



**Our Vision**  
To be the leading authority  
to the sport, servicing the  
needs of bowling.

**A Future FOR  
THE Sport®**

**Jan. 22, 2018**

League officers, centers and association managers,

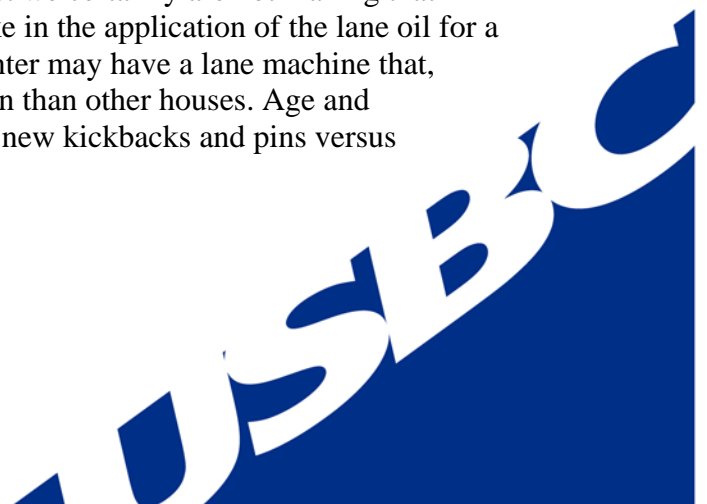
First, I want to start by thanking you for your support of USBC over the years and especially of late. With the recent merger legislation and passage of a national dues increase, it has been a time of much discussion about USBC. Sometimes, the discussion divides our members but, overall, we have a great level of support for our association, so I wanted to begin by saying thanks to each of you.

I'm writing to you today on the topic of the league reclassification and the email you received last week. In reviewing the data of leagues from the 2016-2017 season, we found one or more of your leagues may need to be classified differently. I emphasize the word *may*.

In case you did not see it, last season we announced a new Challenge classification for leagues, in addition to the historic Standard and Sport classifications. This came from a deep dive into our data and many reports that certain centers were conducting some leagues on tougher lane conditions. In some cases, but not all, this is done deliberately to lower members' averages and gain an advantage when those members go to tournaments. More information about this new classification can be found [here](#).

We reclassified about 40 leagues last year, using the same statistical model. However, last year we only investigated reclassifying a league if someone in the field contacted USBC and requested we examine a specific league. Moving forward, we are looking at USBC leagues systematically and running them through the statistical model so any league that may require reclassification is identified. This first attempt to look at all leagues showed about 700 as qualifying for reclassification based on the data.

There are several reasons a league could make the list. Of course, it could be that someone involved in the league is trying to cheat the system, but we certainly are not making that accusation. Alternatively, it could be an honest mistake in the application of the lane oil for a certain number of weeks. A third scenario is that a center may have a lane machine that, for whatever reason, puts down a more difficult pattern than other houses. Age and maintenance of a center are also a factor, for example new kickbacks and pins versus old, can impact scoring pace and the data.





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Regardless of the intent, an unfair situation is created when bowlers from these leagues use their lower averages to compete in tournaments. The data indicates their true average should be higher.

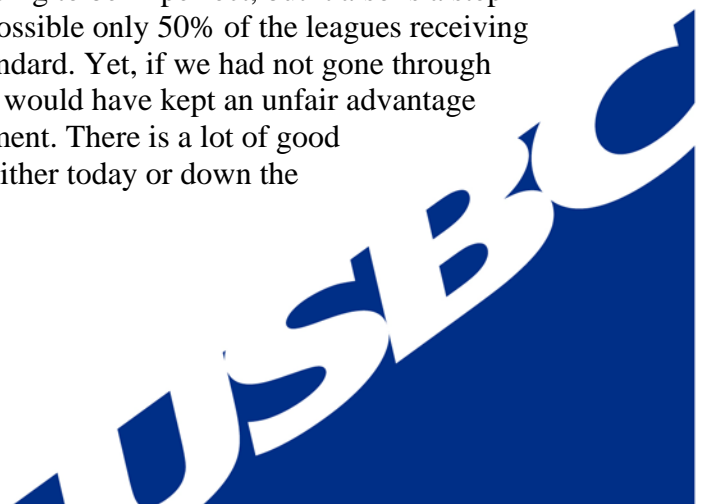
Of course, data entry errors also can be the culprit. As you can imagine, there are many factors that could influence the data. Our job as USBC is to bring fairness issues to everyone's attention, look for a way to improve the situation, and minimize the opportunity for this to happen in the future.

This letter is being sent to you directly to encourage you to appeal, and have a dialogue with USBC staff, if you believe the reclassification letter was sent in error or needs a closer look. USBC is working to improve a known problem in bowling, and we fully admit this process is imperfect, but we need your help to make it better. For example, recreational leagues that have many new bowlers could skew the data. The bottom line, we need to hear from you if you have any concerns, so we can work through it together.

The statistical model does correctly work to identify the cases where there is an obvious problem. When USBC sent out 99 letters informing leagues of a Sport reclassification last week, we immediately had 11 league officials contact us saying their league was, in fact, a Sport league and asked us to simply make the change. We had another four leagues appeal and an additional seven that were left in their current classification because of data entry errors. In these cases, the league or averages simply weren't processed correctly.

We know there will be outliers in data, and that is why we decided not to finalize the reclassifications before allowing an appeal. The appeal process is an important part of this process and gives valuable feedback to improve the process moving forward.

I will close by again stating this type of approach is going to be imperfect, but it also is a step toward better average integrity for our bowlers. It is possible only 50% of the leagues receiving letters will be reclassified and the rest will remain Standard. Yet, if we had not gone through this process, those 50 percent – hundreds of leagues – would have kept an unfair advantage when their bowlers arrived at a state and local tournament. There is a lot of good being done here and we hope everyone will see that, either today or down the road, as we improve the process.





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To be clear, we are not accusing anyone of cheating (as some have suggested) or that anyone involved in leagues or centers receiving notices had bad intentions. We simply are looking for a way to help us stop some of these unfair averages from being used and we all know it takes place in far too many of our tournaments.

I hope this letter helps you better understand what is going on and I hope you can support the effort. If anyone would like to give me a call to discuss (817-385-8469), please feel free to do so.

I hope you will all have a prosperous 2018, and if USBC can do anything to help, please reach out and let us know how. We certainly want to be a resource for you.

Regards,

Chad Murphy,  
USBC Executive Director

