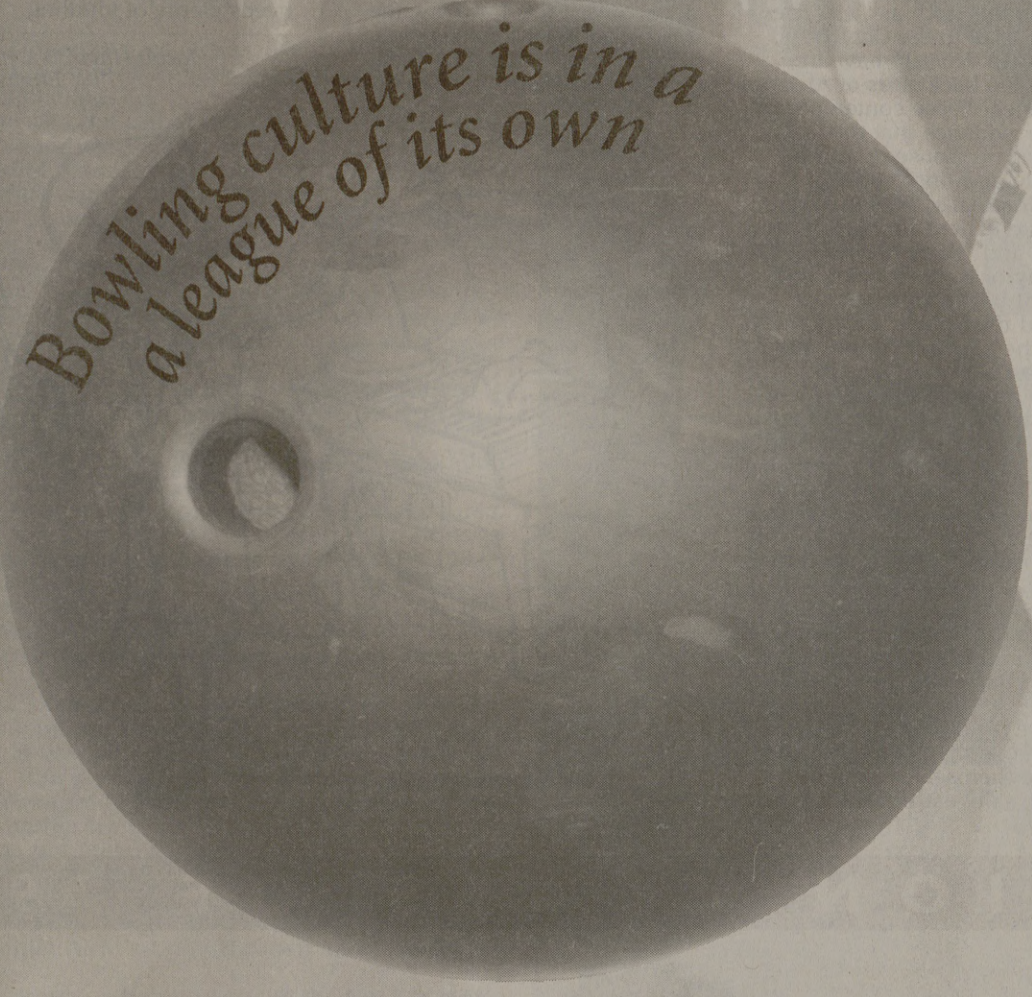


Clear the lane

Story by Kyle Whitacre

Photo Illustration by Sallie Turner & Guy Rogers



What is it about the sport of bowling that makes it different from other sports? No other pastime has such a unique and independent following of players and enthusiasts. Athletic prowess and stamina are thrown out the window, and all that is left is skill, technique and dedication of the player.

According to the Website of the Bowling Association of New Jersey, bowling is 7,000 years old. The earliest record of a game resembling bowling comes from ancient Egypt, where a round object resembling a bowling ball and marble bars, similar to pins, were found in the ruins of an Egyptian pyramid.

Recent movies like *The Big Lebowski* and *Kingpin* have tried to delve into the psyche of the ritual bowler. From clothes to lifestyle to personality, the fanatic bowler has a style all his or her own.

On a typical weeknight, a jukebox plays top 40 hits as the players line the alleys with cheap beer, cigarettes, cool bowling shirts and personalized bowling balls.

Ryan Jordan, a freshman electrical engineering major, said bowling is unique in the world of sports.

"Bowling is 90 percent mental and 10 percent physical," Jordan said. "You don't have to be Michael Jordan or Mark McGwire to be

good at bowling. That isn't what counts. The skill is more mental than most sports."

Style is also an important aspect of the bowling fanatic. Mike Oates, a junior psychology major, and Jordan own their own bowling shoes, and Oates owns his own personalized bowling ball.

"I've been bowling for a long time," Oates said. "It takes a lot of dedication. A girlfriend of mine a few years ago made me choose between her and bowling. I hated to see her go, but I think it was for the best."

Bowling classes offered at Texas A&M can be a breeding ground for future bowling fanatics such as bowler Jason Puckett, a sophomore environmental design major.

"The bowling class I'm taking got me hooked on it," Puckett said. "I bowl so much more now, at least two or three times a week. My average just keeps getting better and better."

The classes teach the beginning bowler proper technique and form. Bowlers are graded on pin average and a midterm. To get an "A" in the skills portion of the class, male students need to get above 165 and female students need to get above 145.

"It's all in the form," Puckett said. "I never thought about certain things before that I'm learning, and

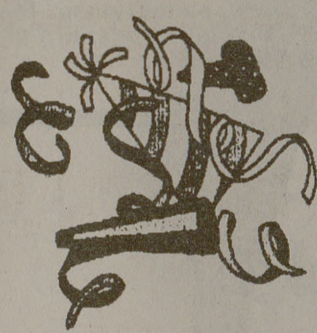
it's making a difference. It just takes a lot of practice. I tried to teach one of my friends and he could never get it down. It's all about the thumb position."

Puckett said bowling has certain advantages other sports cannot offer. "You don't need a lot of people to play," Puckett said. "Basketball, baseball, football and other big sports need a lot of people for a game. One or two people is good enough for a fun game of bowling. That's why smaller games like table tennis and pool are really cool. They can never get rained out, either."

Also, bowling does not offer the physical workout of endurance of most other active sports.

One of the oldest sports of all time, bowling has always had a unique following, from royalty to peasantry to *Lebowski*. It has been a part of popular culture for thousands of years, and the trend is still running strong today in bowling leagues across the nation. A new spin has been put on bowling with the introduction of galaxy bowling in which black lights, glow in the dark pins and laser lighting spice up the bowling experience.

But for the hardcore bowlers, a good pair of shoes, the perfect bowling ball and a smooth lane is all they need.



It's Our

14th Anniversary

You Can Get

And We Are Celebrating

2 Large 2 Topping Pizzas for Only

\$12



Delivery or Carryout
Limited Delivery Area
Good at Any
Bryan/College Station
Papa John's Pizza

1100 D. HARVEY RD
764-7272

601 UNIVERSITY DR
(NORTHGATE)
846-3600

3414 E. 29TH ST.
267-7272

Special Good April 19th thru May 2nd

SLAM FEST '99

3 on 3 Basketball Tournament
Where: Read Building
Cost: \$20/ team
Profits Benefit Community Service
Registration: MSC Hallway
April 14- 21
10:00- 3:00
REC Center
April 14- 21
6:00-9:00
FREE T-SHIRT

Questions call MSC HOSPITALITY 845-1515



MSC L.T. Jordan Institute
for International Awareness
and
MSC Political Forum



A historical and military perspective presented by

Dr. Joseph Dawson

Director of Military Studies Institute

7:00 p.m. Tuesday, April 20, 1999
Room 301 Rudder Tower

For more information, visit <http://pf.tamu.edu>. To inform us of your needs, call 845-8770.