



# A Pro's Call ON STRING

PERFORMANCE MEETS REAL-WORLD ECONOMICS



When Mike Fagan stepped into bowling center ownership, he brought a championship résumé with him. A five-time PBA Tour champion and two-time major winner, Fagan spent years competing at the highest level of the sport. Now, as owner of Tenpins & More, a 24-lane center in Rio Rancho, New Mexico, he's applying that same focus to building a stronger, more efficient business.

One of his first decisions came before he finalized the purchase in 2025. Fagan had already been researching scoring systems and pinsetter technology, knowing the center's existing machines had reached the end of their useful life. The equipment had reached a point where ongoing maintenance costs were significant enough to make replacement the smarter long-term move.

For Fagan, it was a straightforward economic move. **That decision led him to convert the center to Brunswick's Boost ST string pinsetters.**

## MORE CURIOSITY THAN PUSHBACK

The center runs 15 to 16 leagues, with a base of 500 to 600 league bowlers, along with tournaments, sweepers, and other events throughout the year. With that many competitive players, the transition was front and center, and something bowlers were curious about.

"The perception that league bowlers won't like string is much worse than the reality," Fagan says. "There were a lot of questions about what it would be like and why we were doing it." Any pushback didn't last long. **"Once they got out there and competed on it, it was, 'Ok, we're good with this.'"**

Fagan explains that the string pinsetters can be adjusted based on who's on the lanes. The center mostly runs in casual mode, but for league play, it moves to a longer string length that, in his experience, feels very close to free-fall. He also emphasized the importance of communicating early with league bowlers. "We made sure to explain the change and the why behind it," Fagan says.

For him, the bigger picture goes beyond the equipment itself. "If someone leaves over string, you have to look at the entire experience you're offering," he says. "If the food, atmosphere, and service are strong, people stay."

## WHERE IT SHOWS UP DAY TO DAY

Disruptions used to be part of the routine, but Fagan believes his open play guests felt it the most. "Our league bowlers had gotten used to it," Fagan says. "But open play guests are paying by the hour. When the lanes go down, that's a bad experience, and they don't come back."

"Economically, it's night and day," Fagan says. "The savings are significant." He expects a payback within three years and a much stronger cash flow over time; money he can reinvest back into the center and guest experience.

And then there's the time factor. With fewer machine issues pulling attention away, the focus shifts to what keeps people coming back; how the place feels, how it runs, and how much fun they're having.

## SIMPLER OPERATIONS, SAFER STAFF

**Staffing has become more flexible as well.** Most of the time, the machines handle themselves, even working through minor tangles on their own. On the occasional moment when a hands-on fix is needed, any team member can step in.

"It opens it up so anyone on the team can help," Fagan says. **Built-in alerts notify staff when attention is needed, helping the team respond quickly.** "On a busy Friday or Saturday, we're running open play mode and getting almost zero calls."

**Safety is another factor.** Fagan says the string system creates a safer environment for staff and adds peace of mind. "This gives me one less thing to worry about," he says.

## LOOKING AHEAD

"Having competed at the highest level for years, I know what bowlers value," Fagan says. "I wouldn't have made this switch if I didn't believe in the product."

For Fagan, the value of Brunswick's Boost ST system shows up in the day-to-day operation of the center; **fewer disruptions, more consistency, and more time spent focusing on guests instead of machine issues.** And in today's environment, that operational stability can make a meaningful difference.