



▼ KEGEL HOME | LIBRARY: [Kegel White Papers & Articles](#)

## The Long and Short of It: About the controversy surrounding multiple lane conditions

Wednesday, June 01, 2005  
By [John Davis](#), Kegel Founder and CEO

There is much controversy surrounding multiple conditions. It seems so different than the past. However, the sport of bowling has changed and formats of competition have not kept up with these changes to promote Fair Play for all styles.

The WTBA Technical Committee has separated the styles into two groups; first, those whose style prefers a breakpoint closer to the foul line and second, those who style prefer a breakpoint closer to the pins. By using two conditions, long and short, we can give each of the basic styles an equal advantage.

Out of the 30 plus tournaments that have been played on the two conditions, only one or two have shown unfair play as an apparent result and those were not between the two basic groups. They were thought of as unfair because of the left hand, right hand and light ball styles.

For the last 30 years fair play has become increasingly more difficult to attain, even though lane maintenance machines and lane oil chemistry have made major advances. At Kegel, we have over 1500 high level tournaments of experiences where we have provided our services.

**Even with this experience and our advanced tools, we never feel comfortable with single condition formats. Multiple conditions give us a little more confidence that Fair Play can be achieved.**

Furthermore, it is our opinion that multiple condition tournaments are only a band-aid to reduce the chances of Unfair Play. To achieve consensus of Fair Play for all, bowling must dig deeper into the reasons of our integrity and credibility crisis. That cannot happen over night. For now however, we feel confident that Fair Play is much more achievable.

**Fair Play for all is a must. The sport cannot grow and prosper without it. All must agree with this statement.**

Observations of international experiences of Multiple Condition Tournaments:

Five years ago the WTBA Technical Committee created the definition of the best bowling player. These attributes are:

- Accuracy
- Repeatability
- Power
- Knowledge
- Versatility

A bowler who possesses a balance of these five characteristics is therefore considered a world class player. From this definition, the WTBA Technical Committee produced the multiple condition concept. Instead of waiting for the lane condition to match up to a bowlers style, the committee forced the player to become versatile instead of being single dimensional. This format gave the player more prestige for winning instead of everyone thinking his game matched up with that particular condition.

Watching the many multiple condition tournaments, we have found that many players have not played the lanes correctly (knowledge), they used the wrong ball (knowledge) or they could not play one or the other conditions very well (versatility).

At every player and managers meeting that I have been involved in, we have told the players that the short condition was designed for playing outside and the long condition was designed to play inside. Most of the time, bowlers played the lanes the opposite way and used entirely the wrong type of bowling balls, especially on the short pattern.

I believe this is due to a lack of experience, knowledge and also the fact that most players now own and exclusively use excessively strong bowling balls and layouts. This could also be attributed to the fact that a larger majority of today's popular equipment is stronger than the equipment of five years ago. These equipment mistakes were very noticeable to the experienced and educated eye.

**Here are some hints for short oil patterns:**

The short condition will be 32 to 35 feet in length. The high point of the short oil pattern will normally be from the

sixth to the eighth board. Inside the eighth board, the pattern is completely flat. It is also a point where the ball is only five to seven boards away from the pocket.

If the bowler attempts to play the short condition from a deep inside line because the ball hooks a lot, the ball will leave the oil pattern at an area from the eighth to the twelfth board. That does not leave much room for the ball to hold back into the pocket.

Because of the extreme amount of overall hook a short pattern will produce, by playing more towards the outside portion of the lane, the ball will have enough room to make its move towards the pocket.

We have also witnessed players trying to exclusively use very shiny equipment on the short patterns. This type of surface only adds in giving the ball little chance to begin to process to its forward roll. This lack of procession to a forward roll causes the ball to retain a high amount of energy, such that very small changes in speed, turn, and direction will result in violently different reactions.

The knowledgeable player will use a ball type that is smooth in character and play as far to the outside as possible in the lower amount of oil. This allows the ball to begin its turn towards a more forward roll which will smooth out the reaction and make the ball become more predictable as it travels down the lane.

Keep an open mind when choosing equipment to combat conditions. Here are some hints for long oil patterns:

The long oil condition will be in the 42 to 45 feet range. The high point of the oil pattern should be between the 12 and 15 board area. The oil pattern outside this area will be moderately flat and have much less slope than the 10 to 15 board area.

We have witnessed way too many bowlers playing outside on the long pattern. There is actually very little room for error in this portion of the lane on the long patterns as the pattern tends to be fairly flat in this area. If a bowler does choose an outside line on the long pattern, accuracy and repeatability will be extremely important and keeping the ball in play will be difficult to maintain.

The proper way to view a long pattern is this; if the ball comes off the end of the oil pattern at 45 feet at the five board, and there are twelve boards to cover to get to the pocket, the ball has only fifteen feet to make its move up to the pocket. Once again, like the short pattern, its basic geometry on where one should attempt to play.

Since the long pattern dictates the ball will hook a minimal amount, a player's break point will usually need to be closer to the pocket. Therefore, a bowler should find a line inside or around the second arrow as there are fewer boards to the pocket and keeping the ball in play will be much easier.

I personally watched the American Zone Youth Championships this past summer. One block on the short pattern sticks out in my mind. It was like a radio transmission was telling the young men to play inside on the short pattern. The whole squad was playing from 15 to 25 on 32 feet of oil and cranking the ball with as much speed as possible.

As we watched we felt like crying but after awhile it was almost comical. My colleague John Janawicz and I could only laugh. We watched coaches shaking their heads in frustration. They just could not get the concept in the minds of their players. That particular block scored much lower than the previous block where many bowlers played outside.

Conventional thought from a right handers point of view is that if the lanes hook, you move left and if the lanes don't hook you move right. This kind of thinking does not consider the fact that oil distance and where the ball leaves the oil pattern and enters the dry backend.

**This is blocked lane thinking, not World Championship thinking. So, coaches please train your bowlers about oil distance before they get to championship events. This is not new knowledge; it is just not common knowledge ----- yet.**

One more note on short and long conditions, the problem of playing long and short is somewhat different for men and women. Traditionally the women break down lanes together in the track area (7-12 board) and the graphs taken afterwards show the lane to almost be blocked after bowling.

When men bowl the whole middle of the lane oil pattern is destroyed in the front of the lane and narrows down to six or seven boards at the end. This works well on the long pattern but, on the short it is a disaster for scoring pace and the women usually outscore the men.

For the long the opposite is usually true. The women will still break down the track 4-5 boards away from the true best area to play and the men will outscore the women on the long, but not always.

In conclusion, bowling is a game of angles. If you can learn how the length of patterns directly affects how you should play a certain pattern, you will have a better chance at succeeding on all the different types of patterns you may encounter.

---

OTHER KEGEL SITES: [www.foundation300.com](http://www.foundation300.com) | [www.kegeltrainingcenter.com](http://www.kegeltrainingcenter.com) | [www.phantomradioshow.com](http://www.phantomradioshow.com)

[KEGEL](#) [CONTACT](#) [COPYRIGHT](#) [PRIVACY POLICY](#) [SITEMAP](#) [SEARCH](#) [DISTRIBUTOR SITE](#) [EMAIL](#)

---