

6.1.4 Step 4 — Enter thumb information (round or oval)

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workflow

With grip type and finger measurements recorded, Step 4 turns to the thumb — the anchor of the grip and the hole that most directly influences a bowler's release. In Spectre Cloud, thumb entry goes beyond a single hole size: you will specify whether the thumb hole is **round or oval**, record the relevant measurements, and set pitch values that work in concert with the finger holes entered in the previous step. Getting the thumb right is often the difference between a ball a bowler loves and one they never quite connect with.

Round vs. Oval Thumb Holes

The first decision in the thumb section is whether the thumb hole will be drilled **round** or **oval**. This is not a default — it is a deliberate fitting choice that should reflect how the bowler grips and releases the ball.

Thumb hole type	Description	When to use
Round	A standard cylindrical hole with no oval elongation	Most bowlers — conventional grip, standard fingertip, any bowler whose thumb seats cleanly in a round hole
Oval	An elongated hole, typically forward/back, to accommodate thumb shape or release preference	Bowlers with an oval-shaped thumb cross-section, those who prefer a more relaxed release, or where a round hole causes gripping tension

Note: A thumb oval is separate from the finger ovals calculated by the Oval Calculator. Thumb ovals are entered manually based on the fitter's assessment — Spectre Cloud does not auto-suggest thumb oval sizes the way it does for finger ovals.

☐☐ Thumb Measurements to Enter

Regardless of whether the thumb hole is round or oval, Spectre Cloud requires the same core set of thumb measurements. Have your fitting gauge ready before beginning this section.

- ☐ **Thumb hole size** — the diameter of the finished hole. For round holes this is a single value; for oval holes it represents the base diameter before the oval is applied.
- ☐ **Thumb knuckle size** — the widest diameter of the thumb at the knuckle. Ensures the hole can be drilled large enough for the thumb to enter and exit cleanly.
- ☐ **Thumb pitch — forward/back** — the forward or reverse pitch applied to the thumb hole along the ball's forward axis.
- ☐ **Thumb pitch — left/right** — the lateral pitch applied to the thumb hole. Often zero for straightforward fits but critical for bowlers with a lateral thumb angle at release.
- ☐ **Oval size** (oval thumb holes only) — the amount of oval elongation applied to the thumb hole, expressed in fractions of an inch.
- ☐ **Oval direction** (oval thumb holes only) — the axis along which the thumb oval runs, typically forward/back.

☐☐ Entering Thumb Information on Desktop

1. In the open spec sheet, locate the **Thumb** section below the finger measurement fields.
2. Select **Round** or **Oval** from the thumb hole type selector.
3. Enter the **thumb hole size** and **thumb knuckle size** from your measurements.
4. Enter the **forward/back pitch** value for the thumb. Use a positive value for forward pitch and a negative value for reverse pitch, following Spectre Cloud's sign convention.
5. Enter the **left/right pitch** value. Enter if no lateral pitch is required.
6. If **Oval** was selected, the oval size and direction fields activate — enter the oval size and confirm the direction.
7. Review all thumb values before proceeding. Thumb pitch errors are among the most common causes of a ball that feels wrong from the first throw.

☐ Entering Thumb Information on Mobile

1. Scroll to the **Thumb** section of the open spec sheet.
2. Tap the thumb hole type selector and choose **Round** or **Oval**.
3. Tap each measurement field in turn and enter values using the numeric keyboard.
4. If Oval is selected, the additional oval fields appear below — complete them before moving on.
5. Allow auto-save to capture entries, or tap **Save** before continuing.

☐ Thumb Pitch — Getting It Right

Thumb pitch is one of the most consequential decisions in a drilling. Too much forward pitch and the thumb will feel locked in; too much reverse pitch and the thumb exits early, reducing control. The right value depends on the bowler's hand anatomy, release style, and what they are trying to achieve with this ball.

- ☐ **Start conservatively** for new bowlers or first-time fits. A modest forward pitch (to) is a safe baseline for most fingertip drillings.
- ☐ **For bowlers with a known history**, match or start close to the pitch values recorded on their most recent spec sheet — changes from a known baseline are easier to evaluate than starting from scratch.
- ☐ **Reverse pitch** (negative values) is appropriate for bowlers who grip tightly or whose thumb tends to hang in the ball through the release. It encourages an earlier, cleaner exit.
- ☐ **Lateral thumb pitch** corrects for bowlers whose thumb naturally angles left or right at release. A small amount of lateral pitch — often or less — can dramatically improve comfort and consistency.
- ☐ Do not copy thumb pitch values from a finger pitch without checking — finger and thumb pitch serve different biomechanical functions and the same value rarely makes sense for both.

☐ When to Choose an Oval Thumb Hole

Most bowlers do well with a round thumb hole. Choose oval for the thumb when:

- The bowler's thumb has a noticeably **oval cross-section** — wider side to side than front to back, or vice versa — that causes an uneven fit in a round hole.
- The bowler reports **gripping tension** or a tendency to squeeze the ball even with correct hole size — a slight forward oval on the thumb can relieve this by providing a more forgiving exit path.
- The bowler uses a **thumb slug** that has been ovalled — match the spec sheet to the physical slug dimensions.
- A previous fitter used an oval thumb and the bowler has adapted to it — maintaining continuity prevents an adjustment period with an otherwise identical drilling.
- Do not oval the thumb as a substitute for correcting pitch. If the bowler is gripping or hanging, evaluate pitch first — an oval on an incorrectly pitched hole solves the symptom, not the cause.

Thumb Slugs and the Spec Sheet

If the bowler uses a **thumb slug** rather than a drilled-direct thumb hole, enter the slug's outer diameter as the hole size and the slug's pitched bore dimensions as the pitch values. Spectre Cloud treats the thumb entry the same way regardless of whether a slug is used — the spec sheet records the finished hole geometry, not the method used to achieve it.

- Record the slug's **outer diameter** as the thumb hole size.
- Record the **pitched bore angle** of the slug as the thumb pitch values.
- Note the slug brand and model in the spec sheet's notes field for future reference — this helps when the slug needs to be replaced and the bowler cannot remember what they had.

Note: If your shop uses the **Arsenal Plus plugin** () , additional ball and equipment details — including slug specifications — can be recorded against the ball entry in the bowler's Arsenal alongside the spec sheet.

▶ What Comes Next

With thumb information entered, the spec sheet now has a complete picture of the bowler's grip — finger measurements, grip type, and thumb details all in place. Step 5 uses this foundation to set the span and pitch values for the finger holes, completing the core measurement data that the Oval Calculator will use in Step 6.

Related Sections

- 6.1.3 — Step 3: Set grip type and enter finger measurements
- 6.1.5 — Step 5: Setting span and pitch values
- 6.1.6 — Step 6: Running the Oval Calculator on the new spec sheet
- 04.x — Spec Sheets: field reference and measurement guide
- 05.x — Oval Calculator: thumb oval settings and interaction

□ **Tip:** When fitting a brand-new bowler with no drilling history, ask them to mime their release motion before you measure the thumb. Watch where the thumb naturally wants to exit — angled slightly left or right, early or late — and let that observation guide your initial pitch suggestion. A pitch that works with the bowler's natural release is always more comfortable than one that tries to correct it.

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