



# My Bowling Diary

***Strike out with information... don't spare the details!***

January 2006

On behalf of the staff at MBD Solutions, we wish you a happy, healthy and safe 2006!

## New Year Resolutions

(By Timothy A. Sawyer)

Probably one of the most asked questions at the beginning of a New Year is "What are your New Year resolutions?" Some will resolve to quit smoking, others will resolve to lose weight while others will resolve to exercise more or spend more time with their families. There are also those who say that they don't make resolutions. You could dump me into that category; until this year.

If I were to ask 10 bowlers what their resolution is with their bowling, I would venture to guess that 7 out of 10 would respond by saying "I will practice more". Practice is great, don't get me wrong. However remember the saying "Practice makes perfect"? I once had a grade school teacher who changed that to say "**Intelligent** practice makes perfect".

What is intelligent practice? It simply means to practice with a goal in mind. What are you aiming for out of this practice session? Let me offer some advice:

- Identify the strengths and weaknesses in your game
- Gather information on overcoming the weaknesses
- Practice with the goal of overcoming the weaknesses
- Practice with the goal of maintaining the strengths

## Identifying Weaknesses

If I were to identify weaknesses in my game they would be:

- 1) Mental focus
- 2) Spare consistency
- 3) Approach mechanics

Those are the weaknesses that I would work on during practice. How do we identify those? I use MyBowlingDiary to identify them, because I put into the "Comments" section of each frame if I pulled a shot, went wide or did something out of the ordinary. In addition, MyBowlingDiary also

helps me identify what spares I am missing the most – through the rest of this article I will focus on this aspect of practice.

What I did here is that I took the “Spare Statistics” information from a Statistical Report in MyBowlingDiary, and imported this into an Excel spreadsheet:

10	474	357	75.32%
4	327	270	82.57%
7	205	153	74.63%
6	189	166	87.83%
6-10	167	129	77.25%

The data shows that the spare I leave the most is the 10 pin, followed by the 4 pin. This tells me that I need to work on these types of spares. (Missing a single pin spare is a killer. Go to <http://www.mybowlingdiary.com/newsletter.htm> and get the November 2005 newsletter for more insight).

One of my goals during my next practice will be to work on shooting these spares, and I will adopt a new strategy.

## Gathering Information

There is an abundance of information that is available on many aspects of bowling, whether it is video, personal coaching or books. A good resource for information is the website for the US Bowling Congress (<http://www.bowl.com/>). If you are outside of the US, contact your local bowling governing association.

## At the Lanes

When I practice I usually try to get a pair of lanes. I do this because I like to “practice as I play”. Most of the time, the center can be accommodating except if there are leagues going on or if it is a busy day. The best time to do this is to go to the lanes when leagues are not in session (i.e. morning or early afternoon) or at night, after leagues have ended.

If you get a pair of lanes, you may not be able to choose where the lanes are at so you may be dealing with other bowlers who may not understand concepts such as lane courtesy. This helps with the “Mental Focus” aspect. Be patient with them.

My usual mentality during practice would be to just bowl games and keep track of the score. This helps “Mental Focus” and “Approach Mechanics” but it doesn’t do a lot for spare shooting. So my first portion of practice will be to practice my spare shooting.

Try this technique: For the first game, practice spare shooting and don’t worry about anything else. On the first ball of the frame, practice the 10 pin spare. On the next ball, practice the 7 pin. On the next frame, practice aiming at spares such as the 2-4-5 or the 3-5-6. Since you may have a full rack of pins, you won’t know precisely if you would have picked up the spare but what you are practicing for is accuracy.

The next game(s) should be bowled as if it (they) were a normal game(s). This is a good time to practice “Approach Mechanics”. In addition, it provides a good gauge to see if your spare shooting practice paid off.

## Summary

Hopefully this article has given you a bit of insight as to how to practice, as well as showing how MyBowlingDiary can help you in that regard. If you don't own MyBowlingDiary, visit us at <http://www.mybowlingdiary.com>.

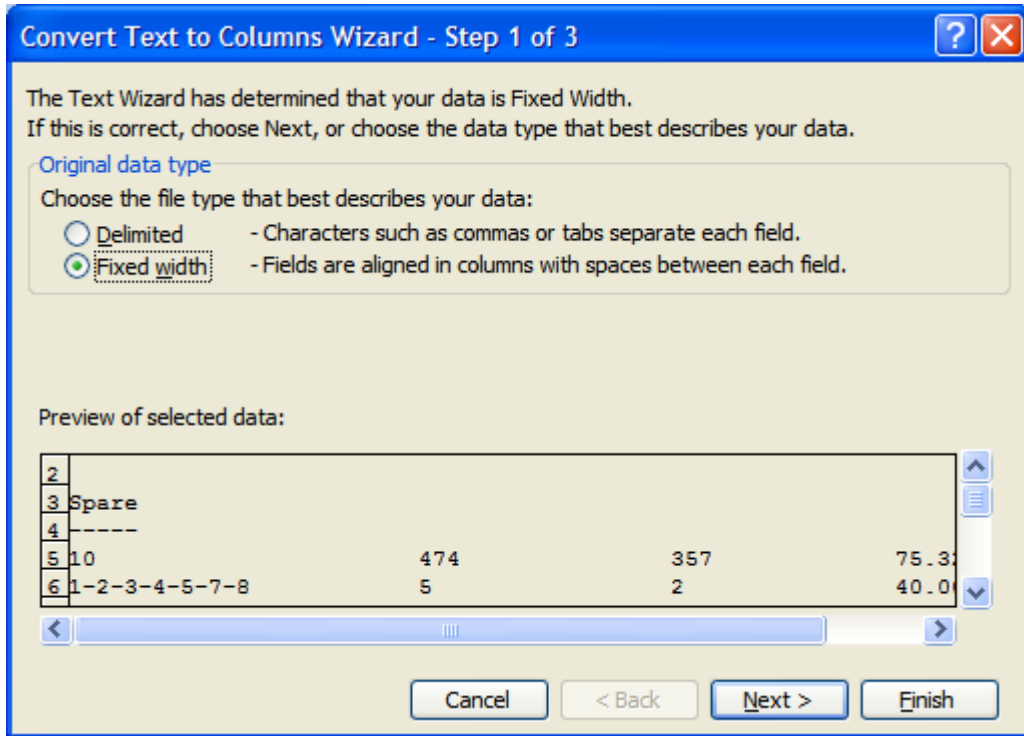
## Tips and Tricks

In the previous section, I showed statistics that were imported from a MyBowlingDiary report into Excel. This section shows you how to do this.

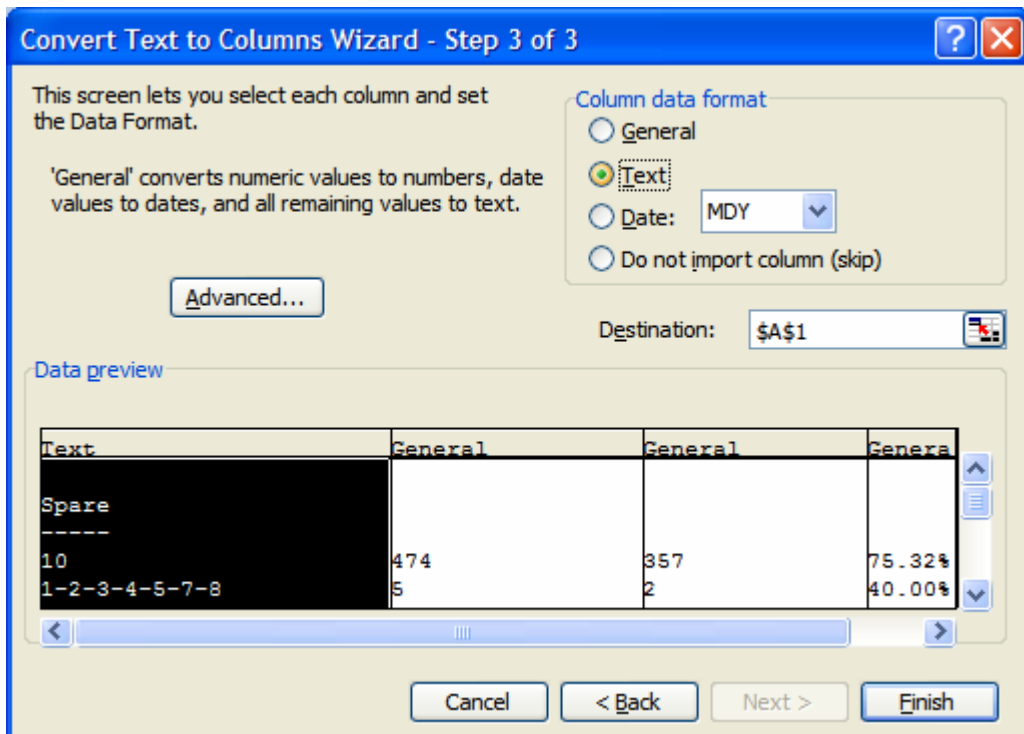
- (1) Run a report from MyBowlingDiary. This can be a statistical report or an event report.
- (2) Under the "Spare Statistics" section, copy the statistics to the clipboard. This is done by highlighting the text region, and then click the RIGHT mouse button. Select the "Copy" option
- (3) Open a blank Excel worksheet
- (4) Highlight the "A1" cell, click with your RIGHT mouse button and select "Paste". Your spreadsheet will look something like this:

Spare				Attempts	Conversions	Conversion Percentage
-----				-----	-----	-----
10	474	357	75.32%			0.9
1-2-3-4-5-7-8	5	2	40.00%			0
4	327	270	82.57%			0.6
1-2-3-5	3	2	66.67%			0
1-2-8	53	30	56.60%			0.1
8	37	32	86.49%			0.1
1-2-8-9	10	6	60.00%			0
2	149	123	82.55%			0.3
6	189	166	87.83%			0.3
2-4-5	76	60	78.95%			0.1
7	205	153	74.63%			0.4
3-6	53	41	77.36%			0.1
1-2-4	78	59	75.64%			0.1
1-2-7	7	3	42.86%			0

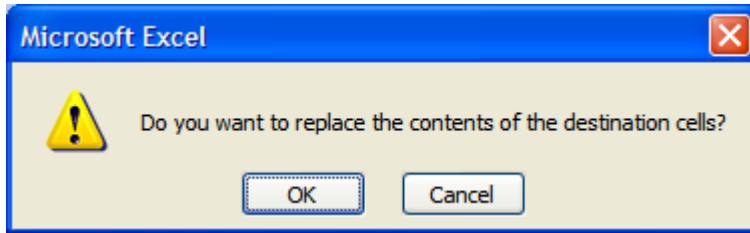
- (5) With your mouse, click on the "A" column to select all of the text in the column
- (6) From the Excel menu, select "Data" -> "Text to Columns". This is the first window you see:



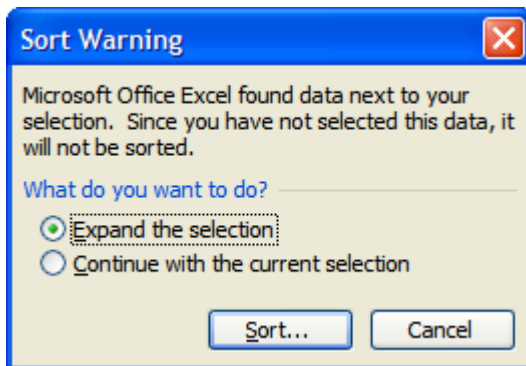
- (7) Select "Fixed Width" as shown in the window, and click "Next"
- (8) The next section allows you to select the text formats. The first column should be formatted as text, while leaving all of the others "General" as shown in the next window



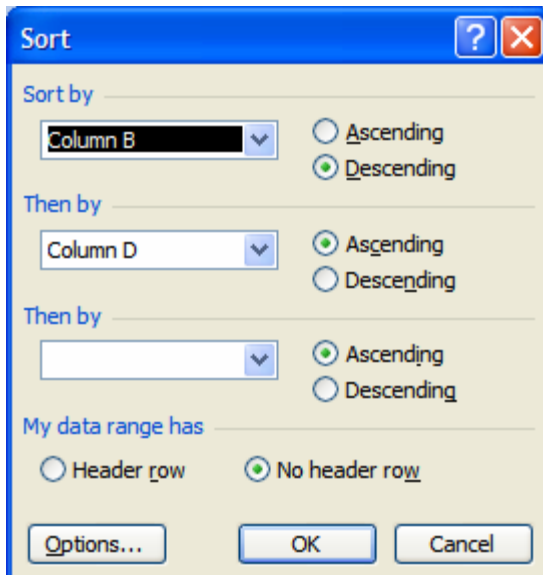
- (9) Click "Finish". You will then be asked to confirm replacement, click "OK"



- (10) At this point, the data is formatted into columns that are: Spare (Column A), Attempts (Column B), Conversions (Column C) and Percentage (Column D).
- (11) You can find which spare you leave the most by sorting on that column. Highlight any column and click "Data" -> "Sort"
- (12) At this window, click the "Expand the Selection" and then the "Sort" button



- (13) This sort will sort by the number of spare attempts (starting at the highest) and then by percentage.



Shown below are the first 10 rows of the sort:

10	474	357	75.32%
4	327	270	82.57%
7	205	153	74.63%
6	189	166	87.83%
6-10	167	129	77.25%
2	149	123	82.55%
1-2	80	65	81.25%
5	79	69	87.34%
1-2-4	78	59	75.64%
3-6-10	76	52	68.42%

The sort can be done in generally any combination, but hopefully this example shows how your reports, combined with Excel can create a fairly powerful tool.

## Other News

- We have improved our mailing list capabilities. If you would like to subscribe to our mailing list, please visit <http://www.mybowlingdiary.com> and look for the "Get Email Updates" link on our page. It is our policy to NEVER send out unsolicited email.

If there is a topic that you would like to see covered in upcoming newsletters, we value your input. Please send an email along with a brief description of the topic to [tsawyer@mybowlingdiary.com](mailto:tsawyer@mybowlingdiary.com).