5.6.5 Choosing EDGE vs. CENTER: which method fits which bowler?

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5.6.5 TIP guide

With four calculation configurations available in Spectre Cloud's Oval Calculator — EDGE and CENTER, each with or without Add Pitch Thumb — the practical question every operator faces is: **which one do I use, and for whom?** This page brings together everything covered in sections 5.6.1 through 5.6.4 into a single decision framework, so you can match the right configuration to each bowler's profile with confidence.

□□ The Core Distinction — One More Time

Before the decision framework, a plain-language summary of what separates the two methods:

- **EDGE** delivers pitch at the point where the bowler's finger actually contacts the hole — the leading edge of the oval. What you specify is (closely) what the bowler feels.
- **CENTER** delivers pitch at the geometric midpoint of the hole. The effective pitch at the contact point is slightly amplified by the oval's length — a known, predictable offset that experienced fitters can account for deliberately.

Neither method is universally superior. Each is the right tool in the right context. The goal of this page is to make that context clear.

□□ Decision Framework — Bowler Profile vs. Recommended Configuration

Bowler profile	Recommended configuration	Reason
Recreational bowler, conventional grip, typical pitch values	CENTER, no Add Pitch Thumb	Simplest configuration, fits most recreational specs cleanly, minimal oval size means centre/edge difference is negligible
Fingertip bowler, moderate forward pitch (`1/4"`), small oval (`1/8"`)	EDGE or CENTER, no Add Pitch Thumb	At small oval sizes the two methods converge — either is valid; match whichever is your shop standard
Fingertip bowler, moderate to high forward pitch (`3/8"`+), larger oval (`1/4"`+)	EDGE, no Add Pitch Thumb	Edge offset becomes meaningful at these values; EDGE delivers the specified pitch accurately at the contact point
Competitive bowler, significant forward pitch, significant thumb pitch	EDGE, with Add Pitch Thumb	Full grip geometry matters at this level; combined pitch reference produces the most cohesive feel through the release
Bowler transitioning from legacy system with centre-based records	CENTER, no Add Pitch Thumb	Maintains consistency with historical spec sheets; avoids a systematic shift in the bowler's specs during transition
Two-handed bowler or no-thumb release	EDGE or CENTER, no Add Pitch Thumb	No thumb pitch data available; Add Pitch Thumb has nothing to contribute — keep it off regardless of method chosen
House ball or rental fleet fit	CENTER, no Add Pitch Thumb	Speed and consistency matter more than precision at this level; simplest configuration is the right call

Bowler profile	Recommended configuration	Reason
Bowler with reverse pitch on fingers	CENTER, no Add Pitch Thumb	Edge offset works against the fitter with reverse pitch; centre reference keeps the calculation stable and predictable
Bowler with zero pitch across all holes	Either method, no Add Pitch Thumb	At zero pitch, EDGE and CENTER produce identical results — method choice is irrelevant
Bowler whose finger feel is consistently reported as "off" despite correct specs	Try EDGE, no Add Pitch Thumb first; escalate to EDGE with Add Pitch Thumb if unresolved	Switching from CENTER to EDGE often resolves persistent pitch-feel mismatches; Add Pitch Thumb addresses the subset caused by thumb-finger interaction

□□ A Shop-Level Decision, Not Just a Per-Bowler One

While the table above gives per-bowler guidance, most shops will also want to land on a **shop-wide default configuration** — the setting that covers the majority of their customers well and is applied consistently unless a specific bowler's profile calls for something different. Here is how to think about that default:

- □ **If your shop primarily serves recreational and league bowlers** with conventional grips and modest pitch values: **CENTER, no Add Pitch Thumb** is the most practical default. It is fast, consistent, and the oval sizes common in recreational fitting make the centre/edge difference negligible.
- □ **If your shop does significant work with fingertip and competitive bowlers** who carry meaningful forward pitch and larger oval cuts: **EDGE, no Add Pitch Thumb** is the stronger default. It delivers specified pitch more accurately across the range of fits you do most.
- □ **If your shop is a performance-focused operation** serving competitive and tournament bowlers almost exclusively: **EDGE, with Add Pitch Thumb** gives the most complete picture of grip geometry and is worth the additional setup attention it requires.
- □ **If you are migrating a bowler database from a legacy system** that used centre-based math: start with **CENTER, no Add Pitch Thumb** and transition individual bowlers to EDGE deliberately, one refitting session at a time, rather than switching everyone at once.

⚠ What to Avoid

- ❌ **Do not switch configurations between spec sheets for the same bowler** without a deliberate refitting session. A configuration change mid-history introduces a systematic shift that is hard to interpret later when reviewing that bowler's records.
- ❌ **Do not use Add Pitch Thumb as a fine-tuning dial** to nudge fit results without understanding what it is doing. It models a specific physical relationship — the thumb's pitch contribution to finger oval placement — and should only be enabled when that relationship is genuinely relevant.
- ❌ **Do not treat EDGE as universally better than CENTER**. For recreational bowlers, small ovals, and reverse pitch situations, CENTER is equally valid and often more appropriate.
- ❌ **Do not change your shop default mid-season** if you have a large number of active bowlers on a regular redrilling schedule. Wait for a natural break — start of a new season, or after a round of planned refits — so the transition is clean.

🔄 Switching a Bowler Between Configurations

If you decide to move a bowler from CENTER to EDGE — or vice versa — the safest approach is to treat it as a **refitting session**, not just a settings change. Before the switch:

1. Review the bowler's current spec sheet and note their pitch values and oval cut sizes.
2. Use Spectre Cloud to calculate what their drill coordinates would look like under the new configuration, without yet committing to a drill.
3. Compare the new coordinates against the current ones. If the difference is small (less than `1/16"` of positional shift), the transition is low-risk. If the shift is larger, discuss it with the bowler before drilling.
4. For significant shifts, consider adjusting the pitch specification itself to preserve the *effective* pitch the bowler has been feeling — rather than applying both a method change and a coordinate shift simultaneously.

🔄 **Note:** Spectre Cloud does not automatically flag when a configuration change would produce a meaningful coordinate shift for an existing bowler. That comparison is the operator's responsibility — which is one more reason to settle on a consistent shop default and change it deliberately rather than frequently.

✅ Quick-Reference Summary

- ✅ **Small oval + low pitch:** CENTER or EDGE — both work, match your shop standard.
- ✅ **Larger oval + meaningful forward pitch:** EDGE, no Add Pitch Thumb.

- **Larger oval + meaningful forward pitch + significant thumb pitch:** EDGE, with Add Pitch Thumb.
- **Reverse pitch or zero pitch:** CENTER, no Add Pitch Thumb.
- **Legacy record continuity:** CENTER, no Add Pitch Thumb.
- **Persistent "pitch feels off" complaint:** Try EDGE, no Add Pitch Thumb first.

Related Sections

- 5.6.1 — EDGE method explained — how pitch is placed at edge of oval
- 5.6.2 — CENTER method explained — how pitch is placed at center of oval
- 5.6.3 — EDGE with and without Add Pitch Thumb — comparison
- 5.6.4 — CENTER with and without Add Pitch Thumb — comparison
- 5.7 — Reading and interpreting Oval Calculator output on a spec sheet
- 2.x — Settings: Oval Calculator options

Tip: When onboarding a new staff member, have them read sections 5.6.1 through 5.6.5 in order before touching the Oval Calculator settings. The conceptual progression — from what each method does, to how Add Pitch Thumb changes it, to how to choose between them — is designed to build a complete mental model before any drilling decisions are made.

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