

Omaha's Crack Women Bowlers



It's a
Great Game
for Healthy
and
Enjoyable
Exercise

By A. R. GROH.

RUMBLE—umble—umble—clatterly—atterly—boom.

That is the music of the bowling alley. "Music!" sniffs the musician. "I don't call that music."

Well, very likely not, Beethoven. There is probably no symphony in it to you. But if you were a bowler—ah, that would be another thing again.

For to the bowler there is no music like the rumble-umble of the big balls as they roll majestically down the alley toward those ten innocent and helpless pins, waiting like sheep for the slaughter, and then the clatterly-atterly as the projectile does its terrible work among the pins, and then the boom as the ball hits the cushion and settles in the shavings only to be picked up by the perspiring pinboy and sent back.

The rise of the bowling alley to respectability is a pleasing narrative of reformation. Only a few years ago a bowling alley wasn't considered any better than a pool hall. Fathers said to their sons, "Now, don't let me catch you hanging around that bowling alley."

Today fathers don't say that. Instead father may take mother and go to the bowling alley for an evening's diversion at the game. Son belongs to a bowling club and boasts of his prowess. Mother herself may belong to a woman's bowling club meeting Tuesday or Thursday or some other afternoon. Oh, indeed, the bowling alley has reformed and has become a most respectable institution.

Abraham Lincoln's reputed aphorism concerning honesty is here proved. Respectability is the best policy. Bowling proves it. Since it became respectable and since bowling alleys have become respectable as churches, there has been a tremendous increase in the number of followers of the sport.

Here in Omaha there are at the present time twenty-seven bowling leagues. Each league is made up of from six to eight teams. Some leagues have as many as eighty members. The average is about fifty. Here are 1,350 Omahans members of bowling leagues.

Outside of the leagues there are about twenty-five bowling teams representing various firms and made up of their employees.

Outside of all there is a great army of bowlers, men and women who do not belong to teams or leagues. These probably number close to 2,000

right here in Omaha, so that there are about 3,500 men and women who follow this sport regularly in this city.

Once each week each of the bowling leagues has a bowling match and at these matches the crowd is great and the interest intense.

At the present time a ten-day tournament is on in Omaha. It is the ninth annual tournament of the Middle West Bowling association. One hundred and twenty-four teams are entered, the largest number ever entered in one of these tournaments. It is the second largest bowling event in the world, exceeded only by the annual American Bowling congress. The Mid-West association is made up of the "crack" bowlers of Nebraska, Colorado, South Dakota, Missouri, Minnesota, Iowa, Oklahoma, Illinois, Wisconsin and Kansas.

Prizes will be awarded aggregating \$7,500. It will cost \$2,500 to entertain the delegates. Nine gold medals and a loving cup will also be presented.

And the women, ah, the women!

Yes, they've been quick to see a good thing, as they always are. They are bowling with vigor, vim and enthusiasm. They are gaining pleasure and diversion. And they are gaining health. Many have substituted for the little pills that they took internally the big, twenty-seven-pound "pills" that make the rumble-umble noise. And the big "pills" are bringing the health that the little pills always promised but didn't bring.

There are many women's bowling teams in Omaha and four out of the twenty-seven bowling leagues in this city are made up of women's teams. Miss Lois Nesbit is considered the best woman bowler in Omaha. She is on the M. E. Smith & Co. team.

"Women, however, don't make as good bowlers as men. They haven't enough speed and their wrists are not strong enough to put the proper 'snap' on the ball."

This was what one Omaha bowling expert said. Of course, it was a man who said it and he may have been prejudiced. "Women are more graceful in other things," he said, trying to square himself with the fair sex.

What are the requisites for a good bowler?

"No two bowlers bowl alike," said C. J. Cain, secretary of the Middle West Bowling Tournament company. "Perfect footwork is very important. So is a curved ball with a 'lot of stuff' on it. In bowl-

ing, as in base ball, the experts roll curve balls. There is the backup ball, which is a ball curving to the left in its course and the equivalent of the base ball inshoot. And there is the hook ball, which curves to the right and is like the outshoot. The best players take three strides forward and shoot the ball from the right corner of the alley.

"Bowling is great for the health, not because, as many think, it exercises the leg and arm muscles, but because it exercises the abdominal muscles. I knew a fellow that had taken doctors' treatment for two years for stomach trouble without getting bet-

ter. He took up bowling and is now well."

Many there are today, as stated above, who are taking "good old doctor" Cain's prescription. "The increased interest in bowling," said Mr. Cain, "is largely due to making the bowling alleys respectable and clean. It is also largely due to the increase in interest taken by business men and firms and to the increased space given the sport in the newspapers. It can be played regardless of the weather and the year round."

There are many varieties of the game, such as "cocked hat," "cocked hat and feather," "college game," "Newport game," "head pin game," "Iowa Island," "seven up," "nine pins," "T game," "pin pool," "nine up and nine down," "five back," "white elephant," "four back," "open game" and "seven down," but practically all the playing in Omaha is confined to the one standard game.

Bowling has come to be so important that it is lodged about with the strictest rules and regulations. There are thirty-three playing rules of the association to which the Omaha teams belong.

The balls were formerly made of lignum vitae, the heaviest wood known. Now they are made of a composition of rubber and cement and they cost from \$13.50 to \$16 each.

In some of the alleys there are weird bulletins which make the observer rub his eyes and imagine he is "seein' things." For example, this, "Ideal Mackinaws against Ideal Overalls." Or this, "Ideal Shirts against Classic Coats." Imagine a team of mackinaws bowling against a team of overalls or a team of shirts against a team of coats! This is merely an evidence of the effect of firms interesting themselves in the sport and naming their teams after their products.