

String-Pin Bowling Rulings Frequently Asked Questions Feb 15, 2026

There can be unusual pinfall situations that arise when bowling in a string-pin centre - many of them different that would be seen with freefall machines. Because string-pin machines have a curtain that drops in front of the pin deck within 3-4 seconds of the bowling ball hitting the pins, it is important for bowlers to remain attentive to the pinfall and pin action during that brief window. Without eyewitness accounts, some situations may arise that are difficult to make a ruling on. Just as with freefall machines, you cannot always rely on the automatic scoring to properly reflect the outcome.

1. If a pin(s) is knocked down by the string of another pin, does the pinfall count?
Yes. This is stated in CTF Rule 6a-5.
Note: There also may be cases where the string of a pin “pulls on” the string of another pin enough to make the machine think that pin has been knocked down, but the pin remains standing. The pin is considered still standing. If on a first ball, the pin must be reset. Manual score corrections may be necessary.
2. If a pin slides over, but remains standing, and the machine believes it has been knocked down and scores it that way, does the pinfall count?
No. This is handled the same way as with free-fall machines. If it occurs on the first ball, the pin must be respotted (in its original position), and the bowler must throw a second ball at the remaining pin(s). If it occurs on the second ball, then that sliding pin is considered to NOT having been knocked down. Manual score corrections to account for these situations must be made.
Note, if the machine does not believe the pin was knocked down (that is, it didn’t slide far enough to trigger the machine into thinking it had been knocked down), the machine will respot that pin in its normal position. That is, it will not be respotted to the spot where it stopped sliding.
3. If a pin is leaning over but appears to be “held up” by a string, does it count as a downed pin?
This is NOT considered a downed pin. As per CTF Rule 6a, a pin must be knocked down in order to be considered legal pinfall.
Note, if the pin is in the gutter, it is considered legal pinfall, no matter the amount of lean.