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Junior Gold Community,

This letter is a follow up to USBC's announcement about new national tournament rules for slow oil-absorbing high-performance (urethane) bowling balls. We want to help clarify how it impacts Junior Gold this season and why we chose this path.

Local qualifying doesn't change. All USBC approved bowling balls can be used unless local tournament rules state otherwise.

For the 2026 Junior Gold Championships in Minneapolis, there will be different ball rules for urethane equipment in qualifying/advancer rounds and match play/finals.

- Qualifying/Advancer Rounds & Youth Open Championships: The only urethane bowling balls allowed will be 78D in hardness. The Purple Hammer and Storm Pitch Black are not allowed.
  - List of ineligible balls for qualifying/advancer rounds [here](#).
- Match Play/Finals: No urethane bowling balls allowed.
  - List of ineligible balls for match play and finals [here](#).

Athletes will be allowed to change ball cards after qualifying/advancer rounds to add and remove balls before match play/final rounds.

Sharing some of our thinking regarding the change. USBC has a real concern about the future of our athletes in terms of skill development. Versatility at the highest levels will be needed to ensure a possibility of success in the future. Urethane ball use increases every year at Junior Gold and is now predominant in the finals. We see youth bowlers becoming less versatile and more dependent on urethane balls. We believe this trend may hinder the athletes developing into the best athletes they can become.

USBC believed removing urethane from Junior Gold Championships completely in 2026 was too drastic. Instead, this incremental move gives athletes time to adjust and keeps the urethane category part of the event.

Tampering with urethane balls is another concern. This has been a controversy in other competitions, and we want to eliminate the concern from Junior Gold match play and finals.

We realize this is a major adjustment to the event and appreciate your support as we look to do what is best for youth bowling. If you have questions, please reach out to our staff at headquarters.



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