

EJ Tackett arrived at PBA Players ChampionRoyal Pin Woodland in ship presented by SnickIndianapolis last season teeming with motivation.

Motivated to win in front of family, friends and fellow Hoosiers.
Motivated to avenge his 2022 title match collapse. Motivated to complete the PBA's Triple Crown (PBA Tournament of Champions, PBA World Championship and U.S. Open).

To say Tackett left fulfilled would be an egregious understatement.
He doubled in the 10th frame to defeat Kyle Troup to manifest Tackett's lifelong dream.
"I tried to play it off, but... this is it, man. This is it," Tackett said after the win. "To get up and do it, throw a double for the U.S. Open like I'd practiced so many times when I was 12 years old, to finally come through, is just unbelievable."
The reigning PBA Player of the Year begins his title defense this week as the 2024 U.S. Open presented by GoBowling returns to Indianapolis.

The U.S. Open, featuring a $\$ 100,000$ top prize, will be the second event of the 2024 PBA tour season. Bill O'Neill won the season-opening

The finals will air Sunday, Feb. 4 at 1 p.m. on FOX.

STORYLINES
If Tackett was the most motivated player in last year's field, Jason Belmonte was a close second. The 40-year-old Australian could enter uncharted territory with a title this week.

With his 2020 U.S. Open title, Belmonte earned wins of all five major championships, joining Indy's own Mike Aulby as the lone members of the Super Slam club.

Belmonte has no plans of stopping there: 48 games and a stepladder finals are the only obstacles standing in his way of winning a second Super Slam. Belmonte has won the PBA Tournament of Champions and USBC Masters four times each and owns three PBA World Championship and PBA Players Championship titles as well.

Where two of the sport's titans have succeeded, Anthony Simonsen is never far behind. The 27-year-old could become the youngest continued on page 6

## Lukosiuss Climbs The Ladder To Win PWBA Myrtle Beach Regional

MYRTLE BEACH, of the year, and I didn't S.C.- Karsyn Lukosius of Jackson, New Jersey, bounced back from a 139 game in qualifying to reach the stepladder finals and defeated everyone in her path to win the 2024 Professional Women's Bowling Association Myrtle Beach Regional Sunday at Myrtle Beach Bowl.
Qualifying was difficult on the 73-person field as only five bowlers averaged above 200 for the eight-game block on the 39-foot condition with Lukosius only getting to plus 42 (1,642). Annalise O'Bryant of Ball Ground, Georgia, led the field with a 1,740 total, averaging over 217.

Lukosius' focus on throwing one shot at a time contributed to her bouncing back from that 139 game with games of 247 and 232 to grab the third seed for the stepladder finals.

IIts the first regional
of the year, and I didn't
have too high of expectations; I was just wanting to make good shots and hope to cash," Lukosius said.

Once the lights turned on for her first match against Corina Grasso of Fort Collins, Colorado, Lukosius was laserfocused, shooting 257, including the final seven strikes, against Grasso's 177 as she began her march to the final match. Grasso would earn $\$ 600$ for her fourth-place finish.

Waiting in the semifinal match was 2023 PWBA Regional Showdown winner Kerry Smith of Lititz, Pennsylvania.

Lukosius would start with a double, but strikes would be hard to come by for both competitors as only seven combined strikes were thrown, and the match became about who could make their spares and get the carry at the right time.


Karsyn Lukosius
Smith was able to hit way to a 186-169 win. the pocket on a majority Smith earned $\$ 700$ for of her shots but couldn't her third-place finish. get any breaks, leaving The final match six single-pin spares in proved to be an exciting the match with a crucial one as Lukosius faced missed 10 pin in the sev- off against O'Bryant, a enth frame
A ball change by Lukosius would be the difference as she doubled in the sixth and seventh frames to essentially lock up the match on the five-time and current Junior Team USA member. Neither bowler was able to pull away until O'Bryant left the 3-4-7 split and failed to concontinued on page 4

## 

by Frank Weiler
MORENO VALLEY - Just one week ago Moreno Valley Bowl hosted the annual USBC Citrus Belt BVL (Bowlers to Veterans Link) Tournament to raise money to fund a variety of recreational equipment and therapeutic supplies for America's veterans. The tournament is run nationally and locally under the auspices of the BVL national nonprofit charicontinued on page 6


Lonnie Richie Citrus Belt President \& BVL Tournament Host


Will June Winner Citrus Belt BVL Tournament


Margaret Vassar Winner Citrus Belt BVL Tourey

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by Nolan Hughes
Last week, Bill O'Neill defeated Tom Smallwood in the title match of the PBA Players Championship presented by Snickers, marking his third career major victory and 14th career title.

With a certain Australian dominating the tour for more than a decade - the same man who exclusively refers to O'Neill as "William" - major championship wins have been hard to come by in the modern era. O'Neill's third major elevates him to an uber-elite class.

Only six current, full-time touring players have met or exceeded O'Neill's three major titles: the aforereferenced Jason Belmonte, Anthony Simonsen, EJ Tackett, François Lavoie, Chris Barnes and Dom Barrett. The list of current, full-time players who can match O'Neill's 14 career titles is even smaller: Belmonte, Tackett, Barnes, Tommy Jones and Sean Rash.

If you're doing the math at home, that means only three full-time active players can match O'Neill's 14 titles and 3 majors. (Parker Bohn III, who bowls the tour part-time, would also qualify.)

Belmonte and Tackett are generation-defining talents and Hall-of-Fame locks. Barnes, a Class of ' 18 Hall of Famer, is 11 years O'Neill's senior and has a son, Ryan, knocking on the door of PBA major titles himself; in fact, O'Neill defeated Ryan in the Players Championship semifinal match en route to his title last week.
"Chris is the reason why I played the lanes the way that I played them," O'Neill said after last week's Players Championship. "He taught me how to soften up my hand and lesson grip pressure and be able to play straighter and use the front part of the lane. That was his thing. I owe him one, but I guess I'll have to take it from his kid."

There's only one way to properly encapsulate the illustrious résumé O'Neill is compiling: It's the Real Deal.

It's a fitting nickname for the 42-year-old PBA star.
First and foremost, it rhymes.
While rhyming is not a prerequisite for an elite nickname, it undeniably elevates an otherwise solid one. (See: Hakeem "The Dream" Olajuwon, "Mean" Joe Greene and a certain Super Bowl MVP-winning quarterback from O'Neill's beloved Philadelphia Eagles.)

Secondly, there is no more apropos way to describe his O'Neill's talent and accolades.

From the moment he began his collegiate tenure at Saginaw Valley State, O'Neill established himself among the best players in the country. From 20002004, he amassed four consecutive First Team All-American selections while earning Most Valuable Player honors during his junior and senior seasons.

O'Neill carried over his collegiate success to the professional ranks, winning PBA Rookie of the Year in 2005-06. He captured his first title in Nov. 2009 and won multiple titles in four of the subsequent 11 seasons.

Now sitting on the precipice of Hall of Fame eligibility - with more than 10 titles, O'Neill only needs to reach 20 years of PBA membership to be eligible O'Neill ended a three-and-a-half-year title drought last week with title no. 14.


O'Neill's reaction to Butturff's match-winning strike.

Fourteen: a number, for unrelated reasons, that O'Neill would soon like to forget.

Without titles in 2021 or 2022, O'Neill switched from 15-pound to 14 -pound equipment before the 2023 season. Theoretically, the weight change would help him increase his rev rate to keep pace with the Belmontes and Tacketts and Simonsens of the tour.

Instead, O'Neill scored like my 61-year-old father, who switched to 14 pounds a few months after O'Neill. While O'Neill said he felt he bowled well early last season, his scores fell short of his standards

Tackett, Simonsen and Belmonte won five of the season's first six events; O'Neill failed to reach a championship round. Missed cuts in Akron and Kokomo spelled the end of O'Neill's 14-pound era.

Following an adjustment period at the USBC Masters, O'Neill closed 2023 in Real Deal form.

He finished top-20 in all four WSOB XIV events, including eighth in the World Championship. In the high-scoring Roth/Holman PBA Doubles Championship, O'Neill and Belmonte finished eighth; they fell to Dom Barrett and Simonsen in the first stepladder match, 280-279.

Despite a season-high, third-place finish in May's PBA Players Championship, O'Neill made the short drive home dejected. Late in his semifinal match against Jakob Butturff, a few fortunate breaks fell in favor of the southpaw.

The loss cost O'Neill a chance at winning a major with his wife, kids, friends and family sitting in the front row - and that was just the tip of the iceberg.

Advancing to face Kevin McCune in the finals would've netted O'Neill at least an additional $\$ 25,000$; a win, on top of a $\$ 100,000$ check and a third major, would've been a euphoric, career-defining moment for O'Neill.

Furthermore, had O'Neill gone on to win that title, he would have qualified for the PBA Super Slam Cup (earning a minimum of $\$ 10,000$ and a chance for $\$ 100,000$ ) and earned another title opportunity in the PBA Tour Finals.

This misfortune, unbeknownst to O'Neill, had only just begun.
His partner, Shannon O'Keefe, had to withdraw from July's Storm PBA/PWBA Striking Against Breast Cancer Mixed Doubles tournament at the last minute. Then, he triggered a long-standing back injury doing yard work just before the PBA League.

## A rekindled season extinguished as soon as it began.

O'Neill, his veteran savvy growing with each gray hair, planned ahead for the 2024 campaign. He scheduled his layover from Philadelphia to Wichita in Houston - not Chicago - to avoid weather delays caused by the expected Midwestern cold front.

Fate had other plans. When tornado warnings in the Houston area created delays and cost him the practice session of the 2024 Players Championship, it felt like 2023 all over again.

But the greats don't let third parties control their careers. O'Neill grinded through the first day of qualifying, adjusting to all the new bowling ball releases, moved up the leaderboard and never looked back.

With the 14-pound equipment mercifully waning in the rearview mirror and his 14th trophy sitting on his mantle, the Real Deal is back - and he's got his sights set on his next target.
"I'm coming for the TOC," O'Neill emphasized after his season-opening win. "That's the one I need."


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# PVBA Website Relaunch A Success 

What a surprise was in store for me when I ventured over to the newly relaunched women's professional bowling website at pwba.com. The brand manager, Robyn Graves, said in a phone interview that the new layout was posted late last year. And what a great job they have done in cataloging all of the statistics since the inception of the new PWBA in 2015.

The area that really got my attention was the 2023 tour statistics. Did anyone even know that the top four competitors on the national tour made in excess of $\$ 89,000$ ? Considering the fact that there are only 8 national events makes those earnings all the more impressive.

Maria Jose Rodriguez led the way with $\$ 98,754$ in earnings, followed by Lindsay Boomershine with $\$ 93,245$, Jordan Richard with $\$ 91,385$, and Bryanna Cote with $\$ 89,214$. Considering the fact that national champions are not eligible to compete in the regional events makes their earnings even more spectacular.

Each of the top four woman pros were raking in more than $\$ 11,000$ per tournament! That's a number that would put Earl Anthony's and Mark Roth's earnings per tournament to shame. I went to the PBA website to get a handle on the incredible numbers posted by these ladies. Although the men's website is still about four years behind, I checked out the numbers that Jason Belmonte posted in 2018, before the COVID confusion began.

Belmonte bowled in 14 national events in 2018, earning $\$ 7892$ per tournament. He actually fared better the next year when he chimed in with earnings of $\$ 15,015$ per tournament. I wonder if COVID-19 actually helped Belmonte in his domination of men's bowling on the PBA Tour? It would appear that it did.
E.J. Tackett, another perennial front runner on the men's tour, checked in with earnings of $\$ 3151$ per tournament in 2018 and $\$ 5932$ in 2019. Similar numbers could be found for Anthony Simonsen ( $\$ 4160$ in 2018, and $\$ 6345$ in 2019) and Jakob Butturff ( $\$ 3260$ in 2018, and $\$ 6592$ in 2019). It's so obvious, and you don't have to be a rocket scientist to appreciate the magnificent numbers put up by the top four PWBA stars.

I was intrigued by the fact that national champions on the PWBA Tour are not permitted to compete in the regional events. "It's less intimidating than in the national events," said Graves. "It gives others a chance to come out and test the waters on the regional tour."

Indeed. Take into account the most recent regional event in Myrtle Beach, S.C., won by Karsyn Lukosius of Jackson, N.J., the longtime home of PBA great Parker Bohn III. Lukosius said following her performance, "I didn't have too high of expectations. I was just wanting to make good shots and hope to cash."


Jordan Richard \$91,385 (2023)
by Dave Williams


Maria Jose Rodriguez \$98,754 (2023)
Of such are legends made.
Lukosius proceeded to lap the field in the televised finals, defeating Corina Grasso of Fort Collins, Colo., 257-177 in the first match; Kerry Smith of Lititz, Pa., by a 186-169 score in the second match; and in the final match Lukosius tied Annalise OBryant of Ball Ground, Ga., by striking out in the 10th frame for a 212-212 tie, forcing a one ball roll-off.

Both players matched each other with strikes, and then another strike, before Lukosius struck a third time and OBryant left a 10 pin. With the victory, Karsyn earned $\$ 1,800$ and a free spot into the season-ending PWBA Regional Showdown in Winter Park, Florida. Only the nine regional champions will compete in Winter Park, according to Graves, and the winner will receive free entries to all of next year's national events. That's quite an incentive.

The new and improved PWBA website is divided into eight subsections: Watch, Schedule, Athletes, Information, Stats, News, Join, and Social. Under the Watch button you can check out the broadcast schedule, including BowITV broadcasts, YouTube and archived videos. The Schedule button provides both the national and regional tour lineups and results.

Next up is the Athletes button that provides personal photos, career stats (2015-2023), PWBA Major and Regional Titles since 2015, awards and other achievements. "Our goal is to have all of the stats from the previous professional organizations (LPBT, LPBA, WPBA, etc.) included in this section," stated Graves. Another cool feature in this category lists the sponsors (with their logos) for each of the members as part of their profile.


Lindsay Boomershine \$93,245 (2023)
But for me, it's the Stats section that reminds me of my childhood, reviewing over and over the yearly breakdown provided in the PBA Program and ABC Yearbook. The ease of viewing those yearly entries here at pwba.com, along with the Athletes section with individual totals, titles, awards and other achievements make this website enjoyable, informational and educational from a single source.

Congratulations to those that were involved for a job well done in this website transformation!


Bryanna Cote \$89,214 (2023)

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## U.S. Open

continued from page 1
player to win six career majors.
Simonsen has won two majors at Royal Pin Woodland. He became the youngest player to win a major at the 2016 USBC Masters, then the youngest to win three with this 2022 U.S. Open victory. He finished fourth in last season's U.S. Open.

## PLAYERS TO WATCH

While the only active, full-time players with four or more major victories are the aforementioned Belmonte, Simonsen and Tackett, Bill O'Neill seeks to join the club after winning the season-opening PBA Players Championship presented by Snickers for his third career major title.

François Lavoie, another three-time major champion, aims to win a third green jacket. Only Pete Weber (five), Don Carter and Dick Weber (four) and Dave Husted (three) have accomplished that feat

Kris Prather can become the 10th Triple Crown winner with a U.S. Open win. He finished 16th in his first attempt at the crown last season.

Last year's televised nine-player stepladder finals introduced bowling fans to three new faces. Justin Knowles nearly climbed the first ladder to reach the finals; Frank Snodgrass' performance later earned him a spot on the Waco Wonders championship squad; and Finland's Tomas Käyhkö established himself as the latest uber-talented European to make waves in the United States.

All three return in 2024 hoping to win their first career PBA Tour titles.

## FORMAT

Competition begins on Monday, following Saturday's pre-tournament qualifier and Sunday's practice sessions. Squads will complete eight-game qualifying rounds at 8 a.m., 1 p.m. and 6 p.m. Eastern on Monday through Wednesday.

After three eight-game rounds on three different oil patterns, the field will be trimmed to the top 36 players following Wednesday's competition. Thursday's fourth round of qualifying, which will feature a fourth oil pattern to be used for the duration of the tournament, will determine the 24 match play advancers.

The top five players following 24 games of round-robin match play across Thursday evening and Friday will advance to the televised finals, airing live Sunday, Feb. 4 at 4 p.m. Eastern on FOX.

All rounds will be livestreamed on BowITV.


More information, including a detailed schedule and tournament roster, is available here.

## U.S. OPEN SCHEDULE

Royal Pin Woodland | Indianapolis, IN
All times Eastern
Monday, Jan. 29 | Qualifying Round 1 (eight games)
8 a.m. - A-squad
1 p.m. - B-squad
6 p.m. - C-squad
Tuesday, Jan. 30 | Qualifying Round 2 (eight games)
8 a.m. - B-squad
1 p.m. - C-squad
6 p.m. - A-squad
Wednesday, Jan. 31 | Qualifying Round 3 (eight games)
8 a.m. - C-squad
1 p.m. - A-squad
6 p.m. - B-squad
Top 36 players advance
Thursday, Feb. 1 | Qualifying and Match Play (eight games)
8 a.m. - practice session
10 a.m. - Qualifying Round 4
Top 24 players advance
5 p.m. - Match Play Round 1
Friday, Feb. 2 | Match Play
10 a.m. - Match Play Round 2
5 p.m. - Match Play Round 3
Top five players advance to stepladder finals
Saturday, Feb. 3
4 p.m. on FS1 - PBA Elite League Round 2 Matches
Waco Wonders vs. Motown Muscle;
Portland Lumberjacks vs. New Jersey KingPins
Sunday, Feb. 4
4 p.m. Eastern on FOX - U.S. Open Finals

## B.V.L. continued from page 1

table organization. The organization raises approximately $\$ 1,000,000$ annually.
The TOP 5 Winners in each category follow:

## Top Male Winners

1. Will June
2. Samuel Sanchez $\quad 859$
3. Jason Foster 858

Rick Huffman 858
5. Martin Montez 857

Top Female Winners

1. Margaret Vassar 889
2. Barbara Camey 871
3. Rosy Reyes-coad 861
4. Valerie Pruitt 841
5. Kellie Shoji 836

The tournament was hosted by newly elected Citrus Belt President Lonnie Richie. Bowling balls were donated as door prizes by Richard Deasis of Rich's Bowling Supplies.

Not only did Will June win first place in the tournament he also received a watch donated by Fred Overstreet for being the oldest veteran competing in the tournament. Will is a young 89 years of age. Congratulations and thanks to all tournament participants for helping raise funds for our veterans.

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# Brivnswick: ,  

by David Yamauchi

DOWNEY - The Brunswick Invitational took to the lanes for the fifth week of the 3rd round pattern seeing if the scoring would hold up despite the 50' length. The league was pulling for Forever Hope Foundation to reel in Cal Bowl who already had a three-game lead on the field halfway through the round.

In the "A" match, Cal Bowl (Leonard Ruiz Jr.) was red-hot sitting at 18-2 taking advantage of some roller-coaster scoring along the way. Forever Hope Foundation (Vernon Adams) had moved up to the "A" match after a high-scoring 4-1 result last week. Cal Bowl continued their dominance of the round with a 5-0 seep to move to 23-2 for the round. James Bael was big for Cal Bowl with a nice 659 set while Eric Williams Jr. led a shorthanded Forever Hope Foundation with a solid 650 series. Cal Bowl will remain in the " $A$ " match next week.

The "B" match featured Bowlium (Billy Myers Jr.) looking to bounce back after dropping from the "A" match last week, taking on DV8 (David Cogswell) who led the league in scoring last week. The night was all DV8 as the took the first two easy, then held on for a 2-pin win in game three for the sweep. David Cogswell was big for DV8 with a 669 set while Billy Myers Jr. paced Bowlium with a 579 series. DV8 will move to the "A" match next week to try and derail Cal Bowl.

Pro Approach Oak Tree (John Struckman) took on US Foods (Gabriel Martinez) with Pro Approach looking to stay hot and US Foods looking to rebound after having a $2400+$ set shot on them last week. US Foods started strong, taking the first two games, but dropped game three for the 4-1 win. Scott Silva led Pro Approach Del Rio with a nice 666 set while Paul Barraco was big leading off for US Foods with a 668 series.

Junior Amateur Tour (Kevin Valmonte) was back in the hunt after a sweep in week Reister (218) and Ramon Torres (259) for

| TOP 10 OVERALL POINTS |  |
| :---: | :---: |
| Bowlium \$ \$ . . . . . . . . 61 | Forever Hope Foundation 56 |
| Cal Bowl . . . . . . . . . . 58.5 | US Foods. . . . . . . . . 56 |
| DV8................. 58 | Family Ties \$ . . . . . . . 56 |
| ThreadWorks......... 58 | Forest Lanes. . . . . . . . 43 |
| Junior Amateur Tour . . 56.5 | Del Rio Lanes . . . . . . . 42 |

## TOP 10 ROUND 3 WEEK 5

Cal Bowl .............. 23 ThreadWorks. ......... 15 DV8................... . 17 Bowlium \$ ............ . 14 US Foods. ............. 15 ProApproach Oak Tree 13 Junior Amateur Tour .. 15 Del Rio Lanes . . . . . . . . 12 Forever Hope Foundation 15 Forest Lanes . . . . . . . . . 10

| COP 10 WE |  |
| :--- | :--- |
| 736 Kaven Massey | 664 Eric Snow |
| 704 Stephanie Zavala | 664 Gabriel Martinez |
| 669 David Cogswell | 659 James Bael |
| 668 Paul Barraco | 655 Jesse Perez |
| 666 Scott Silva | 653 Kevin Valmonte |

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\$19 each. SuperPot went to Butch Jackson (226) for $\$ 114$ with 2nd to Eric Williams Jr. (225) for $\$ 57$.

Come on out and watch Southern California's Richest League as they continue to conquer the 50 ' third round on Monday at 8:00!

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