers usually use balls of different sizes.