



From the Desk of Neil Stremmel

Hello again! I hope everyone that supports our great sport has had a Happy New Year! We have been busy getting ready for the 2023 PBA season. One of the key steps was publishing the 2023 PBA Tour Rules and there are a few changes to them. In this letter, I wanted to review some of the key updates and additions that I think people will have questions about. The full updated 2023 PBA rules are located here: https://www.pba.com/sites/pba/files/2023-01/PBA-RULE-BOOK-2023-Final_1-1-23.pdf.

All of the changes and additions I discuss in this letter are for the **PBA National Tour only!** This is where we have the highest stakes, legalized gambling and most players have unique access to equipment. Therefore, we obviously pay the closest attention and have the tightest rules. The key changes and additions that I will cover include the updated urethane rule, the new plugging rule and the new wrist support rule. Again, these are only for the PBA National Tour so there are no changes in these areas for the Regional, PBA50 or PBA Jr. events in 2023. They also do not affect any of the PBA LBC leagues or tournaments.

The new urethane rule is rule 11.0. It is titled, "Balls Allowed on the PBA National Tour." So the most obvious thing should be that this rule does not affect the Regional, PBA50 or PBA Youth tours – as it states, it is only for the PBA National Tour. Here is the full rule:

11.0 Balls Allowed on the PBA National Tour. Only equipment registered, certified and listed on PBA.com will be allowed on the PBA National Tour.

Regarding traditional urethane, only balls manufactured on or after 8/1/22 are allowed. This corresponds to the full implementation of the USBC 73 minimum hardness rule. Serial numbers will be checked on ball cards, year will be required as well. Spot checks of the ball card may be conducted at any time at the Tournament Directors discretion. Testing will occur in 2023 for informational and trending purposes. Player challenges (see Rule 12.4) will still be in effect and penalties, in these cases, will be fully enforced.

Last year, a special rule for urethane was implemented in March requiring that any traditional urethane ball used must be less than 2 years old. This rule has been updated to coincide with the USBC 73 hardness date of 8/1/22. The manufacturers agreed that any ball made on or after 8/1/22 would be a minimum hardness of 73HD. By using this date, the PBA now knows that all traditional urethane balls have been made recently and have been made above the new higher spec of 73HD. That is what the PBA will use for the 2023 season. A current list of urethane equipment allowed on the PBA National Tour for 2023 is listed at the end of this letter.

The next significant change has to do with plugged equipment. This rule modification was listed in the rulebook last year stating that it will be effective 1/1/23. This change affects rule 11.9 as well as rules 11.6.1 and 11.6.3. Here is the updated 11.9 rule:

11.9 Plugged Equipment. Effective January 1, 2023, plugged bowling balls exceeding the guidelines below, are not allowed in any PBA National Tour competition. Plugging material may only be used for re-drilling the pitch or span of a ball. Up to ¼” of plug or slug material may be visible on the surface of the ball. No foreign matter may be placed within the plug area and all equipment shall otherwise comply with PBA regulations.

Yet again, this is only for the PBA National tour. Plugged holes will not be allowed, however, as noted a small amount (1/4”) of plug or slug material will be allowed to be visible around gripping holes. This will allow players to make slight adjustments to span and/or pitches while still ensuring integrity of the rule and maintaining confidence that there are no illegal materials added to the ball while permitting slight changes, if needed.

The third important rule change has to do with wrist braces. This rule was also announced a year ago. Effective 1/1/2023 any type of restrictive material such as a steel or plastic supportive brace that holds the wrist in a relatively neutral position, basically immobilizing the joint completely, will not be allowed for use in PBA National Tour competition. Here is the updated 9.2.5 rule on wrist supports:

9.2.5 Use of Wrist Supports. Use of Wrist Supports, with any type of restrictive material such as a steel or plastic supportive brace that holds the wrist in a relatively neutral position, basically immobilizing the joint completely, are not allowed for use in PBA National Tour competition effective January 1, 2023. Tape, gloves, and other supportive wristbands without these restrictive qualities of supportive steel, plastic or similar will be allowed.

Wrist supports will still be allowed in Regional, PBA50 and PBA Jr. events. Additionally, if PBA Tour/PBA50 Tour or PBA Tour/PWBA Tour doubles, or other forms of team tournaments are held, the PBA50 and PWBA players will be allowed to use wrist supports.

I hope this clears up some of the questions many of you have regarding the 2023 PBA National Tour. I would like to thank the PBA Players Committee and the PBA Registered ball manufacturers for their input, guidance and support through this revision process.

Lastly, I would like to mention that the new 2023 PBA LBC National Championships tournament is now open to all bowlers! This inaugural event is open for registration at: <https://www.pba.com/lbctournament#tournaments>. I hope to see you there!

Until then, please continue to support our sport!



PBA Director of Rules and Equipment

Attachment:

Traditional urethane balls made on or after 8/1/22 by PBA registered ball manufacturers;

(As of 1/26/23)

Brunswick/Hammer/DV8/Radical/Columbia/Track/Ebonite

Hammer Purple Pearl Urethane

MOTIV

Purple Tank

Storm/Roto/Global

Storm Pitch Black

Rotogrip Rubicon UC3

900Global Zen U

SWAG

Big Bro Burn Up LE

Non-High-Performance urethane

(Spare balls, 80+HD, 3-piece core, high RG, low Diff, polished, non-traditional urethane):

(As of 1/26/23)

MOTIV

Arctic Sniper

Hyper Sniper

Midnight Sniper

Allegiant Sniper

Laser Sniper

Storm/Roto/Global

Storm Mix

SWAG

Wiper

Note: MicroCell Polymer (MCP) urethane is not traditional urethane.