

SMOW HNS – WALT SCHMIT BOWLING LEAGUE RULES

2026–2027 SEASON

Mission Statement

The SMOW Bowling League exists to foster fellowship, sportsmanship and friendly competition through a tradition-rich, handicap bowling format that welcomes all skill levels.

Section A – Definitions

1. Board of Directors (the Board) – composed of the Executive Committee and the 14 team Captains.
2. Executive Committee (EC) – composed of the President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Rules Chairman and 2 Members-at-Large.
3. Team – minimum of 5 and maximum of 8 Members in good standing.
4. Member – a person who is 18+ years of age, out of high school, has completed all required paperwork and is current on dues and fees as defined in Section C.
5. Match – weekly competition consisting of three games, each worth 2 points, and the series score, worth 1 point.
6. Book Average – a bowler's average as recorded in SMOW records or submitted from another USBC-sanctioned league.

Section B – Organization

1. This League will be sanctioned by the USBC and governed by its regulations, unless otherwise amended by the League as allowed under USBC rules.
2. The League year will be from July 1 to June 30. EC positions are volunteer roles, filled as described in B6 and B7 below. Captains are chosen by the members of each individual team.
3. The EC will call an Annual Meeting, to be held in August prior to the start of play, to review the rules and other matters brought up by the membership. Matters may be voted on at that meeting by the 21 Board members, with a simple majority of the full Board (11 votes) needed to carry a vote. EC members who are also Captains must name an acting Captain for this meeting. Only one vote per Board member.
4. Attendance of Captains at the Annual Meeting shall be mandatory. Acting Captains may be named for the purposes of attendance.
5. The EC is authorized to make decisions for the League during the League year. It may meet and vote in person or via telephone, text or email as necessary. The EC reserves the right to call a full Board meeting to consider matters that may have a significant impact on the League.
6. If a position becomes open on the EC during the year, the President may appoint a replacement from the membership for the remainder of the year, subject to the approval of the EC. If the office of President becomes vacant, the Vice-President shall serve as President for the remainder of the year. A person may serve on the EC and be a team Captain.

7. On or before April 1st of each season, the current members of the EC shall declare whether they will continue to serve in the following year. Notification of vacancies shall be offered to the membership in writing. Candidates will be evaluated by the EC, and the EC shall select from that pool to fill the EC for the next season. The incoming EC shall be announced at the end-of-season banquet.

Section C – Dues and Fees

1. Each Member will pay \$20 of the \$32 USBC entry fee to the Treasurer before the Member is eligible to compete. The League will pay the remaining \$12.
2. The bowling fee is \$25 per bowler per night. The pacer's fee is \$20. Each team is responsible for \$100 (\$125 in the 5-on-5 playoff matches) plus any money for a pacer. If a bowler is absent or pre-bowls, the bowler MUST pay those fees the NEXT TIME that bowler bowls. Each bowler has the primary responsibility for paying the bowling fees, and the Captain has the responsibility to ensure that all fees are paid on a timely basis.
3. Bowlers indicated absent on the nightly match play recording sheet are responsible for the \$25 for that night's play. Captains are responsible for submitting the correct names for that match.
4. Captains must also indicate on the payment envelope which bowler owes the \$25 bowling fee.
5. Bowlers are inactive and not allowed to participate if they owe the League \$50 or more. The Treasurer shall notify the Captain when this occurs.
6. If a bowler has unpaid fees at the end of the season, the unpaid fees will be deducted from the bowler's prize money. If the bowler's prize money is not sufficient to satisfy the unpaid fees, the remainder will be deducted from the team's prize money allocation.
7. Prize money will be distributed based on the final team standings (final positions 1–14 as determined by the results of weeks 32–34) and individual performance categories. The Treasurer will present the breakdown to the EC before the end-of-season banquet.

Section D – Teams/Players

1. Number of active bowlers per team – 5 minimum and 8 maximum. If a team loses a player, a new player may be added, subject to rule D3 below.
2. Adding bowlers to the roster – It is the sole responsibility of the League Secretary to assign a bowler to a team, and the League Secretary will produce the rosters of the teams at the beginning of each season. Captains will be consulted prior to any changes to their roster.
3. If a new bowler is recruited to join a specific team during the season, a request to add a player must be sent to the League Secretary and must include all the data on the SMOW bowler information sheet located on the League website. The completed request must be received by the League Secretary by Friday at noon in order for the new bowler to be eligible to bowl on the following Tuesday. Under no circumstances will a new bowler show up on a Tuesday night and be able to bowl in that night's match.
4. Handicap will be calculated weekly on the basis of 95% of the difference between individual average and 240.

5. Last season's average and handicap will be used for regular Members to determine wins and losses on their first night of bowling.
6. A new Member must bowl 3 games to establish a handicap. The bowler's handicap will be calculated by the Secretary and applied retroactively to the games bowled. However, a Book Average for a new bowler from another league will be accepted if verified under USBC rules by the other league's secretary.
7. Bowlers must bowl 9 games in order to participate in the week 15 position round. Bowlers must bowl 18 games to participate in the week 30 position round and/or the week 31 Play-In Match. Bowlers must bowl 21 games to be eligible to participate in weeks 32–34. Bowlers must bowl 15 games to be eligible for the end-of-season prize for Individual High Game or High Series. Any bowler may petition the EC to waive these requirements.
8. No team or individual can win more than one specialized prize (e.g., High Game, High Series).
9. Pre-Bowling – If a bowler pre-bowls, the bowler's scores must be used for that night's match. Pre-bowling is not allowed in the Play-In Match or the playoffs. An entire team may ask the EC to be allowed to pre-bowl once during the season. The request must be made in advance of the night in question. The EC will consider the request and decide based on the circumstances.
10. Pacing – A bowler is allowed to pace when not scheduled to bowl, and only when there are fewer than 8 bowlers present for the match. A \$20 fee must be included in the weekly payment envelope. No more than 4 bowlers on each lane. Either Captain may decline the addition of a pacer to the match. No pacers in any playoff matches.
11. Team rosters provided by the League Secretary are the active members of that team for that season. The Captain will decide which 4 bowlers (5 in the playoffs) are participating in each night's match. The Captain is responsible for notifying team members who is scheduled to play. Any scheduled ABSENT bowler's score will be shown as 10 pins less than the bowler's average. Whenever possible, the nights-off scheduling page available on the League website should be used to show who is bowling and who is off.
12. A tardy bowler must be ready to enter before the teams have finished the 5th frame of the first game; otherwise, the bowler will be considered absent for that game. The bowler may bowl in any remaining games of that match, provided the bowler is there for the first frame of any remaining game.
13. Forfeits – A team will forfeit if fewer than two members are physically present on the night of the match, unless granted an exception as stipulated in D9, or unless it is the last night of a half and the games influence the winner of that half, in which case the match should be rescheduled as soon as possible by the League Secretary.
 - A. The forfeiting team is not to receive any points.
 - B. The team earning the forfeit must bowl at least its team average less 10 pins per scheduled bowler to capture the points of the forfeited games.
 - C. Points not won by the team for failing to bowl the target score should be recorded on the standing sheet as unearned points.

- D.** Players present for the forfeiting team may bowl, but their scores shall not be included in the team's total pins. Scores bowled in accordance with this procedure shall be counted toward averages and shall qualify for league prizes and USBC awards.
- 14.** Bowlers are expected to uphold the League's values of respect and friendly competition. Any conduct deemed inappropriate by the EC may result in warnings, suspension or removal from the League.
- 15.** As a courtesy to the League Secretary, scoring recap sheets should be COMPLETE, LEGIBLE and NEAT. They should be returned to the Secretary each night of bowling. In case of a scoring system malfunction, notify the Secretary immediately so the necessary recaps can be obtained.

Section E – Match Play

1. Each night's match play will be three games. Standings will be determined on a point basis: two points per game won and one point for the series. In a tie game, each team gets one point. A series tie gets a half point each. 7 points maximum per night.
2. The season will be 34 weeks: two 15-week halves, with an additional 4 weeks for the Play-In Match and the playoffs.
3. All scheduled matches will be on Tuesday night, unless otherwise scheduled by the League Secretary.
4. Weeks 1–7 will be round robin scheduling; week 8 will be a position round; weeks 9–14 will be round robin scheduling; week 15 will be a position round to decide the 1st-half winner.
5. Weeks 16–22 will be round robin scheduling; week 23 will be a position round; weeks 24–29 will be round robin scheduling; week 30 will be a position round to decide the 2nd-half winner.
6. Bowlers must meet all participation minimums as defined in D7 above.
7. The two half winners qualify for the playoffs.
8. The eight teams (half winners not included) with the highest overall points for the season will qualify for the Play-In Match in week 31.
9. If a team wins both halves, that team gets the number 1 seed in the playoffs.

Section F – Play-In Week Matches

1. The top eight teams (by YTD points) that have not won a half will compete in the Play-In Match in week 31. Those eight teams will be vying for six playoff spots. In the event that one team wins both halves, nine teams will qualify for the Play-In Match, vying for seven playoff spots.
2. Play-In Match teams will consist of 4 bowlers.
3. During the Play-In Match, teams will be seeded by their YTD points (ties broken by YTD total pins) and will bowl on the corresponding lanes against the paired team as in a position round (3v4, 5v6, 7v8, 9v10). If nine teams qualify, the ninth-seeded team will instead bowl the double half winner (see F7). Score will be kept per standard match play, and a team will earn points (0–7) based on the results, to go toward its YTD totals.
4. The team handicap series score will be the determining factor in deciding which teams advance to the playoffs and which teams are eliminated.

5. At the end of week 31, the two lowest handicap series teams among those eligible for the Play-In Match will be eliminated from the playoffs, and the remaining six teams (seven, if nine teams were in the Play-In Match) will be seeded into the playoffs by their handicap series scores.
6. In the event of a tie for the final playoff spot, there will be a one-game roll-off at the immediate conclusion of the Play-In Matches.
7. The two half winners will bowl head to head for the typical match play 7 points, and the higher YTD point total at the end of week 31 will decide seeding for the playoffs. If one team wins both halves, that team will instead bowl the ninth team added to the Play-In Match (see F1); that ninth team's handicap series score will count toward the advancement and elimination determinations in F4 and F5 on the same basis as the other Play-In Match teams.
8. Teams 11–14 in YTD points will bowl position-round-style matches against each other.

Section G – Playoffs

1. All playoff matches will be 5 on 5. Consequently, no high team game or high team series will be awarded. Individuals remain eligible for sweepstakes, high game and high series.
2. In week 32 (Quarterfinals), the two half winners will be seeded 1 and 2 based on overall point total for the year, with the higher point total taking the 1st seed. The six teams that advanced from the Play-In Match will be seeded 3–8 based on their handicap series scores from the Play-In Match. In the event that one team wins both halves, that team will be the 1st seed and the seven teams that advanced from the Play-In Match will be seeded 2–8 based on their handicap series scores from the Play-In Match.
3. The six teams not in the playoffs will bowl a position round based on YTD points.
4. The Semifinals will consist of the 4 winners from the Quarterfinals.
5. Losers in the Semifinals will bowl for places 3 and 4. If, due to circumstances, there are not 4 teams in the playoffs, the EC will make the necessary adjustments to the schedule.
6. During playoff weeks 33 and 34, teams 5 through 14 (the Quarterfinal losers, holding positions 5–8, and the six non-playoff teams, holding positions 9–14) will bowl position-round style, with seedings based on YTD totals. These matches are 4 on 4.
7. In playoff matches in weeks 32–34, in the event of a tied match, there will be a one-game roll-off at the conclusion of the tied match to determine which team advances (or, in the championship match, which team wins).
8. Captains will determine who bowls in the playoff matches. Every effort should be made to include all team members in the playoff matches.

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