

TOM HESS WINS 2024 PBA50 TOURNAMENT OF CHAMPIONS

by Jill Winters

FAIRLAWN, Ohio – Tom Hess has always believed in his abilities. When he committed to bowling on the PBA50 Tour full-time in 2021, he knew he would end up having a successful career. But he never imagined that his level of success in just four seasons would lead him so quickly to an induction into the PBA Hall of Fame earlier this year, and now his 10th career title at the 2024 PBA50 Tournament of Champions.

“Did I believe that I was going to ever get

to 10 titles? No,” Hess said. “I would have never thought I could win 10 times with the talent that is out here. My God, it is just full of Hall of Famers. Just simply incredible.”

At the start of this week, he walked into AMF Riviera Lanes seeing the sign: “Through these doors pass the world’s finest bowlers.” He walked out Thursday night after rolling a perfect game in match play with a major title, the trophy and a check for \$15,000. What a way to end the 2024 PBA50 season for Hess after



Tom Clark & Tom Hess

dominating his competition over the last two days. He is the winner of the first PBA50 Tour-

nament of Champions ever held at AMF Riviera Lanes, so there is no doubt this place will

always have a special place in his heart.

In Game 39 for the week, Hess rolled a 300 against Chris Warren to officially secure the No. 1 seed in the stepladder finals, allowing him to relax a little bit. He was 322-pins ahead of Mika Koivuniemi, who was in second place.

It was only fitting that the final championship match of the season would feature the top two seeds. For Koivuniemi, this was his eighth straight stepladder finals appearance, while this was Hess’s seventh

stepladder show this year.

It was game time. After Koivuniemi started the match with a strike, Hess was surprised to see his first shot pick up quickly on the right lane going through the nose leaving the 3-6-10. He calmly picked it up and delivered a strike on his next shot. Koivuniemi went spare, double, spare through five frames, as Hess got lined up rolling six straight strikes for a 32-pin lead. Koivuniemi picked up another 10-pin in the sixth followed by

continued on page 4

Sin Li Jane Ends Breakout Season With Tour Championship Title



ALLEN PARK, Mich.- Malaysia’s Sin Li Jane left her mark on the 2024 Professional Women’s Bowling Association National Tour season, ending the year as the PWBA Tour Championship winner for her second major victory and fourth title of the season at Thunderbowl Lanes in Detroit.

Sin defeated Jordan Richard in the title match, 215-209, which came down to the wire

and ended in heartbreak for Richard, who is still seeking her first major title. For Sin, coming over to the states on her own and having the season she’s had validated what she thought she could do.

“It’s been a great journey to be on tour this season,” said Sin. “It means a lot to me because I came over by myself, I do everything on my own. I’m glad to have (PWBA member)

Esther (Cheah) with me for the whole season. I’ve proven to myself that I can do it.”

Before the title match, Sin had to defeat Missy Parkin in the semifinal match, who was making her own kind of history as she made the major show as an alternate, something that no one else has done before.

Neither competitor was able to pull away to start the match, but Sin had an opportunity

to when Parkin opened with a split in the fifth frame. Sin was unable to capitalize on the open but stayed clean the rest of the way for a 217.

Parkin threw the next four strikes and was the one who had to end the match, needing a mark and count to continue her underdog story.

Another big split dashed those hopes for Parkin, ending with a 206 and a third-place finish. continued on page 5

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Who Will Win The 20th New Mexico Open?

by Dave William

By the time most of you read this column, the 20th New Mexico Open will have been completed, and another champion will be crowned from among the stellar cast of entrants vying for a record first place prize of \$13,500. A total of more than ten states and foreign countries will be represented in this year's event.

But just who will come out on top? Odds on favorite is Francois Lavoie of Wichita, Kansas (and also Canada), who is a two-time U.S. Open champion, and the winner of last year's New Mexico Open. He will be challenged by fellow PBA member Jakob Butturff of Tempe, Ariz., who won the New Mexico Open way back in 2015. Proprietor Steve Mackie reports that Butturff is on the road to recovery after a recent injury that has kept him sidelined.

Another strong challenger will be DeeRonn Booker of Albuquerque, N.M., who is the defending USBC Masters national champion. Booker also won the local Albuquerque Masters championship last month, with a 212-184 score over Brad Harvey in the final match. A further local favorite that is sure to challenge is J.D. Nance of Rio Rancho, N.M., who has finished second the past two years in this event.

To give you an idea of the rich history of this event, Mr. Mackie has prepared a look back at the previous 19 years of the New Mexico Open on his website. Without getting into too much detail, we will share with you the highlights and some names you might know from national bowling events. It all started back in 2004, when 78 bowlers took aim at \$14,400 in prize money. First place prize of \$3,600 went to John Young from Tijeras, New Mexico.

In 2006, Team USA's David Haynes of Las Vegas became the first out-of-state bowler to win, with an

exciting 267-234 victory over Albuquerque's Eric Espinda. Local television Channel 13 aired the 2007 finals, and it was Shawn Lee of Colorado that ran the ladder and claimed the top prize. Chris Johnson from Texas rolled the tournament's first 300 game in qualifying.

Californian Mark French amazed everyone in 2008 when he changed equipment to a 26 year old urethane ball, and rose from 28th place to first in the finals. French shot the tournament's second perfect game during qualifying, and then defeated former PBA touring player and Albuquerque resident Mark Van Meter 257-198, for the \$6,000 first prize.

In 2010, it was Andrew Cain of Phoenix, a five-time member of Team USA, turning back Frank Gucione 218-208, Kyle King 225-200, Josh Blanchard 224-166 and former ABC Masters champion (2002) Brett Wolfe from Reno, Nevada, 184-160, for a \$6,600 payday.

PBA stalwart Mike Edwards of Oklahoma took the first three matches in the televised finals and then totaled 242 in the championship match, but it wasn't enough to defeat Devin Bidwell of California, who recorded a mammoth 285 game in the final match for the \$7,500 first place prize in 2011.

In 2012, Bryanna Cote became the first woman to make the stepladder finals, finishing fifth. The field was impressive, with PBA star Lonnie Waliczek defeating another PBA champion, Kris Prather, in the final match. Waliczek received a record \$8,500 first place check.

Yet another strong field in 2013, as PBA star Nathan Bohr defeated Theo Douthit of Arizona by a mere five pins, 188-183. First prize was \$10,000,

a record for the event. The next year saw another PWBA champion, Diana Zavjalova of Latvia making the finals. Craig Nidiffer of Michigan was the eventual winner with a 276-237 victory over Brett Wolfe.

Jakob Butturff of Arizona was the \$11,400 winner in 2015, over Canadian Francois Lavoie. It was the first year of bracket play among the top thirty-two advancers. PBA star Darren Tang of San Francisco was the winner the following year, totaling a 403-400 victory over Jessy Bauer of Kansas.

Vernon Peterson drove all the way from Florida to win the event in 2017, over PBA standout Anthony Simonsen. The next year another PBA champion, Chris Barnes of Texas, bested Brandon Grant of Los Angeles. In 2019, it was 57 year old Duane Mellinger of Colorado that became the tournament's oldest winner.

After a year of confusion and unknown effects from COVID-19, the tournament resumed in 2021, with Dylan Taylor the winner over the likes of Cortez Schenck and Francois Lavoie in the televised finals. Schenck rained supreme the next year, defeating local star J.D. Nance in the 2022 finals.

Last year's winner, Francois Lavoie, defeated J.D. Nance by a 202-194 victory for a \$13,090 first place prize - a record. Nance banked a second place prize of \$6,810, also a record.

So, who will win in 2024? The sentimental favorite has to be J.D. Nance, who has finished second the last two years. But I'm betting on Francois Lavoie. His record in this event is most impressive. Let's see what happens...

Franois Lavoie photo from francoislavoie.com



Franois Lavoie

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PBA50 continued from page 1

three strikes in a row.

Hess converted a 7-pin followed by a wrap 10-pin in the ninth. In the 10th, he needed a double to shut out Koivuniemi. Hess posted his first shot. His right leg came up slightly and he slapped it out when he struck.

“I can’t even tell you all of the thoughts going through my head. You are trying to stay present, but you are thinking this shot wins,” Hess said.

He took a re-rack, took a couple very deep breaths, wiped off his ball, and stepped on the approach. After another deep breath, he watched as his ball went through the nose leaving the 3-6-9-10. He took his time and converted the difficult spare, finishing with 248.

“I did not make my best effort. Thank goodness it did not get four through the middle or something crazy. That was huge. After I made the spare, I didn’t even watch Mika’s first shot,” Hess said. “I took a little walk. Tried to get my head right because in my mind there was no doubt, we were going to another roll-off, like we did a couple of weeks ago.”

Koivuniemi, needing to strike out for a tie, delivered the first strike. On his next shot, Koivuniemi liked the shot, yet he left a wrap 10-pin. He picked it up to finish with a 237. Hess said his heart hurt for his friend, especially after the incredible stepladder run Koivuniemi had been on.

“What a season. Eight shows in a row for Mika. JJ (John Janawicz) had five wins. I got five wins,” he added. “What a great PBA50 Tour season.”

The title of PBA50 Player of the Year is based on points. Janawicz earned the honor just one year after being named 2023 PBA50 Rookie of the Year. He won \$76,250 this season. Janawicz defeated Hess at the PBA Senior U.S. Open and Janawicz won the Bud Moore PBA50 Players Championship for major titles this season. Hess was the Player of the Year runner-up winning \$63,850.

In the opening match, No. 5 seed Dan Knowlton struggled to get comfortable on the lanes. He got his first strike in the fifth frame and finished with five straight strikes for 199. His opponent, Brad Angelo, had four strikes in the first five frames. He stayed clean on his way to a 225 game and the win.

In the second match, Angelo started off with back-to-back spares followed by three strikes. Chris Warren went spare, strike, spare followed by a double. Angelo was able to put doubles together twice between frames seven and 10 to earn the 236-209 victory.

And in the semifinal match, Angelo started off with a spare and a double before back-to-back splits for open frames. Koivuniemi stayed in the 1-3 pocket taking an early lead and went on to earn the 215-187 win.

When Hess was asked about his takeaways from the 2024 PBA50 season, he held back tears:

“I belong. I wish I could have done it 20 years ago, but 20 years ago, I was a different person and who knows, it might not have worked out. I am just enjoying the moment right now. It has been a lot of fun.”

CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND SCORES:

Match 1: Angelo def. Knowlton 225-199
Match 2: Angelo def. Warren 236-209
Match 3: Koivuniemi def. Angelo 215-187
Championship match: Hess def. Koivuniemi 248-237

**PBA50 TOURNAMENT OF CHAMPIONS
FINAL STANDINGS:**

1. Tom Hess, \$15,000
2. Mika Koivuniemi, \$8,000
3. Brad Angelo, \$6,000
4. Chris Warren, \$5,000
5. Dan Knowlton, \$4,000

[Final standings - 2024 PBA50 Tournament of Champions](#)

PWBA continued from page 1

ish. As an alternate, she splits her prize money with the person she came in for, Diana Zavjalova. Parkin and Zavjalova each receive \$8,000.

The title match was another back-and-forth affair that saw Sin and Jordan match each other until the fifth frame, where this time, Sin was the one who opened with a 4-6 split.

Jordan couldn't quite fully seize the opportunity, but kept herself in the match when her ball went high for a 2-4-6-7-10 split and converted it. A few more marks for both players and the Tour Championship title came down to the final frame, where Jordan ended first.

Jordan needed a double and count in the 10th frame to shut the door on Sin's quest for a second major title. Her first shot went flush for a strike and her second shot looked just as good as it hit the pocket.

The 7-10 split said otherwise.

Jordan quickly ran down the 10 pin and ended the game with 209, putting pressure on Sin to get a double and six pins for the win.

For Sin, the pressure was nothing new to her, as the 2024 PWBA Tour season has continued to show everyone who follows.

She flushed all three shots in the 10th for strikes and a 215, earning her fifth PWBA Tour title overall, fourth of the season, second major and the \$50,000 top prize. Richard earned \$25,000 for her runner-up finish.

Sin was able to win this title in front of members of her family, who have been some of her biggest supporters in her career.

"It means a lot to me to win this title in front of my mom and brother. They have been able to witness me win back home and travel with me a lot, giving me that moral support. I'm glad that they were here today. I'm thankful for them and my dad back home, as well as my Malaysian bowling supporters."

Sin also was awarded with PWBA Player of the Year honors during the show, becoming the second international player to win the award in PWBA history. She adds her name to the list of PWBA legends like Lisa Wagner and Wendy Macpherson.

"It's an incredible honor to be a part of that list. I'm glad that I made it happen and I hope it inspires more international players to come bowl on the tour and compete, as well as have fun together."

Her earnings for the 2024 season, \$154,570, is also the second-most any player has won since earnings were tracked in 1981, with only Wendy Macpherson earning more in 1997 (\$165,425).

The stepladder started with Parkin and Singapore's New Hui Fen. Parkin advanced with a 190 while New struggled early and bowed out with a 160, earning \$9,000 for fifth place.

Next for Parkin was Stefanie Johnson of McKinney, Texas, looking for her first title of the season and second major overall.

Parkin and Johnson stayed close until the eighth frame, where Johnson opened three straight frames to end her game with a 154 while Parkin advanced with a 184. Johnson earned \$12,000 for her fourth-place finish.

The Tour Championship was the final event of the season-ending PWBA Championship Week – Detroit, which featured three events – PWBA Greater Detroit Open, PWBA Pepsi Open and Tour Championship – and kicked off Wednesday with 81 athletes.

In order to qualify for the Tour Championship, a player had to be a current PWBA member in good standing and have won a National Tour title during the 2024 season. The remainder of the field was filled from the PWBA season points list through the most recent tournament preceding the Tour Championship, which was the Pepsi Open.

The Tour Championship consisted of three eight-game rounds of match play Sunday and Monday. Total pinfall for 24 games, including bonus pins for each victory in match play, determined the five finalists for Tuesday's championship round.

New won the Greater Detroit Open on Thursday for her first title of the 2024 season and second career title. Jillian Martin of Stow, Ohio, won the Pepsi Open Saturday night to claim her third PWBA Tour tournament victory.

The 2024 PWBA Tour schedule featured 13 events during the season and began in May at the PWBA GoBowling! Twin Cities Open at Cedarvale Lanes in Eagan, Minnesota.

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PBA TOUR TRIALS PREVIEW

Previewing PBA Tour Trials, which will award 12 exempt berths on the 2025 PBA Tour

by Nolan Hughes

In less than one week’s time, a dozen players will cement their status on the top professional bowling circuit in the world. More than 90 players, hailing from 10 countries and 33 states, are set to compete in this week’s PBA Tour Trials. The stakes are clear: Exempt status (priority entry) for all 2025 PBA Tour events and eligibility for the PBA Elite League draft.

FORMAT

A pre-tournament qualifier on Monday, featuring two six-game rounds at Bowlero Mount Prospect, will round out the 90-player main field.

Each of the next four days will consist of two six-game rounds at a different Chicago-area Bowlero center.

One of four new PBA-designed patterns, ranging from 35 to 47 feet in length, will be used each day.

The 12 players with the highest total pinfall across all 48 games will earn exempt status for the 2025 PBA Tour.

PRECEDENT

Fifteen years ago, seven players changed the trajectory of their careers by earning PBA Tour exemptions. Among them:

Scott Norton won the 2009 PBA Regional Players Invitational, which served as that season’s PBA Tour Trials. Norton went on to win three PBA Tour titles with one major.

Ryan Ciminelli, now an eight-time champion with one major, has put himself on the precipice of the PBA Hall of Fame.

Lennie Boresch Jr. may not have the success he envisioned on the PBA Tour, but blazed his own trail to the Hall of Fame through the PBA50 Tour; meanwhile Chris Warren, then a six-time champion, regained his touring status.

PLAYERS TO WATCH

The following list is not comprehensive, but aims to give a sense of the field’s unique backgrounds:

- PBA Tour veterans:** Nathan Bohr, Anthony Lavery-Spahr, Brad Miller
International stars: Kim Bolleby, Rafiq Ismail, William Svensson
Former youth/collegiate champions: Cameron Crowe, Alec Keplinger, Wesley Low Jr., Anthony Neuer, TJ Rock
Recent Regional Tour POYs: Benjy Martinez, Nate Purches, Trevor Roberts, Ildemaro Ruiz Jr., Cody Shoemaker
Active Elite League players: Nick Pate, Arturo Quintero, Cortez Schenck, Frank Snodgrass
Recent PBA Tour TV finalists: Tim Foy Jr., Joe Grondin, Michael Martell
PBA bloodlines: Ryan Barnes, Zac Tackett
- It’s no exaggeration to say that the future of more than a dozen players will soon change forever.

PBA TOUR TRIALS SCHEDULE

All times listed in Central

- Monday, Aug. 19 — Bowlero Mount Prospect**
11 a.m. — PTQ Qualifying Round 1 (six games; 38’ PBA pattern)
6 p.m. — PTQ Qualifying Round 2 (six games; Dragon pattern)
Top 10 players advance into main field
- Tuesday, Aug. 20 — Bowlero Woodridge**
11 a.m. — Qualifying Round 1 (six games; 35’ PBA pattern)
6 p.m. — Qualifying Round 2 (six games; 35’ PBA pattern)
- Wednesday, Aug. 21 — Bowlero Randall Road**
11 a.m. — Qualifying Round 3 (six games; 41’ PBA pattern)
6 p.m. — Qualifying Round 4 (six games; 41’ PBA pattern)
- Thursday, Aug. 22 — Bowlero Mount Prospect**
11 a.m. — Qualifying Round 5 (six games; 44’ PBA pattern)
6 p.m. — Qualifying Round 6 (six games; 44’ PBA pattern)
- Friday, Aug. 23 — Bowlero Deer Park**
11 a.m. — Qualifying Round 7 (six games; 47’ PBA pattern)
6 p.m. — Qualifying Round 8 (six games; 47’ PBA pattern)
Top 12 players qualify for 2025 PBA Tour priority entry (exempt status)

More information on PBA Tour Trials is available [here](#).

Sal Bono & Ralph Gualtieri - Laughlin Blast Champions

by Frank Weiler

LAUGHLIN, NV. – Sal Bono and Ralph Gualtieri are two of the greatest guys to bowl with anywhere. They are just fun to be around. They cheer for each other and have laughs whenever anything hilarious happens on the lanes. I was lucky to bowl next to these guys last week when they won their Laughlin Blast Championship.

If you want to know what it’s like to be around these guys think of the RAT PACK of 1960’s Las Vegas. They are cool like Frank Sinatra and do it “their way” just like the “Chairman of the Board” sang, doing it his way. Sal and Ralph are full of mischief like Dean Martin. They easily can keep up with Dino when it comes to hitting any bar. Dean sang and joked comfortably with a martini in hand and these guys bowl their best with anything a bartender can offer in hand.

Like Sammy Davis’s “Candy Man” this duo of Sal and Ralph “CAN”. They CAN bowl, they CAN score, they CAN win. They CAN DO all of that and still joke, still laugh and have a hell of a good time.

Both Sal and Ralph are natives of NEW YORK CITY (NYC). While both bring with them many BIG APPLE characteristics, they are both currently part

of the “ARIZONA MAFIA”! This “Bowling Mafia” has no connection with any crime family. Instead, it’s a huge contingency of retired senior bowlers from Arizona, who dominate the Laughlin Blast every year. Sal is now retired to Suprise, Arizona and Ralph to Peoria, Arizona.

Sal, born in SICILY, grew up in QUEENS (NYC) and Ralph was born and raised in the BRONX (NYC). With such roots I would expect these two avid bowlers are probably NEW YORK METS or NEW YORK YANKEE fans. That would make sense because both these guys have personality. BIG APPLE personality.

Sal and Ralph won their Laughlin Blast Championship with a Doubles handicap score of 1,766 for three No-Tap games. Their score is the second highest score in Division I history of the tournament. That’s the second highest score in the history of 20 Laughlin Blast tournaments. They missed

setting a new record by just 17 pins or just 3 pins per game. Their win was worth \$359.

By the way, Ralph (a 181 average league bowler) won the Laughlin Blast Singles Championship this year rolling games of 266-248-298 for a 812 no-tap series. With 132 pins handicap Ralph’s winning series was 944! The win was worth \$159.

It was a privilege to meet Ralph Gualtieri at this summer’s Laughlin Blast. He is the son of a World War II Hero. His father, Raphael Gualtieri, born in Brooklyn enlisted in the United States Army and fought in the Battle of the Bulge. He is Ralph’s hero, a great man, and the reason why Ralph constantly is attempting to be the best man he can be.

Thank You Ralph Gualtieri for inspiring me to be better at all of my life’s endeavors! It is because of men like Sal, Ralph and his dad that America is the great nation that it is.



Ralph Gualtieri (left) & Sal Bono (right)



Weekly Scratch 5-Gamer Every Tuesday

\$55 Entry Fee with Optional Pots and Brackets
Check-in at 6pm • Bowl at 7pm • 1 in 5 Payout
8/20: Roth

Saturday HDCP No-Tap Tournament

\$30 Entry Fee with Optional Pots and Brackets
Check-in at 11am • Bowl at Noon • 1 in 5 Payout
4 Games on Same Pair of Lanes on House Shot
22771 Centre Dr. Lake Forest, CA 92630 (949) 770-0055