

USBC rule changes include waiving alternating lane requirement and approving use of isopropyl alcohol to clean bowling balls

ARLINGTON, Texas – The United States Bowling Congress Board of Directors approved waivers and modifications to USBC Playing Rules to allow certified leagues and tournaments more flexibility to return to bowling while adhering to local health guidelines related to COVID-19.

The modifications allow certified competition to take place on one lane for the entirety of a game. Additionally, bowlers will be allowed to use isopropyl alcohol, more commonly known as rubbing alcohol, to clean their bowling ball during competition. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) lists isopropyl alcohol as an approved disinfectant for use against COVID-19.

“As bowling centers around the country are reopening, USBC intends to give operators the most flexibility possible to resume bowling within their local guidelines,” USBC Executive Director Chad Murphy said. “We have been listening to proprietors and members as they prepare to resume certified play and made these changes based on that input. Our goal is to facilitate bowling again in a way that meets the need locally and USBC is ready to quickly consider and activate additional changes based on feedback from centers and associations.”

The USBC Board has the authority to temporarily amend or suspend league and tournament rules in emergency cases. With the current coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, USBC reviewed its rules and policies to identify areas of concern relating to player safety and to determine how it could promote efforts while centers adjust operations to meet local guidelines.

Effective immediately, USBC has temporarily waived USBC Playing Rules 106a, 106b, 320a and 320b, which state two lanes must be used for competition and bowlers must alternate lanes – bowling five frames on each lane of the pair. It also waived the requirement that both lanes must be used for a bowler to be eligible for awards and average recognition.

The temporary waiver allows competitions to use one lane for the entirety of a game and allows recognition of scores bowled on a single lane for USBC High Score Awards and for a bowler’s official average.

USBC will continue to monitor the COVID-19 pandemic and can rescind the waiver of Rules 106a, 106b, 320a and 320b at any time.

USBC also created an exception for Rule 18, which restricts the use of liquid cleaners to clean the outer surface of the bowling ball during USBC certified competition. The exception for Rule 18 applies only to isopropyl alcohol – no other USBC-approved cleaners will be allowed during competition.

The USBC Board, which has the authority over General Playing Rules, was able to make the rules waivers following the adoption of General Playing Rule 14 - Emergency Authorizations. Rule 14 states USBC may authorize temporary modifications to the General Playing Rules, Award, League and Tournament Rules in cases of emergency and that such authorizations will be for a specified period.