

Bowlers Journal

JANUARY 2023

INTERNATIONAL

A WORLD CUP
LONG ON
STORYLINES
PG 50

HOW A BUDDING YOUTH
PROGRAM BECAME
THE MAIN EVENT
PG 60

PUTTING YOUR
NON-GRIPPING
FINGERS TO USE
PG 28

BEST IN SHOW

PBA STATS LEADERS SHARE THEIR SECRETS

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ALWAYS PREPARED





JACKAL

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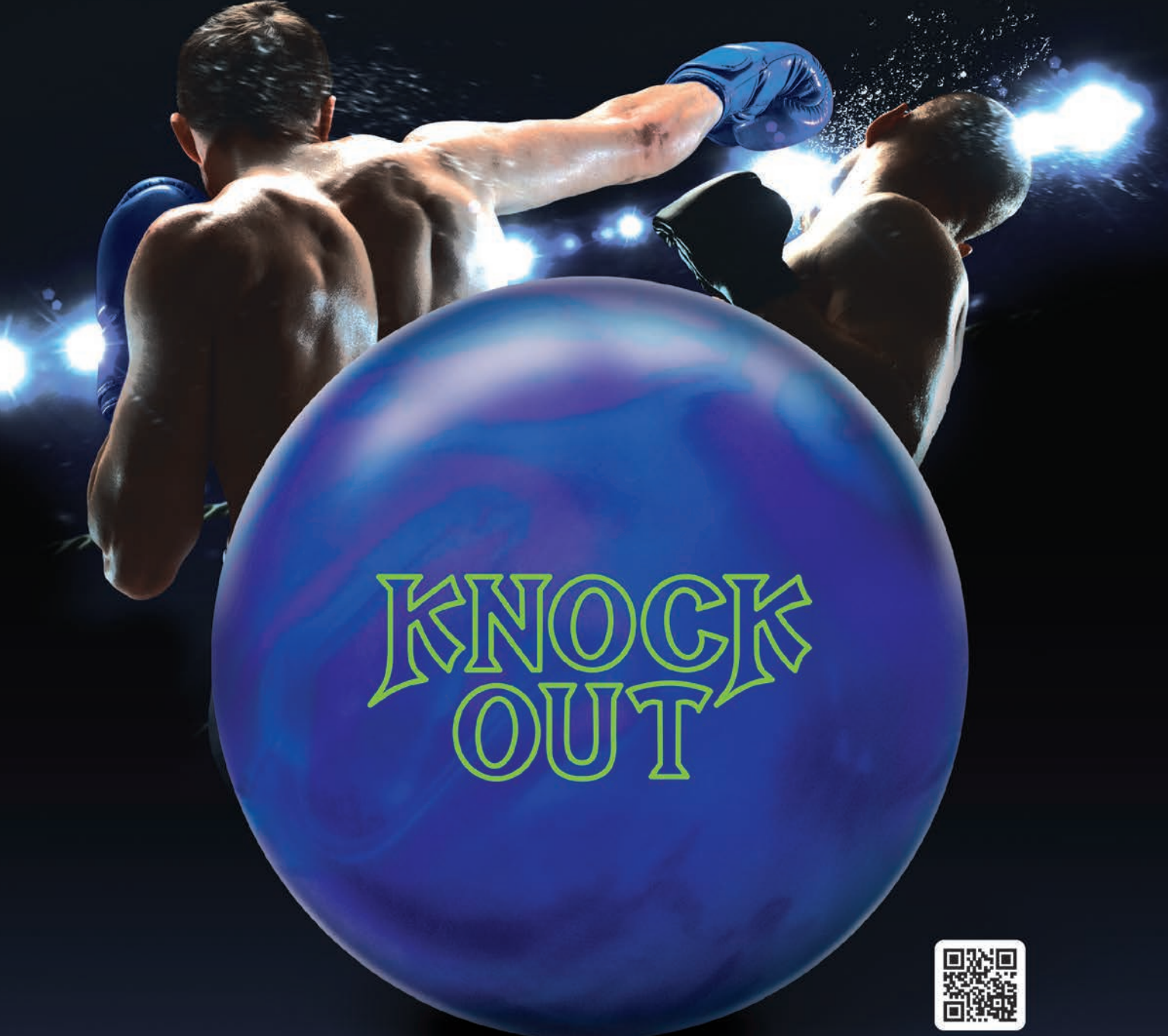
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The Sheet



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PBA titlist Kris Prather is among the stats leaders from the 2022 World Series of Bowling. He and other category leaders share their secrets.

photography
Professional Bowlers Association



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New Beginnings

One does not need to think back very far to recall a time when the events that culminated with this issue's cover story would have been impossible — athletes traveling from throughout the world to an international site and competing on a global stage.

The World Cup's resumption marks another milestone in bowling's roaring comeback from the gut-punch of a pandemic. No issue we publish provides as appropriate a platform for a note of hope for this sport's future than this, the first issue of the year, and the World Cup's comeback is as resounding a reason for hope as any.

Another feature in this issue — veteran bowling writer and broadcaster Emil Williams Jr.'s look at the story behind the inaugural Midwest Youth Main Event tournament, held in Iowa in October — bolsters that hope with a look at yet another reason why the next generation of stars may be the sport's most talented. Today's youth bowler fears no challenge, makes no excuses, and stops at nothing in their pursuit of greatness. With tournament organizers like Brandon Steen working tirelessly to provide that up-and-coming generation with opportunities to take their talents to soaring heights, there is every reason to believe that

bowling's own "greatest generation" is in the making.

For now, though, the Belmos, Troups, Simos and Tacketts remain firmly established in the sport's competitive stratosphere, and another feature in this issue provides a granular look at the greatness of those stars and many others. For that, have a look at Patrick Brettingen's review of the intensely data-driven statistical context Lanetalk gathered as players competed in the most recent World Series of Bowling.

While some of the numbers that feature explores might reinforce things we already knew about the sport's biggest names, the stats also reveal plenty of surprises. Along the way, Gold coach Bill Spigner takes a deeper look at the strategies of various players upon whom those stats cast a spotlight, including Kris Prather's take on lane-play, Tommy Jones and DJ Archer on spare shooting, Jason Sterner on ball motion, and more.

From storytelling to stats to instruction, you can count on this magazine to be there for you on the frontlines of the great deal of bowling that awaits in 2023. In the meantime, my wish for you is that this will be the year that you see your loftiest ambitions become realities on the lanes.

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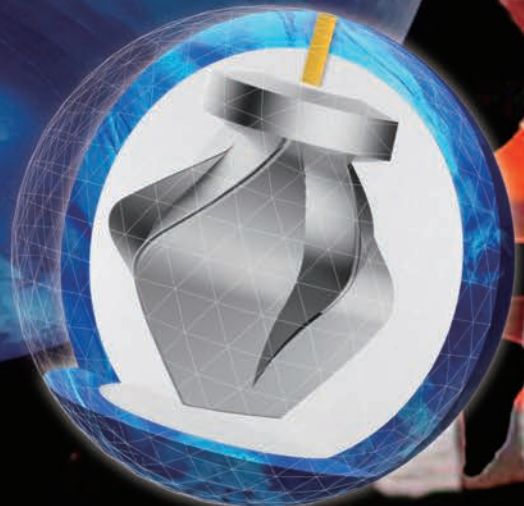
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THE BOWLING BALLET

Intense focus and concentration are evident in top-level tenpin competition, where accuracy is predicated on controlled athleticism. All are evident in the approach of Team Malaysia's Timmy Tan at the 2022 World Cup in Australia.

photography
International Bowling Federation

Hard Facts

18 years
317 days

The age at which Deo Benard of Roanoke, Texas, became the youngest player to win his third PBA title when he prevailed in the 2022 PBA South Point Open on Nov. 6, out-averaging runner-up George Gohagan III by nearly seven pins per game and exceeding his pinfall by 1,104. Looking for the next PBA great in the making? This Texas teen may be your man.



Stay Active, My Friends

The Most Interesting Man in Bowling?

HE HAS TRAVELED WITH A DANCE-CONVENTION tour as a stagehand. He's worked as a private DJ. He scores extra dough driving around town with a car full of saws after storms to clear debris for locals.

"This year, I've cut down a 60-foot maple. I did five dead ashes in a guy's backyard," Justin Wyman says. There's endless little trims and cleanups."

The digital signage you see on PBA Tour telecasts? The LED walls you've seen in some booths at Bowl Expo? He's behind that, too.

Oh yeah, and he just opened one of the country's most fascinating pro shops.

"Technically, I have five businesses," Wyman says. "I've got entertainment tech that does the shows and the stuff there. I've got JWI Audio that does AV installation, hanging TVs and doing the sound. We have a logistics company that supports moving all of this stuff all over the country. And then 12 X, which is the pro shop [in Rochester, New York]. And then I have the tree company."

Does he have time to sleep, the way we mere mortals do?

"Occasionally," he says. "If I'm not drilling balls or doing shows, I'm golfing or on the boat or something."

So basically, no. He doesn't sleep. Especially not after opening 12 X Tech pro shop last fall. Those folks waiting on Wyman to take a saw to their unruly maples might have to wait a while.

"This pro shop has taken up a lot of time. I've got like five or six people who are on the list to get stuff taken care of."

That's because it's not just any pro shop.

"You walk in, and I have a couch, two chairs and a refrigerator, a coffee table and then a recliner that's reserved for Ray," says Wyman, alluding to 93-year-old Ray DiSanto Sr., whose Bowlers World pro shop employed Wyman starting in 2000. That recliner's



not just "reserved;" it's roped off with a red, velvet rope and topped with the revered man's nameplate.

Which reveals the meticulous gestures that inform Wyman's vision for what he calls an "elevated" pro shop.

"You walk into this lounge area that has a 75-inch TV on the wall, a little breakfast bar with bar stools where you can sit down and have lunch. Then you walk into the product. So, you don't just walk into a 'pro shop.'"

A 50-inch TV is dedicated to each of five ball brands, each screen showing their respective brand's YouTube content around the clock. And the technology? Let's put it this way: "If the industry offers it, I have it."

"It's been a pretty crazy adventure in the bowling industry as a whole," Wyman adds.

At age 39, it is safe to say that adventure only has just gotten started.



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Dream A Little Dream

This Year, Put the 'Resolve' in 'Resolution'

by DIANDRA ASBATY



WE ALL KNOW THAT JANUARY COMES with the temptation to assign ourselves those pesky “New Year’s Resolutions.” What we often don’t know is how to make sure we’re committed enough to our goals that we’ll stay true to them past this month.

Draw Your Goal Map

Here’s the thing: There is an art to goal setting. That art begins with drawing what I like to call a “goal map.” Just thinking about your goals won’t magically manifest them, which is why it helps to map them. But when mapping the way to your goal, bear in mind some dos and some donts.

Make sure your goal is something that moves you. Some questions to ponder here might be: Where do you feel that “spark” in your life? What can’t you stop thinking about? Something that sparks me is making the Elite Youth Tour as good a platform for youth bowlers as it can be.

Make a Plan

Next, make a plan. It’s the planning that connects you to your goal. In bowling, that means planning your daily and weekly practices and drills. Oh, and how much time are you spending on your mental game? Be honest with yourself.

Got your plan? Now it’s time to dedicate yourself. Understand that you get out what you put in. Putting in half the effort in practice? Expect half the results.

No Goal is Beyond Your Grasp

Believe in the steps and get up when you fall down. If the journey were easy, everyone would be a champion.

When I first set up the Elite Youth Tour, I didn’t just think about

my goals for it. I wrote them down. I wanted to have national youth champions and Junior Gold champions on my tour. I knew I had to consistently put in the work holding tournaments, maintaining a great supporting team, and creating scholarship opportunities.

After years of that level of consistency, the EYT does have national champions and Junior Gold champions. Understand that no goal is beyond your reach.

Set Goals that Make You a Little Uneasy

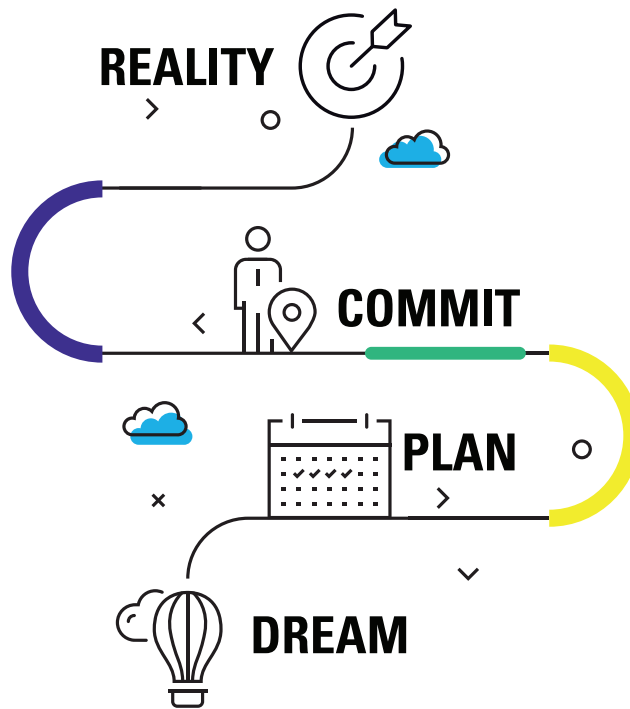
Your comfort zone is a place to avoid when goal setting. That’s where most people live. But do you know who isn’t living there? Champions. Champions aren’t afraid to be uncomfortable. If you want to accomplish something you’ve never done, you have to do the things you’ve never done and feel the things you’ve never felt.

Beware of safe goals. Most people set goals they know they can accomplish. Did you ever think about what would happen if you set goals that people tell you are impossible? Something cool happens when you set those lofty goals and actively work toward them: You land higher than you might if you only aimed for your safe goal.

Go for it!

May your path be defined, and may your heart be invested. May your goals be lofty, and may they last much longer than the first month of the year.

Diandra Asbaty is a World Bowling Writers Hall of Famer, 2012 USBC Queens champion, and winner of more than 70 medals around the world during her 15 years representing Team USA.



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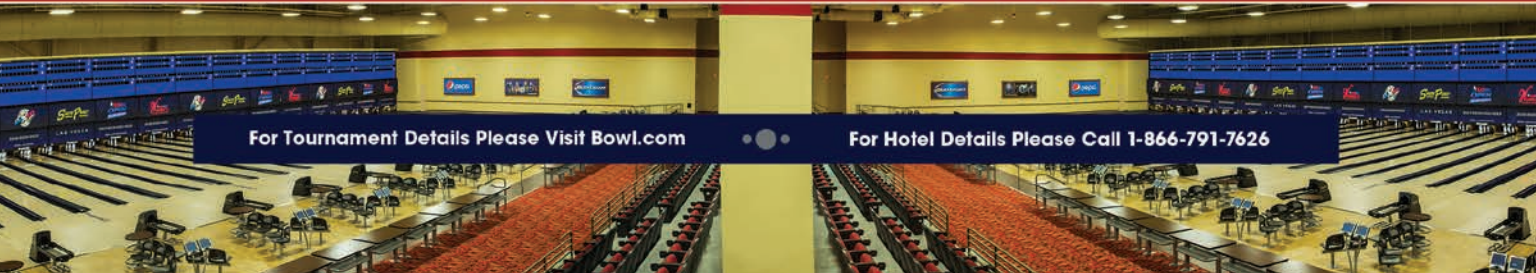
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The One Board

23 Guarantees* for 2023

*Based on Entries

by JEF GOODGER



IN THE ONE BOARD'S seventh annual year-start countup, we prognosticate some of the most important and imminent bowling happenings.

1. Live, televised match-play rounds of PBA majors give more viewers than ever a great perspective on what it takes to make it to the championship match: an unwavering trust of The Process.
2. Aside from a bunch of Super Bowls and the final episodes of M.A.S.H. and Dallas, nothing has captivated the television viewing audience like a heaping helping of Process trusting
3. The USBC Masters moves into its fifth month of touting “selling out in 10 hours” before a single ticket for a fan is even offered for sale.
4. Related: every MLB team sells out all 162 games in 2023 by fielding nine players with 16 players on the waiting list for each team.
5. Baseball fans complain that the MLB should have “just added more defensive positions to increase the player salaries.”
6. When the sold-out Masters is finally complete, another PBA Tour superstar has another major championship.
7. At some point during the year, a bowling ball that changes the entire industry is released: The (brand confidential) Otra Bola.
8. Bowlers start to realize how untrustworthy The Process really is. With dozens of players trusting The Process throughout every event, but only one player winning each time, it's undeniable The Process is not only untrustworthy, but a bit of a conniving, backstabbing, fickle jerk.
9. Players continue trusting The Process.
10. How can they not? It's not about results.
11. Besides, the guy who picked up the trophy also trusted The Process and was rewarded with the ideal result even though results don't matter. The only solution is to trust The Process even harder.
12. People start trusting The Process so hard they let it borrow their cars, live in their houses while they're gone and take their significant others to dinner.
13. Cars get stolen. Houses get destroyed. Relationships end badly. But it's okay; it's not about results.
14. An alliance is formed among all major sports leagues to improve the pace of play. Bowling, obviously, opts out of the alliance.
15. Bowling objects so strongly to the alliance that the PWBA adds a D squad to every event.
16. Feeling challenged by the PWBA's initiative, the PBA50 adds an E squad.
17. With PBA qualifying now streaming on BowlTV along with the PWBA and PBA50 Tours, collegiate high-fiving and a live look at some guy on his couch thinking about finger pitches, the why-can't-bowling-be-in-one-place argument is moot, forcing fans to find something else to detest. They choose an old standby: formats.
18. Oh, man.
19. Speaking of formats, the 17-player stepladder at the Tournament of Champions sets new ratings records as the No. 17 seed climbs all the way to the semifinal match, finishing third. Winning would be too much to ask and the top seed automatically finishes second, so the No. 2 seed wins.
20. “I like variety.” A million games this week, a dozen next week, match play without bonus pins next month, match play with bonus pins after that, bracket here, total pins there, all qualifying, no qualifying, practice, grueling grind, carry contest, Matrix of Fairness, a little of everything.
21. The NFL adopts a similar policy, varying the number of quarters (but still calling them quarters) and the lengths of those quarters from week to week. Field goals are worth four points in months ending in “ember” and three points in all other months. Extra points are still worth one point, but if the kicker is over 60 years old when making the point, he receives \$1,000. Touchdowns are not allowed on Thursdays except in the third quarter, if there is a third quarter, during which touchdowns are worth 47 points each.
22. The bracket format at the PBA Players Championship leads to one of the best season-ending events in PBA history. Three Player of the Year candidates advance to the semifinals and two of them advance to the finals. The winner is ultimately voted Player of the Year.
23. Regardless of how exciting, engrossing and audience-building any of the 2023 PBA, PWBA and PBA50 seasons are, one thing remains undeniable: Need more games.

Happy New Year, bowling fans. May your yanks hold, your out-the-windows hit trees and your focus remain on The Process.

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Generation Next

Amanda Granata

FLORHAM PARK, NJ

AGE 16

MAJBT CHAMPION

THIS STANDOUT SENIOR AT Morris County School of Technology has flourished in the high-school ranks as team captain. That performance brought her to the notice of the Youngstown State University bowling program, with which she signed a letter of intent in November.

Granata, who plans to bowl the Team USA Trials this month, is a three-time member of the New Jersey Athletic Conference first team and the New Jersey All-State team. The Morris County Triple Crown winner also has been a mainstay on Billy Gasn's always challenging and competitive Mid-Atlantic Junior Bowling Tour, where she found frequent success even while often competing among the boys and, for the 2021-22 season, earned Female Scratch Player of the Year honors. Granata, to date, owns two MAJBT titles.

The New Jersey Youth Bowlers Tour Trios champion recorded a 25th-place finish in the 2022 USBC Junior Gold Championships' U18 division. It is safe to say that, in at least this respect, Granata has come a very long way in a very short time. When Granata bowled her first Junior Gold event in 2017 when Cleveland hosted the tournament, explains mom Tracy, "She had one ball when she went out there. She didn't know. We didn't have any of the stuff that people have. She begged me to buy her a ball when we were out there so she'd have two. She didn't do very well. I think she averaged 136 in U12. She'd never bowled on a sport shot and knew nothing about that."

All of which amounts to an experience that might have devastated someone without the heart and work ethic of Amanda Granata. The girl was not at all discouraged. Precisely the opposite, in fact.

"I was like, 'Well, you did your best, you had a lot of fun, met a lot of great people.' And she was like, 'I have to learn how to do that.'"

Many clinics, lessons and competitions followed. "She just got better and better." And now? Now she has a scholarship to a college bowling program. Not bad for a kid who averaged 136 for her first crack at Junior Gold.

And don't sleep on this budding star's performance in the classroom, either. She has a 4.37 GPA and aims to major in pre-veterinary medicine and biology, though her burning passion specifically is in zoology, including animal behavior and nutrition.

"She has a dual enrollment right now at the county college. She's doing amazing." As is Tracy, for that matter, who has raised Amanda as a single mom.



Go-Getter

Granata has come a very long way since her first Junior Gold less than six years ago.

Madi Phillips

SPRINGFIELD, MO

AGE 17

SOUTHWEST GOLD TOUR CHAMPION

Hailing from the same area that has brought the bowling world the likes of youth star Spencer Robarge and PBA Tour champion Keven Williams, this Missouri prodigy steadily is carving out a legacy of her own. Most recently, Phillips scored her sixth title on the Southwest Gold Tour, a circuit on which, in addition to Robarge, other stars have left their mark including Brandon Bonta, Silas Limes and Eric Jones. The PBA Junior Regional champion also has won titles on the Midwest Youth Scholarship Tour, the Gateway Tour, and the Heart of America Tour. In September, she announced her commitment to bowl for Wichita State University. And the girl can sing, too. In November, boasts dad Jeff, “She found out that she has been selected to participate in a national choir that will be singing in Cincinnati in February. Over 4,000 kids auditioned for this choir.” In fact, you might see her sing the National Anthem at a bowling tournament near you, something she has done often in recent years.

College Bound

This teen titan has committed to bowl with none other than Wichita State.



2017

WHAT ARE THEY UP TO?

ZACK SINGER

23 | Blooming, IN | **GENERATION NEXT DEBUT** January 2017

When Bowlers Journal readers last saw this Midwest standout's name flash across the pages of Generation Next, he was a 16-year-old lefty two-hander making waves out of Buffalo Grove, Illinois, who had just helped Stevenson High School claim its first state championship. He also went on to become the third bowler in state history to win both team and individual titles in that tournament in the same year. Now, he is a recent graduate of Purdue University who is giving back in a number of ways. Singer currently serves as head coach of the Indiana University bowling team while also devoting a lot of time — and mileage — to his role as director of the Wisconsin Youth Bowlers Tour. None other than PBA Tour Commissioner Tom Clark has praised the WYBT as “a great tournament series, with great venues and a great tournament director.” Singer attributes that generous devotion of time and effort to bowling to “just being really passionate about it,” adding that, “I’m trying to stay in the bowling industry as much as possible right now as a recent college graduate. It just brings me joy to help bowlers and see their improvement, both on and off the lanes. It’s what I love to do.”

Conversation

JACK LIPPERT

At 90 years old, Jack Lippert has spent the better part of his life in bowling centers, getting his first job setting pins at age 13. Over eight decades, the Chicago native has had his share of memorable moments, the most recent coming during a practice session with his coach, Gregg Zicha at Fox Bowl in Wheaton, Illinois, in mid-November. Lippert bowled a 300 — his fifth overall. This one was not certified like two of the others were, but, had it been, he would have tied for being the oldest person ever to throw a 300 game. He spoke with us about the feat.

Q So, what's the secret to throwing a perfect game at age 90?

A I was just standing there with my bowling coach and he was telling me what to do, so I just followed his instructions. That made it easy.

Q How long have you been working with Gregg?

A I've seen him off and on through the years, working together for about 12 years now. The past couple of years, we've been working together more regularly. I go with my son the last Friday of the month to Fox Lane for a lesson and then we go out for dinner. We do it together to have fun. Gregg is a swell guy and he helps me a lot.

Q Take me through that momentous day. Did you do anything different?

A That particular day, I was getting my bowling lesson and I just started striking. He stated to film it after about six strikes. I had been bowling bad lately and I told Gregg I hadn't been doing great, and my timing was off, so he changed that and had me maintain my backswing for a brief second. He was giving me directions and it was perfect. There was not one lucky strike. They were 12 perfect strikes. I was just locked in a zone.

Q When did it first cross your mind that you had a shot for a 300?

A I didn't really know how many strikes I had. I knew I was getting close to the end, but I didn't want to change my thoughts or look at someone, because I didn't want to get out of the zone. I knew I was in the 12th frame when I threw the ball, so I just kept bowling. I can't explain how I knew it was the last frame. I threw three to four more strikes when I started the next game as well. I did five games for the day.

Q Your regular league night was later that night. How did you bowl in that?

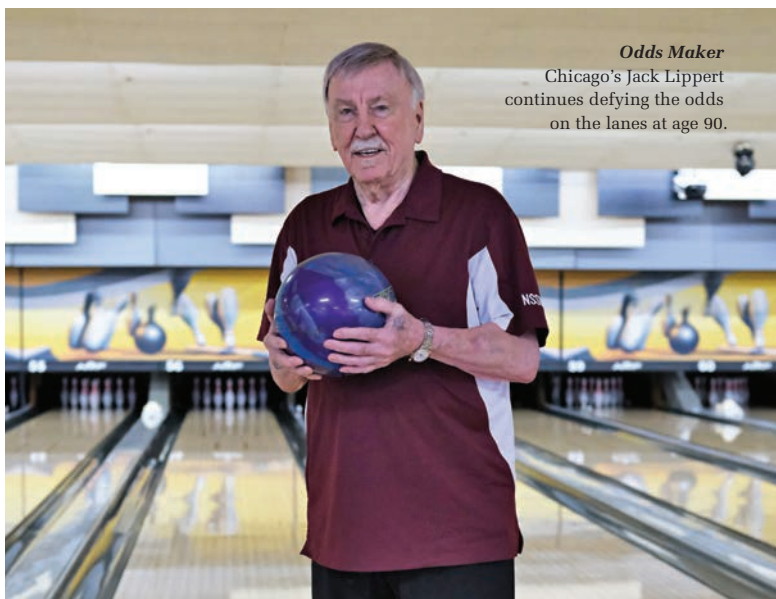
A I couldn't bowl a damn, it was so bizarre. I was so locked in the afternoon, but I think I shot a 560 that night — not very good. I do average 190 in the league.

Q Tell me about your other 300 games in your career.

A I had one at 83 which was sanctioned, which at that age isn't that common. My first was when I was 78 in a tournament, and I shot 807. I also have a 298 watch and a 298 ring from back in 1968. I have three non-sanctioned 300s now. I'm very pleased with what I've accomplished.

Q Over your career, you have thrown four other perfect games and won 44 bowling tournaments in the Chicagoland area. What's your most memorable moment?

A My biggest thrill of all time was when I



Odds Maker
Chicago's Jack Lippert continues defying the odds on the lanes at age 90.

bowled in the ABT Nationals in Las Vegas at the age of 86. This tournament had over 1,500 entries to try and win the \$20,000. I missed winning that by 18 pins after 14 games of bowling and came in second to win \$5,000.

Q Did you ever get involved in professional bowling?

A I bowled in leagues for years and years and my first professional tournament was at Hawthorn Lanes, but I found out I wasn't capable for that world. I'm good for amateur or handicapped leagues. I came in 33rd in that first tournament and missed cashing by eight pins. I averaged 215.

Q Your first job was at a bowling center. Were you a bowler at the time?

A Yes. My first job was setting pins at 13 and it was a way for me to bowl for free. I did that from 1947 until 1952. It was also a way to make money because there weren't a lot of jobs you could do at my age. We had another pin boy, so he would spot for me while I bowled and I would spot for him, so it was a good job.

Q When did you start bowling in leagues and taking it more seriously?

A My dad was never a big-time bowler, but he was a bowler and I bowled on his team

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Conversation

for a couple of years. When I got to Bell & Howell in 1957, they had five leagues and I joined two of them, and I started leading the leagues right away. In 1999, I started bowling with the senior traveling league.

Q You've served as president of the Bell & Howell bowling league for 57 years. What keeps you motivated to continue in that role at age 90?

A That's a record for the USBC. I just enjoy it and never saw a reason to stop. Nowadays, I'm automatically elected. I know it so well that it's an easy job. I like to maintain the longevity. It's an honor to me to know that I'm president longer than anyone else.

Q Do you believe bowling has aided in your health and wellbeing throughout your life?

A Yes, definitely. About a year ago, I hurt my left shoulder and I didn't bowl for about 3 to 4 weeks and it was horrible. I really missed it. I feel if you don't do it, you lose it, so I keep bowling. A lot of people my age have a sore knee or sore back or sore hip or something and I don't have any of that. So why not keep bowling? I like bowling competitively and the thrill of competition.

Q What are the two leagues you're in now and how are you doing?

A My senior traveling league meets on Thursday at 10:30 in the morning and I'm averaging 187. There's one guy older than me — he's 92. For the Bell & Howell League, which meets at Classic Bowl on Friday nights, I'm averaging 190. We have 18 teams now and it's great, but I can't out-average these kids anymore because of the hook-in-a-box balls that they sell nowadays. You can't compete with that.

Q Any other changes that you believe have changed the sport considerably over your years?

A The lane conditioning is considerably different from the past. In the old days, they used varnish, but now they use different kinds of oil and the oil pattern dictates your scoring possibilities. It pretty much tells you whether you're going to score big or small. You also see two-handed bowlers a lot, which is a big change.

Q Your car's license plate reads "BOWL R 76." What's the significance of that?

A I have seven children and six grandkids, so that's where the 76 comes in.

Q You mentioned your son earlier. Have you been able to pass your love of the game down to any of your other children or grandchildren?

A My son is an avid bowler and he's starting to catch up to me. My daughter was a bowler but she hurt her shoulder and dropped out about 10 years ago. Another daughter is just a house bowler for fun. The rest of my kids know how to bowl but none of them are bowlers and the same with my grandkids.

Q Do you have any superstitions or things you do before hitting the lanes?

A I'm not very superstitious, but I have a pattern I do before I bowl. I pick up my ball, concentrate on my target and stand there a second and zone out thoughts, but nothing special. That's the only thing I do.

Q What is it about bowling that you enjoy?

A It's fun and a good sport. The friends that you meet through the years are unbelievable. I have so many great acquaintances and friends that I have developed through the years. It's something to look forward to every week and get you out of the house. It's healthy and keeps you loose, and it feels good to be competitive.



The Prez

Lippert has served as president of his league for 57 years (with Danny Ullenbrauck, Ron La Bellarte and Marty Ullenbrauck, l-r).

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Action

Make It Reign Team Challenge Brings Back Memories

ANYONE WHO REMEMBERS the American Bowling Congress Brunswick World Team Challenge in the 1990s and early 2000s certainly will appreciate what Pete Ferraro has created in central Florida.

He is the tournament director of the Make It Reign Team Challenge, which was held for the fourth consecutive year Nov. 26-27 at the 28-lane Sunshine Bowling Center in DeLand. He has joined with Sunshine Managing Partner Scott Newell to cater to a growing event that reached a record 25 teams this year.

"The Team Challenge was one of the best tournaments ever," said Ferraro, a cousin of Professional Bowlers Association Hall of Famer Dave Ferraro. "Everyone loves team bowling and that's one of the reasons I started this tournament, to bring back that atmosphere."

Make It Reign features five-player teams consisting of one senior, one female and any combination of three others. Each team rolls five traditional games on Saturday and 18 Baker games on Sunday with the top five moving into a bracket determined by a unique formula.

After each traditional game, teams earned points based on their finish — this year 25 for first place, 24 for second, etc. All teams returned Sunday and were awarded the same diminishing points based on pinfall for each two-game match. Additional bonus points were awarded to the top five each day based on total pinfall. Then the fifth-place and fourth-place

teams met to face the top qualifier with that winner going against the winner of second and third.

"He had an idea of running something big," said Newell, himself a PBA Tour champion who won the 2012 PBA Ricart Ford Open for his lone title. "We both really like team bowling. It's the heart of the sport in my opinion. He had this concept of the points making the pinfall a little less important and put more emphasis on having to grind out every point."

Originally scheduled to begin Labor Day Weekend of 2019, the tournament was moved to Thanksgiving weekend after a hurricane hit Florida and has stayed on that weekend ever since.

"The make up of the teams and the talent level have grown every year," said Ferraro, a New York native and long-time bowler who plans to compete on the PBA50 Tour after turning 50 in January. "Word of mouth and getting exposure is what I'm looking for each year. Last year, the exposure came when Jason Couch made the 7-10 split in the semifinal match to send his team to the finals."

This year's winning team consisted of former Team USA member David O'Sullivan, past Junior Team USA member Kenny Ryan, PBA Hall of Famer Danny Wiseman and Professional Women's Bowling Association stars Ashly Galante and Dasha Kovalova. They split the \$7,500 first prize.

Pay Dirt

A Thanksgiving vacation yielded a decent payday for PWBA star Dasha Kovalova.



Kovalova didn't know what awaited her when Galante, who was hosting her for Thanksgiving, convinced her to compete.

"Ashly was telling me about this little tournament and then we were standing in the parking lot and I saw Walter Ray pulling up and later I saw Kyle Troup," she said. "I asked Ashly, 'What kind of tournament is this?' I was just there for a good time and it turned into a good payday."

She also had no idea who besides Galante was on her team.

"The first time I figured out who was on my team was when I walked in the bowling alley and asked where we were bowling," Kovalova said. "I'm not very good at that stuff. I'm just here to bowl."

Two weeks after winning the Make It Reign, Kovalova became a homeowner in Muskegon, Michigan. She lives with her parents, who came to the United States from their native Ukraine soon after escaping the Russian invasion.

"I'm living the American dream. I'm in debt," she joked.

— Mark Miller



Thankful

Chalk up Ashly Galante's win with PWBA peer Dasha Kovalova to holiday happenstance.

Chris Barnes Thanksgiving Classic Continues to Flourish

EVEN AFTER 18 YEARS as one of the America's marquee youth tournaments, people remain impressed with the Chris Barnes Thanksgiving Classic.

This year's event at Plano Super Bowl in suburban Dallas featured 216 entrants and paid out \$20,500 in scholarships through the United States Bowling Congress SMART program. Entry fees covered half the prize fund, with current sponsors including 900 Global, Coolwick, Vice Inserts, JB's Allen Bowl and Plano Super Bowl providing the rest.

That combination has kept a steady stream of talented youth participating and sponsors contributing. Barnes estimates more than \$400,000 in scholarships has been given out overall.

"The idea is to try and help high-end bowlers get through school a little easier and to provide opportunities for athletically-talented kids to choose to bowl at an age when we typically lose them," Barnes said.

Barnes started the tournament in 2005 at what is now Bowlero Euleess. He patterned it after youth scholarship events in which he competed as a youth in Wichita, Kansas. Barnes believes the notoriety of his U.S. Open win that year played a major role in being able to launch the tournament.

It moved to Plano in 2010 and has been there ever since in large part due to the efforts of owner and newly elected USBC Hall of Famer Jamie Brooks, general manager Scott Craddock and youth director Joyce Claus and their staff.

"One of the nice things about having the tournament at the same place each year is the familiarity," Barnes said. "It eliminates a hurdle."

Claus said for the first time, the tournament employed the 10-pin average rule this year to rerate players in the handicap divisions.

"It evened out the plateau for everyone and nobody complained about it," said Claus, who oversees one of the largest youth programs in North Texas. "It was welcoming and fair for everybody."

Bowlers aged 17 and under by July 31 are eligible to compete. Each roll five qualifying games with the top 16 in the 185 and above scratch, best 12 in 184 and under handicap and top 8 in 13 and Young-

Action

er handicap divisions advancing to the semifinals. The top eight in the upper two divisions and six in the younger group move to a round-robin finals.

The tournament put down what Barnes called a “medium playable side” Sport Bowling pattern prepared by Kegel’s John Janawicz several years back. For years, the event matched the previous week’s PBA pattern.

“The level of bowling has increased so much I wanted it to be where it’s playable enough that the best bowlers can score well if they can get it figured out, and at the same time not make it so easy you can just throw it anywhere,” Barnes said.

This year’s winners were Jacob Lesifko in the scratch division, Caden Terry in the 184 and under and James Polk in 13 and younger.

Among those who caught Barnes’s eye this year were Lesifko, Garrett Andrus (third in scratch after placing second in 2021), Brady McDonough (eighth) and Developmental Junior Team USA member Keegan Alexander (14th after fourth in 2021 and 10th in 2020 scratch and first in 13 and under in 2019.).

“This was Jacob’s kind of coming out party,” Barnes said. “I think it’s the first thing he’s won. Garrett is someone I’ve seen for a while. He’s probably disappointed since some of the guys who had sat in front of him for a few years were finally out of his way. I’m sure he thought he had a good chance to win.

Lesifko, a 16-year-old junior at Cedar Ridge High School near Austin, won in his first year in the tournament. He grew up in

the Detroit area and moved to Texas from Shreveport, Louisiana. He has been taught by former pro and Team USA member Nathan Bohr.

Originally a traditional bowler before the COVID-19 pandemic, Lesifko switched to two-handed and found more success, culminating with his win in the Barnes event.

“I really honestly didn’t think I would win it going into the tournament because I was 14th going into the top 16 and somehow found a line,” he said. “I was using urethane, kept my composure and tried picking up as many spares as I could and it overall worked.”

Brothers Drake and Trey Durlfingler have competed at multiple Barnes events. Drake, 18, who graduated from Liberty Hill High School soon after the event, placed 12th in scratch while Trey, 12, ended third in 13 and under. The one-handed righty Drake won the 184 and under in 2020 and was second in qualifying in scratch in 2021 while the two-handed lefty Trey placed ninth in 13 and under in 2020 and fourth in 2019.

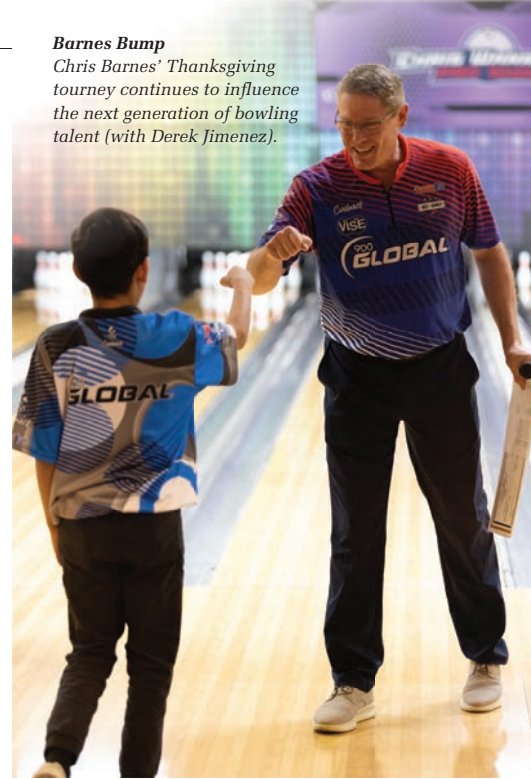
Since graduating, Drake has been working at Austin’s Highland Lanes Pro Shop, practicing his game and competing in events like PBA regionals and the Team USA Trials. He plans to do that until next fall when he heads off to college at William Paterson, St. Ambrose, Lindenwood, SCAD-Savannah or McKendree.

“I think the first thing I love is the difficulty,” Drake said of the tournament. “It’s not the easiest tournament and easiest pattern.

“I like that there’s a Friday night tournament where you can earn extra money if you

Barnes Bump

Chris Barnes’ Thanksgiving tourney continues to influence the next generation of bowling talent (with Derek Jimenez).



sign up early. And it’s super fluid. You can ask Chris some questions between squads and he hosts a Q&A. It’s just a super fun tournament.”

Their father Todd said both started competing recreationally, then moved to the competitive ranks after finding how much they enjoyed the sport.

“It attracts high-level talent for them to be competing against, and a lot of familiar faces, which is great,” Todd said of the event. “I like the format they do for the finals. They use a pretty competitive pattern, which is a great experience for the boys. Chris is always there. Always supportive of the kids and willing to take the time to have side conversations and Q&A, which is great for the kids.”

— Mark Miller



The Barnzy Bunch

Barnes celebrates another group of top youth talent, including Jaxon Wichers, Kimberlyn Hamlin, Ryan Jimenez, Morgan Martin, Ethan Radcliff, Trey Durlfingler, Amber Hill, Caden Terry, l-r.

WHAT IS YOUR ELEMENT?



100% LANE MAINTENANCE



Drill Bits

Signed, Sealed, Delivered

Understanding the pros and cons of your personal follow-through.

The follow-through can be considered a player's autograph to each shot. Just like signatures, the look can range from indecipherable and erratic, to neat and efficient and, in some cases, full and flourishing.

Once the ball is out of a player's possession, the bowling arm and hand cannot influence where it is traveling and how it is rotating. But, make no mistake, the follow-through is highly reflective of the technique that preceded it. In many cases, working on the specifics of the post-release motion can improve accuracy, rotational potency, and repetitiveness of shot-making. Here are five follow-through styles and their defining characteristics...

1: The Non-Follow-Through

This iteration of the follow-through is notable for its severely interrupted finish. This is not a typical problem because, unless considerable imbalance prohibits swing continuation (not the case here), it takes more effort to abruptly cut off the upswing than to let it proceed. A follow-through need not be extensive, and the deployment of it has worked to great effect for players such as PBA Tour champion Stu Williams. But, for the non-pro, having no follow-through often is a style that risks a lack of direction and a lame ball reaction.

2: The Dreaded Chicken-Wing

The "chicken wing" follow-through is a much more common malady. It is usually the consequence of trying to produce turn and revs despite a weak hand position at the release, further complicated by tension in the grip. Addressing those root causes is crucial although, in the meantime, a more effective ball roll — and a tamed-down chicken-wing finish — could be achieved simply by relaxing the hand and scaling back the effort to rev it up.

1



Stu's Way
Stu Williams sporting
the 'non-follow through.'

2



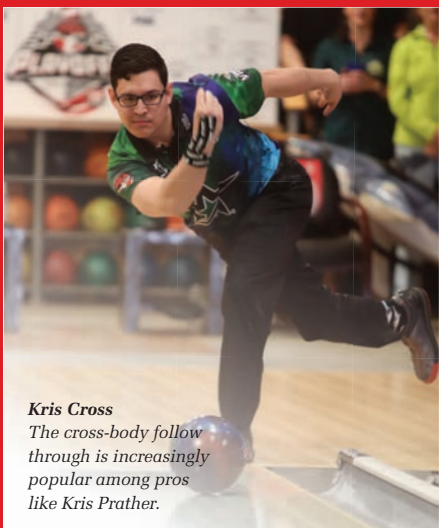


DATE	TIME (ET)	TOURNAMENT	CHANNEL	DATE	TIME (ET)	TOURNAMENT	CHANNEL
SAT. 2/4	4:00P	U.S. OPEN MATCH PLAY	FS1	SAT. 5/6	10:30P	PBA PLAYERS CHAMPIONSHIP MATCH PLAY	FS1
SUN. 2/5	2:00P	U.S. OPEN	FOX	SUN. 5/7	12:00P	PBA PLAYERS CHAMPIONSHIP MATCH PLAY	FS1
SUN. 2/19	1:00P	PBA COLLEGIATE CHAMPIONSHIP	FS1	SUN. 5/7	9:30P	PBA PLAYERS CHAMPIONSHIP MATCH PLAY	FS1
FRI. 3/17	10:00P	PBA TOURNAMENT OF CHAMPIONS MATCH PLAY	FS1	SAT. 5/13	12:30P	PBA PLAYERS CHAMPIONSHIP SEMIFINALS	FS1
SAT. 3/18	7:30P	PBA TOURNAMENT OF CHAMPIONS MATCH PLAY	FS1	SUN. 5/14	1:00P	PBA PLAYERS CHAMPIONSHIP	FOX
SAT. 3/18	9:30P	PBA TOURNAMENT OF CHAMPIONS MATCH PLAY	FS1	SAT. 5/20	2:00P	PBA SUPER SLAM CUP MATCH PLAY	FS1
SUN. 3/19	12:00P	PBA TOURNAMENT OF CHAMPIONS	FOX	SUN. 5/21	2:00P	PBA SUPER SLAM CUP	FOX
SAT. 3/25	7:30P	PBA JR. NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP	FS1	PBA LEAGUE ELIAS CUP			
FRI. 3/31	7:00P	USBC MASTERS MATCH PLAY	FS1	SUN. 9/24	5:00P	PBA LEAGUE ELIAS CUP QUARTERFINALS	FS1
SUN. 4/2	1:00P	USBC MASTERS	FOX	MON. 9/25	7:00P	PBA LEAGUE ELIAS CUP QUARTERFINALS	FS1
PBA WORLD SERIES OF BOWLING XVI				TUES. 9/26	8:00P	PBA LEAGUE ELIAS CUP SEMIFINALS	FS1
SAT. 4/15	2:00P	USA VS. THE WORLD MATCH PLAY	FS1	WED. 9/27	8:00P	PBA LEAGUE ELIAS CUP FINALS	FS1
SUN. 4/16	12:00P	USA VS. THE WORLD	FS1	SUN. 10/1	7:00P	PBA LEAGUE CERTIFIED BOWLER CLASH	FS1
MON. 4/17	7:00P	PBA CHEETAH CHAMPIONSHIP	FS1				
TUES. 4/18	7:00P	PBA SCORPION CHAMPIONSHIP	FS1				
WED. 4/19	7:00P	PBA SHARK CHAMPIONSHIP	FS1				
SUN. 4/23	12:00P	PBA WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP	FOX				

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3



Kris Cross
The cross-body follow through is increasingly popular among pros like Kris Prather.

3: Cross-body Conundrum

A follow-through that finishes to the left of a bowler's head (for a righthander) appears to be an obvious pull that also compromises the opportunity to impart counter-clockwise side rotation on the shot. But these days, an increasing number of bowlers approximate this finishing position with effectiveness, made possible by greatly increased lateral spine tilt. Among the most successful practitioners of this follow-through are PWBA Tour star Diana Zavjalova and PBA Tour standout Kris Prather. As the success those players have enjoyed makes clear, when the ball is underneath the left side, or fully left, of a player's head, a follow-through in that direction is not actually a pull. In fact, combined with other factors, it potentially makes for quite a powerful delivery.

4: The Flair Out

A follow-through that goes up, before fanning to the outside, was the typical finishing look of bowling greats Steve Nagy and Dick Weber. In his Bowler of the Year seasons of 1971 and '72, it was mostly trademarked by Don Johnson, who posted that position almost without fail. Such a follow-through is evidence that the bowler is "trusting the swing," thus a strong antidote to the destructive effects of a pulled or chicken-wing arm action.

5: The Traditional Standard

A follow-through that finishes in the manner exhibited here is evidence that the player accelerated through the release point, stroked the ball down the target line, and maintained balance throughout the entire athletic effort. If you learn to finish roughly in this manner, almost certainly much will be right in your pre-release technique. Then, all that remains is your personal finishing autograph.

— Lyle Zikes

4



With Flair
Few flair-out follow-throughs rivaled Don Johnson's.

5



Drill Bits

Don't Ditch that New Ball After Two Games

Why and how to experiment with surface changes.

The holiday gift-giving season can be a fun time of year, especially for bowlers who find a new ball or two in their pile of presents. But the smiles and excitement that accompany drilling new bowling balls can quickly spiral into frowns and frustration when those balls don't give us the reaction we're looking for. Here's what to do if I just described your situation. . .

Go Beyond the Surface

Write this down: I will not be one of those guys or gals who decides that a ball is garbage and sells it off after five games. I'll put in the time and effort to experiment with surface changes before reaching my final conclusions.

You wouldn't just throw \$200-250 dollars in the garbage, so why would you get rid of a ball that costs that much for pennies on the dollar before ever really learning whether or not that ball can work for you?

That's where surface experimentation comes in.

Pads, Compounds and Polishes. Oh, My!

As you already know, there are many different types of sanding pads and discs out there, and they come in a wide assortment of surface grits. Likewise, there are all sorts of compounds and polishes available at your local pro shop as well.

If your new ball isn't impressing you right out of the box, it may just be that the surface finish the manufacturer chose isn't a good fit for you and your game.

A ball finished at 1500-grit with polish looks awfully good sitting on a shelf or coming out of a box, but it may not give you the traction you need on your long, heavy house shot, especially if you have high ball speed or a lower rev rate.

No worries. Break out the sanding pads and try that ball at 2000 without polish. If it's still not reading the lane where and how you'd like, take it down to 1000, and keep going down until you start seeing the read and reaction that works for you.

The same premise works in the other direction as well.

Oh, your new, dull hook monster is grabbing at your toes or burning up and rolling out? Smooth the surface out by hitting the ball with a higher-grit pad, and keep doing so until you find a more usable reaction.

It's still hooking too much or too early? Consider adding some compound or polish as well.

Love Your Ball Conditionally, and Other Remedies

If surface adjustments still don't get you where you want to be, consider keeping that ball off to the side for trips to other centers where you may encounter conditions better suited to its strengths.

If you're strictly a one-house bowler, as a last-ditch effort, go see your pro shop professional to discuss the possibility of redrilling the ball with a different layout.

The point here is don't give up on a ball too early. Sure, it's great when we get exactly what we're looking for right out of the box, but that doesn't always happen.

So the next time you find yourself unimpressed by your newest ball, dedicate some time to doing some surface experimentation. If you do, you may just turn that frustrating lump of coal into the diamond that has you striking like never before!

— Gene J. Kanak



Training Camp

COME TO GRIPS WITH THESE FINGER POSITIONS

Four ways to use your non-gripping fingers to your advantage

by GENE J. KANAK

If you're even a semi-competitive bowler, you should know the importance of having the proper fit in your bowling balls. After all, if your gripping holes are too big or too small, your span is off or you're not using the right pitches for your hand, it will be almost impossible to repeat quality shots.

However, one thing you may not know or have thought about is the impact that your non-gripping fingers — typically the index finger and pinky — can have on your ball roll from one shot to the next.

That's right; by changing the placement or orientation of those fingers just a little bit, you can subtly alter how the ball comes off your hand and how it rolls and reacts going down the lane.

With that in mind, let's take a look at a few different finger positions you can use and experiment with the next time you hit the lanes for practice.

GRIP 1



Grip 1: Traditional

Index straight, pinky straight, minimal spread

No, not everyone uses this as their default grip. However, this is what most bowlers tend to gravitate towards when they're first starting out or just haven't given much thought to what their non-gripping fingers are doing. So let's start here.

- This is a nice starting point as nothing that the index finger or pinky is doing here is likely to be a significant factor in how the ball rolls.
- If you haven't used this grip in a while, it might be good to go back to it for a little bit of practice and experimentation.
- If you typically use one of the grips listed below, you may find that going back to this setup keeps you up the back of the ball a little more, which could make you more effective when playing straighter angles.

GRIP 2



Grip 2: Flared Index Finger

Index spread out, pinky straight and close to ring

When bowlers start experimenting with different finger positions, spreading the index finger out is often the first change they try out. Here's why:

- Spreading the index finger out may make it feel like you have an easier time turning the ball through release.
- That's because unless you throw a back-up-ball, the hand will rotate toward the index finger.
- Some bowlers enjoy the extra contact point in that direction as they feel it helps them get around the side of the ball more easily.
- If you tend to have very end-over-end ball roll naturally, this change may allow you to circle the ball a bit more to promote later read and more reaction down lane.

GRIP 3



Grip 3: Tucked Pinky

Index Finger in or Spread, Pinky Tucked Against the Ball

Bowlers who have little to no crossover step may appear to be in a steady position to start. If you've never tried this one out, take it slowly at first as some bowlers find it uncomfortable to have the weight of the ball pushing down on the pinky. Also, be warned that this grip may cause a callus to form where your pinky contacts the ball. That being said, proponents of this grip often swear by it as they feel it helps them get under and around the ball better than any other setup, so if you've never tried it, it might be worth giving it a few tosses the next time out.

- To avoid the aforementioned feeling of having too much weight on your pinky, really try to use your non-bowling hand to support the weight of the ball at setup, which is something that is generally recommended anyway.
- The benefit of the tucked pinky is that it allows many bowlers to get under and around the ball more easily since only about half the little finger is touching the ball.
- Some bowlers like to combine the tucked pinky with the flared index finger when they're really trying to open up their angles and swing the ball.
- Try this grip with the index finger tight to the middle finger and with it flared out to see what differences are created — and which one you prefer.

Grip 4: Up the Back

Index finger spread, pinky straight and spread

To this point, we've mainly focused on what to try if you want to hook the ball more, so we'll finish with a grip that's usually better for playing it straight or shooting spares.

- For this one, you'll want to spread both your index finger and pinky away from the grip center as wide as you can while still feeling comfortable.
- Having the non-gripping fingers spread out wide should make it very easy to feel like your hand is behind the ball, which generally promotes more end-over-end roll.
- Also, the pinky being spread generally makes you have to wait a little longer before coming around the side of the ball, which should also help keep things straighter.
- I'd recommend this finger position when you're playing a more direct line to the pocket or when shooting spares, especially if you are a bowler who doesn't use a plastic spare ball. You may just find that this position helps keep the ball on line a bit longer, making those pesky 7 and 10 pins a bit easier to manage.

Now, before the emails start flying in, let me make one thing clear: Nothing mentioned above is meant to be taken as an absolute. A bowler can hook the whole lane using a spread index finger and spread pinky, and a bowler can roll end over end at corner pins using the tucked pinky and spread index finger. This tip addresses the characteristics that most bowlers tend to see when using these various gripping positions. If you see something different, that's fine.

Remember, the goal is to put more tools in your bowling toolbox. If you've never tried out the finger positions mentioned above (or any others you can think of), consider doing some experimentation the next time you practice. You never know; you may just stumble upon something that gets your ball rolling a bit differently and helps you score like you never have before. That's what we're shooting for, isn't it?



BALL MOTION POTENTIAL

Hook Potential	Breakpoint Shape																
	10	11	12	12.5	13	13.5	14	14.5	15	15.5	16	16.5	17	17.5	18		
Very Dry to Lighter Volume Oil Patterns	40.5																
	41																
	41.5																
	42																
	42.5																
	43																
	43.5																
	44																
	44.5																
	45																
45.5																	
46																	
Light: Medium and Medium-Heavy Volume Oil Patterns	46.5																
	47																
	47.5																
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Medium-Heavy to Heavier Oil Volume Oil Patterns	53.5																
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JANUARY 2023

1. Roto Grip: Exotic Gem
2. Motiv: Jackal Ambush
3. Storm: Revenant
4. Storm: Absolute

RECENTLY REVIEWED

DECEMBER 2022	
Radical: Bigfoot Hybrid	60 / 16
Hammer: Purple Hammer Reactive	62.5 / 16
Hammer: 3-D Offset Attack	61 / 16.5
Track: Sensor Pearl	55 / 17
Motiv: Ripcord Launch	57 / 17.5
Motiv: Carbide Tank	57.5 / 13
DV8: Brutal Collision	60.5 / 16.25
Storm: Fate	58.25 / 17
900 Global: Zen U	57 / 13
Swag: Big Bro Big Guns	62 / 16.25
ABS: Pure Rise 74D Eight	55 / 12
ABS: Accu Rise X	58.5 / 16.75

NOVEMBER 2022	
Track: Legend Solid	64.75 / 15
Columbia 300: Top Speed	59.5 / 16.5
Ebonite: GB2	63.5 / 15.5
Brunswick: Defender Hybrid	57.5 / 16
DV8: Diverge Solid	65 / 15
Storm: Electrify G-O	56.5 / 16.5
Motiv: Sky Raptor	58 / 17
Radical: Innovator	59.5 / 16.5
Radical: Rattler	61 / 15

OCTOBER 2022	
Ebonite: The One Remix	57.5 / 16
Columbia 300: Cuda Powercor	63 / 14
Hammer: Scorpion Sting	65.5 / 16/5
Hammer: Envy	64.5 / 15.5
Storm: Phaze V	59.25 / 17
Storm: Super Nova	64.75 / 15.5

Balls with higher breakpoint shape ratings have the potential to react more quickly & angularly when encountering friction areas on the lane. Balls with medium to lower breakpoint shape ratings tend to react more evenly & slowly when encountering friction areas on the lane.

THE BJI BALL CHART/BALL REVIEWS

METHODOLOGY

The Bowlers Journal International Ball Motion Potential chart is designed to help bowlers understand which lane conditions are best suited for the most recently introduced bowling balls in the marketplace. Placement positions on the chart are based on the “out of box” surface from the manufacturer. Surface adjustments can impact a ball’s performance and, thus, its position on the chart.

The chart’s horizontal axis displays a ball’s approximate total hook in the presence of oil. While some coverstocks may have similar maximum, dry lane, or coefficient-of-friction measurements, their ability to traction in oil can vary significantly.

Balls with minimal hook potential are placed on the far left side of the chart. Balls offering a moderate degree of hook are placed in the chart’s middle section. Balls with the greatest hook potential in heavy oil are placed on the right side of the chart.

The chart’s vertical axis displays a ball’s breakpoint shape. Balls offering more skip/snap reaction are placed higher on the chart. Balls offering a smoother, more arcing motion are placed lower on the chart.

Chart placements are based on testing by BJI ball reviewer Vernon Peterson, selected bowlers with varying release styles, C.A.T.S. results, PBA player input, and discussions with ball company representatives.

HOOK POTENTIAL

35-45: Balls with lower total hook ranges, best suited for lighter oil concentrations. Players with slower speeds or higher rev rates may also prefer balls in this range for medium oil applications.

45-51: Balls with medium hook ability, best suited for the vast majority of “typical house shots” and some lower-volume Sport patterns. This hook range should be represented by the “centerpiece” ball in most arsenals.

51-60+: Balls with greater total hook, designed for heavier oil volumes. Players with higher speeds or lower rev rates, who need added lane traction, may also prefer balls in this range.

LENGTH RATINGS

8-12: Earlier rolling balls that read the lane sooner. These products generally come factory-sanded with lower grit surfaces, and match up well with speed-dominant styles and those bowling on longer patterns.

12-15: Medium-length balls that produce easier length through the midlane. Good for most house shots and medium-volume Sport patterns.

15-19+: Balls offering extra length for those bowling on lighter oil concentrations. Also beneficial for slower speed players, or those with higher rev rates needing added push downlane.

BREAKPOINT SHAPE

10-13: Slower-response balls that read the friction areas more gradually. This range may include balls with a urethane or mild reactive cover, designed for a smooth arc to the pocket. Can also help those with higher rev rates control motion and match up well from outside angles of attack.

13-15: Balls rated for slightly stronger and quicker reactions when encountering friction areas (as when the ball leaves the oil pattern). This range offers a balance of control and back-end angularity.

15-18+: Balls that respond more quickly and aggressively to friction areas. This range can help those with less hand action create more angularity near the pocket. Also preferred when playing deeper inside angles, which generally require more entry angle for above-average pin carry.

NO HOLES BARRED

Welcome to 2023!

by VERNON PETERSON

WELCOME TO 2023 and, we hope... more strikes. This month, we kick off a new year with a small but mighty batch of new releases. These balls are really in a special class, as we have probably the biggest-hooking ball from Motiv and two balls that make their debuts amid a great deal of anticipation among bowlers. Plus, we have one that is new and different.

While we welcome in a new year, we also welcome aboard a new assistant ball tester, as Stephen DeLong takes the reins for Thomas Watson, who has gone back to school.

I wish you a Happy New Year full of strikes and honor scores!

THE TESTING: Stephen DeLong and I threw each ball more than 25 times on two patterns: Stone Street, which is similar to what most readers face when bowling in league, and BJ, a modified version of the 2019 USBC Open Championships team-event pattern with more volume, but still falling within the “sport” category. DeLong bowled with Weber International in college, helping that storied squad to two national-television appearances along the way. The two-hander works as a coach at Kegel Training Center. DeLong’s PAP is 5 7/8 over and 3/8 up with an RPM of 450 and a launch speed of 18.5 mph. His testing layout is 50 x 5 x 35. I used the same strong layout I have used for all balls reviewed in this column, but it now has a dual angle of 50/4/35 (4 x 3 x 2.5 in the VLS system). My axis point has evolved to 3 ¾ over and 5/8 up.

ERRATA: The December issue of No Holes Barred featured incorrect core images for the 900 Global Zen U and Swag Big Bro Big Guns balls. The correct ball and core images are:

900 Global Zen U



Swag Big Bro Big Guns





ROTO GRIP EXOTIC GEM

59 Hook 16 Length
16 Breakpoint Shape

Manufacturer's Intent: Roto Grip tells us that this ball was designed for dominance on Medium/Heavy oil conditions thanks to the combination of the Defiant LRG Core and MicroTrax Pearl Coverstock, and the ball has the dashing looks to match its "exotic" moniker.

Core: Defiant LRG Asymmetric. RG: 2.51. Differential: .053. Intermediate Diff: .016. Flare: 5 inches.

Coverstock: MicroTrax Pearl Reactive. Color: Citrine, Apatite and Amethyst. Finish: Reacta Gloss. Scan Numbers: 4860 Grit, 2.20 R.A.:

Overview: This pearl does exactly what a Gem Pearl ball would do to the pins, as it really opened the BJ test pattern up from an inside angle, creating a hold area and a lot of strong recovery from the track area. We were lined up crossing 19 to 20 at the arrows with a breakpoint between the 5 to 12 boards at the 45 foot mark on the Spectro. In the same location as the OG Gem, the Exotic Gem was much cleaner and stronger downlane with a more angular backend reaction. The Exotic Gem read the pattern 3 feet longer creating a washout reaction, lined up 13 boards right with our feet and 6 to 7 boards right at the arrows with a much tighter launch angle to the breakpoint. On the Stone Street pattern, we had to play more in the track area but the Exotic Gem cut through the pattern much more easily than we thought to create a good look to the pocket with no wet/dry issues. In the same location as the OG Gem, the Exotic Gem was much cleaner through the fronts with a stronger backend reaction, with a 3-foot longer breakpoint than the Gem to create a miss-headpin-right reaction. The Exotic Gem was lined up 9 boards right with our feet and 4 to 5 boards with a tighter launch angle to the breakpoint. This is the go-to ball when the Gem is too early and too much but you want that strong Gem-ish reaction when the lanes start to hook. The Exotic Gem is more ball overall than the RST-X2 and cuts through longer patterns more easily. It complements both the Gem and the RST series. The Exotic Gem gives low-rev players that strong backend reaction on medium to longer patterns.



MOTIV JACKAL AMBUSH

64.5 Hook 13 Length
14 Breakpoint Shape

Manufacturer's Intent: "The Jackal Ambush introduces the release of a new coverstock system — the Leverage Solid Reactive, the most aggressive coverstock system ever developed in the MOTIV ball line," says Scott Hewitt, Motiv VP of Marketing.

Core: Predator V2 Symmetric. RG: 2.54. Differential: .054. Intermediate Diff: .015. Flare: 6-7 inches.

Coverstock: Leverage Solid Reactive. Color: Dark Green, Hunter Green and Black. Finish: 1000 Grit LSS. Scan Numbers: 1860 Grit. 19.30 R.A.:

Overview: The Jackal Ambush brings a lot of overall total hook to the Jackal line and is very comparable to the Jackal Legacy (reviewed February 2021). This Jackal doesn't leave much hook out there on the longer patterns like the Stone Street pattern, creating a very good look opening up the right side of the lane. We were able to create a good look crossing 16 to 17 at the arrows with a breakpoint between the 4 to 11 boards at the 43-foot mark on the Spectro. In the same location as the Jackal Legacy, the Ambush read the same line as the Legacy with a 4-pin reaction and read the pattern a foot sooner. The Ambush was lined up 2 boards left with our feet on a similar line to the breakpoint with a little more open launch angle to the breakpoint. On this pattern, both Jackals created a lot of area, especially for low-rev or speed-dominant players. On the BJ test pattern, the Jackal Ambush was a lot of ball. We moved deep into the lane and created a bigger launch angle with some loft to find a good line to the pocket. We were lined up crossing 26 to 27 at the arrows with breakpoint between the 7 to 12 boards at the 42-foot mark on the Spectro. In the same location as Jackal Legacy, The Ambush provided a stronger midlane reaction, leaving the 4 pin and reading the midlane a foot earlier. On this pattern, both of the Jackals were too strong for our liking and the Mythic Jackal (reviewed February 2022) or Sky Raptor (reviewed November 2022) would be better choices for this type of pattern and friction for most average-rev players. The Jackal Ambush is the go-to ball for longer patterns for speed-dominant and rev-deprived players on medium and longer heavier patterns.



STORM REVENANT

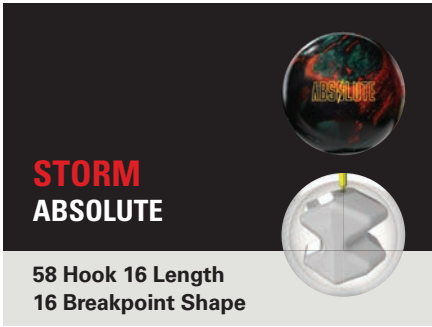
57.75 Hook 16.50 Length
17 Breakpoint Shape

Manufacturer's Intent: Storm tells us that the Revenant should appeal to those who are fans of the ever-popular Hy-Road and Trend series but crave something in between.

Core: Vector Symmetric. RG: 2.54. Differential: .050. Flare: 5 inches.

Coverstock: R3S Pearl Reactive. Color: Blue, Silver. Finish: Reacta Gloss. Scan Numbers: 5050 Grit, 1.60 R.A.:

Overview: The Revenant brings the very similar shape and backend reaction as the Spectre (reviewed January 2022) did on medium to dry lane conditions. We found a very good look to the pocket with quite a bit of area on the BJ test pattern. We were lined up crossing 17 to 18 at the arrows with a breakpoint between the 6 to 14 boards at the 45-foot mark on the Spectro. In the same location as the Spectre, the Revenant read the pattern at largely the same line and trajectory to the breakpoint and pocket. The Revenant was a little more high-flush than the Spectre in the pocket. We were able to stand in the same location for both balls to hit the pocket. The Revenant is a very good number 1 or 2 ball on patterns like the BJ test pattern that have some friction area built into the pattern. On Stone Street, we had to play more to the outside of the track area to create a good look to the pocket. We were lined up to the pocket crossing 11 to 12 at the 43 foot mark on the Spectro. In the same location as the Spectre, the Revenant read the pattern a little sooner, creating a 4-pin reaction. The Revenant was lined up 1 board left at the arrows and 2 boards left with our feet, and provided just a little more total hook on the heavier and longer pattern than the Spectre. The Revenant is a very good number 2 or 3 ball on the longer patterns like Stone when the track area starts to open up more or the heads start to burn up. For all the bowlers waiting for the replacement to the Spectre, wait no longer — it's here. The Revenant is cleaner through the fronts and features stronger backend reaction with a little less total hook than the new Absolute (reviewed next). All types of tournament players will enjoy how easily this ball gets through the fronts and its strong but predictable backend reaction.



Manufacturer's Intent: Storm tells us that bowlers who pick up this ball can expect a more aggressive shape to the pocket with consistency through the heads and more overall angle through the pins.

Core: Sentinel Asymmetric. RG: 2.48. Differential: .050. Intermediate Diff: .021. Flare: 6 inches

Coverstock: R2S Deep Hybrid Reactive. Color: Copperhead, Jade and Phantom Black. Finish: Reacta Gloss. Scan Numbers: 5150 Grit, 1.60 R.A.:

Overview: The Absolute is a very strong asymmetric pearl bowling ball that provides a lot of strong roll and predictable backend motion through the pocket area. On the BJ test pattern, we had to play more toward the track area to open up the breakpoint. We were lined up crossing 12 to 13 at the arrows with a breakpoint between the 4 to 9 boards at the 43-foot mark on the Specto. In the same location as the Infinite Physix, the Absolute provided a much cleaner and stronger down-lane motion with a 3-foot longer breakpoint. The Absolute was lined up 4 to 5 boards right at the arrows and 8 to 9 boards right with our feet with a much tighter launch angle. On this pattern, the Absolute would be a good number 2 ball to the Infinite Physix when it's too much or when it starts to burn up. On the BJ test pattern, we had to play more to the right to create a good area to the pocket, and this ball really created a good look and area just as the Revenant did. The Absolute was lined up 18 to 19 at the arrows with a breakpoint between the 7 to 13 boards at the 44-foot mark on the Specto. In the same location as the Infinite Physix, the Absolute was much cleaner through the fronts, with a 3-foot longer breakpoint and missing the headpin right. The Absolute was lined up 3 to 4 boards right at the arrows and 7 to 8 boards right with our feet with a much tighter launch angle but creating more hold area. The Absolute reminds us of the Parallax (reviewed August 2020) in terms of its strong, big asymmetric core and strong, predictable backend motion. Lower-rev or speed-deprived players will like this big-core pearl on medium patterns.

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STRIKE %

ACCURACY

NUMBERS THAT SPEAK VOLUMES

How Lanetalk's stats make clear which PBA Tour players separate themselves from the rest.

by **PATRICK BRETTINGEN**

CARRY PERCENTAGE

AVERAGE

SPARE CONVERSION %

No Surprise
Belmo was a stats king at the WSOB.

It is perhaps easier than ever for PBA Tour competitors and their fans to know everything there is to know about each player's strengths and weaknesses thanks in no small part to Lanetalk, the PBA's provider of player data. No event on the PBA calendar yields a more abundant harvest of that data than the World Series of Bowling, which, again in 2022, saw multiple titles contested under one roof — this time Bowlero Wauwatosa in Wisconsin.

In this tense space between seasons, fraught as it is with anticipation as one season fades further into the rear view while the next rapidly comes into focus, we took a deep dive into those numbers to get the lowdown on the unique strengths particular players bring to their craft.

Some of the numbers turned out to verify what most already know — does it surprise anyone that Jason Belmonte led the way in both strike percentage and average while also bowling the most games? Others might be more surprising — did you know that the bowler who led the field in carry percentage was non-champion Nick Pate?

The 2022 World Series of Bowling XIII took place March 3-16. After a pre-tournament qualifier (PTQ), the main tournaments kicked off with the Roth-Holman PBA Doubles Championship and included three animal-pattern events (Cheetah, Scorpion, Shark) plus the PBA World Championship major. Combined pinfall from the three animal patterns qualifying rounds determined the top 30 bowlers who moved on to the PBA World Championship cashers round.

As every ball rolled by the 155 bowlers during the WSOB events was tracked by Lanetalk, here's a look at some of the top performers in those statistical categories and their thoughts on how they ended up among the numerical leaders at the WSOB...

Hardly an Average Bunch

One main barometer of success in most bowling tournaments is scoring average. A review of the WSOB statistics showed a direct correlation between overall average and top finishes. Four of the top five in overall average either won or finished second in one of the WSOB events. The top three in scoring average were Jason Belmonte, Jason Sterner and Kris Prather, who were the only three players in the field to average better than 230.

Topping the overall average category was Jason Belmonte, who led the entire field at 231.21. Belmonte accomplished those feats over 77 games — most in the entire field. After taking eighth in the Roth-Holman Doubles with Bill O'Neill, Belmonte embarked on the animal pattern events starting with Cheetah qualifying.

In Belmonte's case, the short 35-foot Cheetah pattern proved again to be a challenge for the Australian two-hander because his high rev rate forces him to move farther left than most bowlers, which can make his entry angles steeper and strikes harder to carry.

"The issue at WSOB is we start with Cheetah," Belmonte said. "I fell behind by about 200 pins. I've never been able to see that



pattern right. It puts more pressure on me. My back was against the wall a bit, so I had to narrow my focus. That's not new for me. Always hoping it's going to be different. My carry goes down on Cheetah and I'm playing catch-up for the rest of the block."

Belmonte made up that ground and then some during Shark and Scorpion qualifying, which catapulted him into the PBA World Championship cashers round. On Shark, Belmonte finished third with an average of 231.05. But he capped off his animal pattern performance by averaging 230.91 overall on Scorpion to eventually win that title, beating fellow two-hander Anthony Simonsen, 244-176, in the title match. On Shark (48 feet) and Scorpion (44 feet), Belmo said he could play more in the middle of the lane, which is more suited for his rev rate, allowing him to carry more strikes.

"I dug myself out of a bit of a hole," said Belmonte. The Scorpion title was one of five 2022 PBA championships that catapulted him to his seventh Player of the Year honor, tying him with Hall of Famer Walter Ray Williams, Jr. "I had to take advantage of the other patterns I'm more suited for. As the oil length increases, I can play a more comfortable part of the lane. Then it comes down to execution and repetition."

Another bowler who executed well was Jason Sterner, who was right behind Belmonte in second among average leaders at 230.72 for 67 WSOB games. Sterner put together a nice WSOB résumé,

Kris Prather: How to Remain Prepared throughout a Block

This two-time major champion on the PBA Tour prides himself on always being prepared to find a quick line to the pocket on any pair in any situation. One key way he does this is by using his ball reps like seeing-eye dogs, which is to say that he does it a little differently than other tour guys. Prather does not rely on his reps to tell him what's happening or what to do; instead, he asks them questions.

One of the biggest questions he has for them over the course of a block is: How are other bowlers who are scoring well playing the lanes? This is a question that involves many variables, like angles, speed, axis rotation and ball surface. In response, Prather's reps might tell him, for instance, that Kyle Sherman is playing inside, swinging the ball with a lot of axis rotation, and doing so with

an asymmetric ball that has a dull surface on it. With that information, Prather is prepared to attack the condition before him. He now can visualize Kyle's shots without even seeing him roll a ball to get an idea what to do if he's struggling.

Prather also pays close attention to the bowlers he's following from pair to pair, which is invaluable, because he's a student of how others bowl. This really helps him mentally prepare to play the lanes he's going to as he moves from pair to pair during qualifying or match play.

Another thing the ball reps watch for is a lane that plays totally different than the others. Most amateur bowlers think it's the oil that causes the difference, but really it's topography — it's the shape of the lane surface, which is not totally level. Prather happens to rank among the best on tour at reading topography, playing it correctly, and shaping the shot the right way for any given topographical scenario.

— Bill Spigner



finishing fifth in the Roth-Holman Doubles with Tom Smallwood, fourth in Shark, and topping off the event with a runner-up finish to Kris Prather in a thrilling roll-off at the PBA World Championship.

One reason behind Sterner's success at AMF Bowlero was his recent embrace of physical fitness and nutrition. His wife Heather founded the BowlFit fitness training and nutrition program. She got Jason involved and he believes that has made a positive difference as he seeks to extend his professional bowling career.

"I had a lot of injuries," Sterner said. "I'll see how many extra years I can get out of my career. I'm in better shape, better health."

Another reason Sterner bowled well in the WSOB was his ability to navigate oil transition on the various patterns and make the correct adjustments on the lanes with targeting and different bowling balls.

"I was falling into the right scenario in that environment. I was taking full advantage," Sterner said. "On the longer patterns it's easier for me to hit the pocket than on shorter patterns. I like to control the pocket, make spares, be around the pocket to give myself opportunities. The environment was always changing. I made better decisions and was able to control the pocket."

As a youth bowler, Sterner grew up bowling much of the time on dry lanes. He naturally adjusted to that high-friction environment with quick footwork to the foul line and faster ball speed. "I didn't get the nickname 'Flash' for nothing," Sterner chuckled.

When Sterner started bowling on the PBA Tour, he encountered oil patterns with heavier volumes and longer length and he needed to make adjustments, and slow down his footwork and ball speed. He needed to work on controlling the mid-lane and the break point down lane. "I could hit the pocket but wasn't striking enough," Sterner said. "It was hard for me to gear down."

Something that's helped Sterner become a better pro bowler is his work with Brad Angelo at his Bowl U workshop in Lockport, New York. Angelo worked with Sterner on-lane and in the classroom, covering several elements of the sport including equipment, physical game, ball motion, oil migration, reading oil transition and lane-play strategies.

Those sessions, Sterner said, have made him a better and more versatile PBA player as he improved his ability to consistently carry strikes — not just hit the pocket — on different patterns. With those improvements in mind, Sterner said he's heading in the right



direction as he prepares for 2023 PBA Tour season.

“I was good at getting the ball to the pocket,” Sterner said. “Learning how to strike was the next step for me. It’s nice to know that I’m going in the right direction. It gives me more inspiration to push the boundaries and improve my skills. It’s nice to see it’s all lining up. I’m working on the things I need to do to get into the winner’s circle.”

Strike Force

A statistic that goes hand in hand with scoring average is strike percentage, defined as the difference between first shots rolled and number of resulting strikes. Not surprisingly, the top three in that category from the WSOB were: Belmonte (65.83%), and Sterner and Kris Prather (65.45%) — the same trio that led the scoring average list.

Leading those categories helped those bowlers to the winner’s circle and a runner-up finish. In addition, Sterner led more obscure categories such as multiple pins left per frame (just 13.59%) and nine or strike percentage per frame (86.41%) — basically meaning he left many single-pin spares while avoiding tough spare combi-

Nick Pate: How to Make Your Ball Work for You

This 2017 USBC Intercollegiate Singles champion is coming into his own on tour, having finished runner up in the 2022 PBA David Small’s Kokomo Open. And he’s doing it as a rare breed in today’s game, making his ball work instead of looking for the ball to do the work.

A case in point: He used basically only two balls at the WSOB — mostly his Obsession Tour Solid, which is an asymmetric, lower differential core that produces less flair than the Obsession.

Being more of a medium speed and rev player, Pate looks for control. His ball choice allowed him to keep his angles more in front of him throughout the World Series. He is a player that will finesse the lane, not overpower it.

One important dimension of his ability to finesse the lane is his confidence playing extreme outside lines, which he

does by keeping his shoulders more closed at the beginning of his approach. His pushaway is particularly interesting: He places the ball out at the start as his right shoulder moves forward, and his left hand comes off the ball before the pushaway is complete. This actually closes his shoulders, which helps him play straighter angles through the front part of the lane. This is a byproduct of growing up on a wet/dry gutter shot where he had to play up the oil line. He couldn’t arc the ball out to the gutter because it would over-hook. When playing the gutter on tour, he had to learn to swing the ball more, or create more shape, because the oil is flatter.

Once he’s in the right area, he will move his eyes right to swing the ball more, or he will move them left to go straighter. Additionally, Pate will increase his axis rotation to hook it more and decrease it for straighter angles. Then add or subtract speed, slower when hooking the ball and faster when going straighter.

— Bill Spigner

nations of two or more pins.

Speaking of strikes, another reason that trio bowled so well at the WSOB was because they maximized their opportunities by finishing 1-2-3 (minimum 30 games) in the strike-on-strike percentage category (Belmonte, 67.03%; Sterner, 66.74%; Prather, 65.87%). About two-thirds of the time when they recorded a strike, they followed with another.

Before bowlers can strike, they must first hit the pocket consistently. Like Sterner, Prather was striking at almost the same rate as Belmonte. For Prather, who led the field in pocket hits percentage (83.92%), finding the 1-3 is his first priority in any tournament.

"Especially for big tournaments, we have to figure out how to get to the pocket," Prather said. "If I get lost on a lane, I will talk to my ball reps, coaches and ask, 'How can I better get to the 1-3 pocket?'"

Preparation is key for Prather. He takes notes on each pair of lanes he will be bowling on, detailing things such as topography, and comparison between the two lanes. Is one lane tighter? How much? Does the ball seem to start up earlier on one lane?

"Every time we move pairs, I'm more prepared to find the 1-3

pocket," Prather said. "My first thing in warming up is to find how to get to the pocket. If I'm hitting the pocket consistently, then I'm not splitting and I'm leaving makeable spares or striking."

That thorough preparation added to Prather's win in the PBA World Championship. Prather averaged 229.80 in that event, eventually edging Sterner in a one-frame roll-off to secure his second career major title.

"That was a big confidence booster," Prather said. "It's difficult for me to have belief I could win. My mindset is I have to take it from him (through qualifying all way to the stepladder finals). I can't take any frames off. I'm one of the most versatile players on Tour. And I can find a way to hit the pocket on anything and everything. No matter what pattern is put out, I will find a way to strike."

Another PBA bowler who had success around the pocket at the WSOB was Nick Pate. Among bowlers with more than eight games, Pate led the field in carry percentage (difference between pocket hits and strikes) at 83.39%. That proficiency carrying strikes when he hit the pocket led him to a 19th-place finish in the PBA Cheetah Championship.

Tommy Jones: How an All-Time Great Attacks Spare

This all-time great on the PBA Tour will be the first to tell you that his game has always been fast. He was, and still is, one of the tour's fastest bowlers to the line. That natural speed helps make him one of the world's greatest spare shooters.

Many bowlers try to throw the ball harder at spares, which throws off their timing and balance. Jones, instead, maintains his naturally fast momentum for spares; he just releases the ball with less rotation, never sacrificing form for speed.

Jones uses urethane instead of plastic because it's more durable. Throughout his career,

Jones has seen a lot of plastic balls chip around the finger holes due to the impact of the ball hitting the pins. The urethane ball he currently is using has been in his bag for about four years. He doesn't use this urethane for a strike ball; for that, he uses a different one that hooks more.

The 20-time PBA Tour champ uses interchangeable thumbs in his strike balls, but not in his spare ball. He uses a mold of his strike-ball thumb so he doesn't have to take it in and out, which takes effort and time. Plus, it wears out the interchangeable system faster. Jones advises that all bowlers "have a permanent thumb for your spare ball, whether it's an interchangeable or mold of it."

— **Bill Spigner**





Jason Sterner: You Can't Out-Bowl a Bad Fit

This three-time PBA Tour champ's transformation from a player who could hit the pocket to a dominant force at last year's WSOB was the culmination of a lot of learning. Hard work is normal for most athletes, but not all are willing to go through the grueling learning process to figure out why they are not performing up to their expectations.

One of the key things Sterner did was change his grip layout. His span was too long, with a lot of reverse pitch in the thumb relative to his span length — an "old-school fit," as he calls it. But it was really a bad fit 40-plus years ago, no less today. The combination of the excessive reverse-thumb pitch relative to the length of his span forced him to rush his downswing so he didn't lose the ball. This gave him limited time for his release, as he had to fire the ball off his hand

without a lot of feel.

When he shortened his span and changed his thumb pitch significantly, he was able to let his downswing flow more naturally rather than speed it up to keep from losing the ball. This greatly enhanced his feel for his release. The ability to slow things down like that without actually slowing anything else down made his release so much better it increased his carry. He is now able to feel and work with his release to play the lane better without trying to do what others do.

He is able to play the mid-lane better because of the grip change, and the knowledge he got from other coaches about it. We are all a product of our environment, which is why bowlers of many different styles see success. But Sterner worked hard for his success, proof that only those with an unending thirst to get better will see results.

— Bill Spigner

Pate partially credited his Cheetah performance to his youth-bowling days at Drkula's 32 Bowl in his hometown of Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota, a suburb of St. Paul. Most players attack Cheetah by setting their break point close to the gutter to create a steep entry angle to the pocket, a similar scenario he learned in his youth leagues.

"I'd say bowling at Drkula's made me not afraid of playing the gutter," Pate said. "We bowled in junior leagues and had to play the 5, 6, or 7 boards to start out. I got comfortable playing by the gutter. I'm comfortable sliding right of 15. If I find my ball leaving 4 pins on short patterns, I know the lane is hooking early. I move my feet two or three feet left and keep my eyes on the same target to find fresh oil out there."

Once competition moved away from Cheetah to other oil patterns, Pate's strategy was to continue moving his feet left, and backing off on his ball speed and increasing his axis rotation to keep his entry angle steep enough to carry strikes on the longer patterns. Additionally, he felt comfortable sticking to his Hammer Obsession Tour Solid, with a

drilling that let the ball read lane patterns earlier and not respond too much to friction by getting through the heads but still have finish on the back end. He used that ball on all four patterns and adjusted his angles, targeting, hand positions and ball speed.

"I get one ball that looks good, I trust in it to bail me out on all different length patterns," Pate said. "Yes, one of the tests [on the PBA Tour] is you bowl on all these different patterns. Based on the stats, it all paid off."

Making the Spare Game their A-Game

While power and strikes are the name of the game on the PBA Tour, some may minimize the importance of spares shooting on today's PBA Tour. While spares might not be as sexy as strikes to fans, avoiding big splits and filling frames still makes a big difference in scoring pace. That is especially true on flatter, low-scoring patterns.

One case in point is DJ Archer, who led in percentage of makeable spares converted (non-splits) at 96.03% among players who bowled more than eight games. He uses a urethane ball for spares

2022 PBA WORLD SERIES OF BOWLING BY THE NUMBERS

Most Games Bowled

Jason Belmonte **77**
 Jakob Butturff **73**
 Anthony Simonsen **73**
 Patrick Hanrahan **71**
 Jason Sterner **67**

Overall Average Leaders

Jason Belmonte **231.2**
 Jason Sterner **230.7**
 Kris Prather **230.3**
 Kyle Sherman **227.2**
 Tommy Jones **227.1**

Gutter Balls Rolled

(PBA animal oil patterns)

Cheetah **71**
 Scorpion **24**
 Shark **0**

Strike Percentage

Jason Belmonte **65.83%**
 Jason Sterner **65.45%**
 Kris Prather **65.45%**
 Anthony Simonsen **63.77%**

Clean Frame Percentage

(minimum 30 games)

Jakob Butturff **93.56%**
 Tommy Jones **93.13%**
 Kyle Sherman **93.04%**
 Jason Belmonte **92.99%**
 Kris Prather **92.88%**

Total number 10-pins Left

(PBA animal oil patterns)

Shark **1,024**
 Cheetah **940**
 Scorpion **852**

10-pin Conversion Rate

(PBA animal oil patterns)

Shark **97%**
 Scorpion **96%**
 Cheetah **93%**

Perfect games

17 bowlers at WSOB
 rolled 300 games

because he said plastic skids too much. He throws hard and straight at right-side spares, but hooks 90 percent of the time at left-side spares. The exception is the U.S. Open, where he throws straight at all spares.

Lessons from his early days on the lanes taught Archer the importance of spare shooting to a bowler's overall game. "I grew up in a small town with a 16-lane center. I had no one to bowl with. I spent a lot of time practicing. A coach told me to work on spares."

Later, as a college bowler under coach Mark Scroggins at West Texas A&M University, Archer and his teammates worked on spare shooting drills — and also got a workout. "On our practice days we shot at spares. If we missed spares, we'd have to do push-ups."

Today, Archer employs a more advanced spare shooting practice regimen at a center in Louisville, Kentucky. He starts by throwing a 30 minute-session to get his arm in the correct alignment and swing position, which he said is a key for his spare game.

"I play a low-ball game and don't keep score," said Archer, who over the years picked up spare-shooting techniques from Walter Ray Williams Jr., Pete Weber and Norm Duke. "I'll go practice for an hour every day. I visualize when I shoot at spares, like Steph Curry shooting free throws. It's very natural for me. I need to make sure my swing stays on the correct path. Spares pay the rent."

That spare-conversion proficiency led Archer to a second-place finish in the Roth-Holman Doubles with his friend Shawn Maldonado.

Although Archer's spare percentage was highest in the field,

his lower strike percentage (97th at 51.95%) and carry percentage (137th at 71.37%) perhaps kept him from higher finishes at more WSOB events.

"Strikes are cool, but when it comes down to it, you need to be a good spare shooter," Archer said. "Spare shooting is something I pride myself on. It's something I work on. I take pride in practicing my spare game. I work hard at it. That's what got me where I am at today."

In addition to Archer, PBA Hall of Famer Tommy Jones was among the spare-shooting leaders at the WSOB. Jones was close to Archer in makeable spare percentage at 94.67% for 67 games. Unlike Archer, Jones throws hard and straight at all spares on both sides of the lane.

"I use a weaker urethane ball for spares, and I throw straight at every spare," Jones said. "I'm old school in that I throw straight at spares all the time."

As a youth bowler, Jones competed at Star Lanes (now AMF Bowlero Greenville) where his mom, Linda Jones, was a league coordinator. The center manager's son was the mechanic.

"When the manager saw me miss a spare, he'd have his son set it until I made that spare 10 times in a row," Jones said. "I couldn't go back to keeping score. At the time I thought it was terrible. In the long run, that helped me become a good spare shooter."

Other examples of solid spare shooting were evident among the top WSOB performers. Sterner's spare shooting played a part in his success at the WSOB. According to Lanetalk, Sterner converted 81 of the 83 10-pins and 100 percent of the 4, 7, and 9 pins he left during the entire WSOB.

Top pin leaves

Pin(s)	Conversion Percentage	Total Times Left
10	95.1	9,166
7	94.3	3,804
9	96.2	2,527
4	95.9	2,320
3-6-10	82.2	1,874
2	95.8	1,867
6	96.7	1,534
2-8	85.8	1,189
3	97.8	1,079
3-6	88.8	959

Examples of how important spare shooting can be: In the PBA World Championship, Brandon Runk missed advancing from the qualifying round by just seven pins. Darren Tang claimed the final spot. Runk's spare-conversion percentage was 87%, while Tang's was 93%. And in the PBA Scorpion Championship, AJ Johnson missed advancing from the qualifying round by seven pins just behind Jason Belmonte, who claimed the last spot. Johnson's spare-conversion percentage was 89% vs. Belmonte's 97%.

PBA players will get another crack at AMF Bowlero when the PBA World Series of Bowling returns to suburban Milwaukee in 2023. Prather said he'll be ready with his trusty notebook in hand set to tackle the center, oil patterns and all the numbers and data.

"If the younger Kris could talk to himself, he'd have told his younger self to take notes earlier," he said. "I'd have been even more prepared for PBA Tour life. Preparation is undervalued. I need to be aware of what each oil pattern is asking."

For Belmonte, focusing on the present is preferable to setting long-range goals. He and the other PBA players will still have numbers to crunch no matter how they approach each season and tournament.

"Goals and achievements, those should be the icing on the cake," said Belmonte, who competed in the World Cup for Team Australia in November. "I prefer to look back on the errors I made and improve on those things. I don't like to set up specific goals. I want to throw this specific shot well right now. If I do that a lot, I'll win more and have better stats." ■

DJ Archer: How the Tour's Most Distinctive Spare Shooter Does it

This two-time PBA Tour champ is the only right-handed bowler on tour who hooks the ball at left-side spares. His system sounds simple. As he puts it, "I stand on the big dot and roll between the second and third arrow." But really, it's more complex than that.

He uses a urethane ball, which hooks more than plastic and much less than reactive resin. He does this because urethane grabs the lane better than plastic. He used to actually take the polish off his plastic balls when he used them to keep the ball from hydroplaning across the oil in the middle of the lane. Personally, I think that's a great idea, and I have recommended that to students before because it's very difficult to roll a perfectly straight ball like Norm Duke does. That's why a ball with a dull finish will not skid out in the direction of the ball's rotation.

It's more complicated hooking the ball at left-side spares. Archer says he plays them by feel, and that feel is based on how the middle of the lane hooks and if there is a defined hook spot right of where he will play the spare. The hard part of hooking the ball is that different oil patterns and topographies greatly affect the ball's path. Even though Archer says he does it by feel, there's a lot of thinking that goes into it that's been built up from years of experience and working at it. It's a constant evaluation of how the ball hooks going across the middle of the lane rather than anything random with his system.

If he doesn't get the right read hooking it, then he will roll it straight like he does for most of his right-side spares. Normally, when the middle of the lane hooks, he will go straight at more left-side spares. When he does this, he pays close attention to his shoulders and forearm facing the direction of a given spare, which helps greatly with his accuracy.

— Bill Spigner



Preview: The 2023 PBA and PWBA Tour Seasons

'Major' plotlines set to unfold in PBA action, while a burning question grows more intriguing on the PWBA side.

BY GIANMARC MANZIONE



Pack Man

Packy Hanrahan seems poised for a breakout season in 2023.

Ready to Win

Colombia's Laura Plazas rides a wave of momentum into the 2023 PWBA Tour season.



Can you believe it? We're here again in the post-holiday anticipation of another year of PBA and PWBA Tour action, and a spate of telecasts — eight of them majors between the two tours — promises to help you escape your uneasy relationship with those New Year's Resolutions that already are nagging at you.

The plotlines are many as the pro-bowling world gears up for another grueling calendar year of action, and they involve much more than just Jason Belmonte and Shannon O'Keefe, though both figures promise to loom large yet again.

Also knocking on the door are a number of newer names riding the momentum of their 2022 successes, while other, more established players are poised to chase down some significant milestones of their own.

There is a lot to get to here, so let's dig in...

PBA TOUR Major Moves

Yes, we know that Jason Belmonte enters the 2023 PBA Tour season as its all-time leading winner of majors with 14, and yes, we reported in our last issue that a win in the 2023 U.S. Open would make him the only player to win the tour's Super Slam of majors twice. But there is much more to dig into as we contemplate the opportunity that another full PBA Tour season presents Belmonte to pad some mind-boggling numbers in majors.

As the 2023 PBA Tour season neared, Belmonte had bowled 63 majors in his career and cashed in 57 of them — which means the man cashes in 90 percent of the majors he bowls. Then there's the money. Let's set aside the 16 standard titles among the 30 overall that Belmonte now owns. In majors alone, Belmonte has amassed more than a million dollars since his first full season in 2008-09 — \$1,260,465, to be exact.

Showing no signs of letting up as he comes off a record-tying seventh PBA Player of the Year season, those stats seem destined to be the subject of further awe. And it's a good season in which to pad such numbers, as no fewer than five majors are on tap for PBA Tour players in 2023, including the U.S. Open, the Tournament of Champions, the USBC Masters, the World Championship and the Players Championship.

On the Rise

A number of non-champions put up such consistent performances throughout last season that any one of them promises to finally enter the PBA Tour winner's circle in 2023.

Lefty two-hander Packy Hanrahan peppered his 2022 campaign with strong tournament performances, including a runner-up finish in the 2022 Storm Cup: Dave Small's Best of the Best Championship and a third-place showing in the Scorpion Championship, the latter being a national TV appearance for the native New Englander.

Hanrahan's excellent WSOB also saw him narrowly miss another show there, as he posted a sixth-place finish in the Shark Championship.

Also enjoying those Storm Cup series events in which Hanrahan found success was Nick Pate, who made back-to-back shows in the Dave Small's Best of the Best Championship and the Dave Small's Kokomo Open with respective finishes of third and second. Ultimately, Pate finished fifth in the Storm Cup standings.

AJ Johnson's season was nothing short of sensational, as he excelled particularly in majors with fourth-place finishes in the U.S. Open and the Masters. He bookended his season with a run in the PBA Players Championship to start off his 2022, advancing to the Midwest Region Final, and ended



***Milestone Ahead**
Kyle Troup chases a milestone 10th
PBA Tour title in 2023.*

Hot Streak

AJ Johnson enters 2023 on the heels of a season that was the envy of most PBA Tour peers.



the year with a semifinal-round finish in the PBA Playoffs.

No one should be surprised to see any of these three up-and-coming standouts become PBA Tour champions in 2023.

The Leader Board

You know what is likely to see an interesting shakeup this year? The all-time PBA Tour titlists leaderboard, as multiple stars are poised to join the ranks of the sport's immortals this season.

Kyle Troup eclipsed dad Guppy with his ninth PBA Tour title thanks to his second consecutive PBA Playoffs victory in 2022, as Guppy amassed eight victories in his career.

But one more win comes with even greater bragging rights, as it gives him a number of titles often equated with Hall of Fame eligibility — 10.

The only players with 10 titles who are not yet in the PBA Hall are younger guns still in their prime — Dom Barrett and Anthony Simonsen, both future Hall of Famers. The other nine? All in the hall, including Barry Asher, Tom Baker, Bryan Goebel, Steve Hoskins, Tommy Hudson, Doug Kent, Wes Malott, Mike McGrath and George Pappas.

If Belmonte comes away with just one more win in 2023, he breaks a tie with the great Dick Weber to stand all alone at 31

titles. The player ahead of him at that point? The man who paved the way for the power game Belmo features: Mark Roth, who won 34 times. Whenever Belmo ties Roth, which seems like an inevitability, only five players will have won more than the Aussie — Parker Bohn III (35), Pete Weber (37), Norm Duke (40), Earl Anthony (41) and Walter Ray Williams Jr. (47).

Other players eyeing milestone moves on the list are Sean Rash, who, with one more win, joins greats Nelson Burton Jr., Dave Davis, Billy Hardwick and Dave Soutar with 18 titles. Should EJ Tackett tear off another win in 2023, he ties Carmen Salvino and Rash with 17.

2023 PWBA TOUR SEASON SCHEDULE

- May 4-6** PWBA Stockton Open, Pacific Avenue Bowl, Stockton, California, BowITV
- May 11-13** PWBA GoBowling! Spokane Open, Lilac Lanes & Casino, Spokane, Washington, BowITV
- May 17-23** USBC Queens, Sam'sTown, Las Vegas, CBS Sports Network
- May 31-June 2** PWBA Grand Rapids Classic – Great Lakes, Spectrum Lanes, Wyoming, Michigan, BowITV
- June 3-4** PWBA BowITV Classic – Great Lakes, Spectrum Lanes, Wyoming, Michigan, BowITV
- June 5-6** PWBA Great Lakes Classic – Great Lakes, Spectrum Lanes, Wyoming, Michigan, BowITV
- June 8-10** PWBA Bowlers Journal Cleveland Open, Yorktown Lanes, Parma Heights, Ohio, BowITV
- June 13-20** U.S. Women's Open, ABC Gates Bowl, Rochester, New York, CBS Sports Network
- July 27-30** PBA/PWBA Striking Against Breast Cancer Mixed Doubles, Copperfield Bowl, Houston, BowITV
- Aug. 8-10** PWBA Waterloo Classic - Waterloo, Cadillac Xtreme Bowling Center, Waterloo, Iowa, BowITV
- Aug. 11-12** PWBA Pepsi Classic - Waterloo, Cadillac Xtreme Bowling Center, Waterloo, Iowa, BowITV
- Aug. 13-15** PWBA Tour Championship - Waterloo, Cadillac Xtreme Bowling Center, Waterloo, Iowa, CBS Sports Network

2023 PBA TOUR SEASON SCHEDULE

Jan. 29-Feb. 5	U.S. Open, Woodland Bowl, Indianapolis, Indiana, FS1/FOX
Feb. 7-11	PBA Springfield Classic, Enterprise Park Lanes, Springfield, Missouri, BowlTV
Feb. 13-17	PBA Shawnee Classic, FireLake Bowling Center, Shawnee, Oklahoma, BowlTV
Feb. 20-24	PBA Wichita Classic, Northrock Lanes, Wichita, Kansas, BowlTV
March 6-9	PBA Jackson Classic, Jax60, Jackson, Michigan, BowlTV
March 12-19	PBA Tournament of Champions, AMF Riviera Lanes, Fairlawn, Ohio, FS1/FOX
March 21-24	PBA Kokomo Classic, Heritage Lanes, Kokomo, Indiana, BowlTV
March 26-April 2	USBC Masters, Thunderbowl Lanes, Allen Park, Michigan, FS1/FOX
April 7-April 23	PBA World Series of Bowling XIV, Bowlero Wauwatosa, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, FS1/FOX
April 30-May 14	PBA Players Championship, Bowlero North Brunswick, New Jersey, FS1/FOX
May 8-11	Roth/Holman PBA Doubles Championship, Mid-County Lanes, Middletown, Delaware, BowlTV
May 19-21	PBA Super Slam Cup, Bowlero Jupiter, Florida, FS1/FOX
June 23-25	PBA Tour Finals, Strikerz, Arlington, Washington
July 28-30	PBA/PWBA Striking Against Breast Cancer Mixed Doubles, Copperfield Bowl, Houston, Texas, BowlTV
Sept. 23-27	PBA League Elias Cup presented by Pabst Blue Ribbon, Bayside Bowl, Portland, Maine, FS1

PWBA TOUR Regional Revival

No PWBA Tour season since its relaunch has featured as many regionals as the nine planned for 2023, providing ample opportunity for the PWBA's next star to emerge. After all, it worked for Julia Bond, who won a dominant tally of three regional titles (Rohnert Park, California and Lincoln, Nebraska, 2019; Clinton, Iowa, 2020) plus the 2019 PWBA Regional Showdown (Orlando, Florida) before bursting into the national limelight with her sensational 2021 season. That year, she won three titles and scored her first major victory when she donned the tiara at the 2021 USBC Queens.

The PWBA's regional program got off to a hot start upon the tour's relaunch, with seven regionals held each season from 2015 to 2017, a period during which Missy Parkin pursued her path to stardom on the relaunched tour by knocking off three regional wins, one in each season (Montclair, California, 2015 and 2016; Dublin, California, 2017). Others who used regional wins as launching pads to bigger things on the PWBA Tour include Liz Kuhlkin, who won in 2016 (Hornell, New York) and 2017 (Elmwood Park, New Jersey), and today is a three-time national champion with a U.S. Open triumph among them. The PWBA regional program saw six events conducted

in 2019, three in 2020, and just two in 2022.

The nine regionals to be contested in 2023 also help round out PWBA action to a full calendar year, as they bookend the season with a first event at JB's Allen Bowl in Allen, Texas, this month, and the 2023 Regional Showdown heading to the International Training & Research Center in Arlington, Texas, in December. Additional details about other regional hosts and dates are to be announced later.

The Player of the Year Juggernaut

On the one hand, the PWBA Tour featured remarkable parity in 2022. The only player to win multiple titles was 2021 Player



Pointer Sisters

The friendly but no less intense rivalry between Bryanna Cote and Shannon O'Keefe seems destined to continue.

Wild Swing

One of the wisest things you can do when tuning into a PBA Tour telecast this season is expect the unexpected. Check out these wild swings between career high and low games in championship-final matches, televised or streamed, among 10 current tour stars. In some cases, the discrepancies exceed 100 pins...

Bowler	High Game	Low Game
Dom Barrett	280 (2022 PBA Playoffs)	126 (2014 Viper Championship)
Jason Belmonte	300 (2012 PBA World Championship, 2022 PBA Tour Finals)	148 (2019 U.S. Open)
Francois Lavoie	300 (2016 U.S. Open, 2020 PBA Playoffs)	168 (2018 Greater Jonesboro Open)
Bill O'Neill	289 (2019 PBA Playoffs)	159 (2009-10 PBA World Championship)
Kris Prather	280 (2020 PBA Tournament of Champions)	170 (2021 PBA Playoffs)
Sean Rash	300 (2014 Wolf Open, 2015 TOC)	161 (2010-11 PBA World Championship)
Anthony Simonse	289 (2021 PBA Tour Finals)	157 (2019 PBA Tour Finals)
Jesper Svensson	279 (2022 PBA Playoffs)	149 (2017 PBA Oklahoma Open)
EJ Tackett	299 (2017 PBA Tour Finals)	145 (2014 PBA Oklahoma Open)
Wes Malott	299 (2005-06 Mile High Classic)	155 (2017 U.S. Open)

— Stats compiled by Eric Hartman

Stepping Stone

Julia Bond showed the bowling world the power of a thriving PWBA regional program.

of the Year Bryanna Coté, who claimed victories in the BVL Classic and the Dallas Classic. Which perhaps makes it all the more remarkable that another player outpaced Coté in the 2022 Player of the Year Race — Shannon O'Keefe, who had claimed the honor in 2018 and 2019.

The 12 national-title events held in 2022 saw 11 different champions emerge, among them a first-time champ in Breanna Clemmer and, in Diandra Asbaty's case, her first title on the relaunched tour when she won the Striking Against Breast Cancer Mixed Doubles with EJ Tackett.

But other stats foreshadow another narrative in 2023 — that of the Player of the Year juggernaut that O'Keefe embodies. Even with all the aforementioned parity playing out last season, still O'Keefe made an eye-popping seven stepladder finals and never finished lower than ninth in any event she bowled, all while nursing a painful hip injury most of the way. Then there was the equally steadfast Danielle McEwan, who proved nearly as dominant with six

stepladder finals appearances.

In the seven seasons since the PWBA Tour's relaunch, only three players have won Player of the Year honors — Liz Johnson in each of the first three seasons, O'Keefe in 2018, 2019 and 2022, and Coté in 2021. The question that demands an answer more urgently with each passing season on the PWBA Tour is this: Who will be that breakout star capable of rivaling the dominance of the relaunched tour's 15-time champion in O'Keefe?

Well, in an interview immediately after she clinched her latest POY, O'Keefe had an answer of her own: "I'm not going to relinquish my title that easily."

O'Keefe's inconceivable record to this point provides every reason to believe her.

Up and Comers

While the PWBA Tour, for all its parity, remains firmly in the grip of its most transcendent stars in the likes of O'Keefe, Coté or McEwan, the 2023 season is likely to see some relatively new names begin to carve





Belmo Show

Until another player proves otherwise, Jason Belmonte remains the center of attention on the PBA Tour.

Major Cash

You might look at Jason Belmonte’s place on the below list of all-time cashes in majors held since 1998 and think, “Wow, Belmo’s got a way to go.” But actually, Belmo’s 12-place position on this list is a wildly impressive feat. Consider the head start that leader Norm Duke, age 58, had on Belmonte, age 39, as Duke bowled every season since 1998, at which time Belmonte was about 15 years old. Belmonte did not even join the PBA until a decade later, on May 2, 2008. And consider this: The next time Belmo cashes in a major, which one rather safely can assume will be the 2023 U.S. Open at Woodland Bowl in Indianapolis (Jan. 29-Feb. 4), he surges up that list from 12th to a three-way tie for ninth at 62 cashes. That is to say nothing of his position as the all-time leader in top-10 finishes in majors — yes, even over Norm Duke with his decade-long head start, by a tally of 44 to 37. Here are those lists. . .

Bowler	Total Cashes in Majors (1998-Present)	Total Top 10s in Majors (1998-Present)
Norm Duke	88	37
Chris Barnes	82	36
Tommy Jones	81	28
Walter Ray Williams Jr.	73	32
Pete Weber	72	38
Wes Malott	72	30
Sean Rash	65	30
Bill O’Neill	64	28
Mika Koivuniemi	62	26
Parker Bohn III	62	25
Ryan Shafer	62	20
Jason Belmonte	61	44

— Stats compiled by Eric Hartman

out noteworthy legacies of their own.

Most glaringly, McKendree’s Hope Gramly will begin her rookie campaign — though describing her as such, true as it is technically, feels as though it sells her short after a sensational run on tour as a college junior in 2022. Gramly made the show at a major — the USBC Queens, where she finished fourth — and then made yet another show later in the year, when she shined up to bowl the series of events that concluded the 2022 season in Dallas and finished third in the Pepsi Classic. And take it from one of the best coaches in the business — Bryan O’Keefe, who knows her as well as anyone in his role as McKendree’s Director of Bowling.

“The amount of talent is incredible. Her ball roll is top 10 in the world,” O’Keefe says.

Any questions? Count on seeing Gramly give her PWBA peers all they can handle.

Others riding the momentum of solid 2022 campaigns are Colombia’s Laura Plazas, who put in a gutsy performance to sneak by McEwan on the 2022 USBC Queens show and ultimately finish third. Plazas later narrowly missed the show at another major, the PWBA Tour Championship, finishing sixth there.

Like Gramly, Lauren Pate is another McKendree product who made her presence felt at times in 2022. The Team USA member finished sixth in the BowlTV Classic, 10th in the Twin Cities Open, and advanced to match play in more events than seasoned peers such as U.S. Women’s Open champions Erin McCarthy and Kuhlkin, who made three match-play appearances to Pate’s four.

Expect bigger things from each of these players in the season ahead. ■

WORLDS COLLIDE

How a World Cup loaded with subplots unfolded Down Under.

BY GENE J. KANAK

The 2022 International Bowling Federation World Cup saw a spirited group of Australian fans root on their homeland hero in Jason Belmonte at Sunshine Coast in Queensland, Australia, and he certainly put on the show they hoped to see. But among the 14 nations to compete in the event, held Nov. 12-23, it was impossible to overlook the squad from neighboring New Zealand.

The Kiwis were loud, proud and energetic from the moment competition began at the reconfigured event, which traditionally has been an individual competition but this year featured both singles and Baker team action along with a new points system.

That team dynamic, which IBF brought about to emphasize “teamwork with skill, endurance, knowledge and strategy,” proved to be just the ticket for the charismatic bunch from next door.

Spectators in every corner of the bowling center could always

tell when New Zealand’s imposing right-hander Blake Brooks was on the lanes for men’s competition.

Not only was Brooks clearly one of the most physically imposing bowlers in the men’s field at well over six-feet tall and more than 250 pounds, he had the game and energy to match.

During the two weeks of tournament action, it was impossible to keep track of how many times a 20-plus miles-per-hour thunderous Brooks strike was immediately followed up by an excited roar and/or an ear-splitting slap of his massive hands as the final pins fell.

Each time they did, the excited New Zealanders would erupt in support, making it sound as if their man had just put the finishing touches on a perfect game even if his actual score was well short of that mark.

When all was said and done, Brooks came up empty in his quest for a medal at the 2022 IBF World Cup — he was eliminated



With Zeal

The charismatic Team New Zealand stole the show at the World Cup in neighboring Australia.



Money's Worth

The players from neighboring New Zealand funded their way to the World Cup largely on their own dime.

*Men: Josh Stretton, Ben Pettit, Blake Brooks, and Ryan Julian (closest to furthest)
Women: Christine Rota, Dayna Haylock, Sarah Young, and Melonie Lister (closest to furthest).*

by Sweden's Jesper Svensson in the Men's Singles Round of 32, and the New Zealand men failed to advance into the Men's Baker quarterfinals — but you would never have known it based on the energy he displayed and the love shown for him by the Kiwi supporters.

"All of our sports in New Zealand have that kind of support from the fans, and it's incredible; we thrive off it," Brooks said. "The support that we get as bowlers is crazy, and we really enjoy it."

The love and support of adoring fans is definitely something every athlete wants,

but one vital component that elite-level athletes need is monetary support. Otherwise, it's simply impossible to travel the world trying to turn their competitive dreams into reality.

Sadly, that type of support can be much tougher to come by.

While some countries pay their national team players yearly salaries or at least cover all of their competition-related expenses (training, airfare, lodging, meals, etc.), bowlers from Team New Zealand are forced to pay out of pocket, fundraise or find personal sponsors to help cover the

costs of their international endeavors.

It's a reality that Team New Zealand bowlers — and those from many other nations — have been facing for many years, and it's something that Brooks' teammate Sarah Young isn't quite sure how to change.

"As great as our fans are, one of the biggest struggles we face is the country we live in because many people back home view tenpin bowling as a hobby or game instead of an actual sport," Young said. "They look at it as an extracurricular activity, and that grinds my gears because we



work so hard and invest our entire lives into it.”

Young certainly has. Not only has she represented Team New Zealand on the lanes for the last 13 years, but she has also worked in the bowling industry during that time as manager of Pins Lincoln bowling center in West Auckland since 2011.

Young’s position has afforded her some free practice over the years, which she appreciates. However, she was quick to point out that the challenges of being an international competitor have far out-

weighed the fringe benefits.

“I’m lucky enough to work in the industry, and with that comes some perks, but the perks don’t go as far as getting overseas or anything as significant as that,” Young said. “When it comes to being an international player, nothing comes easy because we live in New Zealand.”

To be clear, Young was not expressing those feelings out of any desire to speak ill of her country or its national team; on the contrary, several times, she pointed out how much she has enjoyed being able to represent New Zealand over the years.

Still, she wants to see the situation improve for the players and coaches who get to follow in her footsteps and share the honor of representing Team New Zealand in the years to come.

According to Young, while being able to travel the globe in order to challenge elite-level competition in world-level tournaments (as many other teams do) is the desired end goal, simply getting over to Australia for events like the 2022 IBF World Cup will be a valuable early step in that process.

“We came to the world cup thinking that we had a handle on our nerves and how to deal with pressure situations, but, for a lot of us, that went out the window once we stepped up onto the approach,” Young said. “The only way to really train for tournaments like this is to be out there bowling and getting the experience, and to get the experience, we’re going to have to spend the money and travel to events.

“It would be great to have the support to travel the world to compete, but we could get a lot of incredible experience just by bowling in Australia like we did here. Australia has a lot of amazing talent, and that would push us to our limits.”

FOLLOWING THE FOOTSTEPS OF GIANTS

Although Young would be happy just to have more opportunities to cut her teeth Down Under, two members of New Zealand’s men’s team have their sights set a bit further when it comes to testing their limits. They want to follow in the footsteps of talented players like Belmonte and Svensson and take their talents all the way to America.

The two young, talented Kiwis in question are 18-year-old Ryan Julian and 15-year-old Ben Pettit.

Neither advanced out of Men’s Singles qualifying at this year’s world cup, but both demonstrated poise and shot-making

skill that had more than a few bowlers and coaches from opposing teams taking notice.

Prior to the 2022 IBF World Cup, Julian had just finished up his first year of collegiate coursework at Auckland University of Technology, where he was studying exercise science.

He planned to leave his home in New Zealand and transfer to Mount Mercy University after the New Year in the hopes of further honing his academic and bowling skills and moving one step closer to realizing his dream of competing on the PBA Tour.

When Julian was asked to name some of the bowlers who have inspired him to take a shot at the pros, he didn’t immediately name Belmonte, Svensson or any of the other talented international bowlers who have enjoyed success in the PBA.

Instead, the first name he uttered was that of an American legend.

“I remember when I was growing up, I was always looking at Norm Duke,” Julian said. “I didn’t know much about bowling in terms of rev rates and things like that, but he seemed like such a nice guy, and he was so good that I just remember watching him all the time and thinking that I wanted to be out there like him some day.”

As most bowling fans know, Duke burst onto the professional scene at a very young age, winning his first PBA Tour title when he was just 18 years old.

Julian’s Team New Zealand teammate Ben Pettit also knows what it’s like to be on the big stage before turning 21.

At just 15 years old, Pettit was the youngest men’s competitor at the 2022 IBF World Cup, which was his first tournament as a member of New Zealand’s adult national team.

That did not, however, mean that Pettit was just happy to be competing in Queensland; as New Zealand’s top-ranked men’s player coming into the event, he expected to contribute just as much or more than competitors more than twice his age.

Although that didn’t shake out in the final standings, Pettit was certain that the experience will benefit him and his teammates down the road.

“Unfortunately, we didn’t get the results that we wanted here, but I think New Zealand is starting to get to the level where we can compete,” Pettit said. “I think that we’re on track to get to that level, and with so many of us being young, I think that we’ve got a bright future ahead

of us.”

Like Julian, Pettit hopes that a PBA Tour career is in his future. Getting to bowl against the likes of Belmonte, Svensson, Prather and several other successful pros during the world cup was something Pettit enjoyed very much.

“It was really eye-opening to get to bowl against those guys because it shows you how good they really are,” Pettit said. “Still, win or lose, meeting people I’ve looked up to, getting to bowl against them, beating some of them, it was really cool.”

Cool is a great word to describe Pettit, who displayed a level of composure and maturity far beyond his years both during competition and when discussing what the 2022 IBF World Cup meant to him.

That being the case, it wasn’t surprising to hear that Pettit already has a very clear picture of where he wants to go as he continues the transition into adulthood.

“After I finish high school in New Zealand in three years, my goal is to go to college in America. There’s a couple schools that I’m looking at now (Mount Mercy and Wichita State), and we’re hoping to take a trip there to visit some schools and meet with some coaches next year,” Pettit said. “I’d love to bowl for a school like that and then eventually try to make it on the pro tour.

“I’d kind of like to do it like Belmo does, how he comes back and bowls for Australia now. I’d like to bowl on the PBA Tour but still come back to bowl for New Zealand as well because that’s my favorite thing to do.”

BELMO’S HOMECOMING

It was one thing for neighboring New Zealand to see some of its most talented players dip their toes in the waters of international competition; it was another to see the sport’s biggest star compete on the World Cup’s global stage in his home country.

That unique scenario yielded pressures that Jason Belmonte openly acknowledged.

“As an individual, you’re bowling for yourself, so, win or lose, it’s for you. When the name on the back of your shirt is the name of your country, it’s for us, all of us,” Belmonte said. “When you’re wearing your nation’s colors and you win, you feel like you did it for everyone, and when you lose, you feel like you’ve lost it for everyone.”

As far and away the most-decorated player on the Australian team, Bemonte faced additional pressure to perform. That’s because he didn’t always have the luxury of just focusing on winning. At times, he had to worry about entertaining the home fans while doing so.

That factor came into play during Game 2 of his semifinal match versus Team USA’s Kris Prather.

Belmonte put the outcome of the game out of question early, starting with the front seven to establish a 67-pin lead after seven frames.

With the match-tying victory already secured, the prudent strategy would’ve been for Belmonte to use the final three frames to experiment with different bowling balls and angles of attack to ensure that he was properly dialed in heading into the deciding game.

Nevertheless, the home crowd wanted to see their superstar make a run at 300, and Belmonte knew it.

“All tournament long, when someone had a really good game, quite often, the next game was really low, so a part of me wanted to move in order to preserve that part of the lane for the final game,” Belmonte said. “But when you look back and hear the crowd saying ‘C’mon, give us one more,’ you don’t want to disappoint them. Because of that, I figured I’d stay there until I missed, but I never did; the ball just kept striking.”

Belmonte did plenty of striking during the Men’s Baker Team competition as well, and that was one of the factors that allowed him and teammates Sam Cooley, Adam Hayes and Jarrod Langford to bring a bronze medal home to Australia.

Team USA’s quartet of Jakob Butturff, A.J. Johnson, Prather and Kyle Troup secured the gold. Puerto Rico walked away with silver.

Given all the places he’s been and titles he’s won during his legendary bowling career, some might have expected Belmonte to be disappointed by having left the 2022 IBF World Cup with a Men’s Singles silver and a Baker Team bronze.

However, that couldn’t have been further from the truth. On the contrary, Belmonte will look back on this year’s world cup with several fond memories.

“Whether it’s here at home or abroad, it’s always special to wear the Australian jersey, but the difference about this world

Germany’s Paul Purps (center) survived a murderer’s row in a championship round that featured PBA stars Kris Prather (left) and Jason Belmonte (right).





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cup was that my teammates and I got to share it with other Aussies,” Belmonte said. “It was a lot of fun having the home fans behind us and knowing that there were more people in the building who wanted each ball we threw to strike than not to strike.

“We were super honored and super proud to get to host such a prestigious event, and to perform well as a team, to throw a few strikes in front of our family and friends and to get to share this with everyone is something I know we’ll all cherish for the rest of our days.”

That level of pride was on display throughout the world cup as players, coaches and fans from all competing nations were clearly honored to be at Suncity Tenpin Bowl representing their countries on the lanes.

JOHNSON’S SWAN SONG

Team USA’s Stefanie Johnson of McKinney, Texas, has definitely done her fair share of celebrating on the international stage.

After all, the 38-year-old right-hander came to the 2022 IBF World cup having already won 27 medals in international competition — 14 gold, eight silver and five bronze — during a Team USA career that spanned the better part of two decades.

Despite still being highly competitive as a member of the Professional Women’s Bowling Association Tour, Johnson decided to make this year’s world cup her last international competition in one of the event’s many intriguing subplots.

“I have two kids who aren’t getting any younger, so it felt like the right time to hang up my hat and put the Team USA jersey away,” Johnson said. “Plus, Shannon [O’Keefe] and I started this journey together in 2005, and we always talked about ending it together as well.”

O’Keefe, author of a similarly decorated Team USA résumé and a fellow superstar on the PWBA Tour, retired from international competition at the conclusion of the 2022 PANAM Bowling Champion of Champions in Rio de Janeiro back in August.

Not only did retiring from Team USA give Johnson the opportunity to exit the international stage hand-in-hand with her best friend, but it also creates an opportunity for another young woman to step up and take a shot at making her own Team USA dreams come true.

“By stepping away, I’m giving a gift to someone else because now that person will



get to experience the thrill of bowling for their country and get to do everything that I’ve gotten to do while representing the red, white and blue,” Johnson said.

Naturally, Johnson was hoping to reach the podium at least one more time during her Team USA swan song.

Unfortunately, that just wasn’t meant to be.

Johnson’s run at an individual medal ended when she was defeated 2-1 (181-203; 210 (49)-230 (39); 190-201) by Australia’s Chloe Clague in the Women’s Singles Round of 16.

Three days later, the Team USA women fell to Germany 3-2 (158-223; 186-201; 211-185; 221-178; 207-237) in the Women’s Baker Team semifinals and then to Malaysia 3-2 (204-226; 182-219; 226-192; 248-220; 228-235) in the battle for the bronze to officially end Johnson’s bid to leave her last international event with a medal.

The Germans would end up settling for the silver medal as Sweden took gold thanks to a 3-1 win (215-160; 192-162; 212-229; 237-202) in the Women’s Team finals.

Although it would have been understandable for Johnson to feel a bit disap-

pointed by the final outcome, that wasn’t the feeling she described when reflecting upon this year’s world cup.

“I think it’s easy to make the mistake of getting too focused on the results or getting caught up in the prestige of international events, but at the end of the day, it’s still just bowling,” Johnson said. “I was just so thankful to be there and for the opportunity to represent my country. I really just approached the entire event with that mindset.

“I didn’t go out there trying extra hard or trying any less than I normally would have; I just bowled. Nothing that happened at the world cup defines my Team USA career.”

COTÉ PICKS UP THE TORCH

As Johnson’s storied international career was coming to an end, teammate Bryanna Coté authored a performance that may eventually stand out as one of the defining moments of her own Team USA journey.

The 36-year-old right-hander from Tucson, Arizona, certainly made the most of her first opportunity to compete at a world-level event, going 13-2 during three five-match blocks of Women’s Singles



Peace Out
 Stefanie Johnson's final appearance for Team USA also marked Bryanna Coté's world-level debut with the program.

qualifying and then going 4-0 in the elimination round to capture the gold medal.

Winning was certainly nothing new for Coté, who had medaled 23 times (11 gold) in international competition prior to the 2022 IBF World Cup.

Nevertheless, standing atop the podium at such a prestigious event is the type of achievement that just may elevate Coté's Team USA résumé from the ranks of the very good to the legendary status enjoyed by the likes of Johnson, O'Keefe and several other all-time greats.

Only time will tell whether or not Coté's gold medal performance will serve as that type of springboard.

Nevertheless, she wasn't looking ahead to the future; she was too busy enjoying

the thrill of the moment.

"When I realized I had won, pure joy washed over me; it felt amazing," Coté said. "I'm just grateful to have had the opportunity and so thankful for my coaches and teammates. I had a great support system; I couldn't have done it without them."

Coté earned the win by defeating Singapore's Hui Fen New 2-0 (194-186; 226-201) in the gold medal match. That left New to settle for the silver medal. Birgit Noreiks of Germany, the 2022 USBC Queens champion, earned bronze.

THE PROTOUR VIBE

Battling fellow PWBA or PBA players for medals during international competition may seem like old hat to the casual

observer. After all, many of those players square off on a weekly basis during professional events.

Nevertheless, as multiple players attested to, there is just something different about going up against the best while representing your country.

PBA superstars Jason Belmonte and Kris Prather found that out first hand when they were matched up during the Men's Singles semifinals.

Both players came in having already proven themselves more than capable of handling pressure situations as both have won multiple majors and are consistent figures in the TV finals of multiple tour events each season.

Still, that didn't stop the nerves from



Motley Crew

There was no shortage of personality among Team USA players Kyle Troup, AJ Johnson, Kris Prather and Jakob Butturff, Jr.

creeping in during their much-anticipated world-cup singles battle.

“The magnitude of the match against Belmo was definitely higher because I wasn’t just representing myself; I was representing Team USA,” Prather said. “It felt like I was bowling against the whole continent of Australia during that match.”

Sadly for Prather, the Australian fans got the outcome they were rooting for as Belmonte won the match 2-1 (199-224; 300-210; 212-204) to earn a shot at the gold medal while forcing Prather to settle for a chance at bronze.

Prather would make the most of that

chance by defeating Malaysia’s Timmy Tan 2-0 (288-279; 215-206) to bring home the bronze medal.

Belmonte would finish with silver after falling to Germany’s Paul Purps, who topped the Australian superstar 2-1 (157-269; 189 (59) -189 (49); 223-218) to take gold.

PRIDE AND PRIVILEGE

As Belmonte said, wins and losses in an event like the World Cup come with stakes far beyond individual interests, and that perspective permeated all facets of competition at the 2022 IBF World Cup.

That’s because even though only a very small percentage of competitors walked away with medals, all bowlers, coaches and fans showed their national pride from beginning to end.

They also demonstrated the single greatest thing about bowling, which is that it brings us all together.

No matter where you come from, what country you represent (or cheer for) or what skill level you’re at, at the end of the day, we’re all bowlers. No matter what space you occupy in the bowling world, when you’re with other bowlers, you’re always among friends. ■

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A DREAM COME TRUE

How the inaugural Midwest Youth Main Event was Born.

BY EMIL WILLIAMS JR.

Brandon Steen is a bowling savant. The Waterloo, Iowa, mortgage-lending professional rarely stops thinking about how to improve the sport he has loved most of his life, and few urgencies have intensified that ambition like his 13-year-old son Rush's growing passion for it. The kid is following in dad's footsteps, a budding star hungry for a challenge and always testing the limits of what he is capable of on the lanes.

One of the elder Steen's claims to fame within the local bowling community is the Northern Iowa bowling club, which Brandon, a bowler throughout high school and college, helped create. It still is going strong to this day.

But 2022 saw Steen initiate a far greater movement within the local youth-bowling scene, something which, it is no exaggeration to say, made an impact in the lives of young people that extends well beyond the lanes. It is a still relatively new organization called the Youth Bowling Scholarship Foundation. The inaugural tournament that organization conducted in October, the Midwest Youth Main

Event, marked one of 2022's greatest grassroots triumphs for youth bowling anywhere in the country.

That triumph began with a simple question Steen put to himself: How could he create more scholarship opportunities not just for his son, but for all youth bowlers in the greater Iowa area than they currently had available? He knew who to call for some answers: John and Cher Breunig, the duo behind the wildly successful Sun Prairie High School Bowling Team and the Prairie Lanes Junior Bowling Program in neighboring Wisconsin.

Steen was in awe of their reputation for generating substantial scholarship opportunities for their bowlers, not the least of which was the more than \$25,000 in scholarship funds they award annually.

Steen shot an email to the Breunigs asking if they wouldn't mind spending some time with him and Angi Erickson, the youth director of the Greater Cedar Valley USBC, to share ideas and see if they believed their program could be replicated elsewhere. The Breunigs

Family Matter

Rush Steen (left) was a big part of dad Brandon's (right) motivation to create opportunity for Iowa-area youth bowlers.



happily agreed, and Steen and Erickson made the nearly four-hour drive from Waterloo to Sun Prairie.

They had no idea that the forthcoming meeting would change the lives of so many youth bowlers and their parents.

“They were awesome,” said Steen, who is the head coach of the bowling team at Waterloo West High School. “I bet we spent three or four hours with John and Cher. They welcomed us with open arms and really opened up. They discussed how they develop different teams of volunteers to help with fundraising and gave us some ideas and info on what they do within their leagues for kids to earn points and scholarship money. We decided it was something we should try,

because it was such a great concept.”

The Breunigs were so thrilled about their meeting they took to social media to thank their team of volunteers who helped create magic in Sun Prairie. They understand it's not about them, but everyone who helps make bowling better for their youth athletes.

Which would prove to be just as true for everything Steen would do on this front going forward. As he and Erickson spent their drive home discussing the ideas and how to implement their version of the Breunig blueprint, it quickly became apparent to them that they were going to need some help.

They hosted a meeting for anyone who wanted to become involved with the newly created YBSF, and the response was

overwhelming. Ultimately, a committee was created, which eventually evolved into more of a leadership council wherein each committee member led a specific YBSF function.

The committee includes:

- YBSF Executive Chairs - Matthew McConaughy and Brandon Steen
- Fundraising Chair - Anne Britson
- Volunteer Chair - Josh Steere
- Treasurer and Liaison with GCV Youth Committee - Lindsey Smedley
- Youth Director and Liaison with GCV USBC Board of Directors - Angi Erickson

With their crew in hand, the group's first scholarship endeavor awarded \$100 to every graduating senior in the youth program at



the end of the 2020-2021 season. A nice award, especially considering they were just understanding and implementing new fundraising tools and opportunities. Things took off quickly from there.

During the 2021-2022 season, the group added a points element whereby athletes earned points based on a variety of achievements. High game incentives. High series incentives. Pins over average. Athletes also received points for volunteering at YBSF functions and perfect league attendance, among other plaudits. The points element was a hit, and their first five-figure scholarship offering was awarded.

“That was pretty cool,” said Steen, referring to the \$100 scholarships. “But,

we knew we were just getting started. Then, last year, the first year we really had our points system in place, we gave out \$12,600 to our youth bowlers as a whole. So, that was pretty awesome. It was a good way to kick things off. We’re going to keep building that with different fundraising ideas and different ways to raise money for our youth program.”

In just two seasons, the YBSF reached five-figure scholarship payouts — all from a simple desire to help grow youth bowling in Waterloo, a social media post, and an email to two of the best youth directors in the country. Steen’s hope is that the YBSF becomes an example and inspiration for other youth bowling programs to mimic, just like

Fantastic Five
Angi Erickson, Anne Britson, Josh Steere, Matthew McConaughy and Lindsey Smedley (l-r) are among the YBSF’s indispensable supporting cast.



Black Belts

Winners in the well-attended Main Event got championship belts in addition to scholarship funds.

the Prairie Lanes Youth Program led by the Breunigs that inspired him and Erickson.

“As we’re growing the organization, we’re hoping people can see the success our organization is having and know that these things are possible,” Steen said. “Just like we saw with John and Cher. Maybe some people will reach out and say, ‘How can we do something like this with our junior program?’ We all want to see youth bowling grow as a whole, and that would be a great side benefit to what we’re doing.”

Steen then turned his attention to another passion project, an idea for which he enlisted the YBSF to see it to fruition as he wasn’t quite sure how to make it happen.

When Steen began taking Rush to compete in scholarship tournaments — ironically, around the same time he first learned of the Breunigs’ success — it was his first real introduction into what scholarship tournaments had to offer.

The Steens traveled with McConaughy and his daughter Ainslie, along with Steere and his son Brady, to numerous competitions like the Elite

Youth Tour, Junior Gold and Storm Youth Championships.

He pondered how he could bring a scholarship tournament to Waterloo/Cedar Falls that would empower local youth to get involved in the kind of tournament bowling that could have a direct impact on their future by providing scholarship money. Most of the local youth events, including high school competition, were contested on house shots, and Steen wanted to introduce the local youth and their parents to a different challenge.

His bowling-industry background includes center management along with league and tournament development, and the latter has always been something he’s enjoyed long before he began helping make the dreams of potential homeowners come true. He’s worked in the mortgage-lending business for the last 12 years and currently holds the title of VP of Mortgage Lending with Guaranteed Rate.

Steen would take notes about what he liked from each event and brought the info back to the YBSF for discussion.

Steen called McConaughy, Erickson and Steere to meet at one of their favorite Waterloo restaurants, The Other Place, and got down to the business of developing the inaugural Midwest Youth Main Event.

“I really wanted people to understand what’s out there for kids if they want to do it,” said Steen, speaking passionately. “One night, I was laying there thinking about the cool things that I like from the EYTs, SYCs and other tournaments we bowl and how we can take some of those things and combine them with our ideas and bring it here and bring people here. What I’ve noticed is if you have the right format and the right draw, parents and kids will drive or fly everywhere.”

He brought a paper sketch of what he thought the tournament would look like, which included a format and prize fund. Like most ideas, the event’s name, format, dates and location went through multiple iterations before being finalized. The Cedar Valley Shootout was one of the first names under consideration.

Steen and McConaughy often bounced bowling ideas off one another on a



weekly basis, so having a discussion with the full group about a future event was — pardon the pun — right up their alley.

“We sat there for a couple hours and by the time we were done, I think everybody had a cool idea in their head of how we could make this look and be special,” Steen said. “The team just ran with it. By the time we were done at that table, it looked way different from what I initially started with, but it was better. Their ideas and perspective made things better, and that’s how the tournament started.”

The inaugural Midwest Youth Main Event, held in Waterloo, Iowa, across two centers — Cadillac XBC and Maples Lanes — Oct. 1-2, was indeed a success. The tournament garnered 81 entries in its inaugural year and featured no shortage of primary sponsors, including Guaranteed Rate, Roto Grip, High 5 Gear, Experience Waterloo, Hampton Inn Cedar Falls, Maple Lanes, Cadillac Lanes, and YBSF. Each athlete received a brand-new Roto Grip Gem bowling ball with their entry, and the winners received custom jerseys courtesy of High 5 Gear.

Competitors grappled with three challenging lane conditions (ranging from 33 feet to 50 feet) and were distributed across three divisions (U18G, U18B and U15B). A \$1,000 scholarship prize was awarded to each winner, along with a wrestling-like championship belt.

The YBSF originally advertised four divisions, including a 15-and-under girls division, which didn’t fill. While they did award three \$1,000 scholarships to the winners in the other divisions, they stayed true and awarded a \$250 scholarship and championship belt to the highest U15 female finisher since none qualified for the finals of the U18 girls division.

Competition began at Cadillac XBC with the 33-foot short pattern in the morning, and the 50-foot long pattern in the afternoon. The event moved to Maple Lanes for Day 2, where the 42-foot medium pattern awaited the competitors. All athletes bowled five games on each pattern for a total of 15 games, and the top four players in each division advanced to their respective stepladder finals.

In the U15B division, No. 2 Anthony Swanson of Des Plaines, Illinois, edged top seed Jos Weems, 217-205, to earn the win. Swanson needed seven pins on his fill ball to shut out Weems and left a 4-6-7 to secure the victory. In the semifinal match, Swanson defeated No. 3 Micah Jensen, 202-188, after Jensen defeated No. 4 Will Hudson, 236-178, to open the stepladder.

The U18B division featured Lucas Hersrud as the top seed after a dominating performance on the medium pattern earlier in the day. Hersrud fired a five-game total of 1,311 on the medium pattern, an average of 262.5.

But, it was No. 2 Dawson Peterson of Stewartville, Minnesota, who took home the belt after toppling Hersrud in the finals, 275-186. He advanced to the title match by defeating No. 4 Ethan Caruso, 181-164. Caruso knocked off No. 3 Zach Andresen, 234-187, in the opening match.

No. 2 Brooke Salzman of Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota, took home the championship belt in the U18G division and made it a clean sweep for No. 2 seeds across the divisions in the finals. Salzman



claimed the win over top seed Keira Mag-sam, 209-179, having found her way to the title match by dispatching Rachel Moore, 215-187. Moore snuck past Abigail Starkey, 233-212, to begin the finals.

The top four players in each division all received scholarships, and block award winners also received medals for their performances. In all, the MYME awarded \$10,275 in scholarships in its first year.

The 12 finalists were an accomplished bunch, including numerous titlists in the Storm Youth Championships, Elite Youth Tour, and the Minnesota Junior Bowlers Tour as well as some Junior Team USA veterans, state champions and more.

The event certainly brought out many of the best players as Steen was looking for, but his original goal of introducing local youth to challenging conditions also was met by many, including Owen Brinker.

Brinker, who competed in the U18B division, bowls in high school but had very little sport-shot experience leading up to the event. He stepped up to the challenge.

"The three different lane conditions really opened my eyes to how a sport shot can be something different than a house shot," Brinker said. "The biggest takeaway

I have from that eye-opening experience was how much I had to execute my shots and how precise I really had to be. I can say with utmost certainty that the precision that I had to have will help me tremendously on the house shots of this upcoming high school season and more sport shot tournaments to come."

Brinker's father, John, was right there with him and knew the decision was going to benefit his development as a player in the long run. They decided to take the challenge and gain more knowledge in the process.

"We decided to give Owen the opportunity to compete against some of the best bowlers in the Midwest as well as meeting some new competitors," John said. "This opportunity to bowl in a premier tournament exposed Owen to a new level of competition — both from the lanes and from the competitors. This was a great experience and will help Owen for future tournaments as well as high school bowling."

Owen also gained a newfound respect for the players and levels of the game that he hopes to reach.

"The biggest reason that I originally chose to bowl in this tournament was that I knew that it was going to be a higher level

of competition," he said. "But, it was a great surprise and opportunity at how impressive my fellow competitors really were, and it gave me a new profound respect for levels of bowling that I have yet to unlock."

Jensen, who finished third in U15B, is a pretty experienced player but knew a tougher field would only aid in his development, specifically from the mental aspect.

"I decided to compete in this event because of the caliber of bowlers it was drawing," he said. "I knew the competition would be awesome, and I would get to bowl with some of my friends from all around the country. But, I think bowling on three different, but challenging patterns, helped me with my mental game. It forced me to think about both my short- and long-term tournament goals as well as help prepare for my next competition."

Jensen along with his mom, Amy, and dad, David, traveled from Sioux Falls, South Dakota, where similar to Waterloo/Cedar Valley, there aren't many events like the MYME in their area. Amy Jensen was happy to make the trip.

"I feel competing in the event has helped Micah and will continue to help him navigate tough lane conditions," Amy

Learning Curve

The Main Event proved an invaluable learning experience for Owen Brinker and Micah Jensen, 1-r.

observed. “At 13, learning to move on from a bad shot or game is more challenging than anything else. But, with the amount of talent that this tournament was drawing, it was a no-brainer for us to attend. Waterloo is just a four-hour drive and being from South Dakota, we do not have a lot of big tournaments like the MYME around us.”

Amy added that, “It is always our hope that Micah will gain knowledge, experience, friendships and confidence in both himself and his bowling skills. I am confident that while participating in the MYME, Micah gained all of those things. It was a great tournament, and we look forward to participating in it again next year.”

The group already is looking to add an education portion to the MYME, which they hope to include multiple PBA and PWBA players and/or someone like Kegel’s John Janawicz to assist with helping young athletes learn more about varying lane conditions and how to attack them. Janawicz helped design this year’s lane conditions.

Since its inception in 2019, the YBSF has awarded \$29,280 in scholarships and will eclipse \$31,000 before the end of 2022 following their final Junior Gold Series event.

Steen reiterates that he could not have done this without the help of every member of the YBSF, and they look forward to hosting their annual event along with other local tournaments for years to come.

“The entire group worked tirelessly to put this together,” Steen said. “Angi, Matthew, Anne, Josh and Lindsey ... there was a lot of hard work put in by everyone there.”

For more information about the YBSF and the Midwest Youth Main Event, visit the YBSF Facebook page. ■





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Yesteryear

How A 1901 Tournament Paved The Way For Women's Bowling

by J.R. SCHMIDT

Bowling was a challenging sport for women in 1900. Besides the general belief that “nice ladies” didn’t bowl, there were physical challenges. Bowling balls were made of hard wood and did not have finger holes. Women who took to the lanes most often used lighter-weight or undersize balls. These factors kept scores down.

One woman who was not discouraged was Maie Wachsmuth. A member of Chicago’s high society, she was already a prominent sports-woman in tennis and golf when she took up bowling. In less than a year she had rolled a 243 game, reckoned as a city record for a female bowler.

So Wachsmuth was intrigued by the September 1900 announcement that the American Bowling Congress would be staging its first national tournament in Chicago the following January. The recent International Bowling Tournament in New Jersey had been more carnival than serious competition. Still, there had been a Ladies Division there. Wachsmuth asked the ABC to do the same thing at their tournament.

ABC officials rejected the idea. They had plenty to do already, without having to add a women’s event. Besides, there were simply not enough female bowlers who’d sign up to compete. Now Wachsmuth realized she would have to hold her own tournament.

Wachsmuth sent circulars around Chicago to various



Chi-Town Showdown

A few blocks from the site of the inaugural ABC Tournament in 1901 was a women’s event that also would make history.

Maie's Way
One of the heroes of women's bowling was this member of Chicago's high society who defied the odds.



League of their Own

The wives of these dapper chaps, bowling legends WV Thompson (top) and Frank Brill (bottom), sparked a legend of their own.

women's groups, proposing a meeting to discuss a bowling tournament. On December 13, 40 women gathered at the Sherman House hotel. As the Chicago Tribune reported, "Less than 10 minutes after the meeting was called to order, it was evident they were determined to hold a tournament, whether the men wished it or not."

The delegates founded the Chicago Women's Bowling Association. Wachsmuth was elected President. The Vice Presidents included the wives of prominent male bowlers W.V. Thompson and Frank Brill. Then the meeting got down to planning the tournament.

Wachsmuth told the delegates that she had already secured pledges from local merchants for nearly \$1,000 worth of prizes. Mussey's Alleys had been reserved for their use. The Women's United States Bowling Championships (WUSBC) would open at Mussey's on January 8, 1901, the same day the ABC Tournament was opening a few blocks away.

Four divisions were planned. Five-woman, three-woman, and two-woman divisions would each roll three games. The individual championship would be five games. Wachsmuth had also gotten the railroads to offer reduced fares to Chicago, and the delegates were confident of a strong out-of-town entry.

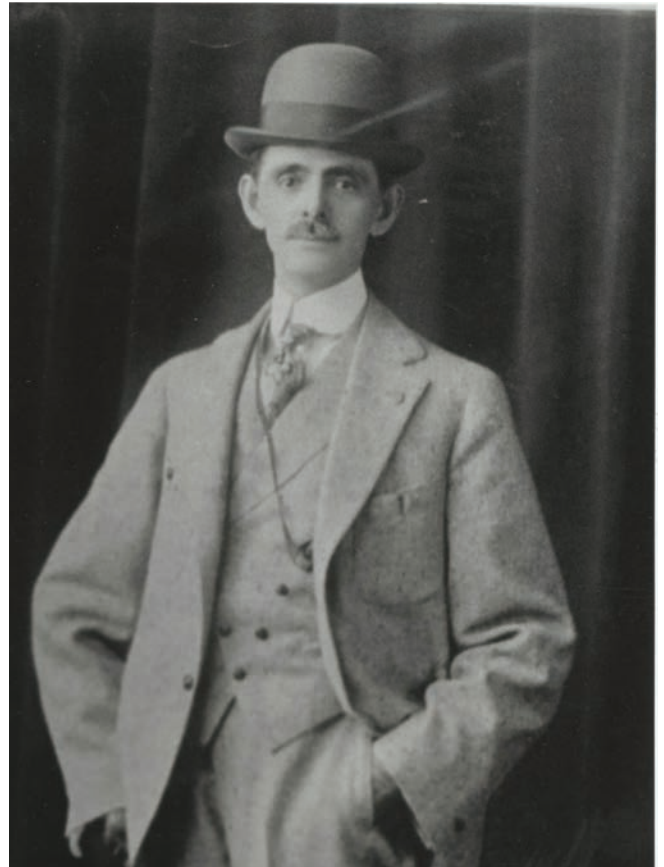
ABC President Godfred Langhenry was critical of the planned WUSBC. He noted that the ABC had spent several months putting together its own tournament, and thought the women's group was rushing

forward too fast. Despite its grand name, the WUSBC had no national bowling organization backing it. The railroads had offered those reduced fares because they thought the women's event was part of the ABC Tournament.

When bowling began on January 8, the WUSBC entry was far short of expectations. Where the ABC Tournament drew 41 five-man teams, the WUSBC counted only 7 five-woman teams. Entries in the other division were similarly low. All bowlers were local Chicagoans, except for a lone woman from Toledo. Wachsmuth made the excuse that women from other cities had not entered the tournament because they felt uncomfortable bowling in front of spectators.

The tournament ended after four days, with the Double Century team on top of the five-woman event with a three-game score of 1,876. The Center team won the three-woman event with 1,222, while Wachsmuth and Mrs. L.G. Stebbins took the Doubles with 801. Elizabeth Jeschke won the Individual event with a five-game total of 701. Jeschke also topped what might be considered the 14-game All Events with 1,918, four pins better than Wachsmuth.

Chicago women staged a second WUSBC in 1902, with similar results. Then the tournament passed from history. But the pattern had been set. Over the next decade, women's bowling tournaments became increasingly common. Finally, in 1916, the Women's International Bowling Congress was formed.



Spare Me

Teddy and the Social Network

by JASON THOMAS



“It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better.” – Theodore Roosevelt, 1910

AH, SOCIAL MEDIA. The great flower of communication that allows the world to be gloriously and harmoniously connected for the benefit of humankind. Or is it a poisonous, choking weed that drains the life out of us all and gives an ill-intentioned, unhappy minority the ability to make the rest of our lives a miserable and anxiety-ridden hellscape?

Working and living in the world of bowling, we see this dichotomy displayed on a daily basis, to the point that it sometimes feels as if we are forever locked in an eternal “Battle at Hogwarts” that will determine the fate of our industry and its inhabitants. I ponder this question frequently and, as a reader of history, I recently stumbled upon an iconic 1910 speech by one of this country’s greatest presidents, Theodore Roosevelt, which summarizes my feelings on the matter better than anything I’ve read since the invention of social media just a few short years ago:

“The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming.”

I recently had a conversation with one of the top bowlers in the world, who explained it to me perfectly. This person is very active on social media, and I asked him how he deals with the many slings and arrows that are often tossed his way over the course of his exploits on the PBA Tour and in his many other bowling-related endeavors.

He says he has learned to deal with the negativity in a healthy way and no longer allows it to bother him. In fact, he says if he does read negative comments, he’s able to laugh and then immediately convert them into fuel that drive his desire to keep pushing to be the best bowler he can be. But there certainly was a time when he took the comments personally and spent many a day dwelling on the soul-crushing impact they had in partially stealing the thunder from some of his greatest accomplishments.

Anyone who has been the victim of a “mean tweet” can certainly relate, but the perspective of understanding that these negative comments are going to come our way, no matter what we do or how successful we become, is a refreshing, healthy point of view that could benefit all of us — especially our youngest community members, for whom social media is now intertwined with their lives in an almost seamless, potentially insidious way.

As much as some of us despise the

current state of things, social media is here to stay, so it behooves us all to accept it for what it is and develop our own unique strategies for dealing with it. In my case, to this point I have largely chosen to ignore social media in its entirety, which is probably not the best thing I could be doing for the good of bowling — and the larger world — as it deprives “Team Potter” of a worthy soldier in the epic, never-ending battle against “Team Voldemort.” Perhaps this column is my partial atonement for this failing, but I am somewhat comforted in the knowledge that even though I prefer to ignore the din, I am still out there doing things for others to comment upon.

For those of you who are out there waging the battle, before your next post I would encourage you to read these next lines from Mr. Roosevelt and consider which side your words place you on.

“But who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.”

Old Teddy’s bespectacled face isn’t carved into the side of a mountain for nothing.

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