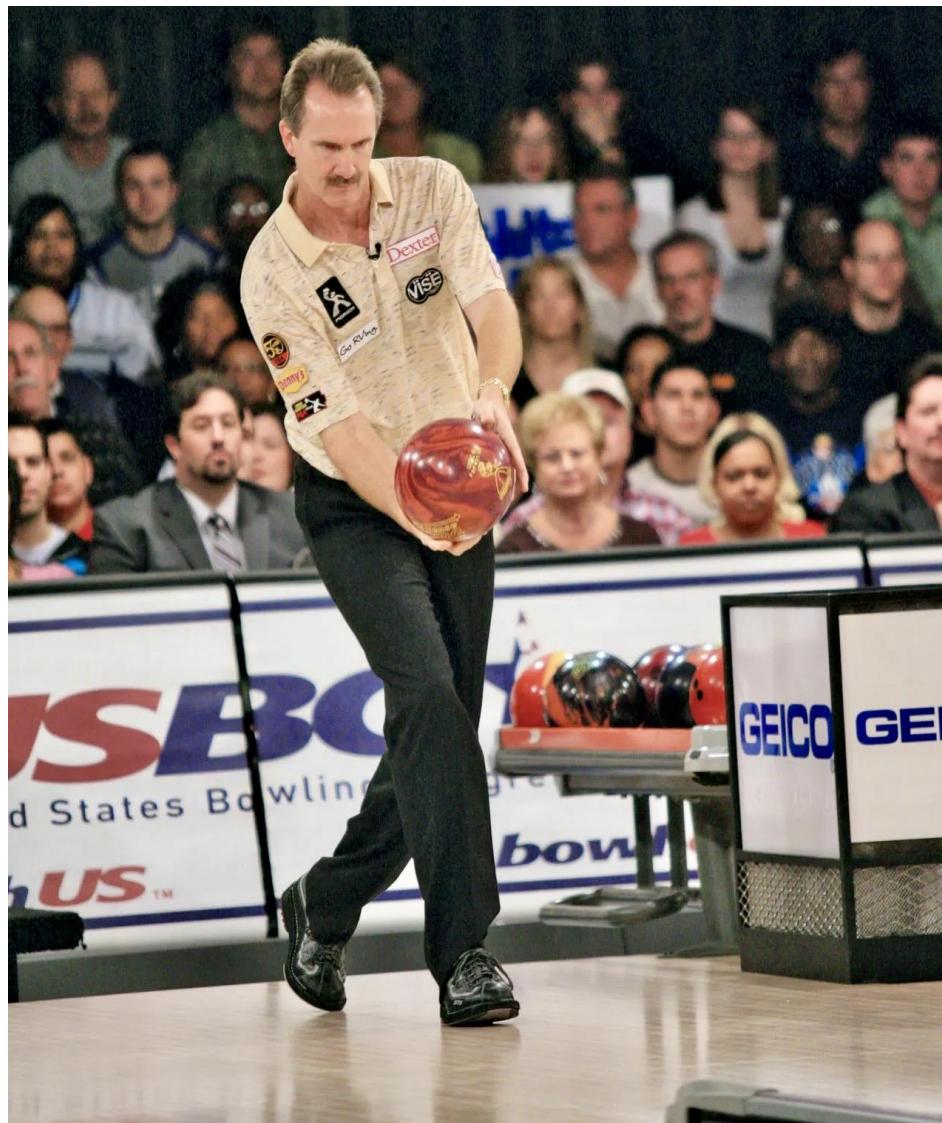


# EXCEL EVENING EDITION

## GOAT BOWLER TALKS STRIKES, SPARES AND PHYSICS



Greatest Of All Time Bowler Walter Ray Williams Jr. eyes another strike (left) and speaks recently with Excel students (right)

Scientists, authors, TV celebrity chefs, singers, actors, filmmakers, bishops, chess grandmasters, and Academy Award winning special FX makeup artists. These are some of the careers represented by guest speakers who visited the Excel classroom at Crescent City Junior Senior High School. Professional athletes can now be added to the list.

The bowler with the most tournament wins in the history of bowling recently joined Excel students to discuss his life and career. In a sport which can trace its roots back to 5200 BC in ancient Egypt, Walter Ray Williams Jr has more bowling titles than anyone. The winner of seven Espys for best bowler, he's the GOAT and what follows is some of what he had to say.

**Q: What was the first sport you competed in?**

**A:** I first started playing horseshoes. It's not a super popular game, but it's something I got introduced to when I was young and went out and practiced and got very good very quickly. When I was ten years old, I went to the World Horseshoe Championships, which are mainly in the United States. In the qualifying rounds I had 45 ringers out of 50 shoes at ten years old. I was very good. I finished second that year in the junior division. The next year I won the junior class at eleven. I was the youngest to win the junior class and broke the record for the high average with 86%. Unfortunately, there's not a lot of money in horseshoes. I didn't realize that at the time, but I didn't care. It was something I enjoyed doing.

**Q: When did you first start bowling?**

**A:** I think I was about eleven when I first got introduced to bowling. I bowled one year when I was and did okay at it. I come from a large family, seven kids, and bowling is a little expensive, so it wasn't really fair for me to bowl and nobody else.

**Q: You started bowling again in High School.**

**A:** When I was a senior in high school, I got reintroduced to bowling in PE class and after a couple of years got pretty good at it, basically because of my underhand arm swing from playing horseshoes carried over to bowling. I was able to get good fairly quickly without putting in an excessive amount of time. I was pretty fortunate.

**Q: Despite your success in bowling, you went to college.**

**A:** I went to college and got a degree in physics with a minor in mathematics. When I started college, I had no ambitions of being on the bowling tour. It was kind of halfway through college that I got really good and started bowling local tournaments where I lived and was able to make money doing that. I had an interest in bowling but I didn't have any real desire to try to make a living at it. I didn't realize that it was going to be a real possibility.

**Q: Why did you major in Physics?**

**A:** I first tried to get an engineering class and they were filled up so I went to the physics classes and when I got introduced to that, I really enjoyed it. Probably if I hadn't been a bowler, I would have been either a teacher with math or science or maybe if I could have got a job with NASA or JPL or one of those companies, that would have been a really nice thing. But to do that, I probably would have to go back to school and get a masters. But I earned a degree in physics and a minor in mathematics. That was always an interest of mine, math and science. I thought that would be a good idea to get that good education. Fortunately for me, I'd never needed to use it. But I think it's definitely a good idea to get a good education because even if you desire to be like a sports person or say a movie star or something like that, the reality is a very small percentage of those people actually do really well at that to make a great living. It doesn't mean you can't do it and make a living, but the superstars are very far and few between, and I was very fortunate to kind of be in that category.

**Q: Do you think your Physics degree has helped you in bowling?**

**A:** I don't really think my degree in physics helped in that regard. However, I think my analytical mind for math and physics helped. In bowling, one of the terms they use is called a pocket. For a right hander, the pin that's in the front, they call it the head pin. The one that's immediate to the left is called the two pin. Then it's a three pin to the right. That pocket is for the right hander. One three. I try to get my ball to hit between the head pin and the pin just to the right of that with the hook going from right to left. I figured that the best way to get a strike is to get the ball in that spot. For me it's trying to figure out how to get to that spot.

**Q: When did you win your first bowling tournament?**

**A:** Well, on the national tour, I was 26. I'd won a regional tournament when I was 23 but it actually took me several years on the tour to actually win my first tournament. I was actually able to make money my first few years, and I thought, this is pretty cool. I can make a living bowling and not have a real job. After four years of being on tour, I won my first tournament. I actually ended up being player of the year that year. I went from kind of a decent player to all of a sudden being a top level player in one year. I stayed at that level pretty good for about the next 25 years. From 1986 to 2010, I was mainly in the top five at the end of the season, except for a few years. It was very fortunate for me that things went as well as they did.

**Q: Are you allowed to change balls during a tournament?**

**A:** Yes. I'm kind of what they call old school, not just because I'm older, but the way I approach things. I'm less likely to change a bowling ball. But there are different bowling balls. I've probably got twenty bowling balls in my van that I travel to when I go to local tournaments. The reality is I'm only going to take about six of them in the bowling center, maybe seven. I'm not going to be using all of the bowling balls, but there's definitely different bowling balls to do different things. There are times when I think a ball is not working, and I think it's because of the ball and not because of me, I'll change the ball because I want to get something specific. Unfortunately, I think a lot of guys don't realize it's actually them not making the correct shots they need to, and they just want to change bowling balls.

**Q: How much money have you won bowling?**

**A:** Bowling doesn't have as much as the other sports, but it does have a decent amount. I've won \$120,000 in one tournament. Golfers win a tournament and get a few million dollars, so it's not quite the same.

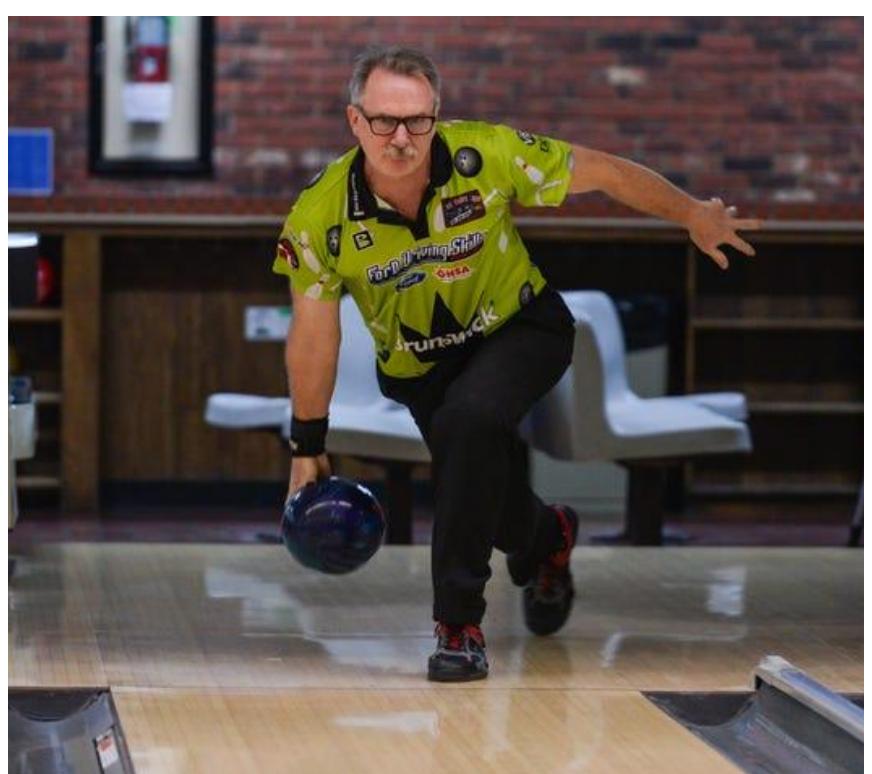
I don't have a multimillion dollar house or anything like that, but I've made a pretty good living over the years and am pretty fortunate to do something I enjoy. But \$100,000 is not bad. Over my career, I've won about \$5 million. But that's over a 40 year period. I still bowl professionally. I don't bowl with the young guys because they're very good. And I'm not so young anymore.



Walter Ray Williams Jr. with one of his seven Espy awards

**Q: What was your most memorable moment in your career?**

**A:** The very first time I was on TV was very exciting because that's kind of your ultimate goal, to get on TV, you're trying to win a tournament and that's the big stage. I was very fortunate. My very first game on TV, I shot 269, so I was really excited about that. I ended up losing the next game and finishing third in that tournament, but it was very exciting. That was when I first went out on tour in 1983 when I was 23. People say, what's your best title? And I say the first one because without the first one you never really know what's going to happen. Any title you win, it's always fun to win.



Walter Ray Williams Jr. still competing after forty years

**Q: How many tournaments have you won?**

**A:** In the PBA, I now have a total of 125 tournament wins. I have 47 PBA national titles, which are the big ones that are the ones you see on TV. Then I have 16 PBA 50 titles, which is the senior tour title. That's the most of anybody. Those two numbers are the most of anybody. And then I've got 63 regional titles, which is also the most of anybody.

**Q: What advice would you give to students making career choices?**

**A:** Go out there and try to enjoy life, try to do something you enjoy doing and try to be nice to people. I think, unfortunately, there's too much negative stuff going on in the world, and we'd all be much better off if we all got along a lot better.