



BALL OF THE YEAR IS THE T ROAD SOLID

Other honors go to the Gamebreaker and Cherry Vibe, et al, while the Black Widow Pearl had staying power.

WHILE CLINTON AND OBAMA ARE STILL BUSY TRYING TO GET THE UPPER HAND

in their primary campaigns, we here at the *Bowlers Journal* have the final results of our own meaningful voting that you're sure to be more interested in. These results are from our bowling ball ballots to determine the sport's best products for 2007. We know you can't stand the suspense, so without any further preamble, the top vote-getter for the coveted Ball of the Year award is the Storm T Road solid. The T Road was chosen for its user and lane versatility, overall hitting and carry power and its longevity. The T Road encapsulates a medium-high RG symmetric core (2.57) and a Diff (.046) which produces about 5" of track flare potential. Surrounding this core is Storm's highly successful R2S coverstock.

Runner-up to this year's choice was the Hammer Black Widow pearl, sister of last year's winner, the Black Widow solid. Obviously, that lineage helped.

Other winners include the Hammer Cherry Vibe, which was voted Best Value. The Ebonite Gamebreaker was chosen as Most Underrated, while the Ebonite NVS was voted Most Overrated. The Most Attractive choice was Lane Masters' World Class Particle Pearl.

In the other areas of voting, Storm's Shift emerged as the head of the class in the pearl particle category. The Quest, produced by Roto Grip, was the voters' pick for top solid particle. Top choice in the pearl reactive category was the above-mentioned Black Widow pearl, which emerged as a narrow pick over the Brunswick Twisted Fury. The top solid reactive was the Ball of the Year winner, T Road from Storm. Runners-up in this crowded category were the Morich LevRG and the Brunswick Fury.

This month's latest and greatest ball releases are sure to be in the running for honors in the 2008 voting in their respective categories. Our feature ball, the 900 Global Break pearl, is the first orb to garner a 17 Breakpoint Shape, the highest rating in my two-plus years of testing. The 17 rating signifies an extremely strong and angular move at the breakpoint. Naturally, this aggressive move is dependent upon the bowler's release, lane condition and layout choice. The Lane #1 BuzzBomb sets a new standard in total hook as it earned a 58.5 rating. This ball will give bowlers a strong midlane move with a hard continuous arc in the final 20 feet. Next up is the Counter Strike from Lane Masters. This particle pearl entry is all about control and exceptional pin carry. Last up is the Brunswick Ultra Zone. The Ultra uses a strong Hybrid cover, which surrounds an asymmetric power plant. The Ultra Zone can be the centerpiece of many a ball arsenal.

The setting of these firsts at this time is appropriate, considering we just heard from several readers who were asking for a "key" so they could better understand all the numbers, new and old. We have printed that "legend" in conjunction with our annual Ball Guide, but we hereby comply with that request as part of our regular column, when space permits, to better allow a handy reference point for all the "real world" and other numbers that accompany each month's reviewed balls. Enjoy.



The winner and new champion is Storm's T Road solid, chosen as Ball of the Year for its user versatility, overall hitting and carry power, and longevity. It beat out the Hammer Black Widow pearl, sister of Black Widow solid, which is still enjoying good shelf life after winning '06 Ball of the Year. Ebonite's Gamebreaker was chosen as Most Underrated, while the Hammer Cherry Vibe was Best Value.

BOWLERS JOURNAL BALL OF THE YEAR BALLOTING RESULTS FOR 2007

SOLID REACTIVE		PEARL REACTIVE		SOLID PARTICLE		PEARL PARTICLE			
1. STORM T ROAD		1. HAMMER BLACK WIDOW		1. ROTO GRIP QUEST		1. STORM SHIFT			
2. MORICH LEV RG		2. BRUNSWICK TWISTED FURY		2. LANE MASTERS STING		2. LANE MASTERS WORLD CLASS			
3. BRUNSWICK FURY		3. STORM T ROAD PEARL		3. STORM JOLT		3. STORM SECRET AGENT			
MOST VALUABLE		BEST VALUE		MOST UNDERRATED		MOST OVERRATED		MOST ATTRACTIVE	
1. STORM T ROAD		1. HAMMER VIBE		1. EBONITE GAMEBREAKER		1. EBONITE NVS		1. LANE MASTERS WORLD CLASS	
2. BLACK WIDOW PEARL		2. T ROAD SOLID		2. HAMMER CHERRY VIBE		2. TRACK RISING		2. STORM SECRET AGENT	
3. STORM SPECIAL AGENT		3. TRACK TEMPER		3. LANE MASTERS XS		3. BRUNSWICK FURY		3. LANE ONE SUPERNOVA XP	

light oil volume and shorter oil patterns				medium oil volume and medium length oil patterns				heavier oil volume and longer oil patterns											
A																		2	
N																		3	
G																		4	
U																		5	
L																		6	
A																		7	
R																		8	
																		9	
A																		10	
R																		11	
C																		12	
I																		13	
N																		14	
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M																		23	
O																		24	
T																		25	
I																		26	
O																		27	
N																			
	MINIMAL HOOK POTENTIAL					MEDIUM HOOK POTENTIAL						STRONGER HOOK POTENTIAL					STRONGEST HOOK POTENTIAL		
	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T

All balls have an expanded ball motion range from the "box" finish rating assigned them.
Do not be reluctant to sand or polish your particular ball to achieve the desired ball reaction.

AUGUST 2007		SEPTEMBER 2007		OCTOBER 2007		NOVEMBER 2007	
NO MERCY	P-13	SURE STRIKE	NO-9	RISING	MN-11	WORLD CLASS PP	0-10
RESURGENCE	P-14	TEMPER	M-12	XS POWER	0-13	SHIFT ATTITUDE	Q-11
RIVAL	L-12	QUEST	N-11	BREAK	MN-13	PRO TACTICS	0-12
KINETIC	LM-11	BLAST ZONE	NO-15	CREATURE	IJ-12	ULTRA RADICAL SOLID	LM-12
SEWINDER	M-16	SURE FIRE	I-13	SUPERNOVA	QR-12	ULTRA RADICAL PEARL	KL-9
JAZZ	G-10	FURY PEARL	OP-12	PLAYMAKER	KL-11	HOLE POUNDER SOLID	P-19
HIGH FLUSH	K-13			LEV RG	RS-11		
STING	P-11						
HEIST	L-10						
DECEMBER 2007		JANUARY 2008		FEBRUARY 2008		MARCH 2008	
TWISTED	L-10	'NSANE	QR-7	GRAVITY	PQ-6	BREAK PEARL	MN-5
SUPERNOVA	MN-11	CELL	QR-12	RAPID	LM-10	BUZZBOMB	S-11
ILLUSION	K-11	WIDOW BITE	OP-19	PLUTO	G-14	COUNTERSTRIKE	PQ-13
NIGHTHAWK	J-11	COMPLETE NV	NO-9	DEAD FLUSH	KL-9	ULTRA ZONE	NO-10
HOLEFINDER SOLID	OP-17	MOMENTUM	MN-13				
HOLEFINDER PEARL	N-6	KINETIC ENERGY	LM-12				

LEGEND: The ball motion chart (above) is designed to help bowlers understand ball motion, and on which lane condition new releases can be used. All balls are placed on the chart using the "out of box" surface from the manufacturer. Surface adjustments can change the location of many balls from their factory finish. The horizontal axis of the chart will display approximate total hook in the presence of oil. While different coverstocks may have similar maximum, dry lane, or coefficient of friction measurements, their ability to traction in the oil can be significantly different. Balls with minimal hook will be placed on the far left side of the graph. Balls in the middle section will have a moderate amount of hook, while balls placed on the far right will have the greatest hook potential in heavier oil. The vertical axis will display a ball's breakpoint shape. Balls possessing more skid/snap reaction will be higher on the chart. Balls with a smoother, more arcing nature will be lower on the chart. Our placements are based on our testing, our C.A.T.S. results, PBA player input, as well as discussions with the R&D expert from each manufacturer.

900 GLOBAL: BREAK PEARL

48 Hook

15.5 Length

17 Breakpoint Shape

Core Design: The BP (Break Pearl) utilizes the exact same asymmetric core found in the original Break. The RG is moderately low at 2.48, the Diff a hefty .055, and the intermediate mass bias is strong at .024. Testing displayed an average of 5-plus inches of track flare, with the majority occurring downlane. This asymmetric core can definitely create the breakpoint shape you're looking for. Ask your pro shop professional for help with layout and weight hole location. Dual angle drillings work very well with this core design.

Coverstock: The BP's S-70 pearlized cover will surely attract everyone's attention. Coloring is a wild combo of auburn (orange-copper) and silver pearl, a striking mixture. The finishing process includes an initial sanding with 600 grit followed by a high gloss polishing. This S-70 coverstock will handle most light to medium-heavy oil volumes with ease. We preferred the box finish for a strong back-end move. Abralon surfaces at 1000, 2000 or 4000 muted the angularity noticeably. Response time off friction is quick with box finish.

Manufacturer's Intent: 900 Global has introduced a fine line-up of products since its inception less than a year ago. Its newest entry is designed to be later and stronger than the original solid reactive Break (black). Is a light load particle sure to follow?

Test Results: Making a skid flip pearl is not extremely difficult, in theory. You just need a coverstock which "hates" oil and "loves" dry. Sounds simple enough, but the tricky part is producing an effective and versatile skid-flip reaction which plays well for varying release types and on a wide spectrum of lane conditions. The BP is one such ball. We had exceptional results on five of our six test patterns with both area and release forgiveness. Pin carry is also an important criterion, and the BP passed with flying colors. The BP was not overly sensitive in the oil, which can cause unpredictability or squirtiness. When encountering friction, the BP gave us a quick and strong response with an admirable continuation through the pin deck. Two of the more surprising attributes of the BP were its ability to read oil transition and handle carry-down. I believe this is a result of the sum of its complete design: cover strength, core design and surface finish.

When to Use: The BP was a striking machine on fresh house or PBA patterns (Viper, Chameleon and Scorpion are the three we bowled on). The BP was also very effective after midlane breakdown. We were able to move inside the pattern and see ample recovery even after relatively heavy carrydown was present. This is not always the case with a pearlized reactive. Our favorite layouts positioned the pin 4.5" to 5.5" from our PAP, either above or below the fingers. Mass bias placement will have an effect on length as well as on breakpoint shape, so see a qualified IBPSIA-certified ball-driller to insure satisfaction.



LANE #1: BUZZBOMB

58.5 Hook

11 Length

15 Breakpoint Shape

Core Design: The powerhouse inside this hook monster is an all new double-sided Doomsday Bomb-2 symmetric core. The RG is medium at 2.50 and the Diff strong at .054. Testing showed up to 6-plus inches of track flare with our 4" pin and CG drilling with a 1" weight hole below our PAP.

Coverstock: You want hook? We got hook. Traction abounds with a factory 1000-grit dull surface. The BuzzBomb's Pure Grip solid reactive cover is an attractive blend of black and purple with neon yellow lettering. Response time off friction is quick with factory finish or polish applied.

Manufacturer's Intent: Lane #1 President Richie Sposato had this to say: "We tried to come up with a ball that out-hooks all others because that's what sells the best. I didn't want a ball that hooked at your feet and just curved to the pocket. I was looking to make a ball for oil that rolled early and heavy in the midlane, and hooked strong and continuous on the backend." Richie is confident that's what this ball does. He also confirmed the fact that balls with thinner shell thickness do not become oil saturated more quickly. He stated that the outer core wrap aids in wicking away oil from the coverstock, thereby keeping the shell less saturated.

Test Results: The Buzzbomb has set a new total hook threshold for all others to achieve. The 58.5 total hook was compiled as an average hook rating over six different test patterns, and is reflective of the BuzzBomb with box finish. Sanding the surface with 360 and 500 grits added an additional 3-5 boards of hook. With a polished finish, the BuzzBomb's Real World numbers would be 54.5 hook, 14.5 length and 15.5 breakpoint shape. Performance was exceptional on all medium to heavy volumes. Longer test patterns, such as the PBA Shark (44'), offered little resistance for the BuzzBomb. Pin carry was above average, and the blurring "rev visual" was vintage Lane #1. This rev look was present for even



our lower and medium rev rate testers.

When to Use: The BuzzBomb needs oil in the fronts and midlane to perform appropriately due to the cover and core strength. The core/cover combo gave us a strong arcing motion from all angles on the lane. We saw no skid/flip on any of our patterns. Bowlers with higher rev rates or slower speeds may need to smooth the surface or apply polish to lessen friction in the oil and add length. This ball should match up very well at the USBC Open, as this pattern will play much slicker than most typically see in league play.

LANE MASTERS: COUNTER STRIKE 53 Hook 14 Length 14.5 Breakpoint Shape

Core Design: The Counter Strike utilizes the same core as the Sure Strike blue pearl. This tall symmetric core boasts an RG of 2.58 and a Diff of .040. The core shape and higher RG help create added length and enliven the downlane move. The differences in motion between the Sure Strike and this entry are quite apparent, though, because of the coverstocks. The Sure Strike is all about an aggressive back-end, while the Counter Strike is all about usability and control.

Coverstock: The Counter Strike's coloring blend of olive green and white pearl is unique, to say the least. Some will love it and some will hate it, but don't judge this book by its cover. Judge it by its performance. The base resin is 1000-sanded with a sheen finish applied. The cover has a light amount of particle added, which eliminates over-skid in oil and over-reaction off dry. Response time is moderate off friction.

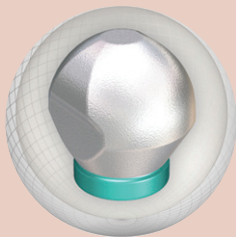
Manufacturer's Intent: Lane Masters has produced some fine products, and also offers four distinct pricing categories from which to choose. The Counter Strike is the second entry in the Plus-Performance category. This is its third tier pricing group, following the more expensive Max-Performance and High-Performance categories. Regardless of pricing category, all Lane Masters products perform like



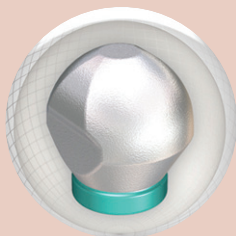
ERRATA

Due to a production error, the February issue included an incorrect depiction of the core of Storm's Gravity Shift bowling ball. According to the company, the incorrect version "gives the appearance that the core is off-centered within the coverstock... flat and not spherical... and misshapen and off-kilter." We have included both the incorrect and correct depictions of the core below, and regret the error.

INCORRECT DEPICTION



CORRECT DEPICTION



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Test Results: Even though the Counter Strike and the earlier reviewed Sure Strike share the same core, the reaction differences are diametrically opposed. The Sure Strike was awarded a 50 hook, 15 length and 16.5 breakpoint shape in real world numbers. It is an excellent aggressive skid-flip ball. Comparatively, the new Counter Strike hooks a few boards more, about a foot or longer sooner, and makes a slower and smoother move off friction. This slower response off friction should *not* be looked upon as a negative. It simply rolls more evenly, yet still delivers lots of power and carry. Bowlers looking for a urethane-like roll — but with more hook and carry-power — should seriously consider the Counter Strike.

When to Use: The Counter Strike displayed a wider range of use than one would expect from a particle coverstock. The higher RG (2.58) provides later revs and adds some length. The .040 Diff regulates the flare down to 4" or less, thus conserving energy. The 1000-sheen finish also complements the core specs by providing ease through the front 25' and supplying just enough midlane traction. Bowlers trying to close their angles and go more direct toward their breakpoint should use longer pin distance layouts such as 5" or so. This lessens the track flare even more and also reduces the total hook a few boards. The Counter Strike displayed impressive breakpoint continuation, and pin carry was most impressive. This ball is a sleeper, and those fortunate enough to throw one will know what I mean.

BRUNSWICK: ULTRA ZONE

50 Hook

13.5 Length

15 Breakpoint Shape

Core Design: The Ultra Zone core is an ultra-low RG (2.45) asymmetric design. The Diff is rated at .048 with a mass bias of .020. Testing showed an average 5" of track flare. This core revs very easily and can be layout-adjusted to create many different reaction looks.

Coverstock: Blue solid, black solid and silver pearl comprise the Hybrid EnMotion reactive cover of this new Zone. The surface is finished with Brunswick's rough buff medium gloss polish. Response time off friction is moderately quick. Overall cover strength is designed for medium to heavier volumes.

Manufacturer's Intent: Brunswick wanted to produce a reaction fit between the Twisted Fury and Blast Zone. The Ultra reacts earlier, hooks more and reads friction slightly slower when compared to the Twisted Fury. Compared to a Blast Zone, the Ultra hooks less, has slightly more length and is slightly more angular during the breakpoint phase.

Test Results: The Ultra Zone has many faces depending on layout and surface choice. The 6" pin above the fingers gave us effortless length, with a smooth move off the friction and great carry. This layout also had a 5.5" mass bias distance and no weight hole. With this layout, the stronger your release, the longer you'll be able to stay with it as the lanes go through transition. Lower rev rates usually have to put 6" pin distances away once carrydown rears its ugly head. The 3.5 and 4.5" pins reacted much more aggressively off the friction and hooked on average 4-5 boards more. They also recover with more angularity as lanes go through transitional phases of midlane oil depletion and oil carrydown.

When to Use: The cover strength and versatile asymmetric core design will afford many options for all styles of bowlers. This core/cover combo will work on all but the driest or oiliest of conditions. That leaves lots of usability. The real world ratings of 50 hook, 13.5 length and 15 breakpoint shape reinforce the versatility of this product. The Ultra also performed very well on our wet/dry oil patterns as it blended the over/under associated with this pattern, and this was with all three layouts (3.5, 4.5 and 6" pins). As stated above, the longer pin and mass bias distances will create added length and reduce total hook a bit. Bowlers attempting to open up the lane can lay this Zone out with strong pin distances (3.5 to 4.5") and complement the breakpoint shape with an appropriate mass bias distance and weight hole location. Visit a qualified (IPBSIA certified) pro shop to help insure everything is done properly.

MARCH TEST PARAMETERS: My guest tester this month was Steve Grabowski of Milwaukee. Steve is an accomplished area bowler with dozens of 300 games and a few 800 series. Steve has a 390 rev rate, 34 degree axis rotation, 12 degree axis tilt and average ball speed of 17 mph. Steve's axis coordinates are 4 5/8 by 1/2 up.

We began testing this month on our wood surface at Classic Lanes in Oak Creek, Wis. We initially bowled on the house pattern, which is a 7-to-1 ratio oiled to 41'. Classic Lanes was our choice for the videotaping segment. Next, we bowled on three PBA patterns: the Chameleon, the Viper and the Shark. From there, we went to Olympic Lanes in Milwaukee, where we bowled on their house pattern and the PBA Chameleon, both oiled to 39'. The surface is Brunswick Anvilane, an older synthetic surface.

LEGEND: Hook: 38-45 for light-to-medium oil; 45-50 for med.-to-med./hvy. oil; 50-56 for heavier oil/longer patterns
Length: 7-11, earlier roll; 11-14, medium length; 14-17, extra length, later roll
Breakpoint Shape: 10-13 = smooth and arcing; 13-15 = strong arcing; 15-17 = strong arc and/or flip

