

# BOWLING NEWS

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## ZAVJALOVA RUNS STEPLADDER TO WIN 2023 PWBA WATERLOO OPEN FOR FIFTH CAREER TITLE

WATERLOO, Iowa – Diana Zavjalova of Latvia began Thursday night as the No. 4 seed in the five-player stepladder finals at the 2023 Professional Women's Bowling Association Waterloo Open, which was contested at Cadillac Xtreme Bowling Center and streamed live at BowlTV.com.

By night's end, Zavjalova was No. 1 as she rattled off four con-

secutive victories to take home her first title of the 2023 PWBA Tour season and the fifth of her career.

The 32-year-old righthander reached the winner's circle by topping top seed Shannon Pluhowsky of Dayton, Ohio, 279-244, during a thrilling title match that saw the two competitors combine to strike 20 times in 24 opportunities.

Zavjalova collected 11

of those strikes with only a solid 9-pin in the eighth frame keeping her from perfection.

Pluhowsky was equally impressive, striking on nine of her final 10 shots; however, a spare in the first frame and an open in the second allowed Zavjalova to grab the early lead and never look back.

The victory earned Zavjalova the \$10,000

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## CAITLYN JOHNSON WINS 2023 PWBA PEPSI OPEN FOR FIRST PWBA TOUR VICTORY

WATERLOO, Iowa – Caitlyn Johnson of Beaumont, Texas, is not a Professional Women's Bowling Association Tour member.

She used to be, but she let her membership lapse because her position as a bowling center general manager doesn't typically afford her enough time off to travel to tournaments on a weekly basis throughout the season.

Nevertheless, Johnson's desire to test herself against the best female bowlers in the world never went away, and it likely won't anytime soon because now the 24-year-old righthander has proven that she belongs among them.

That fact was made quite clear Saturday night when Johnson struck on seven of her final nine shots to complete a thrilling 197-181

come-from-behind victory over Latvia's Diana Zavjalova to win the 2023 PWBA Pepsi Open, which was contested at Cadillac Xtreme Bowling Center.

Because she was bowling the event as a non-member, Johnson wasn't credited with a PWBA Tour title; she was, however, still able to collect the \$10,000 first-place prize.

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## \$10,315 In SMART Scholarship Awarded In First Three Summer Shootout Events

20 More Shootout Events To Go With Over \$120K Up For Grabs

SIMI VALLEY – The Bowling Centers of Southern California's 3rd of 23 Summer Shootout events took place this last Sunday at Harley's Simi Bowl. \$3,265 was awarded to 13 bowlers in four different divisions.

This follows events at Forest Lanes with \$3,665 awarded to 12 bowlers and Saddleback Lanes with \$3,385 awarded to 11 bowlers.

Bowlers earn scholarships at a 1:5 ratio, with amounts awarded for

qualifying positions, as well as final positions for rolloff participants.

The A Division (\$40 entry, 5 games, over 185 average) bowlers saw 2nd seed Daniel Hong meet top-seed Leoj Chin in the rolloff. Leoj took the match 242-202 for the \$450 scholarship.

Daniel Hong banked \$350 for second. In the B Division (\$35 entry, 4 games, 161-185 average) Naomi Yamauchi was awarded \$195 for

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## Pickwick Bowl in Burbank Closing Its Doors

by Fred Eisenhammer

BURBANK – Sylvester Foster said he was bummed when he heard that Pickwick Bowl in Burbank would be shutting down Aug. 15.

But he said his unhappiness didn't particularly stem from losing a connection with the bowling center from which he rolled one of the greatest series in Los Angeles-area history.

Rather, "I'm sadder for the people who have been bowling there for years and live in close proximity and have to go to someplace else," Foster said.

"And I'm sadder for



the people who work there. Of all the places I've bowled, it was my favorite place."

The 24-lane bowling center had been open for 62 years but will be shut to make way for nearly

100 townhomes, said James Beightler, the manager. The Pickwick ice arena will remain open.

Pickwick provided the setting in 2016 for Foster's once-in-a-lifetime

performance. The Toluca Lake right-hander crushed an 878 series (279, 299, 300), which is believed to be the second-highest sanctioned series in San Fernando

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# PETE WEBER GETS A MAJOR VICTORY, WINS BUD MOORE PBA50 PLAYERS CHAMPIONSHIP

by Jill Winters

STERLING, Virginia – As Pete Weber said on Wednesday after day one of match play at the 2023 Bud Moore PBA50 Players Championship, “I got breaks, I’ve got it, I’m winning.”

He backed that statement up with a 11-1 record in match play Thursday, which included another 300 game, to earn the No. 1 seed. Then it was time to pack up his equipment to head to Bill Moore’s home to finish the job.

Once inside the unique setting, Weber wasn’t quite as optimistic about his chances during practice. But two people changed all of that for him.

“I owe Bill Rowe and I owe Kelly Kulick for my title tonight,” Weber said. “Kelly filmed Bill, and she said, ‘Pete, look at what he is doing. He is throwing the ball as hard as he can, and he is trying to keep it in the line.’”

So, when it was Weber’s turn to face Troy Lint in the championship match, it was all about executing and self-encouragement.

“Throw it as hard as you can, that is what I said to myself every time I got on the approach and it worked,” Weber said. “I can’t thank Kelly enough for being here and telling me to be a man and throw it.”

Weber and Lint were tied through two frames before Lint left the 6-7-10 in the third frame for an open. The first thought in Weber’s mind was to take full advantage. Weber did just that rolling five straight strikes. Lint responded with a spare and four strikes to bring the match to the foundation frame.

“He threw a great shot and left the solid-8,” Weber said of Lint. “I threw probably the worst shots I threw all day, and I got breaks. Like I said yesterday, if you don’t get breaks, you don’t win.”

Weber picked up the 6-10 in the ninth and needed just a spare in the 10th for the win. He felt like he threw it “terrible again,” but he was fortunate to leave a 10-pin and he picked it up. He rocketed his spare ball toward the head pin for the 236-211 victory.

He earned a major championship — his first win since May 2021 — and the \$20,000 top prize. He is now tied with John Handegard with 14 career PBA50 titles, and sits just two behind Walter Ray Williams Jr.

“Walter has got 16 and we still have three tournaments left,” Weber said of his chance to match Williams. “I’ve won twice at The Villages. I like Florida and we have three stops in Florida, so don’t count me out.”

“I owe my mom, I owe my dad, I owe everybody up in heaven for what I’ve got today,” Weber said.

In the opening match, Tom Hess was in complete control. Barnes had six total open frames, while Hess opened only once for the 198-116 win. Next up for Hess was Troy Lint. Hess had back-to-back splits in the second and third frames while Lint had a great look all to himself on the left side of the lanes. Lint put together nine straight strikes for the 279-204 victory.

It was a strike fest in the semifinal match between Lint and Bill Rowe, the No. 2 seed. Rowe started out with five straight strikes, while Lint doubled, converted a 7-pin and responded with seven strikes in a row to finish with 268. Rowe made two single-pin spares, coming up just short with a 258.

The PBA50 Tour now heads to Florida with action beginning on Tuesday at the PBA50 The Villages Classic.

**FINAL SCORES**

- Match 1: Hess def. Barnes 198-116
- Match 2: Lint def. Hess 279-204
- Match 3: Lint def. Rowe 268-258
- Championship match: Weber def. Lint 236-211

**FINAL STANDINGS**

1. Pete Weber \$20,000
2. Troy Lint \$11,000
3. Bill Rowe \$7,000
4. Tom Hess \$5,000
5. Chris Barnes \$4,000

[Full standings – PBA50 Players Championship](#)

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# Everything Happens For A Reason

by Dave Williams

You really have to wonder sometimes why things happen the way that they do. There were two provocative stories happening this week on [bowltv.com](http://bowltv.com) at the exact same time. My original plan was to watch the Professional Women Bowlers Association (PWBA) tour from Waterloo, Iowa on Thursday night, but when I saw that Pete Weber was among the finalists at the Bud Moore PBA50 Players Championship, I couldn't resist an opportunity to watch one of the greatest bowlers of all time going after another major title at the PBA50 Players Championship.

And then the rains came. As we all waited for the telecast to begin, the chat box to the right of the screen was filled with comments about the numerous "Stream Offline" messages. Many commented that if the blackouts continued, they were heading over to the coverage of the PWBA tour from Waterloo on another [bowltv.com](http://bowltv.com) channel. I held off until the last minute before joining the others and moving to the PWBA channel.

What I witnessed on the PWBA channel was one of the greatest broadcast teams in recent bowling history - the team of Emil Williams Jr. and Sydney Brummett. The chemistry between the two is apparent, and their use of silence at the proper moments is refreshing. It's no secret that I am one of many viewers that is miffed by the constant chatter between the announcers on the PBA tour channel at [bowltv.com](http://bowltv.com). The result has been that during the PBA telecasts, I have resorted to the mute button in order to focus upon the bowlers, and not the gossip.

The team of Williams Jr. and Brummett remind me of the many memorable announcer teams that have ingratiated professional bowling... names like Chris Schenkel and Nelson Burton Jr., Denny Schreiner and Mike Durbin, Leila Wagner and Jan Schmidt, Jack Buck and Jerome "Whitey" Harris, and the team of Fred Wolf and Bill Bunetta, to name a few. They even remind me of a handful of famous baseball announcers that I have alluded to from time to time.

## You Can Tell It Goodbye!

Over the years I have compared the memories of those famous baseball announcers and their use of "silence" to enhance the telecast. Vin Scully, the play-by-play announcer for both the Brooklyn and Los Angeles Dodgers from 1950 to 2016, had to be the master of silence to draw in the listener to his broadcast. He was so ingratiating with his "She is Gone!"



Lon Simmons Baseball Hall of Fame Induction (2004)



Zavjalova-Nenichka Wedding on the island of Bora Bora (2023)

home run call that he would often use it in describing homers by San Francisco Giants rivals Willie Mays, Willie McCovey, Orlando Cepeda, Barry Bonds, and others. He was a class act.

The Giants baseball broadcast team of Russ Hodges and Lon Simmons were also adept at the art of silence... until it came to a home run! Hodges ("Bye Bye Baby!") and Simmons ("You Can Tell it Goodbye!") were a wakeup call that brought me back into the broadcast. Many times, I would wonder if my reception from a Giants radio broadcast was lost, until I heard one of the familiar home run calls from either Hodges or Simmons.

I've highlighted Hodges on a couple of occasions regarding his famous calls of Bobby Thompson's home run ("The Shot Heard 'Round the World") and Willie Mays unbelievable snare of Vic Wertz' fly ball in the cavernous Polo Grounds ("The Catch"). But Lon Simmons (1923-2015) was also an announcer

of some repute. He came to KSFO-560AM radio in 1957 and was immediately paired with Bob Fouts for the San Francisco 49ers broadcasts. Fouts (1921-2019) was the father of Hall of Fame quarterback Dan Fouts of the San Diego Chargers.

When the New York Giants moved to San Francisco in 1958, Simmons was paired with veteran Russ Hodges for the play-by-play. A New York Yankees blogger ("Uncle Mike's Musings") once said that John Fogerty, leader of the rock band Creedence Clearwater Revival (and a Giants baseball fan), included the words "It's gone, and you can tell it goodbye," in his baseball tribute song *Centerfield* in honor of Simmons famous home run call. Simmons also had a special connection with Willie McCovey, my favorite player while growing up. McCovey was a very private person that allowed only Simmons to interview him after the games. Their interviews were unforgettable, like two friends getting together to talk about the results of the game.

## Back To Bowling

It's probably bad news to the other bowling competitors on the PWBA tour, but since Diana Zavjalova's wedding to E.J. Nenichka in March, she has been a different person. The most immediate changes that I can see are perhaps a couple of extra pounds (that's a good thing), and a more conservative hair style! And then there's that PWBA tournament record - making the last four TV shows, including this week's win at the Waterloo Open.

Her demeanor throughout the telecast at Waterloo was like that of a child... enjoying every moment and sharing it with the audience and her friends in the front row. Zavjalova began by dusting off Kerry Smith of Lititz, Pa., in the first of four matches, 244-204. She then toppled amateur Jillian Martin of Stow, Ohio, by a final score of 249-223. Jillian is only 19 and a student at the University of Nebraska. What an amazing future is in store for this tremendous talent.

The semi-final match pitted Diana against Jordan Richard of Tipton, Mich., and Zavjalova was once again victorious by a 212-192 count. That set up the final match between Diana and the only left-hander to make the show, Shannon Pluhowsky of Dayton, Ohio. Zavjalova wasted no time in polishing off the perennial favorite by a score of 279-244. A solid 9 pin in the eighth frame kept Zavjalova from perfection.

For her efforts, Zavjalova received the \$10,000 first place prize, followed by Pluhowsky (\$5,000), Richard (\$3,500), Martin (\$2,500) and Smith (\$2,000). There was a total of 85 entries and 28 cashing spots (1 in 3 ratio).

Photo of Zavjalova-Nenichka wedding from Diana Zavjalova's Facebook page

Photo of Lon Simmons at Baseball Hall of Fame Induction in 2004 ([mlb.com](http://mlb.com))

*Incidentally, Pete Weber went on to win the Bud Moore PBA50 Players Championship. An email from [bowltv.com](http://bowltv.com) on Saturday stated that they hope to have the telecast available as part of their archives as early as Sunday.*

Saturday

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## Pickwick Bowl

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Valley-area history.

Anthony Sharpsteen blistered an 888 in 2011 at now-defunct Mission Hills Bowl.

"I was definitely in a zone," Foster said, "because I didn't have time to think about it. I used to run the pot on Sunday and it was Sweeper night so I was just trying to figure out how to pay people. I was completely occupied the whole time so I didn't have time to think about it."

"Even when I shot the 300, I didn't think about the 800 series."

Sweepers is a tournament involving bowlers from a particular league after the season is completed. Bowlers compete in various categories. If an individual gets hot, it could mean big bucks.

And that's just what happened to Foster.

"I won first place in everything," said Foster, laughing. "I cleaned up."

Foster was 60 years old at the time and had just returned to bowling a few years earlier after leaving the game for almost 30 years.

Foster was bowling in just one league at Pickwick when he fashioned his masterpiece. "I'm an actor and my work schedule is erratic," explained Foster, who also was coaching youth bowlers at Pickwick.

So what made the Pickwick bowling center special?

"It's a real family environment," Foster said. "It might be that way in other places but I can only speak from my experience. I always felt welcome there. It's one of those things where you go someplace and you know everyone and everyone knows you."

Foster cited Beightler; Roger Desgroseilliers, the pro-shop manager; and assistant manager Janice Desgroseilliers as three people in particular who will be greatly missed.

"Roger and James and Janie are all so great, and the mechanics too," Foster said. "They're all like family."

Pickwick's closing represents the latest cruel blow to Valley bowlers, who have seen their local bowling centers steadily decline.

In recent years, AMF Rocket Bowl in Chatsworth closed in 2009. And Mission Hills Bowl and Wagon Wheel Bowl in Oxnard shut in 2015.



*Sylvester Foster, who crushed an 878 series at Pickwick Bowl, speaks highly of the bowling center. "It's a real family environment," Foster said. "It might be that way in other places but I can only speak from my experience. I always felt welcome there. It's one of those things where you go someplace and you know everyone and everyone knows you."*

## Waterloo Open

continued from page 1

first-place check, a beautiful trophy and a berth in the season's final major, the 2023 PWBA Tour Championship, which begins Sunday night at Cadillac Xtreme.

Pluhowsky walked away with \$5,000 for her runner-up finish.

Even though Zavjalova was more than happy to take home the cash and prizes, Thursday night's win was special for another reason, that being that it allowed her to finally answer the very nagging question: When are you going to win again?

Zavjalova faced that question many times over the past few seasons because, prior to her win at the Waterloo Open, she hadn't recorded a PWBA Tour title since her victory at the 2018 St. Petersburg-Clearwater Open in Seminole, Florida.

That wasn't due to a lack of opportunities, however, as Zavjalova had made several stepladder finals appearances in recent years; in fact, Thursday night's berth marked her fourth trip to the TV finals during the 2023 season alone.

Nevertheless, while getting there is nice, winning is much nicer, and Zavjalova felt a great deal of relief after finally reaching the top again on Thursday night.

"This has been a very long time coming," Zavjalova said. "I've been knocking on this door for a long time. I've made a lot of TV shows and talked to a lot of people asking 'hey, how do I win again?' Everyone told me to just keep knocking on the door and to keep being myself, and that's what I did. I'm just happy."

It would've been hard for Zavjalova to be anything but after Thursday night's performance.

That's because she didn't just win; she won in extremely impressive fashion.

Zavjalova opened the stepladder finals with a 244-204 victory over No. 5 seed Kerry Smith of Lititz, Pennsylvania, a two-time PWBA Regional champion who was making her first championship-round appearance on the PWBA Tour this season.

The victory pushed Zavjalova through to Match 2 where she would face No. 3 seed Jillian Martin of Stow, Ohio.

Smith, meanwhile, ended her night with a fifth-place finish and \$2,000.

Two years ago, to the day, Martin, then just 17 years old, became the youngest player to ever win a PWBA Tour title when she defeated England's Verity Crawley, 221-188, to win the 2021 PWBA BowlTV Classic in Arlington, Texas.

Nevertheless, Zavjalova got the better of Martin on Thursday night, finishing with a seven-bagger to erase an early deficit and emerge with a 249-223 victory that ended Martin's bid for PWBA Tour title No. 2 and pushed Zavjalova through to the semifinals.

Martin finished the Waterloo Open in fourth place and earned a check for \$2,500.

Zavjalova, meanwhile, advanced to face 2023 PWBA Player of the Year front-runner Jordan Richard of Tipton, Michigan, who was making her fifth stepladder finals appearance of the season and was vying for her tour-best fourth title of the year.

Unfortunately for Richard, the striking power that had propelled her to the winner's circle three times already this season failed to materialize during Thursday night's match with Zavjalova.

Despite staying locked in on the 1-3 pocket all match long, Richard was only able to record three strikes.

Zavjalova, on the other hand, began the match with three strikes in a row and then used a clutch double in the ninth and 10th to hold Richard off and punch her ticket to the title match, where she would go on to defeat Pluhowsky.

Richard was forced to settle for a third-place showing and \$3,500.

To some degree, Zavjalova felt fortunate to have walked away as champion.

"I felt very lucky today," Zavjalova said. "The last three shows I'd made, I threw the ball really well, but I just wasn't lucky enough by maybe choosing the wrong ball or something like that. Today, I felt good and happy, I got the breaks and the pins fell my way."

Luck had little to do with it, however, as Zavjalova had the pins falling in bunches throughout the Waterloo Open.

For the tournament, Zavjalova averaged 235.75 over the course of 28 games, which was certainly bolstered by the 984 (244, 249, 212 and 279) she authored during her four games in the stepladder finals.

Some bowlers may have preferred having some downtime and being able to celebrate a bit more before jumping into the next event; however, that wasn't Zavjalova's preference.

"I like that I have the opportunity to keep the momentum going," Zavjalova said. "I feel very comfortable in this bowling center, so even though it's a new tournament, I like that I get to go back in and try to continue. I think it's a good thing."

The Waterloo Open was the first tournament of PWBA Championship Week – Waterloo, which also will include the Pepsi Open and PWBA Tour Championship, the final major of the 2023 PWBA Tour season.

The Pepsi Open will feature the same format as the Waterloo Open.

All rounds of the Pepsi Open, including the stepladder finals, were livestreamed on BowlTV. The stepladder was Saturday at 7:30 p.m. Eastern.

The season's final event, the 2023 PWBA Tour Championship, began the next evening.

In order to qualify for the Tour Championship, a player must be a current PWBA member in good standing and have won a National Tour title during the 2023 season. The remainder of the field will be filled from the PWBA season points list through the most recent tournament preceding the Tour Championship, which will be the Pepsi Open.

All Tour Championship competitors will be seeded into the round-robin match play schedule according to their position on the season points list after the Pepsi Open.

Those 24 players will bowl three eight-game rounds of round-robin match play starting Sunday at 6 p.m. Eastern. Additional eight-game blocks of matches will be contested on Monday at 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. Eastern to determine the top five for the stepladder finals.

The stepladder finals will start at 7 p.m. Eastern on Tuesday and determine which player wins the 2023 PWBA Tour Championship and its \$50,000 first-place prize. The finals will be broadcast live on CBS Sports Network.

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**Pepsi Open** continued from page 1

What was perhaps even more valuable to Johnson though was the realization that she has what it takes to go up against and beat the best.

"I definitely feel a lot more comfortable and confident in my abilities after a win like this," Johnson said. "I hadn't bowled a PWBA tournament in two years, so I came out here this week to sort of get my name back out there and be able to test what I've been seeing back home. Based on what happened out here these last two days, I'd say it's working pretty good."

Johnson certainly enjoyed a great deal of success during those two days, rolling a pair of 300 games, leading the field after Friday's 12 games of qualifying and continuing to stay out front throughout match play on Saturday en route to earning the No. 1 seed for the stepladder finals.

But for as smoothly as Johnson navigated the first two phases of the Pepsi Open, the championship match proved to be a significantly bumpier ride.

That's because Johnson managed just one strike during the first five frames of her bout with Zavjalova, which came as something of a surprise seeing as how Johnson had thrown more strikes than just about anyone in the field during the course of her first 24 games.

Worse yet was the fact that not only was Johnson not striking, but she was also leaving splits, three in the first five frames to be exact.

Johnson's misfortune started when her ball sailed wide and left the 2-4-10 in the second frame. She skillfully converted that split, but she was unable to do the same with the 4-7-9 she left in the third frame or the 4-6-7-10 she was saddled with in the fifth.

Zavjalova, meanwhile, shook off two early splits of her own and notched a turkey in frames four through six to grab a 27-pin lead halfway through the championship match.

At that point, it looked like it just wasn't going to be Johnson's night and that despite having led the Pepsi Open wire to wire, she was going to have to settle for second.

In some ways, had things turned out that way, Johnson wouldn't have been terribly surprised.

"I've always seen myself as the person who doesn't win; I get second," Johnson said. "I've finished second multiple times in big events, so I've always sort of seen myself as the queen of second."

But that moniker didn't hold up on Saturday night; instead, she became the comeback queen.

Unwilling to let the early struggles get her down, Johnson went to work, throwing a turkey of her own in the sixth, seventh and eighth frames.

Those clutch strikes didn't just get Johnson close; they actually allowed her to retake the lead after Zavjalova suffered a 6-7-10 split and opened in the eighth.

When Johnson stepped up for her final two frames, she had the opportunity to lock Zavjalova out and guarantee victory.

That wouldn't happen, however, as her pocket shot in the ninth frame left a 10 pin, which she converted.

Even though the chance to shut Zavjalova out was gone, the opportunity to apply a great deal of pressure to her was not.

That's precisely what Johnson did, delivering three flush strikes in the 10th frame to post a final score of 197.

It was the second-lowest game Johnson recorded all tournament long – her lowest was the 193 she notched during the final game of Saturday morning's opening round of match play – but it was still enough to force Zavjalova to have a big finish of her own in the 10th.

The math was simple. Zavjalova needed a double and six pins to tie. Anything more, and she'd win her second PWBA Tour title in two days – she won the Waterloo Open at Cadillac Xtreme Bowling Center on Thursday night. Anything less, and Johnson would be the tournament champion.

Zavjalova has proven herself to be a tremendous pressure performer many times throughout her career, but things didn't go her way this time around as her first ball in the 10th drifted high, leaving the 3-10 baby split and officially ending the match in Johnson's favor.

In that moment, Johnson needed a second or two to fully grasp what had just transpired.

"It actually took until Diana (Zavjalova) went to shoot her spare for me to realize that I'd just won," Johnson said. "My first thought was 'did that really just happen?' Honestly, it was more like 'did this last two days really just happen; did I just shoot 300 twice and basically lead wire-to-wire?'"

It most certainly did, and because of that, Johnson is already beginning to think about when she might be able to get back out and bowl on tour again.

"I've really missed being out here competing and seeing my friends, so I'm going to really study the 2024 season schedule a bit more to see what I can and

can't show up to," Johnson said.

Despite finishing second on Saturday night, Zavjalova certainly showed up in a big way once again.

Making her fifth consecutive stepladder finals appearance, Zavjalova recorded wins over Jillian Martin of Stow, Ohio (260-205), and England's Verity Crawley (235-214) before falling to Johnson in the title match.

Not only did the second-place finish earn Zavjalova \$5,000, but it also moved her even closer to Jordan Richard of Tipton, Michigan, in the 2023 PWBA Player of the Year race, which will be determined at the Tour Championship.

Martin took home \$3,500 for finishing third on Saturday night; Crawley placed fourth and earned a check for \$2,500.

Jasmine Snell of Papillion, Nebraska, fell to Crawley by a final score of 246-202 during Saturday night's opening stepladder match. Snell placed fifth and walked away with \$2,000.

The Pepsi Open was the second tournament of PWBA Championship Week – Waterloo, which included the PWBA Waterloo Open, Pepsi Open and Tour Championship, the final major of the 2023 PWBA Tour season.

The Tour Championship will begin Sunday evening at 6 p.m. Eastern.

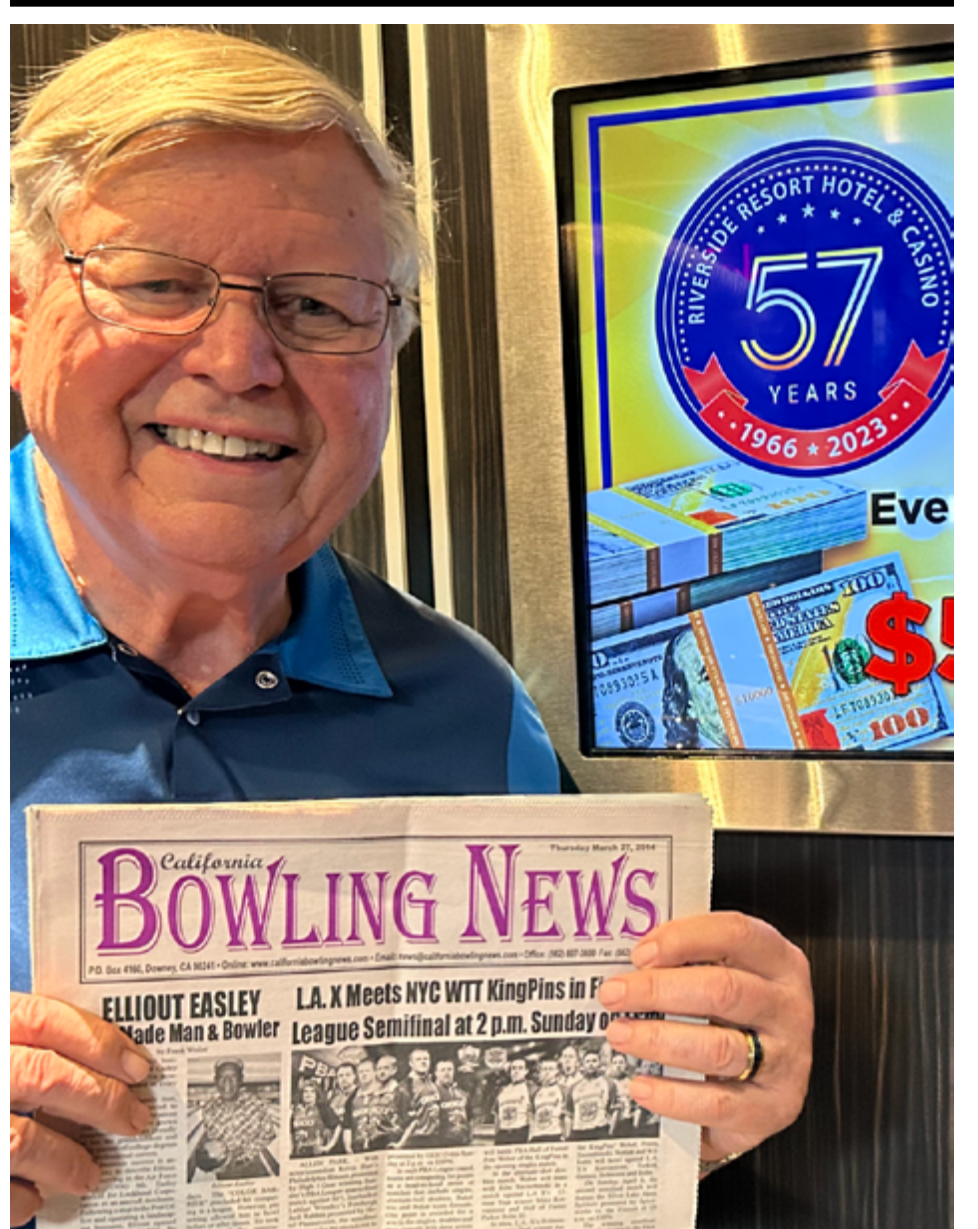
In order to qualify for the Tour Championship, a player must be a current PWBA member in good standing and have won a National Tour title during the 2023 season. The remainder of the field will be filled from the PWBA season points list through the most recent tournament preceding the Tour Championship, which was the Pepsi Open.

All Tour Championship competitors will be seeded into the round-robin match play schedule according to their position on the season points list after the Pepsi Open.

Those 24 players will bowl three eight-game rounds of round-robin match play starting Sunday evening. Additional eight-game blocks of matches will be contested on Monday at 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. Eastern to determine the top five for the stepladder finals.

The stepladder finals will start at 7 p.m. Eastern on Tuesday and determine which player wins the 2023 PWBA Tour Championship and its \$50,000 first-place prize. The finals will be broadcast live on CBS Sports Network.

All rounds leading up to the CBS Sports Network broadcast will be livestreamed at BowlTV.com.



**Traveling With The BOWLING NEWS**

by Frank Weiler

LAUGHLIN, NV. – Here I am again in the city by the river, to bowl. "River City" sits on the banks of the mighty Colorado River and probably boasts more casinos than any other city bordering a major river in these great United States of America.

My favorite Resort and Casino here is Don Laughlin's Riverside Resort and Casino. The facility boasts thirty-six bowling lanes and is managed by BRIAN MARKOWITZ. Brian is a master craftsman when it comes to hosting Bowling tournaments.

I am here to bowl in the 18th semi-annual Laughlin Blast senior, handicap, no-tap tournament. It will be my sixteenth "Blast". I have won here in the past but I have also finished low in the standings. No matter, it's all about having a good time.

Whenever I travel to bowl I bring a copy of the California Bowling News with me to share with my fellow bowlers. "I travel with the Bowling News".

In the photograph you will see me holding a issue of the California Bowling News. "WISH YOU WERE HERE".



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**Jr. Shootout** continued from page 1



**A Division Champion**  
Leoj Chin and 2nd Daniel Hong



**B Division Champion**  
Ethan Santos and 2nd Ethan Long



**C Division Champion**  
Bryson Roller and 2nd Jonathan Orozco



**D Division Champion**  
Christian Jimeno and 2nd Brendan Lercel

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PARKWAY BOWL 10/8/23	Victor BOWL 10/21/23	Harley's 10/22/23
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Division B - 161-185	\$35	4 GAMES	Division D - Under 135	\$30	3 GAMES

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4 Divisions Compete For \$100,000

third, while 2nd seeded Ethan Santos met top-seed Ethan Long for the title. Ethan Santos struck to a 216-205 win with both bowlers banking \$370 scholarships.

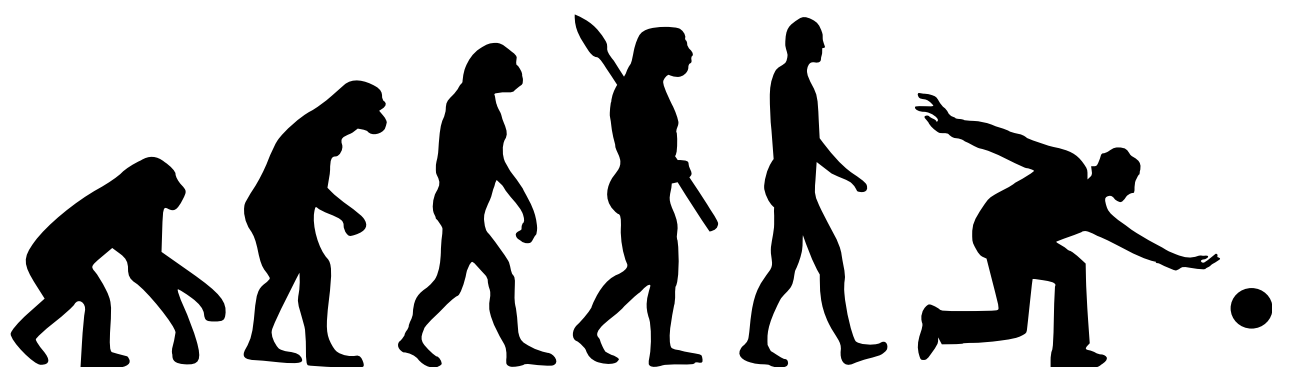
C Division (\$30 entry, 3 games, 135-160 average) saw Jack Lindharst take 3rd and a \$160 scholarship. Top-seeded Jonathan Orozco met 2nd seed Bryson Roller in the final. With the match on the line, Bryson Roller converted a 3-6-7-10 split in the 10th to take the match 178-175. Both bowlers earned \$310 scholarships.

In the D Division (\$30 entry, 3 games, under 135 average) three bowlers tied for 3rd with \$60 scholarships going to Faith Persall, Avery Heitmann and Percila Garcia. Top-seed Brendan Lercel met 2nd seeded Christian Jimeno and it was Christian finish-

ing strong for the 161-151 win. Both bowlers were awarded \$310 scholarships. Congratulations to all the scholarship winners!

There are still 20 events left on the schedule with up to \$6,000 up for grabs at each event. With entry fees from \$30, these are fun, affordable events for Southern California junior bowlers to have a chance to earn SMART Scholarship funds for their future.

Bowlers entering at least three events in the series will be eligible to enter the Southern California Grand Championships in January of 2024. Over \$100,000 in scholarships will be available in the mega-event thanks to the Bowling Proprietors of Southern California. Hope to see you at Bowlium this Saturday, August 19th and Oak Tree Lanes this Sunday, August 20th.



# Bowling Icon Rusty Bryant Has Been Making a Difference – for Decades

by Fred Eisenhammer

WINNETKA – There were prizes aplenty at Winnetka's Finest Bowling Tournament last month.

Winnetka Bowl raffled off and handed out assorted novelties such as bowling equipment, free games and adult beverages at its semiannual event.

But there was one newly created prize that caused some bowlers to stop in their tracks when it was announced:

*A half-hour coaching session with Rusty Bryant.*

"I thought I'd love to win that," said tournament bowler Carol Tucker, laughing heartily.

This, after all, was Rusty Bryant, the 76-year-old impresario of Winnetka's pro shop who seemingly has mystical powers as a bowling coach. So when Bryant's name was announced at the Winnetka tournament, his prize was akin to well-to-do investors paying millions to win a charity auction and share a lunch with Warren Buffett, the acclaimed greatest investor of all time.

The comparison is no exaggeration.

Bryant is without a doubt a Los Angeles-wide hidden treasure in his part-time dabbling as bowling coach at his San Fernando Valley bowling center. This is true despite the fact that dozens of local bowlers – both beginners and advanced – flock each month to his one-on-one bowling tutoring session filled with confidence-inducing magic. Bryant estimates he's had up to 1,000 sessions in his nearly four decades of coaching. His students come from as far away as Lancaster, Santa Monica and Oxnard.

The way he connects with bowlers typically results in much higher scores for Bryant's students and smiles all around.

"I love it," said Bryant about his coaching pastime that gives him a break from running his pro shop at the bowling center and running up eye-popping scores as an age-defying left-handed marksman. (We'll get to his remarkable 79 perfect games and 38 800 series later.)

Ace bowler Gary Bricker said that he was a mid-160s bowler before he enlisted Bryant's aid. He now averages 185 "and a lot of that has to do with Rusty," Bricker said.

"He gives really good advice. His knowledge is incredible and he's easy to work with."

Bricker marvels that Bryant often strolls around Winnetka's bowling house when Bricker is bowling in his league and Bryant "has no problem giving you advice. He makes me feel welcome. I don't know how many teachers do that."

Bryant, who's often endearingly called "Pops" by his fellow league bowlers, connects with players old and young and his simple mission is to make players better bowlers who feel good about their future in the sport.

"Old bowlers are fun because they want to get better," Bryant said. "They wouldn't be there if they didn't want to get better. Youngsters are fun because they want to get better than their buddies. The older ones just don't want to look bad."

What sets Bryant apart from other coaches, bowlers say, is that he personalizes his instruction, usually compacted in a 30-minute session at an open Winnetka lane. For instance, Bryant will avoid mentioning oil patterns for bowlers who are not ready to radicalize their game based on lane conditions.

"If you take a look at every person," Bryant said, "everyone's a little different. Not everyone throws the



*Rusty Bryant, left, says assistant Karl Kurtz has been keenly instrumental in his coaching success through the years. "None of this would have happened without Karl in the shop. He's been with me for 29 years," Bryant said. Photo by Fred Eisenhammer*

ball like [200-average bowler] Karl [Kurtz]. You've got to look at, 'What do I need to do to make him a better bowler?' and not make it a drawn-out affair. I want everyone to play well and have that grin."

Bryant's allure as a coach is well-known to Winnetka league bowlers such as Tucker, who unfortunately for her, didn't win the free Bryant lesson. Tucker has gone to Bryant whenever she needs to pick up her game and her 150-average.

"He is the best bowling coach I've ever encountered through the years and I've had lessons sporadically with different people," she said. "He is the coach that after the first time I had a lesson with him, he totally changed my bowling. Before, I threw a perfectly straight ball. He's the one that got me to curve the ball. And it was so simple.

"That's something that I've always wanted to do. That's not simple for someone like me. I thought that was a miracle.

"His coaching makes me very calm and relaxed and it's because of his knowledge and warm personality. After a lesson, I go to league and just pretend Rusty is right there watching me."

And she joked: "The next time I go for a lesson, I'm going to try to get a cutout of him so I can put it next to me when I'm bowling."

Bryant began his coaching career when he was running the pro shop at now-closed Rocky Mountain Bowl in Sylmar for 10 years. His coaching career took off when he launched a "Better Bowling With Rusty" program at now-defunct Mission Hills Bowl, where he instructed 30 bowlers each Wednesday night for two years.

"It was an opportunity to help a little bit," said Bryant, a Reseda resident who's been selected to the North Los Angeles County United States Bowling Congress Hall of Fame for meritorious service.

USBC Hall-of-Famer Robin Romeo bowled on the same league team with Bryant for years at Mission Hills Bowl. On one occasion, she asked Bryant to check out her swing that seemed to be out of sorts a bit. "The two big tips he gave me helped me tremendously," said Romeo, who credited Bryant for helping her win an upcoming women's tournament.

"He has a great eye and can spot things quickly," said Romeo, who also has coached bowlers with great results.

Romeo added that Bryant's positivity, calm demeanor and simple agenda provide a winning formula for Bryant's coaching. His gentle nature also helps, she said.

"Rusty is probably the nicest man you could ever meet," said Romeo, a longtime Newhall resident now living in Las Vegas.

Not surprisingly, Bryant's biggest thrills often come when he succeeds in boosting bowlers' scores and their spirits during his coaching session.

"The absolute best thing to see is if someone is having trouble and then they throw a really, really good shot and they turn around and smile ear to ear, and they say, 'This works.'"

Bryant makes it clear that he doesn't tread on the turf of coaches who work with the super talented. That's the domain of the likes of Mark Baker, Juan Fonseca and Ric Hamlin, all exemplary coaches, Bryant said.

"I want to see the little guy win," Bryant said. "If, say, there's a 220-average bowler who wants to go on the pro tour, I'd say, 'Here's Baker's number, or Juan's number or Ric's number. They'll take you to the next level.' I have no qualms about passing them along.

"I want to be the coach who helps bowlers to have fun at the local bowl. I'm not the one to put myself at that [professional] caliber."

Now, as far as Bryant's bowling, he just rolled another 300 last month, his 79<sup>th</sup> of his career and his first of 2023. The perfect game allowed Bryant to finish with a sterling 760 series, which still ranks far below his all-time best of a blistering 834 (300-267-267).

He also owns Mission Hills Bowl's record for perfect games with 60. And incidentally, he has bowled a 300 seven times right after drilling a new ball for himself. And if you want to name-drop, Bryant has drilled the bowling balls for such luminaries as Romeo and Tish Johnson, among others.

So when Bryant goes into his coaching sessions, bowlers should know he has the background experience – not to mention his handy-dandy Apple phone for video – to provide excellent counsel.

Bryant also wants to make it clear that his coaching success has an asterisk to it. To that end, Bryant called this reporter by phone the day after being interviewed to emphasize the importance of Kurtz, his pro shop assistant.

"None of this [coaching] would have happened without Karl in the shop," Bryant said. "He's been with me for 29 years."

That's Rusty Bryant.

He's always passing the credit and compliments.


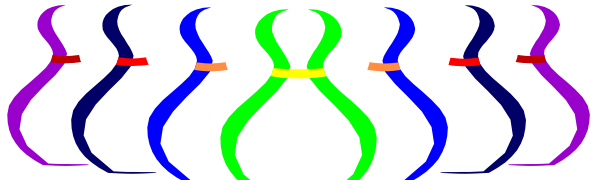
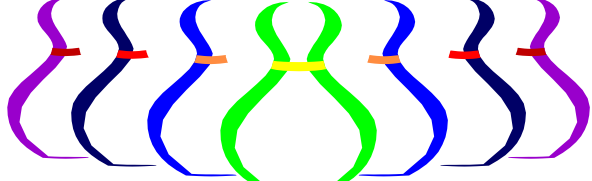
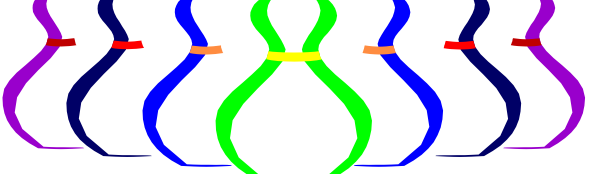
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