

# Column for Will County Sportsman      August 2007

## Just Paying Attention      By Mark London

It's August and fall league time has arrived. You know hat that means. The annual JPA devoted to getting your equipment and yourself ready for another league season. There will be the usual tips, but there will be newer tips you may not have seen or read before.

Open your bag first. Let it air out. Check the ball and clean it. Take some warm water and a dish soap mixed in and wipe it down. Plastic shelled balls pick up oil, but don't absorb, so that explains why there might still be oil rings from last spring. It makes it easy to hold, too. How about the shoes? Put them on and check the fit. Don't be surprised if they feel different since they haven't been on your feet in four months. Check the soles while you're at it. The slide sole may have more compressed dirt and other stuff you may not have noticed. You'll have to wait until you get to the lanes to check the slide, but a wire brush is always a good accessory. Soles can get so slick as shoes age, walking to the foul line can be a challenge. So why should I air out the bag? There may be all kinds of other items you don't need anymore, like that recap sheet from three years ago or the high handicap game patch from two years ago. Plus, it will give you time to find those two towels that has hasn't seen the washer since you bought it and the wrist support on its last threads.

Those are the absolute basics. For those proud owners of a higher tech reactive resin ball, don't touch that remote. Cleaning your ball is a bit more of a challenge that it has ever been before. First, check your supply of ball cleaner. Next, see if you local pro shop has a device called a Rejuvenator, Revivor, or Ebonite Hook Again System. To make today's balls have as much traction as they do, the covers literally erase and absorb oil off the lane. The oil does not evaporate, instead going into the shell of the ball. So it's

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a very hard sponge, so what? A modern reactive resin ball's traction and potential hook is reduced greatly if the shell is not kept clean after each use. Today's equipment absorbs a more oil than ever. Once that hard sponge gets full of oil in the pores of the reactive resin urethane ball, it doesn't hook no where near as much as it did new. A controlled heat atmosphere gets the oil out the shell, allowing the ball to hook again. Brunswick highly recommends either process and should work nicely on other balls using Brunswick coverstock materials like Lane #1 and Morich. Ebonite, Hammer, Columbia and Storm balls need a different process to restore the out-of-the-box reaction. The Ebonite Hook Again system is a material applied to the shell which restores the chemical composition of the shell to a brand new state. The shell-heating process averages 2-4 hours while Ebonite's takes 24 hours. The best time to clean your ball at league is after your league session, not before. After a whole week, that oil on the shell is well out of the reach of rag and cleaner. Those oil rings usually disappear within a half hour. As I write this in fact, there are two in the Revivor and three waiting to go here at my pro shop, Bowlers÷ Universe of Deer Park, with both customers wanting to get this done before the league meetings here in August.

Pro shops have found after either process, the glue on the gripping tape loses its sticking ability. We have also known for some time that after one calendar year, gripping tape will lose its sticking ability. Put new tape in your gripping holes. Another thing we've found is some of the finger and thumb insert glue also may lose some adhesiveness. Heated lane oil on its way out of the ball is thought to be the culprit at this point. And lastly, check the finger inserts. Tight inserts make the fingers swell that much faster while older ones get more slippery with age. Grips in the ball over ten years tend

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to shrink and pull away from any area they are not glued to. If they are even close to getting that old, put a new set in. The purpose of having grips is that batting glove feel inside the ball, allowing for a more relaxed, comfortable grip. With the high-tech balls costing as much as they do, keeping them maintained helps not only traction, but not everyone can afford a new ball every month. Now you are ready to roll a couple of good ones my favorite editor, Don Ladas.

Next month, a recap of the summer PBA Experience leagues and some of the new USBC regulations concerning leagues, as well as how they are promoting the game in many different ways.