

CALIFORNIA BOWLING NEWS

FEBRUARY 2, 2023

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2023 U.S. OPEN TO GETS UNDERWAY IN INDIANAPOLIS

by Gene J. Kanak

ARLINGTON, Texas – There is nothing quite like the start of a new bowling season.

That's because whether you're a league bowler or a touring professional, each new season provides the opportunity to catch up with old friends, get back in the swing of competition and pursue challenging goals designed to take your game to the next level.

For members of the Professional Bowlers Association Tour, the season-opener is even more special because it happens to take place at one of the sport's most-prestigious major championships, the U.S. Open.

The 2023 U.S. Open presented by Go Bowling!, a major championship on the Professional Bowlers Association Tour schedule, started Sunday at Royal Pin Woodland (formerly Woodland Bowl) in Indianapolis and will wrap up on Feb. 5.

The week long tournament is sure to be chock full of intriguing action. With that in mind, here are some unique storylines to keep your eye on during this year's tournament:

Simonsen looks to complete successful title defense
continued on page 2

JONES, BELMONTE TO CAPTAIN USA VS. THE WORLD TEAMS

by Nolan Hughes

One of the highlights of the 2023 Guaranteed Rate PBA Tour is the return of the USA vs. The World event at the World Series of Bowling XIV.

During a pair of FS1 telecasts on April 15-16, four Americans will compete against four international stars for the right to the Hall of Fame Cup, which will reside at the International Bowling Museum and Hall of Fame in Arlington, Texas.

Tommy Jones is set to captain the Americans, while Australia's Jason Belmonte leads the World team. The remaining players will be determined during the 2023 PBA Tour.

On Feb. 13, before the PBA Shawnee Classic, each captain will select one player to join their team. Belmonte can



choose any international player, while Jones can tab any American.

The final roster spots will be determined following the Tournament of Champions based on the 2023 PBA Tour points list. The top two Americans and international players in points through the Tour's first six tournaments will join the USA and World teams, respectively.

Jones is an 11-time Team USA member, and one of five players to win PBA Rookie and Player of the Year during his career. The 44-year-old South Carolinian owns 20 career titles, including two majors, and was inducted into the PBA Hall of Fame in 2020.

"I've always enjoyed bowling with USA on my jersey, whether it's been for the Weber Cup or

bowling for Team USA," Jones said. "This is a little bit of a different animal and something that is pretty cool, bowling and coaching some of the greatest guys throwing the ball these days."

The 39-year-old Belmonte is still at the peak of his powers, earning a record-tying seventh PBA Player of the Year award in 2022. Belmonte continued on page 10

TOBY LEE Leads The NFL Clubhouse League

by Frank Weiler

REDLANDS – With the new Kegel Lane Machine cleaning the backends like never before, Empire Bowl scores are down across the board. Even BIG JOHN HENRY of 16 TONS fame would probably struggle to meet his expectations bowling here. Most of our "league rats" and social bowlers are feeling the pinch. Few have been free of low scores

and frustration. TOBY LEE is one of the few bowlers who continue to score while others continue to struggle.

Toby Lee is one of the top bowlers currently bowling at Empire Bowl. He currently has the High Average among the NFL CLUBHOUSE LEAGUE bowlers and has rolled some of the highest league scores.

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Toby Lee





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MAILING ADDRESS7502 Florence Ave.
Downey, CA 90240

EDITORIAL OFFICE11459 Imperial Hwy.
Norwalk, CA 90650

TEMP. OFFICE NUMBER: 626-252-2985

24-HOUR FAX NUMBER:

E-mail: news@californiabowlingnews.com

Website: www.californiabowlingnews.com

CHARLES KINSTLER.....Publisher

DEAN LOPEZEditor / Typesetter

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DOUG HOSKINSComputer Consultant

California Bowling News is NOT responsible for ADS,
EDITORIALS, STORIES, FACTS, PICTURE CAPTIONS or
SPELLING emailed for publication. Published 52 weeks.

U.S. Open

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Since all 108 bowlers in this year’s U.S. Open field will be looking to reach the top of the mountain, it’s probably best to begin by looking at the man who currently resides there.

In this case, that would be Anthony Simonsen of Las Vegas.

Simonsen won last year’s tournament, which was also held at Woodland, by defeating E.J. Tackett of Bluffton, Indiana, 232-165 during the live TV finals on Fox Sports’ FS1.

The victory earned Simonsen the tournament’s \$100,000 first-place prize and the distinction of being the youngest player in PBA history to win three majors at just 25 years and 31 days old. USBC and PBA Hall of Famer Dave Davis held the previous mark (25 years, 43 days).

Not one to rest on his laurels, a little over a month later, Simonsen became the fastest to record four PBA major victories when he won the 2022 United States Bowling Congress Masters in Las Vegas.

Simonsen can rewrite the record book once again by capturing major No. 5 in Indianapolis this week. However, to do so, he’d have to complete the first successful U.S. Open title defense since Dave Husted accomplished the feat in 1996.

It’s sure to be a tall task, but Simonsen has already proven time and time again that he’s more than up to the challenge.

Belmonte aims to break own record

Speaking of being up to a challenge, no bowler in the world has proven himself more capable of rising to the occasion than has Australian superstar Jason Belmonte.

Belmonte has been the consensus pick as the world’s No. 1 bowler for the better part of the last decade, and it’s easy to understand why as a seven-time PBA Player of the Year and the tour’s all-time leader in major championship victories with 14.

The two-hander already has one U.S. Open title under his belt. That win came when he defeated Simon-sen (226-201) during the stepladder finals at the 2020 event held at Sun Valley Lanes in Lincoln, Nebraska.

That victory was especially sweet for Belmonte as it allowed him to become just the second player in PBA history to capture the elusive Super Slam, which means a player has won five different major championship titles. PBA Hall of Famer Mike Aulby is the only other bowler to have accomplished the feat.

Belmonte comes to Woodland looking to add to his already-legendary resume by starting the 2023 season with U.S. Open win No. 2 and major title No. 15.

If past history is any indicator of things to come, Belmonte is almost certain to be in the mix all week long at Woodland.

MLB’s Mookie Betts, country music’s Jimmie Allen to take part in U.S. Open activities

The Bowling Proprietors’ Association of America recently awarded Los Angeles Dodgers outfielder Mookie Betts and country music headliner Jimmie Allen exemptions into the main field at the 2023 U.S. Open.

Betts and Allen have served as advocates and ambassadors for the sport of bowling, and both still com-pete in high level events across the country as much as their busy schedules will allow.

Allen will participate in Sunday’s pre-tournament qualifier after being forced to decline his exemption in order to perform at this year’s Grammy Awards in Los Angeles on Feb. 1.

Betts, meanwhile, will compete in the tournament proper as a member of A Squad, which kicks off this year’s event Tuesday morning at 8 a.m. Eastern for the first of three eight-game qualifying blocks.

The Dodgers’ all-star outfielder has been an ardent supporter of both USBC and PBA tournaments through the years, maintaining an average of right around 200 during 11 career PBA events.

Betts’ crowning PBA achievement to date came in 2017 when he recorded a perfect game during qualify-ing-round action at PBA World Series of Bowling IX at the National Bowling Stadium in Reno, Nevada.

Regardless of how Betts and Allen perform on the lanes, just having them on site is sure to add even more excitement to an already-thrilling week of action on the lanes in Indianapolis.

Don’t overlook the locals

Eight Indiana natives head to Woodland hoping to win the title and keep the 2023 U.S. Open crown in the Hoosier state.

That list includes a pair of past major champions in Wes Malott of Fort Wayne, who won the 2012-2013 Lipton U.S. Open, and Tackett, who secured major victories at the 2016 PBA World Championship in Reno and the 2017 FireLake Tournament of Champions in Owasso, Oklahoma.

Malott’s son Jordan, also of Fort Wayne, is in this year’s field as well. The younger Malott, a current mem-ber of Junior Team USA, is no stranger to success at Woodland as he has authored strong performances there in years past while competing at the Junior Gold Championships.

Nevertheless, fan-favorite honors may very well go to Indianapolis natives Brent Boho and Zach Weidman, who will have the advantage of bowling in their own backyard and being able to sleep at home throughout this year’s tournament.

Despite having to travel a bit farther, Kevin McCune of Munster, Ronnie Russell of Marion and Matthew Sanders of Evansville will also feel at home and should garner plenty of support this week at Woodland.

A family affair

Competing for a major title is always a nerve-wracking experience. As such, it’s nice when a bowler can count on the support of family to help weather the storm. Several 2023 U.S. Open competitors will be able to

continued on page 4



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Another Look At Closed Bowling Centers

by Dave Williams

In response to our question about closed bowling centers, we have received four thoughtful replies, and rather than take bits and pieces and mold them into one article, I've decided to take each one as a separate story. Yes, there is that much information in each response.

The first of these responses that we'll focus on comes from Rich LaChance of Ohio, who previously lived in California, and before that Arizona. If nothing else, you would certainly have to say that Rich is following a recent trend, first by moving from Arizona to California about 45 years ago, and then fleeing California for Ohio, where he has been for the past 30 years. But he is still able to keep up on all the bowling news by following The Desert Bowler and California Bowling News online.



The bowling center that he brought up from his childhood was **Golden Pin Lanes in Tucson, Ariz.**, a 48 lane facility that originally opened in 1960, like so many others, with the advent of the automatic pinsetter, eliminating the need for pin boys. They would finally close in 2019. The last professional event (there were many over the years, including 27 national PBA tournaments), was held by the PWBA that summer, and Shannon O'Keefe came away the victor with a 259 final game on television, good for a \$10,000 payday.

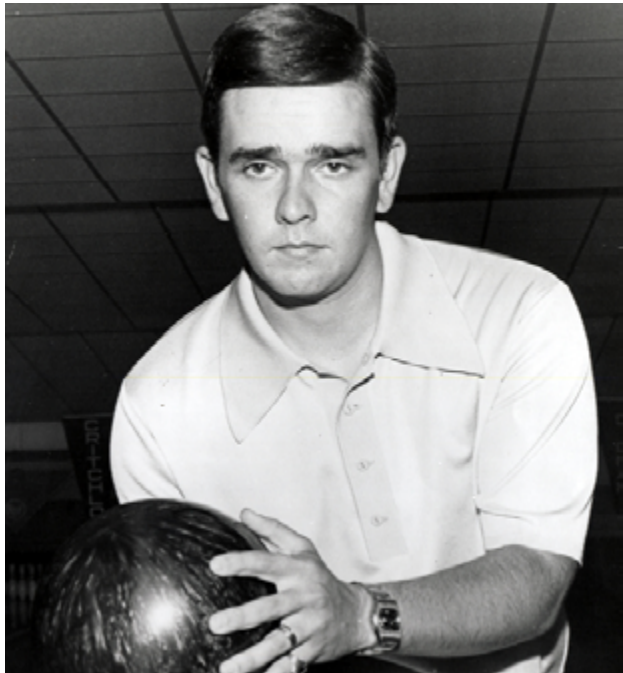
Unlike so many bowling centers that have closed due to real estate values in recent years, Golden Pin Lanes fell victim to another fate that has been around just as long — failure by the immediate family to show an interest in the business. In my travels with AMF, American Recreation Centers (ARC), and Nationwide Bowling Centers, I witnessed this phenomenon almost as often as the real estate conundrum.

In fact, it carried right to the board room, where the sons of both ARC and Nationwide Bowling Centers owners became lawyers, after witnessing the long and hard hours devoted by their parents to make the bowling centers thrive. In the case of Golden Pin Lanes it was the age of Don Allan, 85, which ultimately led to the decision to put the lanes up for sale, according to Caryn Bustos in an article posted by KGUN Channel 9 in Tucson, an ABC affiliate.

Bustos, the general manager who had been with Golden Pin Lanes for 24 years, said that it was difficult to see the place close. When no one stepped forward for the asking price of \$2.8 to \$3.0 million as a bowling center, it was ultimately purchased by Pima County for \$2.85 million. The property is still vacant today, but the elaborate brick entrance, and of course the road sign (why do they always save the sign?), have been spared and will be incorporated into the new building which will provide city services such as healthcare.

Golden Pin Lanes was not without its share of celebrities. Pete Tountas was the general manager of the center for many years. Prior to that, Pete en-

joyed a professional career that included 2 PBA titles as well as the USBC Masters in 1968. It seems as though Tountas won many more PBA events, perhaps because of his familiar mustachioed face and heavy Greek accent... and no slide! How did his knee survive all those years on the PBA tour?



Paul Colwell

There's no question, however, that **Paul Colwell** was the most famous bowler to come out of Tucson. He was one of the first professionals to sign with Columbia 300, along with superstars Don Johnson and Betty Morris. His "frisbee" release was envied by many competitors, but no one ever came close to duplicating the unusual delivery.

Sidewalk Bowling

"People say that Paul got his release from throwing a frisbee," said childhood friend LaChance. "In reality it came from bowling on a cement alley his dad had poured in their back yard." Rich would meet up there with Colwell, John Menche and Jim Zook. "We would spend a lot of time bowling there, two on each end to set up the pins and take our turn on the approach."

LaChance remembers that the bowling balls didn't last very long, so they were always looking for a few leftover or discarded bowling balls at pro shops. "I think that's where Paul developed his approach also — his lack of slide," said Rich. It could have also been influenced by the planted foot release of Tountas, who had left the tour by this time to focus on his management duties at Golden Pin Lanes.

It's interesting how children find ways to entertain themselves. I shared with Rich my own sidewalk bowling tour experience that 3 of my friends and I devised in our backyards. We would travel to each of the four homes that had cement walkways that could be used for bowling. We used plastic pins and a softball as a bowling ball. Our mom's would never have agreed to using real bowling balls!

Years later when a couple of us had driver's licenses, we discovered a chicken coop along the railroad tracks south of Sebastopol, Calif., with a bowling "alley" inside! Along with the single lane, there were pins (with spikes in the pit to set the pins), bowling balls — everything was there. A local farmer said that it was something the farmer's used to do when they had free time, or at night after being in the fields all day. He told us it was okay to use it as long as we didn't hurt anything. We spent many summer days there, bowling for nothing! We called it Chicken Coop Bowl.



Java Lanes in Long Beach

Fast forward 15 years, and Rich had made the move west, like so many Americans, for sunny California. His favorite bowling center during those years was Java Lanes in Long Beach, which opened in the mid-1950's, and closed their doors for good in 2004. They featured the famous "googie" architecture that was beginning to take place across the nation by firms such as DeRosa, Daly and Powers... the same organization that designed the largest bowling center in the world when it opened, the Willow Grove Park Lanes in Pennsylvania (116 lanes).

Rich had a humorous story about a seagull that fits in nicely with the stories I've told about the curious birds that have been a part of the lives of myself and Dick Weber. LaChance recalls: "Java Lanes had a 5 game sweeper every Friday. Well one week I got there at least an hour early, paid my entry fee and side pots, and I think I had \$4.00 left over. I needed gas in the car and I was hungry."

Rich said that his hunger pains won out over the gas concern, so he took a walk down the hill and across a traffic circle to a small deli at the end of a strip mall. "I went in and ordered a sub with potato salad and a lemonade. It came to \$3.95. I figured I would eat at a table outside and still have time to get back to bowl. As I was carrying my lunch to the table a seagull 'crapped' right in the middle of my plate!"

LaChance said that he just kept walking and dropped his lunch in the nearest trash bin, and headed back up the hill to the lanes. "I sat there pouting and complaining to myself until it was time to bowl. However, I not only won the sweeper that day, but four of the side pots. I filled the car with gas, and ate indoors at a fancy restaurant. Later that same weekend, I won a 10 game marathon and an ABA Tournament."

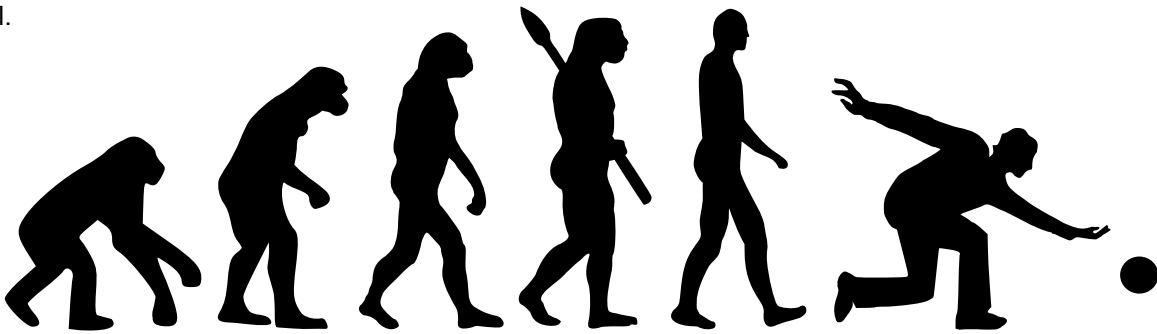
It's interesting how the seagull took Rich's immediate troubles away, and he was better able to focus on the tournament. I have also witnessed this same experience when I've bowled some of my best scores while feeling a little under the weather. Famous book writer Hal Lindsey has often said not to sweat the little stuff. His 'eleventh commandment' is: Thou shall not worry (Philippians 4:6-7).

Rich put his good fortune into other words: "I guess I owe my good weekend to a bird with 'crappy' aim. I sure do miss that sea gull."

Paul Colwell photo provided by bowl.com
Golden Pin Lanes photos provided from Golden Pin Lanes (twitter.com - 2019)
Java Lanes t-shirt design provided by m00nshot.com.



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USA vs. The World

continued from page 1

owns 30 career titles, including a PBA-record 14 majors.

“I can’t wait to captain the World team against the USA,” said Belmonte, who was a member of the victorious World team at the last USA vs. The World event in 2019. “I have a few players on my radar I’m looking at for my selection, but before that I’m excited to bowl TJ for the seeding at the historic Holler House.”

Milwaukee’s Holler House will host a one-game match between Jones and Belmonte at the World Series of Bowling. Its two wood lanes are the oldest sanctioned pair in the United States. To this day, oiling, scoring and pinsetting are done by hand.

“I’ve been there a couple of times just to see the place and it’s pretty nostalgic,” Jones said. “I’m really looking forward to bowling a match there. I’m not sure that either one of us have had a whole lot of experience with that. I’m hoping that straighter is going to be greater and that we’ll be able to prevail.”

The winner of the match will earn the top seed for the TV finals and lane choice for every match of the finals. The match will be livestreamed on the PBA’s YouTube channel for free. Any proceeds will be donated to the International Bowling Museum and Hall of Fame.

The two-part TV finals will be held at Bowlero Wauwatosa, kicking off the seven-telecast World Series of Bowling XIV. Both shows will air live on FS1.

On April 15, the teams will square off in four singles matches with five points up for grabs (one point per match and one point for total combined pinfall).

Teamwork becomes crucial on April 16 as doubles and baker matches take center stage. Two points will go to the winning teams of an alternate shot doubles match and best ball doubles match. A Race to Two team baker match worth five points will close out the competition.

The team with the most points will claim the Hall of Fame Cup.

“As competitive bowling continues to grow globally, we aim to make USA vs. The World the ultimate international team event,” said PBA Commissioner Tom Clark. “With this year’s twists of Tommy and Belmo as the playing captains, a new trophy and its spot at the International Bowling Museum and Hall of Fame, the captain’s match at historic Holler House and two days of live multi-event coverage on FS1 from the WSOB, we will reintroduce and elevate this annual competition.”



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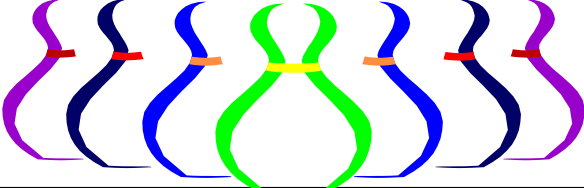
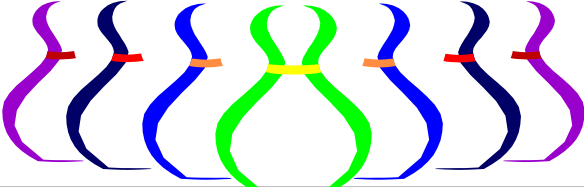


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INVITATIONAL

DV8 Grabs A Big Final Game Three Points With Just Two Weeks To Go

by David Yamauchi

DOWNEY – The Brunswick Invitational took the lanes for Week 5 of the third round with two teams looking to extend their lead, and the rest of the league looking to catch them, with just ten points available in the round after tonight.

In the “A” match, **DV8** and **Cal Bowl** were both coming off 4-1 sessions with DV8 sitting atop the round at 18-2. Cal Bowl was sitting three points back at 15-5 and looking to close the gap as the round hits the final two weeks. DV8 dropped the first two but stormed back to take game three by enough for a 3-2 win adding one win to their cushion over Cal Bowl with just two weeks left. Kyle Duster led DV8 with a 603 set while Leonard Ruiz Jr. again paced Cal Bowl with a 593 set.

In the “B” match, **Forest Lanes** was coming off a 4-1 week and was sitting at 14-6 as they took on second-round winners **Finishing Touch Floors**. The night was all Finishing Touch as their sub Matt Murtishaw put up a big 661 set to help them sweep Forest Lanes. Brad Jones led Forest Lanes with a 569 set.

First round winners **Family Ties** was taking on **US Foods** after they took 5 the previous week to jump back into the round. The night was all Family Ties as they swept US Foods for the 5-0 win. Mikey Villarreal was huge with a 698 set to pace Family Ties while Gabriel Martinez led US Foods with a 612 series.

Threadworks and **Allied Paving** was the 7-8 matchup with both teams sitting at 11-9. Allied Paving took a close Game 1 by 8 sticks but it was all Threadworks from there as they struck to a 4-1 result. Eric Snow showed why they are the tough draw with his 658 series while Juan Zavala was big for Allied Paving with a 625 set.

Junior Amateur Tour and **Bowlium** were both sitting at 10-10 and set for a rematch of their week 2 matchup. J.A.T. took a close Game 1, and Game 2 came down to the anchors with a 7 count on one side and a chopped spare on the other creating a 855-855 tie. Game 3 was all J.A.T. as they took the 4.5-.5 win. Arnold Cheesman was big for Bowlium with a 639 set while Kurt Arakaki led a balanced attack from J.A.T. with a 627 set.

Professional Approach was the low of the 10-10 teams as they took on 12th place **HB Complete Builders** who were looking to bounce back after their loss last week. Professional Approach took a 4-1 result led by super-sub Kevin Jones’ 716 set. HB Complete Builders took a close game 2 by 9 sticks as they were paced by Christian Eichelkraut’s 636 set.

Bowling Guys, J.K. Inc., Westminster Lanes and **Don Julio Tequila** rounded out this Monday’s action. J.K. Inc. banked five wins off Bowling Guys with Ian Markstrum leading the way with a 568 set. Ross Rios managed 530 to pace Bowling Guys. Don Julio Tequila swept through Westminster Lanes 5-0 with Westminster’s highlight being Jonathan Huezo covering the 3-7-9 series to the crowd roar. Bryan Osborn paced Westminster with a 552 set while William Morris led Don Julio Tequila with a 535 set.

Financial Advisor’s Pot went to Arnold Cheesman (277) for \$160 with 2nd to Mikey Villarreal (258) for \$70. **Sidepots** went to Gabriel Martinez (230) and Arnold Cheesman (277) for \$50 each with 2nd going to Kurt Arakaki (226) and Mikey Villarreal (258) for \$25. **Third Game SuperPot** went to Eric Snow (242) and Bobby Hornacek (242) for \$112 each.

Come and watch teams battle for position in Southern California’s Richest League as they take on the 48’ Eiffel Tower next Monday at 8:00!

TOP 10 TEAMS ROUND 3			
DV8.....	21	Junior Amateur Tour	14.5
Finishing Touch Floors\$	18	Forest Lanes	14
Family Ties\$	17	Professional Approach ...	14
Cal Bowl	17	Allied Paving.....	12
Threadworks.....	15	US Foods.....	11

TOP 10 THIS WEEK			
Kevin Jones	716	Christian Eichelkraut ...	636
Mikey Villarreal	698	Kurt Arakaki	627
Matt Murtishaw	661	David Yamauchi	625
Eric Snow	658	Juan Zavala.....	625
Arnold Cheesman.....	639	Anthony Santos	615

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