



Drive more revenue and begin creating lifelong bowlers today!

# USA BOWLING PLAYBOOK



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# INTRODUCTION

USA Bowling is a new mainstream youth sports model with coaching, league, tournament and summer camp components. USA Bowling aims to follow a similar format of traditional youth team sports by utilizing shorter seasons, a Baker-style format, one coach per team and instructional opportunities for both children and coaches.

It is a great alternative to the traditional Saturday morning youth leagues.

Teams ready to compete at the next level can attend one of the 16 USA Bowling regional tournaments to try and earn a spot at the USA Bowling National Championships. To learn more about these tournaments, visit [BOWL.com/USABowling](http://BOWL.com/USABowling).



# BEFORE GETTING STARTED

## MAKE THE COMMITMENT

Before you begin down the journey of launching a new USA Bowling league, it's important that you make a commitment to follow the program. Sure, it takes some time and energy to properly prepare, plan and execute this playbook, but the rewards will be worth the effort. Before you can get started, you first have to be willing to commit. After all, making the commitment and decision to get started is half the battle. With that decision behind you, it's full speed ahead.

## ADOPT THE PROPER MINDSET

There's actually more to making a commitment, and that includes adopting the right mindset. You can't execute this program (or any program) if you don't believe in it. After all, if you think kids and parents are too busy with other activities to consider joining a bowling league, the results of your program will reflect that. Similarly, if you believe that you've tried everything to market your center and grow your youth program but nothing ever works, it probably won't.

Once you are committed to the program and have adopted the mindset that your center is willing to offer local children a USA Bowling youth league that's fun, exciting and memorable, then you've taken the first few steps toward success.



# PLANNING

## THREE KEY ELEMENTS TO SUCCESS

### IN THIS SECTION, YOU WILL LEARN ABOUT:

- Blast-Off Events
- Coaching Seminars
- Leagues

### BLAST-OFF EVENT

To successfully launch a new program, you are going to need a larger pool of potential prospects. One of the best ways to drive local families into your facility is to offer a *FREE* bowling blast-off event.

Originally introduced in 1999, a bowling blast-off event is a one-day extravaganza designed to get the community (especially kids) excited about bowling. Each event is different. You can choose the activities that will work best for your community, center and budget.

#### Planning a Blast-Off Event:

- Choose a day and time in your center when you can accommodate a large group of people
- Besides free bowling, add additional activities for kids to enjoy the day of your event
- Develop a marketing message and ways to communicate about the blast-off event
- Determine who you will market to – families, teachers, community leaders/organizations
- Consider requiring RSVP to get a better idea of how many to expect
- Templates for marketing communications can be found at [BOWL.com/YRC\\_Home/USA\\_Bowling](http://BOWL.com/YRC_Home/USA_Bowling)

#### On the day of the event:

- Use the opportunity of having so many people in your center excited about bowling to promote your leagues and birthday parties.
- Make sure that staff is energetic, welcoming and fun
- Solicit staff members who have exceptional customer service skills or volunteers passionate about bowling to walk around and discuss the USA Bowling program with children and parents.



**HELPFUL HINT:** Just remember that this is not designed to be a “hard sell” event. It is designed to be a fun and festive experience. If the kids are having a fun time, they may practically beg their parents to join a league at your center. If your only focus is to coerce parents into joining the league, your results will not be as good as if you simply focused on ensuring everyone had a great time.

For a complete set of helpful blast-off planning tools and worksheets, please see the resource list in the back of this playbook on Page 19.



## COACHING SEMINAR

Since the USA Bowling league format is designed to have one designated coach per team, you will need to solicit volunteer coaches. We understand that there are parents and other people who would be interested in volunteering, but perhaps they just don't feel confident in their abilities to coach. That's why we offer a **FREE** USA Bowling Coaching Seminar that specifically trains attendees on how to instruct and coach youth bowlers. Upon completion of the seminar, all attendees also will receive a resource guide that includes more than 140 pages discussing everything from coaching philosophy, physical game techniques and basic drills.

### Planning Coaching Seminar:

- Coordinate the date and time with the USA Coaching Instructor
- Determine where inside your facility you will host the seminar
- Promote the seminar on your website, inside the center, in emails and social media marketing

### Day of Seminar:

- Set up the space in a classroom style so all attendees can see the instructor
- Have a check-in table on the concourse or in the back of the meeting room to check guests in
- Make sure to have pens or pencils for attendees to take notes
- Consider having a complimentary snacks/drinks station

**HELPFUL HINT:** Having trouble finding coaches? Look to your staff or adult bowlers who may be interested in coaching. Reach out to your local USBC Association to see how they can assist with finding volunteer coaches.



# PROMOTION

## IN-CENTER MARKETING

### IN THIS SECTION, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to inform your staff about the event.
- How to dress up your center for the event.

### INFORM YOUR STAFF

Simply put, let everyone in your center know and understand what's happening with your new program. Inform your staff of the concept of USA Bowling, so they are well-versed and prepared for questions they might receive. If available, provide examples of the marketing materials for the event, the league and the program. Have the staff run through a Baker game together, so they can experience what they are selling.

**HELPFUL HINT:** Consider holding a contest for your staff to see who can recruit the most new sign-ups.



Staff scripts and a list of frequently asked questions are available in the Youth Resource Center. Encourage your counter attendants to ask every child that comes into the center if they are interested in joining your USA Bowling program. Training your staff and making them aware of the programming is vital to the recruitment of new bowlers.

### DRESS THE CENTER

Place all USA Bowling marketing assets in high-traffic areas within your center. Place the vinyl banner on the walls alongside and/or above the lanes. Place posters at the entrance to the game room, pro shop and snack bar.



Place counter cards at the ends of the front counter and snack bar. Be sure to keep brochures with sign-up forms, staff scripts and the FAQ next to the register for staff reference. Each of these assets can be found under the USA Bowling tab in the Youth Resource Center at [BOWL.com/YRC\\_Home/USA\\_Bowling/](http://BOWL.com/YRC_Home/USA_Bowling/).

Place the USA Bowling flyers next to the register and ask the counter attendants to include one with every receipt to open-play customers who have a child in their party.

## **LOCAL COMMUNITY MARKETING**

### **IN THIS SECTION, YOU WILL LEARN:**

- How to market within your local community.

### **GET INTO THE SCHOOLS!**

The most effective way to raise awareness about youth bowling and market your programs to children is marketing through your local school district. Although schools have put safety measures into place when it comes to soliciting to their students, it's still very possible!

The first step to getting in with the schools is exhausting all connections you may have. If you utilize the Bowler's Ed Program, that's an excellent place to start. Contact your local physical education coordinators or teachers and ask if they would allow you to promote your programming in conjunction with their teachings. They might even allow you to visit their class and speak with the children about youth bowling.

If you do not currently utilize the Bowler's Ed program, but know a school teacher or principal who bowls in a league or parent who is involved in the PTA, ask them what you need to do to be able to send flyers home with the kids. You can even request a free Bowler's Ed curriculum to provide to your local school, using the teacher's resource as a conversation starter. You will be surprised how easy the process can be if you know someone within the school system.

If you are unfamiliar with the school district and do not utilize the Bowler's Ed program, your first step is understanding your local flyer distribution policies within the schools. These can be found on the school district's website under the listed school board policies. To find them quickly within the board policies document, search for flyer distribution, advertising in the school or community relations.



**HELPFUL HINT:** It may be worth looking to see if your school district is listed on [www.peachjar.com](http://www.peachjar.com). This website allows businesses the opportunity to market their products to families and students via their online distribution platform for a modest fee.

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Don't forget that there are several other community organizations that offer youth activities. Consider reaching out to churches, daycares, parks and recreation centers, as well as youth organizations like the YMCA, Boys & Girls Club, etc.

## DIGITAL MARKETING

### IN THIS SECTION, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to utilize social media and other digital marketing to your advantage.

The internet is where a lot of people go for information. Use it to your advantage and let it do your recruiting for you! Social marketing is an excellent tool for online marketing. Create a Facebook page or link information about your USA Bowling program on your center's existing page.

Place the USA Bowling web banner on the front page of your center's website and link it to more information about the USA Bowling program and how to sign up. You also can place a USA Bowling web banner ad on a local high-traffic website geared toward activities for parents and kids. An example can be found here: [www.evansvillemoms.com](http://www.evansvillemoms.com)

Prepare an email blast using one of the templates provided in the Youth Resource Center with information on your USA Bowling program and how to register.

**HELPFUL HINT:** One of the most cost-effective means of attracting families to your event is by running paid Facebook ads promoting it. For a complete set of helpful Facebook Ad scripts and examples, please see the appendix in the back of the playbook. Need help with creating social media marketing graphics? Contact USBC Youth and utilize our **FREE** creative services!



**Saint Lucie Lanes - USA Youth Bowling League**  
Sponsored

Now Enrolling children ages 5-16 for our new USA Youth Bowling Program. 10 weeks of bowling, coaching and instruction, plus an end of season celebration party. Beginners are welcome as no previous experience is required. Pre-Register Online and save \$40.



**Now Enrolling - USA Youth Bowling Program** [Learn More](#)  
Register Online and Save \$40



**Forest View Lanes**  
Sponsored

Please join us for a FREE Family Fun Day of bowling, video games, face painting, games and great raffle prizes at Forest View Lanes.

Tell your family, tell your friends, and don't forget to Register Today as capacity is limited.



**FREE USA Youth Bowling Blast Off Party** [Sign Up](#)  
Register Today, Capacity is Limited



# PREPARATION

## ASSIGNING A COMMISSIONER

\*We suggest completing this step eight weeks prior to the start of your program.

### IN THIS SECTION, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Why it's important to assign a Program Commissioner
- Who would make a good candidate for your Program Commissioner
- Duties of the Program Commissioner

### IMPORTANCE OF ASSIGNING A PROGRAM COMMISSIONER

It is important to appoint a Program Commissioner to eliminate confusion and clearly define responsibilities of your program. This person is crucial to the operation of the league, whether it be marketing/administrative, coordination with coaches, issues with players/parents and more. Having one individual to make operational decisions and drive execution is key to the success of the program and all future USAB initiatives.

### EXCELLENT CANDIDATES FOR PROGRAM COMMISSIONER

A USA Bowling Program Commissioner can be a league coordinator or anyone in your bowling community who is passionate about youth bowling. It can be a paid or volunteer position within your center. Address this like a job interview. What worked-related skills and qualities should the person have to insure the operation of USAB.

### DUTIES OF THE PROGRAM COMMISSIONER

Responsibilities of the Program Commissioner include:

- Assisting in any marketing efforts
- Determining a pricing strategy
- Organizing registrants
- Governing the rules
- Managing the volunteer coaches
- Scheduling the competition
- Recording the scores
- Coordinating the end-of-season party



## ORIENTATION MEETING

This meeting will kick off the program and start the process of practice and competition. All coaches, kids and parents should attend this meeting.

Materials that should be provided to the parents are:

- Certification card (blank)
- Rules
- Schedule of matches
- Rosters with the coach's contact information

**HELPFUL HINT:** Consider using the Parent's Pledge, Player's Pledge and Coach's Pledge to minimize conflicts and ensure proper behavior of all parties during the season (see the resources page for referenced documents).

Goals of the orientation meeting include:

- Introduction of Program Commissioner, instructors and players
- Clarification of rules and parent expectations
- Gather certification information and payment
- Communicate any potential scheduling conflicts
- Schedule practices



# RECRUITING COACHES

\*We suggest completing this step four-to-six weeks prior to the start of your program.

## IN THIS SECTION, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Tips for recruiting volunteer coaches
- When to schedule your coaches and orientation meetings
- How to get free training for your coaches

## TIPS FOR RECRUITING VOLUNTEER COACHES

The driving source of the USA Bowling program is instruction. This is the first time we are asking coaches to volunteer in shorter cycles with fewer kids. With only four kids per team and eight-to-12 weeks of competition, we have a new opportunity to ask someone to manage a team who loves bowling. Explain to potential volunteers that they are only committing to two or three hours per week for eight-to-12 weeks. Ideal candidates are people who walk the concourse in your center every day. They might include:

- Existing adult league bowlers
- Local high school or college bowlers
- Parents of youth bowlers in the program
- Bowling center staff

While getting someone passionate and educated about bowling is preferred, recruiting a parent with little to no bowling experience should be an option. Many youth sports operated on the same development level as USAB utilize parents who are volunteer coaches. Many parents are willing to coach baseball, yet they have little knowledge or experience in the sport. It is the job of the center, program commissioner and others to encourage parents to serve in this role and that your support group can help them “learn the ropes” as a team coach.



**HELPFUL HINT:** If you are having a hard time attracting volunteers to serve as coaches, you could consider offering volunteer coaches a financial stipend or special perk in return for their involvement. If needed, you can roll in the cost of providing these perks into the league registration fees so no cost is incurred by your center.

## COACHING AND ORIENTATION MEETINGS

Two weeks prior to the start of the program, schedule a meeting for the coaches and an orientation for the parents and children. As you recruit your volunteer coaches, inform them of the dates and times of these meetings. It will be the opportunity for you to communicate the responsibilities and overview of the program to your coaches, then to the parents and kids during the orientation meeting.



# EXECUTION

## FORMING THE TEAMS

\*We suggest completing this step two-to-three weeks prior to the start of your program.

### IN THIS SECTION, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to select balanced teams
- How to conduct the coaching meeting
- How to conduct the orientation meeting

## COORDINATING TEAMS

Once you begin to receive registrations and sign-up forms, you must determine how to split the youths and coaches into teams. The USA Bowling program does not utilize the handicap model similar to a traditional youth league, so it's important to coordinate teams as balanced and competitive as possible. The more equal the teams are, the better the experience for all youths involved. To achieve this, you have a few options.

## THE DRAFT

The first option is to institute a draft. Many other youth sports (baseball, basketball, etc.) utilize this method. A draft is a system of assigning players on a team as chosen by the coaches.

The first step of a draft is to coordinate a tryout. The tryout is a specific date and time for each of the kids to show up and bowl while being evaluated by the coaches. Once the tryout is over, the coaches meet to rank players into groups based on their skill level. Each ranked group should have the same number of kids as coaches. For example, if your program has six coaches and there are 24 kids at tryouts, there should be four kids in each ranked group.

The most talented group should be ranked No. 1, the second most talented group as No. 2 and so on. If a coach's son or daughter is competing, they must also be seeded even though they are automatically placed on their team.

Once the coaches have agreed (which may take some time) and all the kids have been put into ranked groups, it's time for the coaches to begin selecting players. Each coach begins by choosing a player from the first group. Then each coach selects a player from the second group. This continues until all the children have been chosen.

The draft should be a closed process. Only coaches and the Program Commissioner should be present during the draft. No parents or kids should be allowed to be present during the draft.



## TRYOUTS

Another option for creating competitive and balanced teams is to coordinate a tryout. A tryout is the system of placing youths on a team based on their performance during the session.

The first step is to coordinate a time and date for the tryout. Make sure all of the players who have registered are able to attend. Your tryout should consist of at least two games of bowling. Record the scores for each player to determine an average and rank the bowlers from highest to lowest, based on their average, during the tryout.

The next step is to place bowlers on a team so the cumulative total for their averages is nearly the same for each team. Below is an example of a four-player league placement based on their tryout average.

The Program Commissioner should be the one to define the “team average” scale and how to evenly divide the players.

### TEAM 1

Johnny 36 | Bill 102.5 | Susie 55 | Jessica 48.5 | Total = 242

**HELPFUL HINT:** Unless it would create an unfair competitive advantage, try and accommodate the requests of parents to place friends and siblings on the same team, as this can often help with carpooling and transportation issues.



# RUNNING THE LEAGUE

## IN THIS SECTION, YOU WILL LEARN:

- An example model for a four-team, eight-week program

Practices can be conducted any time lanes are available and teams are willing to schedule. Matches should be held weekly on the same day. Essentially, you can run an entire eight-week program utilizing only one set of lanes. There is no set prerequisite other than making it work for your center and the customer!

### WEEKS 1–2 (PRACTICE ONLY)

**Tuesday :** 4:00 – 5:00 Practice – two teams, one pair of lanes each (four lanes needed)

**Wednesday :** 4:00 – 5:00 Practice – two teams, one pair of lanes each (four lanes needed)

**Saturday :** 1:00 – 2:00 Practice – same two teams from Tuesday (four lanes needed)  
2:00 – 3:00 Practice – same two teams from Wednesday (four lanes needed)

### WEEKS 3–7 – ONE PRACTICE, ONE COMPETITION

**Tuesday :** 4:00 – 5:00 Practice – two teams, one pair of lanes each (four lanes needed)

**Wednesday :** 4:00 – 5:00 Practice – two teams, one pair of lanes each (four lanes needed)

**Saturday :** 1:00 p.m. Competition - two teams compete (two lanes needed)  
2:00 p.m. Competition - remaining two teams compete (two lanes needed)

### WEEK 8 – ONE PRACTICE, CHAMPIONSHIP

**Tuesday :** 4:00 – 5:00 Practice – two teams, one pair of lanes each (four lanes needed)

**Wednesday :** 4:00 – 5:00 Practice – two teams, one pair of lanes each (four lanes needed)

**Saturday :** 1:00 p.m. Four teams compete in a position round (four lanes needed)  
2:00 p.m. Awards and party

*\*If you have four or more teams, you may expand and have more practices and competitions going at the same time.*

**HELPFUL HINT:** If lane availability is an issue, you can consider offering the practice sessions an hour before each competition. This also allows parents to make a single weekly trip to the center compared to two, which might be appealing to some families.



## **MIDSEASON**

### **IN THIS SECTION, YOU WILL LEARN:**

- What responsibilities the Program Commissioner should be handling during the tournament.

Halfway through the USA Bowling session (four weeks for an eight-week program or six weeks for a 12-week program), the Program Commissioner should make phone calls to all the parents of kids in the program.

During this call, it's important for the Program Commissioner to ask the parents how things are going and if there's anything they can do to help make the USA Bowling Program better. This will enable the Program Commissioner to discover any unforeseen concerns with the program, coaches or bowling center, and resolve them before they become an issue. This will promote better customer service, and parents will appreciate the additional attention paid to their concerns and feel valued by the bowling center

## **END OF SEASON**

### **IN THIS SECTION, YOU WILL LEARN:**

- How to conduct the championship week

## **CHAMPIONSHIP**

This is a standard position round with the winners receiving their awards at the end in a planned ceremony/party that drives everyone to want to get better and be there next time. Close the day by letting everyone know when the next session will be and distributing surveys.

## **SURVEYS**

USBC Youth has provided surveys in the Youth Resource Center that you may pass out to the coaches, parents and players. These surveys will provide feedback and be the basis for how we move forward with the USA Bowling program in the future.



## SEASON REVIEW

Congratulations! You made it through your first season running a USA Youth League. This is a great time to reflect on the overall results of the league.

- Review the survey
- Have a debriefing meeting with coaches and staff
- Determine strengths and successes from the season
- Identify the weaknesses and shortcomings from the season
- Determine what changes (if any) need to be made in the offseason
- Plan the kickoff for the next season

## NEXT SEASON

You've already made it through your first season and identified what areas you need to focus on to improve for upcoming seasons.

You've provided a quality experience for kids and their parents and have a solid foundation to build on. Now, it is time to invite previous participants to consider joining you for another season. Plus, be sure and market your new season using the same strategies you used last season mentioned in this playbook.

**HELPFUL HINT:** Remember that families who have participated in your program also have potential to provide referrals for future participants, so don't be afraid to ask.



# TESTIMONIALS

“Should get back in town just in time to get started on the Western Bowl summer blast-off. Over 600 kids signed up for one of the greatest community events of all time, as it’s a free day of bowling for the kids, face painting and so much more. June 30, mark it or your kid missed out. Special thank you to Chuck Lande, Roger Noordhoek and everyone involved with this special event.”

**DAVID W. BOLT**

Western Bowl, Champaign, Illinois

“This whole year has been about trying to make our leagues better and improve that business. Over the last three months, we’ve been advertising and recruiting, and we ended up with almost 30 bowlers. This is the first time we’ve had a youth program here in a while, and we’re really excited about expanding that.”

**RICH KENNY**

Forest View Lanes, Temperance, Michigan

“I highly recommend following the guidance of the USBC Youth Team when it comes to growing a youth program. The USA Bowling Blast-Off was instrumental in helping us rebuild our youth leagues.”

**STEPHEN CAUSEY**

Bowlarama, Rowlett, Texas

Thank you for your interest in launching a USA Bowling program. At the International Bowling Campus, we are excited about the development of our youth programs and look forward to helping you in any way we can. Good luck!

## QUESTIONS?

Contact USA Bowling at: [usabowling@icbcyouth.com](mailto:usabowling@icbcyouth.com)



# RESOURCES

The Youth Resource Center is a valuable tool with hundreds of ***FREE*** resources for you to use. Below is a list of the resources mentioned in this playbook, as well as others that are helpful to the implementation of the USA Bowling program in your center. We encourage you to check out all the resources in the YRC as well as the ones below. You can find these resources and more at: [BOWL.com/YRC\\_Home/USA\\_Bowling/](http://BOWL.com/YRC_Home/USA_Bowling/)

[Assignment Sheet](#)

[Event Setup Worksheet](#)

[Coach's Pledge Form](#)

[Facebook Ad Copy Example](#)

[Follow up Email](#)

[Invitation Letter for Local Youth Organizations](#)

[Sponsorship/Donation Request Letter](#)

[Emcee Announcements](#)

[League Registration Form](#)

[Sample League Rules](#)

[Learn The Sport Registration Form](#)

