

Many bowlers ask, “Why is our handicap base 240 (90% of 240) when most other leagues are lower”

The USBC advisement (as stated in the USBC League Operations Handbook) is:

*A handicap league must also decide what percentage and base will be used. Without a rule, a handicap league must use 100%. USBC recommends higher handicap percentages such as 100% be used for more equalized matches. **The scratch base handicap is figured from should be greater than the highest team or individual entering average.** For example, if the highest entering individual average is 218, handicap should be 100% of 220.*

Since we have several bowlers averaging between 220 and 234, per USBC advisement, we use 240 as our base.

The main reason for this advisement is if you do not use a base over your highest average bowler, you give an unfair advantage to bowlers who average above the base and an even more unfair advantage for teams with several bowlers above the base.

For Example:

### Comparing 90% of 210 versus 90% of 240 for individual bowlers.

<b>Bowler 1 Ave</b>	<b>234</b>
<b>Bowler 2 Ave</b>	<b>205</b>

<b>90% of 240</b>			
Bowler 1		Bowler 2	
Average	Handicap	Average	Handicap
234	5	205	31

<b>90% of 210</b>			
Bowler 1		Bowler 2	
Average	Handicap	Average	Handicap
234	0	205	4

<b>Ave Diff</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Hdcp Diff</b>	<b>26</b>

<b>Ave Diff</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Hdcp Diff</b>	<b>4</b>

In the example above, when using the 210 base, the 234 average bowler only has to beat the 205 average bowler by 5 pins but their average difference is 29. In this scenario, the higher average bowler will win most of the time as they have a 25 pin advantage (difference between 29 and 4). When using 240 base, the handicap is 26 versus 29 average difference, a 3 pin average difference which results in a fairer scenario.

In addition, we’ve heard comments about how a 234 average bowler should not get a handicap. The example above shows that even though you are giving the 234 average bowler 5 pins when using 90% of 240, the lower average bowler will get 27 pins more handicap compared to 90% of 210. We need to focus on the handicap difference, not the fact that the high average bowler is getting handicap. Please note that the differences/advantages are consistent for any average below the 210 base average.

## Comparing 90% of 210 versus 90% of 240 for team competition.

<b>Handicap per bowler (90% of 240)</b>							
	Avg	Hdcp				Avg	Hdcp
Bowler 1	234	5			Bowler 5	220	18
Bowler 2	229	9			Bowler 6	203	33
Bowler 3	227	11			Bowler 7	202	34
Bowler 4	108	118			Bowler 8	173	60
	<b>798</b>	<b>143</b>				<b>798</b>	<b>145</b>
<b>Handicap Difference using individual averages = 2</b>							
<b>Handicap per bowler (90% of 210)</b>							
	Avg	Hdcp				Avg	Hdcp
Bowler 1	234	0			Bowler 5	220	-9
Bowler 2	229	0			Bowler 6	203	6
Bowler 3	227	0			Bowler 7	202	7
Bowler 4	108	91			Bowler 8	173	33
	<b>798</b>	<b>91</b>				<b>798</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Handicap using 90% difference between 2 teams = -54</b>							

In the example above, one team stacked up with over 210 average bowlers and both teams have a total team average of 798 and although their total averages are the same, the difference between the handicaps is 54 when you use 210 base so one team has to bowl 54 pins more to win. When you use 240 base, the handicap difference is 2. Although it should be zero, the 2 pin is due to the rounding of handicaps for certain averages.

This clearly shows that using the lower base gives an unfair advantage to a team with averages over the base average. Now some may argue that it would be difficult to stack a team like this because it's hard to find a very low average bowler. It may be difficult but not impossible and it has been done in the past and was one of the reasons we raised the base many years ago. Going from 210 or 220 to 240 didn't impact a very large majority of our bowlers and gave more teams an opportunity to compete. Most bowlers handicap go up an equal amount of pins.