

HART OF THE MATTER

STEVE HARTER

A special kind of delivery

The delivery portion of the approach now begins. Since last month, the bowling ball has been suspended at the top of your backswing. Now we move into the final step and slide, along with releasing the ball down the lane toward the pins.

We have taken the first three steps in a heel-toe method. During the slide, however, this changes to toe-heel and should be about 3½ to 4 feet in length. The moment of truth begins.

The ball has started downward with the final step. As the ball passes your right knee, the bowling hand is firmly behind the ball with the thumb positioned and relaxed for easy exit. At this point the arm speed has increased slightly to increase ball speed and the rotation of the

ball.

Once the ball is even with the ankle of the sliding foot, the thumb has exited the ball and the ball is now supported

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only by the fingers. The fingers will exit automatically as they pass the foul line with the arm continuing upward until the elbow is at eye level. This is the follow-through.

Your eyes still should be trained on your target, with the knee of your sliding leg bent and beneath your chin. The non-

sliding leg will trail behind to aid in balance and to brake the momentum of the slide. The non-bowling arm is also aiding in keeping balance in the follow-through by pointing toward the wall opposite our bowling hand. A proper follow-through allows you to maintain balance and body position until the ball hits the pins.

The total distance of an average four-step approach is about 12 feet. Check your starting point. If your starting point from the foul line is too far back, your steps during your approach will be too long, thereby causing your balance to be off. Too short of an approach will lead to muscle and force in the armswing. Both will cause errors in shot-making, causing the ball to go someplace other than on target.

Let's review the approach: A good stance and pushaway, momentum-building middle steps, and a solid slide with a free and easy armswing takes you from a "rural delivery" to a very "special delivery."

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