



Revised 11-9-2023

As announced at the 2023 USBC Convention in Las Vegas, as of Aug. 1, 2023, after years of research, specifications have been set for string pinsetters, and certain string pinsetters have become eligible for certification as a separate category of competition. At this time, this includes four (4) specific models of pinsetters. To see the list of those pinsetters, click [here](#).

Pinsetters installed prior to 2023 are likely not eligible for certification as they do not meet the specifications for approved products. If you have a center that has converted to string pinsetters in the last few years, please notify us by emailing certifications@bowl.com. Please include the center name and certification number. If we haven't yet, we may contact you or the center to work on verifying the product's approval status.

Continued research compiled by USBC has resulted in the determination that averages established on USBC approved string pinsetters are comparably equivalent to averages established on free-fall pinsetters. Therefore, effective immediately, while the requirement that averages established on string pinsetters must be reported and will be maintained separate from averages established on free-fall pinsetters, averages established on string pinsetters will be allowed to be used for entry purposes into competitions conducted in centers with free-fall machines.

In order to help you navigate issues that will arise due to the decision of USBC to certify String Pin Bowling effective Aug. 1, 2023, Rules has compiled the following information for your reference.

No center(s) in our jurisdiction have String Pinsetters:

If none of the centers in your jurisdiction have string pinsetters, for the most part, your association/league/tournament operations should not be impacted. However, you may come across situations where an individual(s) enters a league/tournament with only an average established on string pinsetters. For those situations, consider the following:

USBC recognizes averages established on both free-fall pinsetters and USBC-certified string pinsetters as official and acceptable for use in all leagues or tournaments.



A center in our jurisdiction has installed USBC-Approved String Pinsetters after/before the league season:

When a center changes to certified string pinsetters during a period where there are no certified competitions being conducted, the following will occur:

USBC will verify that the pinsetters are on the Approved Product List. If so, USBC will update the center profile and notify the association when completed.

String pinsetter machines that meet the new specifications will have a USBC approval logo on the back of the machine on the 7-pin side to identify them as complying with the new specifications.

A listing of the USBC-Approved String Pinsetters can be found [here](#).

LEAGUES

Can we use last year's ending average established on free-fall pinsetters in our league for an entering average this season?

Yes. Using everyone's average established on free-fall machines for entering purposes into leagues bowling on certified string pinsetters is allowed.

Should leagues bowling in a center that recently converted to certified string pinsetter machines establish their averages the first night instead of using last season's average?

The league should discuss this option at the organizational meeting. USBC recognizes averages established on both free-fall pinsetters and USBC certified string pinsetters as official and acceptable for use in all leagues or tournaments.

TOURNAMENTS

Can a tournament conducted on certified string pinsetting machines use averages established on free-fall machines?

Yes. USBC research has concluded that the averages established on both free-fall and certified string pinsetters are comparable and are acceptable for use in competitions held on either pinsetter version without adjustment.



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A center in our jurisdiction is converting to USBC-Certified String Pinsetters DURING the season:

When this occurs, all leagues who started the season in the center on free-fall machines will need to submit final averages for that league as of the final date bowled before the conversion.

Once the conversion to certified string-pinsetters is complete, each league that resumes competition during the same season must complete a new certification application. Bowlers in these leagues do not need to complete another USBC membership application for these leagues. However, new members to the league must fulfill all membership requirements in Rule 101.

A listing of the USBC-Certified String Pinsetters can be found [here](#).

ASSOCIATIONS: Leagues in the center that wish to continue competition for this season are to be contacted and need to provide the following:

Final average information as of the final date that the league competes on free-fall pinsetters. Separate averages of games bowled pre-conversion and post-conversion must be maintained for final-average reporting purposes. Much like when an individual has both a right-handed and a left-handed average, both averages must be reported separately and will be displayed on BOWL.com with the proper designations.

New certification applications as the league must certify as a new league in the certified string-pin center. This will result in the league having two (2) certification numbers for the same season.

Leagues in the center that do not wish to continue competition post-conversion will close out their seasons as they would at the end of any season.

LEAGUES: There are a number of issues that leagues in a center who convert from free-fall to certified string during the regular season must be prepared to address, such as:



RE-CERTIFICATION OF THE LEAGUE: The league would need to submit a new certification application to the local association as this competition must be re-certified as a string pinsetter league. Only NEW members to the league who are joining the league post-conversion would be required to complete USBC membership applications.

AVERAGES: Separate averages of games bowled pre-conversion (on free-fall pinsetters) and post-conversion (on string pins) must be maintained for final-average reporting purposes. Much like when an individual has both a right-handed and a left-handed average, both averages must be reported separately and will be displayed on BOWL.com with the proper designations. Your local association is to be provided with the final average information for all participants as of the final date of the competition on the free-fall pinsetters.

CONTINUING THE LEAGUE COMPETITION: While separate averages must be maintained for reporting purposes, the league does have the option of carrying forward the pre-conversion averages for use in the league competition. The same goes for wins/losses and any other cumulative records the league uses. A league can carry forward pre-conversion league/individual awards if they choose to as there is no requirement that pre-conversion accomplishments must be separated from post-conversion accomplishments in the league rules. However, while these pre-conversion averages may be continued post-conversion for the league competition, **separate average records** MUST be maintained consisting only of the games bowled on the certified string pinsetters for reporting purposes to the local association at the end of the season.

ENDING THE LEAGUE COMPETITION: Should the league decide to end their competition when the conversion occurs, they will close their season out by completing the same end-of-season processes used during a regular-length league season.



If a league will continue to bowl post-conversion but members want to withdraw from the league when the league resumes competition, must the resigning bowler(s) comply with Rule 121a and give a two-week notice and pay for those two weeks unless they are replaced?

Any individual who chooses to withdraw from the league due to the change from free-fall to certified string pinsetters must provide the two-week notice and is responsible for payment of league fees for that period unless they are replaced.

USBC holds that any member who withdraws from a league due to a change at the center from free-fall machines to USBC-certified string-pin machines have sufficient cause for withdrawal in accordance with Rule 121a and would be entitled to a prorated share of prize money.

TRAVEL LEAGUES

How are travel leagues that have certified string pinsetter center(s) in their rotations affected by the certification of string pins?

A travel league whose schedule includes both free fall centers and certified string pin centers with USBC Approved pinsetters will need to certify as two separate leagues. One certification will cover competitions held in free-fall centers and the other certification will cover dates bowled in the certified string-pin centers. While the league can use all scores bowled in both types of centers for win/losses and league prizes, the games bowled in the free fall centers must be separated from the games bowled in the certified string-pin centers for final average submission to the local association.