

“FAQ’s” – Women’s Championships New Format

1. *Why change the USBC Women’s Championships format now?*

The bowling and general societal climate has changed dramatically in recent years in many ways, especially effecting women. To name a few, more women are in the workforce, women have more obligations and expectations than ever before, women’s-only leagues are becoming harder to find and normal bowling center scoring conditions have changed. For these reasons and many more, the format and venue of the Women’s Championships have been given a complete “makeover” to provide a more modern and exciting experience, while protecting and celebrating the long tradition of the event.

2. *Will the USBC Women’s Championships lose appeal by going from a traditional scratch tournament to a handicap event?*

Participation in the Women’s Championships has been declining steadily in the past decade. The women have indicated through annual surveys that they want something different. A change in both format and venue accomplishes this.

3. *What is USBC’s goal in the Women’s Championships makeover?*

The USBC Women’s Championships mission is to provide the ultimate tournament experience for women of all abilities. It is a tournament that is largely about tradition, camaraderie and fun, with a spirit of competition mixed in. USBC’s ultimate goal is to engage more women to bowl in the tournament.

4. *Why three divisions?*

Very few lower average bowlers participate in one-division handicap tournaments because they feel that they can’t compete against higher average bowlers. The three divisions were created to provide a comfort level to all participants, who will compete against bowlers of similar skill levels. Further, less divisions means more total prize money distributed in each compartment.

5. *How will champions be crowned now that the event is handicap?*

Recognition will be given to the women with the highest handicap scores in each division, crowning Diamond, Sapphire, and Ruby Division champions in team, doubles, singles and all-events. Each divisional winner will be recognized as a tournament champion and receive a necklace and trophy along with prize money.

The Women's Championships also will recognize scratch champions in team, doubles, singles, all-events and Team All-Events. Having topped the entire field of the three jewel divisions, these bowlers will earn prominent titles as the overall tournament champions. In addition to receiving awards, the scratch winners will receive a total of \$8,000 in added prize money.

Estimated prize list:

	<u>Team</u>	<u>Doubles</u>	<u>Singles</u>	<u>All-Events</u>
1st Place	\$2000	\$800	\$400	\$350
2 nd Place	\$1500	\$600	\$300	\$250
3 rd Place	\$1000	\$400	\$200	\$200

6. *Why 100% handicap?*

USBC research has shown that over the course of longer tournaments and leagues, 100 percent handicap is the fairest handicap percentage. Further, by compartmentalizing the tournament into three divisions of similar ability, the stigma of huge handicap disparities has been removed.

7. *Why is the handicap in brackets 75 percent?*

Brackets are optional, stand alone, mini tournaments and are not competed for in divisions. Larger average differences between head-to-head players are possible. A 75 percent handicap is used to offset the fact that a lower average bowler has more room for improvement (her average is further from the perfect bowling score of 300) than the higher average bowler.

8. *How is USBC going to maintain the traditions of the Women's Championships?*

The Women's Championships has more than 90 years of traditions that are not going away. A rich history of many customs like awards for participation and on-site bowling achievements, a grand march out, recognition of participation by state, music and anthems to name a few.

9. *Why the entry fee increase?*

Most of the increase in entry fee went directly to the prize fund, which is returned 100 percent and allows for a higher casher vs. non-casher ratio. With the complete makeover of the Women's Championships comes the added expenses of transporting, building and removing the state-of-the-art bowling equipment, furniture and fixtures, plus the extra staffing expenses that come with moving from commercial bowling centers to a custom-built venue.

10. *How were the prize ratios determined?*

The nature of our participants was examined, and generally speaking, the higher division bowlers placed higher priority on the amount of money rewarded for each of the various “place” prizes in the prize list, than did lower division bowlers. The lower divisions prefer more cashers. The ratios reflect the general attitudes of the three divisions. The higher division players prefer larger amounts of money on a much shorter prize list, while the lower divisions favoring a much longer, less top-heavy prize list.

11. Why change to a format that discourages scratch bowling?

The format doesn't discourage scratch bowling in any way. The national champions, as always, are the overall, (full-field) highest scratch scores bowled in each event as explained in No. 5 above. Our “rank-and-file” USBC members who participate in womens' and mixed leagues across the country cannot compete with the top female players in our sport. The new format was designed to change with the times and create a fun and fair national competition for any and all skill levels, while honoring and preserving the long history and tradition of the event.

12. Who was involved in the design of this new format?

The original concepts emanated from USBC staff and have been discussed for the last several years. In mid-2008, a task team was put together to finalize the concepts. In early 2009, a focus group of nine women from all across the country of all skill levels and all bowling backgrounds were presented with the recommended new format ideas. They provided candid and insightful feedback. Changes were made to finalize the format and it was rolled out several months later.

13. What are the advantages of building a venue annually for this event vs. using existing commercial bowling centers?

Most commercial bowling centers were not built with an event like the USBC Womens' Championships specifically in mind. Issues like parking, temperature control, spaciousness inside the center and office facilities are often inadequate to host an event of the size of the Womens' Championships. Since we build the venue specifically for the event, and the convention halls we go to are very large and are used to handling large numbers of people, these things are not an issue. Custom installation of lanes and equipment, offices and vendor booths annually, allow us to provide the fairest and most comfortable bowling conditions possible on state-of-the-art bowling and scorekeeping equipment.