

17 December, 2007

**TO: High School Bowling Coaches**  
**FROM: Roxanne Price, Assistant Commissioner,**  
**The Ohio High School Athletic Association**  
**SUBJECT: Clarification of OHSAA Bowling Rule 1.93 - Use of Foreign Substances**

There is extensive discussion and uncertainty regarding General Bowling Regulation 1.93 that addresses the use of Foreign Substances. The rule, approved by the OHSAA Board of Control, is as follows:

1.93) *Use of Foreign Substances – the use of foreign substances applied to bowling balls, bowling shoes, towels, or the use of foreign substances that emit powder are prohibited. Exception: The use of approved cleaning agents such as isopropyl (rubbing) alcohol and ball polishing machine are permissible.*

The spirit and intent of the rule is to prevent the use of foreign substance(s) that could create an unsafe lane environment for participating athletes resulting in a competitive advantage/disadvantage to teammates and opponents. Rosin bags, an accessory that clearly emits a powder substance, fall under the jurisdiction of this rule and are not allowed for use during high school bowling competition.

Of current controversy is the use of an item popularly referred to as a "Puff Ball". Puff Balls are manufactured by multiple suppliers (Master, Ebonite, others) and are sold as a bowling accessory in virtually all bowling Pro Shops. The use of Puff Balls, (and similar items too numerous to list here) for the purpose of drying hands is widespread among bowlers.

I have examined a Puff Ball. When slammed down hard on a surface, this item does emit a microscopic amount of foreign substance. However, the question under adjudication is that, while any item slammed down hard on a surface will emit some foreign substance (including a simple towel) is the use of a Puff Ball (or similar item) a violation of the "spirit and intent" of Rule 1.93 resulting in its use being disallowed?

No evidence has been present to my office that the use of a Puff Ball (or similar item) by a bowler creates an advantage/disadvantage for bowling athletes. Further, no evidence has been presented showing that Puff Balls create an unsafe lane environment, like rosin bags can and do. It is not the intention of the Ohio High School Athletic Association to create bowling rules designed to impair the ability of athletes to perform. It is not possible for the OHSAA to have a specific rule that applies to every accessory item in every sport. Sometimes, items of controversy have to be examined individually to determine safety and competitive considerations.

The use of Puff Balls (and similar items) that do not emit a foreign substance of "clear and present significance" do not create a competitive advantage/disadvantage. Further, the use of Puff Balls (and similar items) do not create a safety hazard on the field of play. Therefore, the use of Puff Balls (and similar items) are allowed for use in Ohio High school Bowling contests.