PineRiders Bowling League Rule Book

Sep 26, 2026 · @Josh

League Overview

Season 5 is one league. Every team follows the same rules, handicap and prize fund.

Item	Detail
Location	Lucky Strike Garland
Game day & start time	Fridays. Practice starts at 6:30 PM; league bowling starts at 6:40 PM
Practice	10 minutes, 6:30–6:40 PM
Lane assignments	Set by Lucky Strike each week. Teams get a different lane pair each week and stay on it for all 3 games.
League communication	The PineRiders Bowling League - Garland GroupMe is the official channel. Topics: League Announcements (news, rule changes, cancellations, polls), Rules & Guidelines (this rule book), Absent Pre/Post Bowls (absence notices), Available Subs (finding substitutes) and Scores & Standings (weekly results).
Season length	12 weeks of league play, plus Week 13 Sweep Week
Sweep Week	Week 13: 9-Pin No Tap Tournament
Format	Four-person teams with any mix of men, women and children (4 active bowlers + up to 2 substitutes)
Games per week	3
Age	Bowlers of all ages are welcome

Fees & Payments

The season fee is $280 per bowler paid in full, or $285–$290 on a weekly plan, covering all 12 league weeks and Week 13 Sweep Week. $25 of each fee goes toward the prize fund.

What the Fee Includes

- 12 weeks of league bowling
- Week 13 Sweep Week (9-Pin No Tap Tournament)
- Each bowler's choice of one:
  - **A bowling ball.** Delivery date isn't guaranteed; balls are expected by the end of the season.
  - **6 additional free games per week** at Lucky Strike Garland, on top of the 2 free practice games every bowler receives.

Choosing a Package

- Each bowler must choose the ball or free-games package by Week 1.
- Bowlers who don't choose by Week 1 are placed in the free-games package.

Payment Plans

Plan	Up front (Week 1)	Weekly payments (Weeks 1–13)	Total	Admin Fees
Pay in full (either package)	$280	None	$280	$0
Free games, weekly	$50 deposit	$18.46	$290	+$10
Bowling ball, weekly	$142.50 (50%)	$10.96	$285	+$5

- All payments are made through the PineRiders payment page, an automated service.
- Payments must begin in Week 1.
- Week 1's charge is the up-front amount plus the first weekly payment. Weeks 2–13 are charged the weekly rate. Weekly plans cost more than paying in full.
- If a payment is declined, the bowler has 1 week to fix it.

- A bowler whose payment is still unresolved after that week is not eligible to bowl. Until the bowler is paid up, the team receives the bowler's average minus 10 pins, unless a substitute replaces the bowler (see When a Substitute Can Bowl).
- The full balance must be paid by Week 13 for the bowler to be eligible for the 9-Pin No Tap Tournament.

> **Example:** A bowler picks free games and pays weekly. Week 1 charges $68.46 ($50 deposit + $18.46), then $18.46 each week through Week 13, for $290 total. If the Week 5 charge is declined, they have until Week 6 to fix it. If it's still unpaid in Week 6, they can't bowl, and their team gets their average minus 10 pins until they're paid up.

Bowler Perks

Because the league runs through Lucky Strike, every bowler also receives:

- 2 practice games per week
- 20% off select food and drinks
- 20% off events held at Lucky Strike

Prize Fund & Payouts

The prize fund is $25 per bowler. Payouts are set as percentages because the fund depends on how many bowlers sign up. Dollar amounts are announced after Week 1, once rosters are final.

How the Fund Is Split

Portion of the prize fund	Share	Pays for
Team payouts	60%	Top 50% of teams (below)
Individual awards	25%	High Average, High Series and Most Improved, Male and Female
Sweep Week	15%	Sweep Week prizes for the top Male and Female bowler

Places Paid

- The top 50% of teams are paid, rounded down. For example, 11 teams pays 5 places and 10 teams pays 5.

Payout Percentages

Places paid	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th
2	60%	40%				
3	50%	30%	20%			
4	40%	30%	20%	10%		
5	35%	25%	20%	12%	8%	
6	30%	22%	18%	14%	10%	6%

Percentages apply to the team payout portion (60%) of the prize fund.

> **Example:** With 11 teams and 44 bowlers, the prize fund is $1,100 and 5 places are paid (50% of 11, rounded down). Team payouts get 60%, or $660: 1st $231, 2nd $165, 3rd $132, 4th $79.20, 5th $52.80.

Championship Rings

- The 1st-place team receives championship rings.
- Rings are provided by the league and do not come from the prize fund.

Individual Awards

The league awards Male and Female winners in three categories: 6 awards in total.

Award	How it's decided	Eligibility
Most Improved	Largest increase from last season's book average to this season's final average	Established book average and 21+ games this season
High Average	Highest final average for the season	21+ games this season

Award	How it's decided	Eligibility
High Series	Highest 3-game series with handicap	Any bowler

- **300 Game:** any bowler who rolls a 300 game is recognized. This award is funded separately, not from the prize fund.
- A bowler can win only one individual award per season. Awards are decided in this order: High Average, then High Series, then Most Improved. A bowler who wins an earlier award is skipped for later ones, and that award goes to the next eligible bowler.

> **Example:** Sarah has the highest average and the highest series among women in the league. She wins High Average, which is decided first. High Series then goes to the woman with the next-highest series.

Sweep Week Prizes

- Sweep Week prizes are awarded to the top Male and top Female bowler in the 9-Pin No Tap Tournament.
- The Sweep Week share (15% of the prize fund) is split evenly between the Male and Female winners.

Mini Games

- Bowling Bingo and the 50/50 raffle are optional for all bowlers.
- 100% of each pot is paid to the winners. None of it goes to the prize fund.
- The 50/50 raffle pot is split evenly between 2 winners (50% each). The Bowling Bingo pot is split evenly among 3 winners (one-third each).
- The Activities Director runs both games, and the pot is counted by two board members before it's paid out.

Handicap

For Season 5, every team uses a handicap of 80% of 220. This rewards better bowling while still giving lower-average teams a real chance to win.

Item	Rule
Individual handicap	80% of 220
Who receives handicap	All bowlers, men and women
Individual handicap limit	None
Team handicap	Sum of all individual handicaps
Team handicap limit	None

- Handicaps are recalculated every week from each bowler's current average.

> **Example:** A bowler averaging 150 gets 56 pins of handicap per game (220 − 150 = 70 × 80%). A bowler averaging 200 gets 16 pins. Against a 450-average team, a 600-average team keeps about a 30-pin edge per game after handicap.

Averages

Returning bowlers carry over last season's average. New bowlers set theirs in their first 3 games.

- Returning bowlers continue with their average from last season, updated each week as they bowl. New bowlers establish their average from their first 3 games, and it is applied retroactively to their Week 1 scores.
- A previous-season average requires 21 or more games to qualify.
- New bowlers must complete 3 games to qualify for leaderboards.

Rosters & Substitutes

Each team has a roster of up to 6 bowlers: 4 active bowlers and up to 2 substitutes.

Rosters

- A roster is 4 active bowlers plus up to 2 substitutes, for a maximum of 6.
- Season fees are collected from the 4 active bowlers. Substitutes do not pay, except when replacing an ineligible bowler; otherwise the active bowler remains responsible for payment.

- Active bowlers stay the same for the full season, except when a paid substitute replaces an ineligible bowler (see When a Substitute Can Bowl).
- Substitutes can be switched out during the season.
- Active bowlers may bowl on only one team. Substitutes may sub for any team.

Substitute Averages

- A substitute without a book average establishes an average from their first 3 games.

When a Substitute Can Bowl

A team may use a substitute in place of an active bowler when:

1. The bowler has used all 4 pre/post bowls for the season.
2. The bowler can't pre-bowl or post-bowl within the allowed window, such as for illness or travel.
3. The team prefers a substitute's real score over the bowler's blind score.
4. The bowler is ineligible because of an unpaid balance or the attendance limit. In this case only, the substitute must pay for the remaining weeks in advance, at $14.23 per week ($185 ÷ 13 weeks). This rate covers league bowling only; the ball or free-games package is not guaranteed for substitutes. The $25 prize fund contribution comes from the original bowler's Week 1 payment; if it wasn't collected, the first $25 of the substitute's payment goes to the prize fund. The substitute then joins the active roster for the rest of the season. It should be one of the team's listed substitutes; anyone else needs board approval.

Substitutes must be listed on the Absent Bowler Form at least 24 hours before game day.

> **Example:** A bowler becomes ineligible after Week 8 for an unpaid balance. The team can bring in a substitute for Weeks 9–13 only if the substitute pays for those 5 remaining weeks up front: 5 × $14.23 = $71.15. The substitute then becomes an active bowler. Otherwise, the team receives the bowler's average minus 10 pins.

Scoring, Standings & Leaderboards

Each week is worth 5 points.

Points

- 1 point per game won
- 2 points per series won
- Total possible points per week: 5

Standings

- All teams are ranked in one set of standings.
- Standings are determined by Points Won.
- Ties in weekly matchups are broken by total pinfall.

Championship & Position Round

- Weeks 1–11 set the standings going into the final week.
- Week 12 is a position round. Teams bowl the team next to them in the standings: 1st vs. 2nd, 3rd vs. 4th, and so on.
- With an odd number of teams, the last-place team bowls against a vacancy.
- Week 12 Points Won are added to each team's season total. Final standings after Week 12 decide the league champion and all payout places.

Final Standings Tie-Breaker

- Teams tied in Points Won after Week 12 are ranked by total season pinfall with handicap.
- This tie-breaker decides the championship and every payout place.

> **Example:** After Week 11, Team A has 40 Points Won and Team B has 38, so they bowl each other in Week 12. Team B wins 4 points to Team A's 1, finishing with 42 to Team A's 41. Team B is the champion. If they had finished tied, total season pinfall would decide it.

Leaderboards

- Leaderboards are split into Men's and Women's divisions.

Pre/Post Bowling, Blinds & Vacancies

Pre-bowls are allowed up to 7 days before game day. Post-bowls must be turned in by 6:00 PM Friday of the following week. These rules apply to every team.

Pre/Post Bowling

- Each bowler is allowed up to 4 pre/post bowls per season.
- **Advance notice:** to be eligible to pre-bowl or post-bowl, the bowler must post in the Absent Pre/Post Bowls topic on GroupMe and submit the Absent Bowler Form at least 24 hours before game day. Without notice, the bowler receives the blind score.
- **Scheduling:** the bowler must schedule the pre-bowl or post-bowl directly with Lucky Strike to make sure lanes are available.
- **Lane conditions:** pre-bowls and post-bowls are bowled on as-is conditions. Oiled lanes and league lighting are not guaranteed.
- **Pre-bowl:** may be bowled up to 7 days before game day.
- **Post-bowl:** must be bowled and the post-bowl form turned in to the league organizer by 6:00 PM on Friday of the following week, before that week's first game. Late post-bowls are not accepted, and the bowler is scored as a blind.
- Bowlers must submit the Absent Bowler Form to be eligible to pre-bowl or post-bowl.
- Substitutes must be listed on the Absent Bowler Form at least 24 hours before game day to be eligible to play.

> **Example:** A bowler will miss Friday's league night. They must post in the Absent Pre/Post Bowls topic on GroupMe and submit the Absent Bowler Form by Thursday at 6:30 PM (24 hours before game day) and schedule a lane with Lucky Strike. They can pre-bowl any time from the previous Friday, or post-bowl any time before 6:00 PM the following Friday. Without notice by Thursday, they receive the blind score.

Blind (Absent) Bowlers

- A blind score is 10 pins under the bowler's average.
- A bowler who has not shown by Frame 4 is automatically marked absent.
- Once marked absent, a bowler cannot re-enter the series.
- A blind score counts toward the team total, so a team with blind bowlers can still win points. A vacant team can never win points.

Attendance Limit

- A bowler may miss no more than 4 weeks per season.*
- A missed week is any week the bowler does not bowl on game day and does not complete a pre-bowl or post-bowl.
- After the 4th missed week, the bowler is ineligible. The bowler scores 0 pins for every game from then on, unless a substitute replaces the bowler (see When a Substitute Can Bowl).
- No refunds are given.

*If a bowler knows they will miss weeks because of an emergency or reasons outside their control, the league board will review it.

> **Example:** A bowler misses Weeks 3, 6, 8 and 10 without pre-bowling or post-bowling. That's 4 missed weeks. If they miss again in Week 11, they become ineligible, score 0 pins for every game from then on, and get no refund. Weeks they made up with a pre-bowl or post-bowl don't count as missed.

Vacancies

- There are no byes. If the league has an odd number of teams, one team bowls a vacant team each week.
- A vacancy scores 125 for all matchups.
- A vacancy receives handicap.
- When two vacant or forfeiting teams face each other, no points are awarded to either team.
- The opposing team must bowl within 40 pins of its team average (10 per bowler) to win points against a vacant team.

> **Example:** Team A shows up with 3 bowlers; their absent bowler averages 160, so the blind score is 150. That 150 counts in Team A's total, and Team A can still win points. Team B is scheduled against a vacant team and has a 600 team average, so Team B must bowl at least 560 in a game to win that game's point.

Legal Lineups

A legal lineup needs at least 2 eligible bowlers. Teams can also pre-bowl or post-bowl using the Absent Bowler Form.

- A legal lineup is 2 or more eligible bowlers.
- Substitutes and bowlers who have pre-bowled or post-bowled count as eligible bowlers.
- An illegal lineup is a forfeit.
- The opposing team must bowl within 40 pins of its team average (10 per bowler) to win points against a forfeit or a vacant team.

Score Disputes

Report scoring errors to the League Organizer, in person or in the Scores & Standings topic on GroupMe. The League Organizer is the only person who updates official scores.

- Report errors on league night, before leaving the lanes, whenever possible.
- The deadline to report a scoring error is 24 hours after the last game of that night.
- After 24 hours, scores are final.
- A team that disagrees with the League Organizer's decision may ask the board to review it.

Conduct

The league is a family-friendly environment, and every bowler is expected to help keep it that way.

- The board decides whether any behavior requires action.
- The first step is always a warning.
- If the behavior continues, the board reviews the situation and decides next steps.

Cancellations

If league night is cancelled, that week is bowled the following week and the rest of the season moves back 1 week.

- Cancellations may happen for weather, lane issues or other closures at Lucky Strike.

- Every later week, including Week 13 Sweep Week, moves back 1 week.
- Pre-bowl and post-bowl deadlines move with the schedule.

Holidays

- Holidays are handled case by case.
- Team captains are polled in the League Announcements topic to decide whether a holiday week is skipped.
- A skipped holiday week moves the rest of the season back 1 week, the same as a cancellation.

Sweep Week: 9-Pin No Tap Tournament

Week 13 is an individual 9-Pin No Tap Tournament, bowled with handicap. Team results do not count.

- Every bowler competes individually. Only their league average and handicap carry over.
- Each bowler bowls 3 games of 9-Pin No Tap, where knocking down 9 pins on the first ball counts as a strike.
- All bowlers use the league handicap, 80% of 220.
- The highest 3-game series with handicap wins, with separate Male and Female winners.
- Bowlers must have their season fee paid in full to be eligible.

League Board

A 5-member board oversees the league. It handles disputes, rule interpretations and exception reviews.

Seats

Seat	How filled	Responsibilities
President / League Organizer	Permanent, appointed by PineRiders	Runs board meetings, breaks tie votes, final say on anything the rules don't cover

Seat	How filled	Responsibilities
Secretary	Elected	Keeps records of Absent Bowler / post-bowl forms and board decisions; supports the League Organizer with averages and standings
Treasurer	Elected	Tracks league fees, payouts and the prize fund; gives a season-end financial summary
Team Rep	Elected	Represents all teams and captains
Activities Director	Elected	Runs Bowling Bingo, the 50/50 raffle and Sweep Week (9-Pin No Tap Tournament); works with the Treasurer on activity money

Seat Descriptions

All board members attend board decisions, sit out votes involving their own team, and help keep the league family-friendly.

President / League Organizer

- Runs the league and board meetings.
- Updates official scores, averages and standings, and rules on score disputes.
- Breaks tie votes and makes the final call on anything the rules don't cover.
- Fills any board seat with no applicants.

Secretary

- Tracks Absent Bowler Forms, pre/post bowls and each bowler's missed weeks against the 4-week limit.
- Records every board decision and posts it in League Announcements.
- Supports the League Organizer with averages and standings.
- Time: about 30 minutes a week, plus board decisions.

Treasurer

- Tracks bowler payments and flags declined or late payments.
- Manages the prize fund, including mini-game proceeds.

- Calculates payouts after Week 1 rosters are final and pays out at season's end.
- Gives a season-end financial summary to the league.
- Time: about 30 minutes a week, plus season-end payouts.

Activities Director

- Runs Bowling Bingo and the 50/50 raffle each week and reports totals to the Treasurer.
- Plans and runs Sweep Week (9-Pin No Tap Tournament).
- Coordinates individual awards and prizes.
- Time: league nights, plus Sweep Week planning.

Team Rep

- Represents the league's teams on the board.
- Bring team concerns and suggestions to the board.
- Shares board decisions with team captains.
- Time: league nights, plus board decisions.

Elections & Terms

- Elected seats serve a 1-season term.
- Elections are held at the end of each season for the following season.
- Any league bowler may apply for a seat through the board application form, ranking a first and second choice. Seats are filled by a league vote in the League Announcements topic on GroupMe, one vote per bowler.
- A seat with only one applicant is filled without a vote. The League Organizer appoints anyone to a seat with no applicants.
- If a seat opens mid-season, the board appoints a replacement until the next election.

Decisions

- Decisions are made by majority vote.
- At least 3 of 5 board members must be present to make a decision.
- The President votes only to break a tie.
- A board member does not vote on any matter involving their own team.

What the Board Handles

- Disputes between teams or bowlers

- Rule interpretations
- Emergency or out-of-control absence reviews under the Attendance Limit
- Rule changes, which take effect at the start of the next season, never mid-season