# Handicap Facts

The United States Bowling Congress (USBC) defines handicapping as the means of placing bowlers and teams of varying degrees of bowling skill on as equitable a basis as possible for competition against each other.

## Does any handicap used by a league equalize competition?

The results of an extensive four year study of handicap leagues -- mixed, all women and all men -- disclosed that the handicap percentages 75%, 80% and 90% do NOT achieve this goal as illustrated by the results from the study as follows:

| Handicap Percent | Championship Won by Team with Average Below Median in the League | Championship Won by Team with Average Above Median in the League |
|---|---|---|
| 70 | 0 out of 100 | 100 out of 100 |
| 75 | 0 out of 100 | 100 out of 100 |
| 80 | 0 out of 100 | 100 out of 100 |
| 85 | 6 out of 100 | 94 out of 100 |
| 90 | 11 out of 100 | 89 out of 100 |
| 95 | 24 out of 100 | 76 out of 100 |
| 100 | 30 out of 100 | 70 out of 100 |

Even at 100% handicap, as the above chart shows, the higher average teams or bowlers still have a decided edge. Seventy out of 100 championships are still won by the higher average team when 100% handicap is used. An exact 50-50 distribution of league championships would result only if a 116% handicap was used.

You must always look at the difference in averages well as handicap. In the table the higher average team total is 73% or 223 pins higher than the lower average team.

As shown below, when both teams bowl their exact averages; the higher average team always wins unless the handicap is 100%, then the teams tie.

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| | TEAM A | | | | | TEAM B | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Average** | **80%** | **90%** | **100%** | | **Average** | **80%** | **90%** | **100%** |
| Linda | 120 | 64 | 72 | 80 | Dave | 150 | 40 | 45 | 50 |
| Dick | 115 | 68 | 76 | 85 | Patti | 167 | 26 | 29 | 33 |
| Kathy | 95 | 84 | 94 | 105 | Scott | 185 | 12 | 13 | 15 |
| Jeff | 135 | 52 | 58 | 65 | Terri | 188 | 9 | 10 | 12 |
| Sandi | 142 | 46 | 52 | 58 | Lisa | 140 | 48 | 54 | 60 |
| | 607 | 314 | 352 | 393 | | 830 | 135 | 151 | 170 |

Average + 80% = 921    Average + 80% = 965

Average + 90% = 959    Average + 90% = 981

Average + 100% = 1000    Average + 100% = 1000