



**2023 USBC OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS  
OFFICIAL RULES, POLICIES AND PLAYING INFORMATION**

**MARCH 4 to JULY 23 (last team date – unless extended)**

**National Bowling Stadium 300 N Center St Reno, NV 89501**

**ENTRY CLOSE DATE: July 10, 2023 (unless extended)**

**1. AVERAGES - REPORTING REQUIREMENTS FOR USBC 2023 OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS**

The average to be used will be determined in the following order:

- A.** Open Championships tournament average, based on most recent 27 games bowled at the tournament since 2014 (Championships Average).
- B.** League Average - Bowlers without a qualifying Championships Average will enter with the highest average from either the 2021/2022, 2020/2021 or 2019/2020 USBC winter or summer season, based on 21 or more games in a USBC-certified league OR the highest composite average of 21 games or more during the same period.
- C.** Current Average - Bowlers who do not have an average from A or B must enter with whichever is higher - their current certified average at the time of bowling of 21 or more games OR current composite average of 21 or more games in all current USBC leagues. League standings sheets or a letter of verification from association manager must be presented upon check-in.
- D.** No Average - Bowlers who do not meet any of the average requirements of A, B or C will be entered with a 220 Sport average.
- E.** Green Sheet – Prior to competition, each entrant must complete and sign the Open Championships Green Sheet and waiver available on BOWL.com, under Open Championships - Information. THIS MUST BE COMPLETED ONLINE.

1) All bowlers must answer questions 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 on the Green Sheet, covering professional status, past champions, collegiate status and national team members and Championships Average.

2) Bowlers without a Championships Average, who are competing in any Standard or Classified event, also must answer questions 10, and 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17 covering USBC rules 200a, 319a, 319c, 319d & 319e.

**Note:** ALL Averages NOT established on a Sport condition will be converted downward using the appropriate Sport or Challenge conversion chart.

### **FAILURE TO REPORT REQUIRED INFORMATION**

Failure to answer any applicable question or provide accurate and complete information on the Green Sheet shall be cause for disqualification.

Bowlers must attest to the accuracy of the information provided and understand the consequences of their failure to provide the proper facts.

### **AVERAGE INTEGRITY**

Any bowler found using an average below the player's ability will be disqualified from the competition and subject to suspension charges initiated under USBC Rule 17a, Grounds for Disciplinary Action – Unfair Tactics.

## **2. AVERAGE VERIFICATION – CORRECTION**

Bowlers are responsible for verifying the accuracy of their averages, whether originally submitted by the bowler, team captain or others. If submitted average is lower than required and results in a lower classification, the bowler's score is disqualified. If the submitted average is higher than required, prize winnings will be based on the submitted average. In the case of a team of two or more bowlers, the averages will be combined to determine if the correct total is higher or lower than the submitted total.

Average corrections can be made up to the end of the bowler's first game of a series.

If an extension of time has been granted in writing by tournament management before the end of the first game of a series, the bowler will be placed in the Regular Division, pending verification of average, which must be submitted by the bowler within 10 days of the end of their competition.

## **3. AVERAGES – ADJUSTMENTS**

Tournament management has the authority to adjust a bowler's average upward before participation in any event. For purposes of average adjustment, tournament management will use guidelines including, but not limited to, Open Championships performance, previous tournament winnings and any records of bowler performance

from leagues and/or tournaments. A bowler has the right to appeal adjustments to the USBC Rules department within 15 days of notification. If the assigned average is not accepted by the bowler, the entry fee shall be refunded.

## **AVERAGE RELIEF**

Bowlers wanting to apply for relief of average due to injury or disability under provisions of USBC Rule 4e should apply a minimum of 30 days prior to bowling. Applications for relief of average (USBC Rule 4e) must be submitted in writing to USBC Headquarters, Attn: Rules. Please see USBC Playing Rules for information regarding rule. USBC Championship Tournaments staff does not have the authority to grant average relief.

## **4. CLOSE OF ENTRIES/CANCELLATION AND REFUND POLICY**

Entries into the Open Championships will be accepted until the official entries closing date. Entries received after this date will be returned. All entries are subject to the Tournament Cancellation/Refund Policy.

**Note:** The addition of doubles, singles and/or all-events to an existing team entry does not constitute a new entry. The doubles, singles and/or all-events fee must be paid before the participant bowls any of the events.

Refunds will be issued to any captain who pays at least the team entry fee and requests cancellation in writing by the official close of entries date. Refunds are subject to a \$50 service charge. Cancellations received after the close of entries date may be considered for the following if requested in writing prior to the team's date of competition:

**A.** A team captain may transfer their entry to a substitute team at no cost. The substitute team will be required to pay in full prior to substitution. The original team captain will not receive any refund until the substitute team is paid in full.

**B.** A team captain may request a tournament credit, which is a transfer of the expense portion of the entry to the following year's tournament.

**Note:** Tournament credit is available only for the following year. Tournament management will consider the above requests on a case-by-case basis.

## **5. DRESS CODE**

Entrants are expected to wear attire suitable and representative of participation in a national-championships event. For details, please refer to USBC Open Championships Dress for Success Brochure available on BOWL.com, under Open Championships Information.

Examples of prohibited attire include, but are not limited to, shorts, cotton T-shirts, hats/headgear (medical reasons only), tank tops, halter tops, bare midriffs, spaghetti strap tops, sleeveless shirts or tops, workout attire (sweats, yoga pants, leggings, etc.) and collarless bowling jerseys being worn with jeans.

Capri pants are acceptable provided the length is below the knees. Skirts, culottes and skorts are permitted, provided the length is beyond the fingertips when your arms are at rest along your sides.

Any bowler requesting a dress code exception for medical or other reason must do so in writing to tournament management prior to their date of bowling. Documentation from a medical professional, on letterhead, will be required.

Bowlers will be required to change if attire is deemed inappropriate by tournament management. Tournament management's decision will be final.

### **PRIDE AWARD**

USBC has created the Pride Award to reward teams dressed in a "team uniform." To qualify, all five members of a team must wear matching attire when they bowl their team event. Jeans are not permitted for a team to be eligible for the Pride Award.

## **6. DIVISION STRUCTURE & ROSTER PROVISIONS**

### **DIVISION STRUCTURE:**

Divisions for team and doubles events will be based on a composite of the competitors' averages.

#### **TEAM**

Regular – 876 and above.....Standard – 776-875                      Classified – 775 and below

#### **DOUBLES**

Regular – 351 and above.....Standard – 311-350                      Classified – 310 and below

#### **SINGLES/ALL-EVENTS**

Regular – 176 and above.....Standard – 156-175.                      Classified – 155 and below

### **ROSTER PROVISIONS:**

#### **TEAM EVENT**

**A.** Regular Division bowlers (entering averages of 176 and above) may not compete in Classified Team or Classified Doubles, regardless of composite average.

**B.** Teams in the Standard Division may have no more than **two (2)** bowlers with an average of 176 or higher.

**C.** Teams in the Classified Division may have no more than **two (2)** bowlers with an average between 156 and 175

**D.** Teams with any roster member defined as a professional bowler, collegiate bowler or member of a national bowling team will be eligible to compete **ONLY** in the Regular Division.

**E.** A team may contain only one (1) bowler under the age of 60 who is a past champion of any of the following, with no additional bowlers classified as a professional bowler, collegiate bowler, or member of a national bowling team.

1) A PBA or PWBA national title

2) A USBC Masters or U.S. Open title.

3) A USBC Queens or U.S. Women's Open title from 2003 to 2014.

### **DOUBLES EVENT**

Doubles pairings may have only one bowler defined as a professional bowler, past champion, collegiate bowler or past or present member of Team USA, Junior Team USA, or other national bowling team and may compete only in the Regular Division.

### **SINGLES AND ALL-EVENTS**

Each such player defined as a professional bowler, past champion, collegiate bowler or member of a national team shall be eligible to enter singles and all-events only in the Regular Division.

**Note: See Rule 21 for definition of professional bowler, past champion, collegiate bowler or national team member.**

### **ROSTERS:**

**A.** All empty roster positions will be assigned a Sport average of 220.

**B.** Empty roster positions will receive a score of zero (0) for each frame.

**C.** Unless a change in division is authorized by tournament management, all bowlers will be placed in the Regular Division for any event where rosters are not completed/submitted at least 14 days in advance of participation in the tournament.

### **7. DOUBLES & SINGLES-ONLY ENTRIES**

Doubles and singles-only entries may be available beginning Jan. 2, 2023. Entering doubles and singles only is limited to inventory after sets are allocated to purchased teams. Entry fee is \$280, plus \$25 processing fee.

## 8. ELIGIBILITY

All participants must have current USBC Adult membership and be 18 years of age or older at time of competition. Captains must provide proof of membership for each bowler on their roster upon check in. If current membership can't be verified, a USBC Associate membership card must be purchased at the tournament site.

**Note:** USBC national headquarters employees and tournament employees at the USBC Open and Women's Championships, their teams and/or doubles partners are not permitted to participate in the prize funds, brackets or awards programs at the Open Championships. Employees are eligible to bowl for purpose of participation records and pinfall.

## 9. EQUIPMENT

The manager on duty will handle any questionable circumstances.

### BOWLING BALLS

*USBC will be conducting ball hardness research at the 2023 USBC Open Championships. This is a research project to collect data. No balls will be removed from the competition unless there is evidence of tampering. Not all balls will be tested. Selection is random. The testing will occur during doubles and singles squads on select days. Not all squads will participate. If a bowler refuses to have the ball tested, the ball will be removed from competition.*

Every bowler must have a bowling ball and shoes for his/her exclusive use. Each entrant will be allowed a maximum of eight bowling balls.

Only USBC-approved bowling balls will be allowed and MUST have the manufacturer's name, product name and serial number clearly visible.

**The following bowling balls are prohibited for use. 900 Global Altered Reality, 900 Global Wolverine, Roto Grip UFO Alert, Storm Electrify Solid, Storm Phaze 4, Storm Trend 2.**

Bowling balls and drilling must meet all USBC specifications. All bowling balls will be checked for compliance per USBC Equipment Specifications. The specifications include a maximum of three (3) ounces of thumb, finger, side, top and bottom weight.

Holes or indentations for gripping purposes shall not exceed five and shall be limited to one for each finger and one for the thumb, all for the same hand. Any thumb hole that is not used for gripping purposes during the delivery would be classified as a balance hole. Balance holes are not allowed.

Bowlers MUST declare at scale room if they are delivering the bowling ball without a thumb inserted in the ball.

Balls without a thumbhole must have a scribed or engraved crosshair lines ("+") near the center of the palm to indicate the grip orientation. The ball must be delivered in the marked orientation (i.e., palm must cover the "+").

One vent hole is allowed for each finger and/or thumb.

The scale room will open 90 minutes prior to each squad.

Any bowler found to be using any bowling ball that does not meet USBC specifications will be subject to disqualification.

### **PLUGS, INSERTS AND SLUGS**

Removable devices must be approved and on the Approved Removable Bowling Ball Devices list. A ball plug or slugs may be used for the purpose of re-drilling a ball. When a slug is used, there must be a hole drilled completely through the slug leaving no void at the base.

Plugs, inserts, tape and slugs may not extend beyond the surface of the ball.

### **EQUIPMENT ALTERATIONS**

Altering the surface of a bowling ball by the use of abrasives, cleaners or polish is prohibited during competition. In addition, no substance may be placed on the outer surface of the bowling ball. Bowlers are permitted to sand the surface of their bowling balls prior to certified competition. The use of abrasives strictly is prohibited once the bowler's first ball is thrown in competition. The outer surface of the bowling ball may only be cleaned with a dry towel once the bowler has begun competition.

**Note:** USBC Rule 18/3 – Since the tournament is conducting doubles and singles concurrently, bowlers cannot alter the surface of the bowling ball (including sanding) between events. Competition is defined as any time teams or individuals are bowling for score.

- First offense: Individual is warned, and the ball is removed for the remainder of the series, match, or block (Doubles and singles is considered a block).
- Second offense: Disqualification from the remainder of the event in which the violation occurred.

### **FOREIGN SUBSTANCES**

No foreign substance can be applied to bowling shoes or approaches. This includes, but is not limited to rosin, powder, Easy-Slide, dry bags, slide stone, soap stone, polish, wax, alcohol and like products.

- First offense: Individual is warned.
- Second offense: Disqualification from the remainder of the event in which the violation occurred.

## **10. ETIQUETTE**

**A. Devices (headphones)** - The use of an artificial device to listen to music or broadcast is prohibited during competition.

**B.** Unsportsmanlike behavior will not be tolerated on the lanes or inside the tournament venue. Individuals are subject to ejection for engaging in improper tactics or conduct including, but not limited to, physical or verbal abuse toward other persons.

**C. Pace of Play** – Please be ready to bowl when it is your turn, observing one-lane courtesy. This will help ensure your event is completed in the allotted time. *(see Tournament Rule 25 – Slow Bowling)*

**D.** All forms of gambling are prohibited while bowling. This includes, but is not limited to, card playing, etc.

**E. Food & Drink** – Outside food and beverage is not permitted. Please keep all food and beverage items in far back area of the settee.

**Violation of the rules of etiquette may subject the competitor to removal from the remainder of competition.**

## **11. FEES**

Entry fee is \$70 per event per bowler. All-events fee (optional) is \$15.

Total cost for team, doubles, singles and all-events per bowler is \$225.

Entries for all-events option will be accepted any time prior to the start of practice before the bowler's first event.

**A.** Breakdown for team, doubles, and singles: Prize fee - \$40. Expense fee - \$30.

**B.** Breakdown for all-events: Prize fee - \$13. Expense fee - \$1. Team USA contribution - \$1.

**Note:** A \$25 processing applies to each team registration (\$5 per bowler).

## **12. FORMAT**

**A.** The USBC Open Championships features three divisions, with each consisting of a five-person team event, doubles, singles and all-events.

**B.** Three games will be bowled in each event.

**C.** Scores are recorded and ranked on a scratch basis (no handicap).

**D.** Team event is customarily bowled on the first day, and doubles/singles will be bowled the next day.



**E.** During the doubles/singles events, doubles will be bowled first, then singles, in that order, without exception.

**F.** Entrants bowling doubles are automatically entered in singles, and entry fees for both must be paid.

**G.** An entrant may enter each event only one time.

**13. No Present Rule.**

**14. LANE CONDITIONING**

Lanes will be conditioned before all squads.

The USBC will not disclose any oil pattern information until after the entire event has concluded. It is prohibited to discuss lane maintenance procedures or pattern information with tournament personnel during the tournament. Violators may be subject to disqualification. Questions or comments regarding lane maintenance must be directed to the tournament director.

**15. LOST SCORES**

In the event a game (or portion of a game) is irretrievably lost in the scoring process, the game (or portion thereof) shall be re-bowled at a time and date determined by tournament management. Should the time and date of re-bowling be refused by the participant, USBC is liable only for the return of the entry fee paid for the event in which the loss occurred (including all-events entry, if applicable).

**16. No Present Rule.**

**17. PACERS**

Pacers shall not be permitted in the tournament.

**18. PARTICIPATION RECORDS**

Every entrant who supplies proper information will have a participation record established. All bowlers must compete in the Open Championships to receive participation and average recognition.

To receive credit for a year's participation, a bowler must extend a reasonable effort, as determined by management, to complete at least one event.

## **19. PRIZE CHECKS**

- A.** The IRS requires USBC to furnish 1099 forms to individuals who accumulate winnings of \$600 or more annually in any USBC events in which they participate (including brackets).
- B.** Failure to furnish a Social Security number (U.S. citizens) or Individual Tax ID Number (ITIN) (non-U.S. citizens) to USBC will result in a 30% tax reduction of the prize check.
- C.** Prize checks will be distributed within 30 days after the conclusion of the tournament (Rule 309) unless permission is granted to extend by USBC tournament certification.
- D.** In the event a substitute will be used, a prize check will be issued in the name of the substitute.
- E.** Any prize check requiring replacement within 90 days of tournament ending will require a \$25 replacement fee and \$50 thereafter.
- F.** Prize checks, or replacement checks, must be cashed by July 31, 2024, or prize winnings will be forfeited.

## **20. PRIZE RATIOS**

All prize money will be returned 100%. Prize ratio will be at least 1:5 for team, doubles and singles in all divisions. Prize ratio for all-events will be 1:8.

## **21. PROFESSIONAL BOWLERS, PAST CHAMPIONS, COLLEGIATE BOWLERS & MEMBERS OF A NATIONAL TEAM**

- A.** For the purpose of participation in the Open Championships, PROFESSIONAL BOWLERS are defined as: Any bowler, regardless of age, having applied for membership or held membership in ANY professional bowling organization during the calendar year (Jan. 1 – Dec. 31, 2022) preceding the event, and or up through their dates of their competition in 2023.
- B.** For the purpose of participation in the Open Championships, PAST CHAMPIONS defined as any bowler under the age of 60 who has won any of the following:
  - 1) A PBA or PWBA national title regardless of professional status at the time of the win
  - 2) A USBC Masters title or U.S. Open title.
  - 3) A USBC Queens or U.S. Women's Open title from 2003 to 2014

**C.** For the purpose of participation in the Open Championships, COLLEGIATE BOWLERS are defined as: any bowler currently holding a collegiate bowling membership (from the 2022-2023 bowling season) and or one who has been a member of any college bowling program/team/club during the calendar year (Jan.1 – Dec. 31, 2022).

**D.** For the purpose of participation in the Open Championships, MEMBERS OF A NATIONAL BOWLING TEAM are defined as: any past member of Team USA, Junior Team USA or any other national bowling team, under the age of 60.

**E.** Professional bowlers, past champions, collegiate bowlers and members of a national bowling team (as defined above) will be eligible to compete ONLY in the REGULAR DIVISION subject to the following guidelines:

### **1) TEAM EVENT**

a. A team may only have one past champion. If a team has a bowler who meets the criteria as defined in item 21-B, the team may NOT also have a bowler who meets the criteria in 21-A, 21-B, 21-C, or 21-D.

b. A team may be comprised of any combination of two (2), but no more than two, players defined as a professional bowler, collegiate bowler, or member of a national bowling team – items 21 – A, C and D.

### **2) DOUBLES**

There may not be more than ONE bowler identified in 21-A, 21-B, 21-C, or 21-D per doubles team.

### **3) SINGLES and ALL-EVENTS**

Each such player identified in 21-A, 21-B, 21-C or 21-D as a professional shall be eligible to enter singles and all-events only in the Regular Division.

### **4) BRACKETS**

Each such player identified in 21-A, 21-B, 21-C or 21-D are eligible for daily and yearlong brackets products in the Regular Division only, regardless of whether they fit the average criteria for another division. They also are eligible for any age-based products for which they qualify.

## **22. PROTESTS**

**A.** Any protest or appeal concerning scoring must be made in writing briefly stating the grounds of the protest or appeal and submitted to the USBC tournament office no later than 24 hours after the game has been played.

**B.** All foul protests must be filed before the squad is finished.

**C.** Any other protest must be filed in accordance with USBC Rule 329.

## **23. RE-RACKS**

Each bowler is allowed one re-rack per game. Tournament management may grant additional re-racks.

## **24. SCALE ROOM**

All bowling balls used in the Open Championships must meet USBC Equipment Specifications. The scale room will open 90 minutes prior to each squad.

## **25. SLOW BOWLING**

Teams/bowlers who receive a formal warning for slow bowling and/or have a history of not completing their competition on time may be assigned to the final squad of the day in future Open Championships.

Including practice, competition should be completed in:

**Team Event** - 3 hours and 20 minutes

**Doubles & Singles** – 2 hours and 30 minutes

## **26. SMOKING**

The use of tobacco products or any product intended to simulate the tobacco/smoking experience (e-cigarettes, hookahs, shisha, vape etc.) is prohibited during competition.

First offense: Warning

Second offense: Disqualification

## **27. SPECIAL NEEDS BOWLERS**

Bowlers requiring aids, such as crutches, canes, wheelchairs, etc., or who are blind or have other special needs, must report this in writing when the team is registered, so that scheduling consideration can be arranged. Similar advance notice must be given if such a bowler with special needs is to be used as a substitute. Any bowler requesting a dress code exception must do so in writing and have a current written doctor's note.

## **28. SQUAD TIMES/LANE ASSIGNMENTS**

**Team:** 2 p.m. and 9:30 p.m.

**Doubles and Singles:** 7 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 6 p.m. and 9:30 p.m.

The 9:30 p.m. squad will be a combination squad with 30 lanes for teams and 30 lanes for doubles/singles.

March-out times are scheduled to begin 15 minutes prior to official squad times.

Requests to bowl together must be made prior to competition via online registration or paper entry form. Online, enter a group code to bowl next to each other and/or a companion code to bowl on the same pair. Using a paper form, note the groupings and/or pairing on the form. Entries received without a group or companion code will be randomly scheduled.

Tournament management has the right to reschedule lane assignments and times up to the time of bowling for score. Reasons for rescheduling of lanes may include, but are not limited to, mechanical breakdowns, bowling unopposed and technical problems.

**Note:** All squad times are assigned/scheduled in real time when payment is received. Times are not guaranteed from year to year. Special events or circumstances may require squads be conducted at times other than the times listed above.

## **29. SUBSTITUTES**

- A.** No one may bowl in this tournament except those originally entered or such replacements authorized by the team captain or captain's appointee.
- B.** Any bowler replaced once competition has begun must use the higher of the two averages.

## **30. VIDEO POLICY**

All participants agree to abide by the Open Championships' Video Policy, which can be found on BOWL.com. Any participant appearing in, recording, publishing, or sharing video clips deemed by USBC to affect the integrity of the tournament may be subject to disqualification and suspension.

## **31. OTHER RULES**

- A.** Prior to participation in the Open Championships all bowlers must read and sign the Acknowledgement of Assumption of Risk and Waiver of Liability document.
- B.** Bowlers agree to follow all directives issued by federal, state, and local authorities designed to ensure public safety regarding gatherings/events.
- C.** Teams and/or individuals arriving late shall begin play, and the scores shall count beginning with the frame being bowled. Entrant will receive a zero for all frames missed or not completed.

**D.** In the event a team or doubles pair is bowling alone on a pair of lanes, each frame shall be completed on one lane before the next frame is started on the adjoining lane.

**E.** All USBC tournament rules will apply, unless otherwise stated.

**F.** Tournament management has the authority to make decisions regarding anything not covered by these rules.

#### **TERMINATION/RELEASE CLAUSE**

To the Chief Executive Officer of the United States Bowling Congress: We, by our captain and agent, hereby make application to participate in the 2023 USBC Open Championships events listed and tender the entry fees required, therefore. We warrant that we are USBC members. We agree to abide by all tournament and playing rules and regulations prescribed by USBC, including all provisions set forth on this form. We specifically agree for ourselves, and any replacements chosen by or for us, if we are not eligible for participation and/or cannot bowl in the USBC Open Championships, then our prize, bowling and expense fees shall be forfeited, and all sums tendered by us as prize, bowling and expense fees may be retained by USBC as liquidated damages. The entrants whose names appear hereon, or their authorized replacements, hereby agree that the USBC, or its officers and agents, shall be liable only to the extent of returning entry fees, less expenses, if and when these entrants shall be prevented from bowling any event in the tournament through premature termination of the tournament, which may be brought about by war, national emergency or emergencies or causes relating thereto or resulting there from fires, strikes, labor difficulties, terrorism or threats of terrorism, or other causes beyond the control of USBC. We further agree that USBC may use our names and likenesses (including video) for promotional purposes at no cost to us and with no fees being paid by us.

The entrants whose names appear on this application, and/ or their authorized replacements, hereby agree that the USBC, and its officers and agents, shall not be liable for any injury resulting from participation in bowling in the USBC Open Championships, absent willful or gross negligence on the part of USBC.

**Updated: April 13, 2023**