

## BowlersMAP™ Affiliate Profile: *Karen Pullman*

**W**hile most pro shops recognize the value of USBC Coaching Certification, few are either willing or able to take it to the level that Ebonite BowlersMAP™ Affiliate Karen Pullman has. Nearly a year ago, Karen took her knowledge as a physical education teacher, her experience as a pro shop operator and her passion for the sport of bowling to a new level when she built Karen Pullman's Training Center in Sandy, Utah.

Pullman began coaching 20 years ago when the center where she bowled hired her as their in-house instructor. She had just graduated college with a degree in physical education and was already a good bowler. Later, when her children were in YABA, Karen began with her first level of certification, and from there it snowballed.

"I am a teacher, so that was the logical thing for me to do," she notes. "Everyone would ask why are you coaching this person or helping that person, and I always say it creates more competition for me. I want to bowl, and it only makes sense that there needs to be someone for me to bowl against."

Karen became a pro shop owner in 1991, and she and her husband combined an embroidery business with their pro shop. She's been a member of IBPSIA from the beginning, and her husband was always pushing her to do more. Still, there were unique issues to being a pro shop owner without being located in a bowling center. For one, it was difficult to schedule meetings with customers on the lanes. She would schedule coaching sessions when she could, and if she wanted to recommend a certain ball, the customer would have to wait to have it drilled.

"I had to meet people to see what they



needed. We kept thinking if we had our own place we could do all the teaching we wanted," she remembers. "For seven years we researched. We wanted C.A.T.S., we wanted BowlersMAP™, everything that would make the teaching program great."

After seven years, Karen's dream came true. Their 16 lane bowling center / training facility includes two C.A.T.S. lanes, Ebonite BowlersMAP™ Gold, a 30' x 30' meeting room and a large pro shop. Every employee is at least a Level I Certified USBC Coach.

"There is so much we can do here now," says Karen. "Now it's hands-on, right here. We can work with them on the lanes and tell them 'this is what this ball will do for you,' and then we can just go drill it up. We can make real recommendations now."

According to Cary Pon, Manager of Coach Development and Certification for USBC Bowling, the number of USBC Coaching Certified pro shop owners is rising.

"I would say 10-20% of those currently going through the certification process are from pro shops," says Cary. "There's definitely been an increase."

As an original owner of Rod Ross's BowlersMAP™, Karen loves the recent upgrades to the Gold program. She likes to

pull up video on a bowler with a similar style to help the student recognize things about their own game. The pro staff videos make it easy to show the individuality of each bowler as well. The ability to show a bowler frame by frame, in slow motion, what they are doing is crucial to the coaching process.

"I've taken some of the higher average bowlers," explains Karen, "and when I show them the video, they say 'I didn't realize what I was doing.' BowlersMAP™ gives them the proof. It's a great teaching tool."

In addition, BowlersMAP™ allows her to work with Coaches in Coaching Clinics to help them develop the Coaches' Eye. As a USBC Coaching Bronze Instructor, this makes it easy to teach an important step in the program.

This year, she hosted a Jr. Gold Scratch League, where each of the bowlers is able to bowl on the C.A.T.S lanes.

"Initially I tried to video each of them alone so that there wouldn't be any embarrassment. But once we started pointing things out, they wanted to share them with everyone else. They loved the comparison to their peers. It was a league, but it was a learning experience for them."

As a pro shop owner, Karen still tries to come up with creative ways to tie in the pro shop business with the coaching business. Customers who purchase a ball/bag/shoe combo receive a one game mini-lesson, which leads them to want more. In addition, she likes to start students out with entry-level reactive balls, and then moves them into plastic for their spare balls.

Karen currently offers Individual and Group Lessons, and is planning to start Bowling Training Camps this summer at all levels.

