

Tips on reading an oil pattern graph

Oil Pattern Distance

This is how far down the lane oil is being placed and gives you a plan on where the ball path should go. Depending on a bowler's style, ball, and volume will determine if that path is more 'down & in' or if the path is 'coast to coast'.

Longer distances (45ft or more). Since the lane is 60ft long if the oil is longer than the ball has less room for hook from the remaining drier backend (around 15 board).

Medium distance (38ft-44ft). medium distance breakpoint will fit around the 10 board.

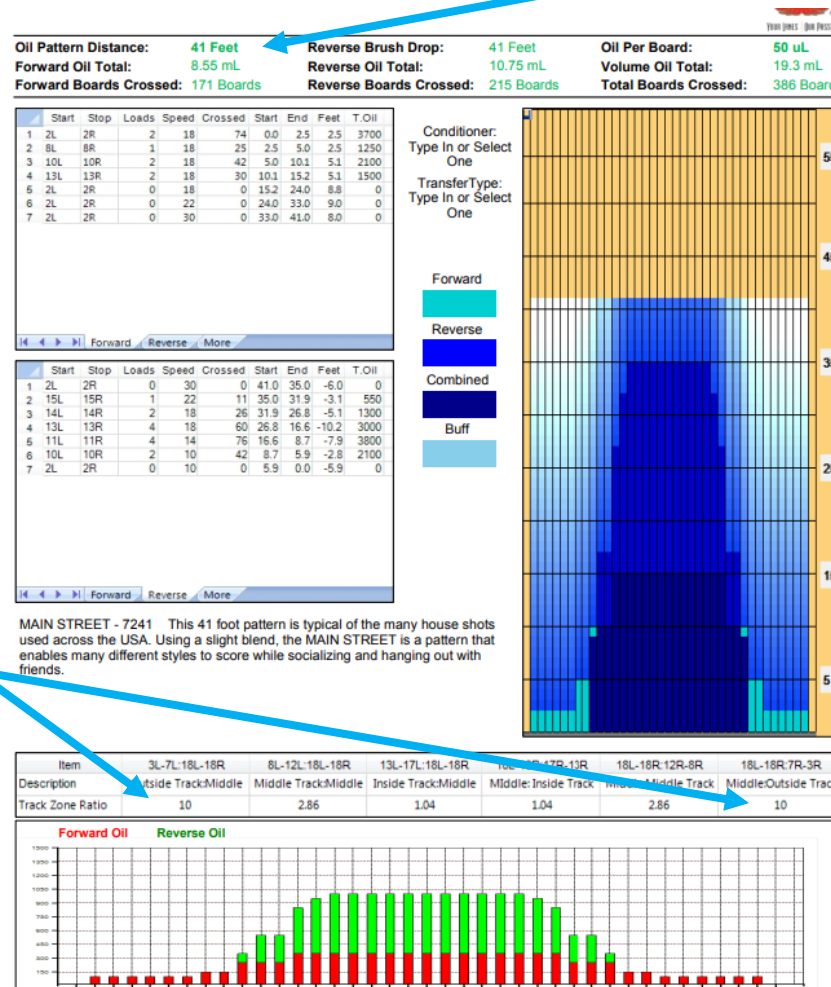
Shorter distance (37ft or less). Less oil length gives greater room for hook so the breakpoint will need to be farther from the pocket (around 5 board).

Oil Pattern Ratio

This is the slope of oil on the lane. 10:1 means 10 times more oil in the middle compared to the outside part of the lane.

Ratio is correlated to scoring. The higher the ratio the higher the scoring pace will be.

Tip: when ratio is low (4:1 to 1:1 sport pattern) during practice time you should be trying to consistently get to the pocket. Scoring will generally be low so don't panic trying several different balls if didn't get tons of strikes in practice. If ratio is higher (8:1 or more house shot) since getting to the pocket is 'easier' that leaves a single pin might be more helpful during the higher scoring pace.



Oil Pattern Volume

This is the amount of oil on the lane.

Heavier oil = 26 mL of oil or greater.

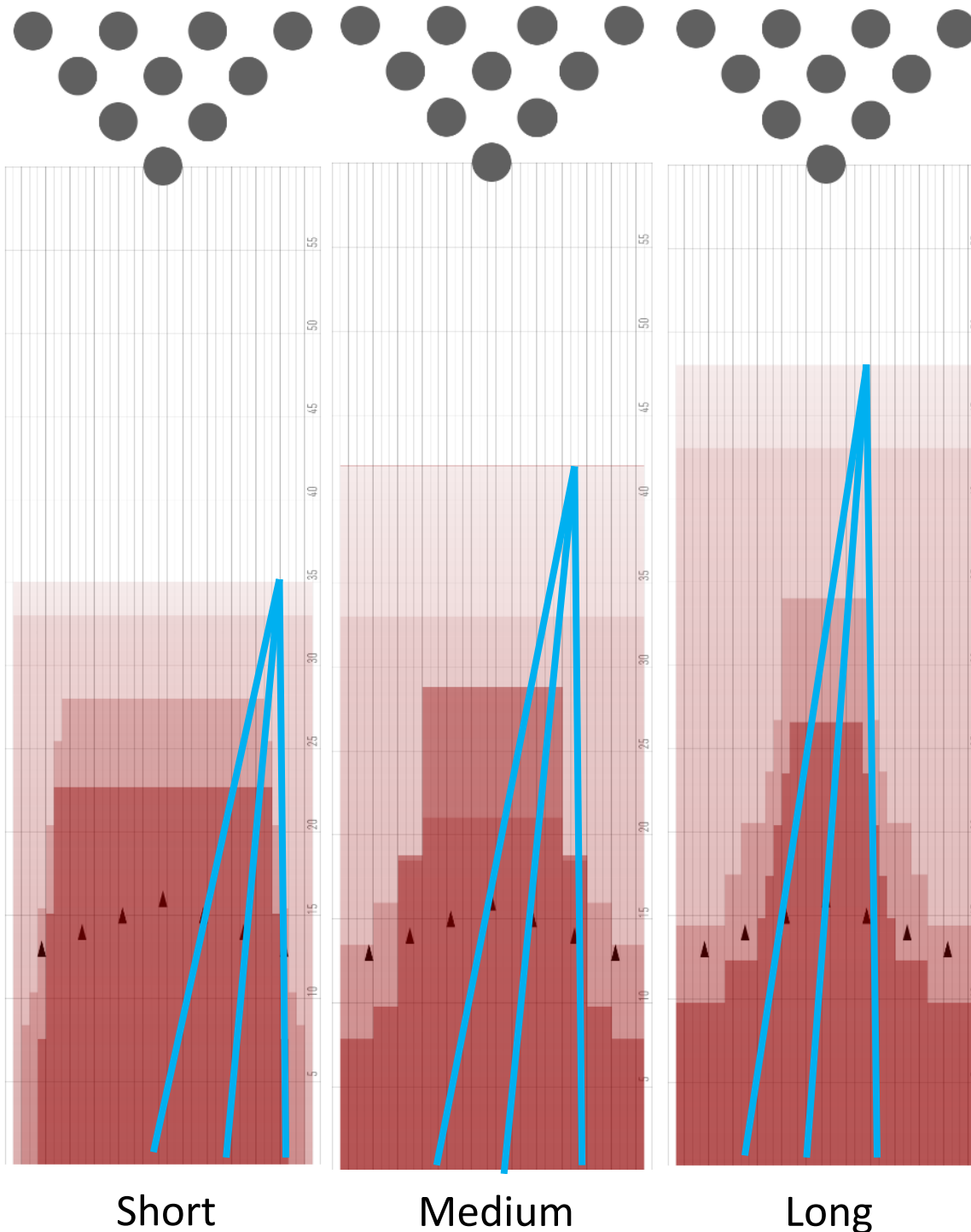
Medium oil = 20 mL – 25mL

Light oil = 19 mL or less

TIP: if you are familiar with your home bowling center's volume you may be able to use as a baseline. And then adjust surface on bowling ball beforehand, use different ball strength, or ball path might be more direct/indirect.

Ball paths on different oil distances

TIP: When distance is unknown, 1st ball during practice, roll down the center part of the lane at a slow speed and with low side roll on the ball. You can see the ball will make a small yet quick change in direction and when that happens that will be your oil pattern distance. (Use home bowling center as a baseline).



Spare:

Shooting spares on harder oil pattern can be done with a plastic ball (or without curving the ball). As a practice drill getting ready for short shot tournament you can try using a plastic ball on all your single pins even when on the home bowling center oil because the plastic ball will still go straight on the different oil patterns. And the lower oil ratio means challenging conditions and more time throwing a 2nd ball in frames.

BONUS TIP: if ratio is lower a bowler might have to move greater inside when lanes get drier because as there is not as much oil in the center to move into (when compared to the house shot). This is why you'll see pros stand in front of the ball return and loft the gutter.