Paul Lane Career U.K.

* 1954 – 1960

Paul got his start in bowling working at the base bowling center at USAF Mildenhall. He started as a pin-boy and moved on to various positions within the center including Lanesman, Snack Bar Manager, Front Desk and Assistant/Manager.

During this time, he ran many promotions for the military including hosting the European-Wide Championships for all branches of the US military.

Paul also developed skills in aspects such as ball-measuring and drilling, bowing instruction and became proficient as a bowler.

In the late 50’s Paul participated in Exhibitions involving US Hall of Fame members such as Lee Jouglard, Tom Hennessey, Marion Ladewig and Frank Clause. And, at the request of AMF’s promotions manager, Jim Moynihan, replaced a US woman professional (I think it was Sylvia Wene) who was hospitalized at the start of the six military base tour with Lee Jouglard.

In 1958, Paul was involved with what was probably the first ever live TV coverage of bowling in the UK. And hour-long show that took place at the 4-lane US Military base at South Ruislip.

In 1959 Paul oversaw the installation of the first military center in Europe to install AMF pinspotters and, in the process, became known to AMF executives.

* 1960 – 1983

In January 1960 Paul attended the grand opening of the first bowling center in the UK at Stamford Hill as a guest. This led to an offer to join AMF’s instruction staff and he accepted and joined for the grand opening of the King Alfred Lanes in Hove in September 1960. This was the start of what turned into a 30-year tenure with the company and a travel schedule that took him to more than 50-countries.

* For the next 5-6 years Paul travelled the country attending the grand openings of more than 125-UK centers, giving a short clinic and exhibition and training center employees’ how to teach beginners.
* During this time frame Paul also ran numerous instructor training programs at basic, intermediate, and advanced levels. The instructor training program met with the approval of the BTBA and became to basis of instructor training after he moved on to other responsibilities with AMF.
* Paul was adamant that people attending the instructor schools graduate by achieving a high standard of proficiency in teaching, communication, and bowling knowledge skills. To help achieve this Paul involved a company of industrial psychologists to observe the schools and make recommendations on testing procedures.
* Television played an important part in Paul’s career in the 1960’s and beyond, having bowled or served as a color-analyst on dozens of live and taped broadcasts, both nationally and regionally.
* Paul also worked closely with ITV’s World of Sport, who’s leader, the late John Bromley, was responsible for adding tenpin bowling to the myriad sports ITV covered during their Saturday afternoon broadcasts. This included working with WOS editors and the shows anchor, Dickie Davis, when, as an example, they purchased the full broadcast of PBA’s Firestone Tournament of Champions and developed taped specials.
* In the late 60’s/early70’s Paul worked closely with the BTBA and the Sports Council on developing and managing a Sports Instruction Holiday Package. The pilot program was held in Plymouth where people could include instruction in lifetime sports such as tennis, golf, tenpin bowling, etc., as part of their holiday. They could sign up for lessons in one or all of the sports being offered in the program.
* In 1977 Paul earned the Queens Silver Jubilee Medal after being nominated by the Sports Council.
* In 1977 Paul was also instrumental in bringing the AMF Bowling World Cup to the U.K. The tournament was held at the Charrington Bowl in Tolworth with Bass Charrington and Tuborg, plus British Airways as sponsors, including a couple of freebies from London to New York on Concorde for the press.
* That year Paul also worked with Viz-News who packaged news length highlights of the tournament which were distributed globally and featured in sports and general news programs in 32-countries and, in many, two or more times in a single day.
* By end of the 60’s Paul hung up his bowling shoes and focused more on the marketing side of the sport, including running the elimination tournament to determine the British representatives for the annual AMF Bowling World Cup Tournament.

The concept of the Bowling World Cup was to give proprietors an annual lineage building promotion by running qualifying events in their centers. In the UK these were reentry tournaments running for a period of several weeks, before taking to top 24 and running a center level final to determine who would go forward to a national final. Every participating center had prizes at center level, and their representative would receive a contribution to towards the cost of traveling to the national finals. On a typical year more the 5,000 individual bowlers participated at center level, not counting reentries.

* One of the biggest promotions run by AMF in the late 60’s in the UK was a program called Britain Swings to Bowling. Paul played an important role in developing the and managing the program in which, virtually every center in the country participated. The program offered prizes running the gamut from a Car for the overall winner, Sunfish Sailing Boats, and designer furniture, to a myriad smaller prize.

The program was driven by advertising on cinema screens at the three cinemas closest to every participating center, with a slide at the end of the commercial saying: “why not visit the (name of center) after the show and qualify to win one of hundreds of prizes.” Almost 200 thousand entered the contest.

Additional marketing included supplying local supermarkets with carrier bags featuring the promotion logo for Britain Swings to Bowling and a contest for youth at centers whereby they could release a helium filled black balloon bearing the logo. The balloons returned from the furthest point from the center of origin would earn prizes.

To qualify to enter the contest required bowling one game (score not relevant). Bowling one game gave the contestant the right to complete a short questionnaire. Basically, “I like bowling because” …with 8-answers to be put in order of preference, plus a tie breaker. The winners were those who predicted the right order to the answers as pre-determined by a panel of judges and filed and sealed with a legally recognized contest management organization.

* In 1983 Paul relocated to AMF’s corporate headquarters in New York. However, before the year was over, he returned to the UK wearing the hat of the National Bowling Council (NBC) from the USA. Paul made a presentation to industry leaders in the UK including representatives from the TBPA and BTBA and a number of proprietors and executives from AMF & Brunswick and smaller local bowling distributors and pro-shop owners.

The concept was to encourage a unification of the industry and formation of a British edition of the NBC by developing a war chest that would enable the industry to conduct national programs to promote bowling through marketing and education. Paul was also instrumental in developing similar programs in France Germany and Japan.

* And Paul was soon back in the UK as he negotiated and brought the Professional Bowlers Tour to the UK for the first time. The tournament, the AMF Grand Prix, was staged at the Humber Bowl in Crawley. This was an invitational tournament that included the top 12 players from the PBA’s points list, plus 4-more with special invitations, and eight European amateur bowlers.
* In the 1960’s Paul toured the country with pro-bowler Frank Clause, known as the Bowling Schoolmaster. This was a program comprising an hour-long bowling clinic with Frank Clause and Paul as presenters, followed by an exhibition. Most days of the month-long tour Frank and Paul took in two centers in different towns and cities.

Then, in the 1970’s Paul started a program involving annual tours of UK centers with US Professional bowlers including Dick Weber, Cheryl Robinson (nee Kominsky), Jay Robinson, Dick Ritger, Bill Bunetta and Wayne Zahn to name but a few. These tours included exhibitions, clinics, TV appearances, lineage building programs, etc. This annual program ran from circa 1972 until Paul relocated to the USA in 1983.

* WBW Distinguished Services Award 1981
* From 1983 to 1990 Paul continued his involvement with the AMF Bowling World Cup, served on the marketing committee of the national Bowling Council, served as AMF’s director of marketing and marketing services, before leaving the company to become an independent contractor and starting Paul Lane Marketing, representing more than a dozen major integers of the industry on a consulting basis, and becoming a regular contributor to International Bowling Industry Magazine.
* Since 1992 Paul and his family have lived in the-mile-high city of Denver Colorado.