

## **EJ TACKETT EARNS THIRD CAREER CHRIS SCHENKEL PBA PLAYER OF THE YEAR AWARD** *Tackett joins elite company with third career Player of the Year honor*

EJ Tackett of Bluffton, Ind. etched his name into the PBA record books by earning his second consecutive and third career Chris Schenkel PBA Player of the Year award in 2024.

After winning Player of the Year honors in 2016 and again last season, Tackett has become the fifth player in PBA history to have won the award three or more times.

Only Jason Belmonte (7), Walter Ray Williams Jr. (7), Earl Anthony (6) and Mark Roth (4) have won the PBA's top individual accolade more than Tackett.

Tackett also became the seventh player to win back-to-back POY awards, joining Belmonte, Williams, Anthony, Roth, Amleto Monacelli and Don Johnson.

"When you get to such a level where your name is put next to icons people that created the sport and made it what it is — there are no words for that," Tackett said. "It's what you dream about as a kid, but don't ever think can actually happen, no matter who you are or how good you are. For it to actually come true is mind blowing. You have to remind yourself it actually is happening and it's real."

This season Tackett won two titles, including the PBA World Championship, and led the tour with 29,920 points, \$265,792 in earnings and by Nolan Hughes



a near-record 229.37 average. Tackett garnered 67.50% of votes from PBA members and the media. Anthony Simonsen,

who led the tour with three standard titles, finished second in voting at 11.00%. Marshall Kent finished third with 9.50% of votes. Bill O'Neill, David "Boog" Krol, Kyle Troup, Matt Russo and Jesper Svensson were also nominated and received votes. "It's so much fun to be able to compete and be rewarded with things like this, adding to the legacy that I've been fortunate continued on page 12

## NATE PURCHES NAMED 2024 HARRY GOLDEN PBA ROOKIE OF THE YEAR Purches becomes first PBA Junior product to win PBA Rookie of the Year

by Nolan Hughes

Nate Purches of Fond Championship and a du Lac, Wis. has been season-high major finish named the 2024 Harry of 12th in the PBA World Golden PBA Rookie of Championship.

season-high major finish of 12th in the PBA World Championship. "It felt like everything that I worked for - the dedication, the effort --everything all felt completed at that moment in time," Purches said of hearing the news. "It means everything to be with guys like Belmo, Pete Weber and all the guys I just idolized growing up. It seems so surreal. It's pretty cool to continued on page 11

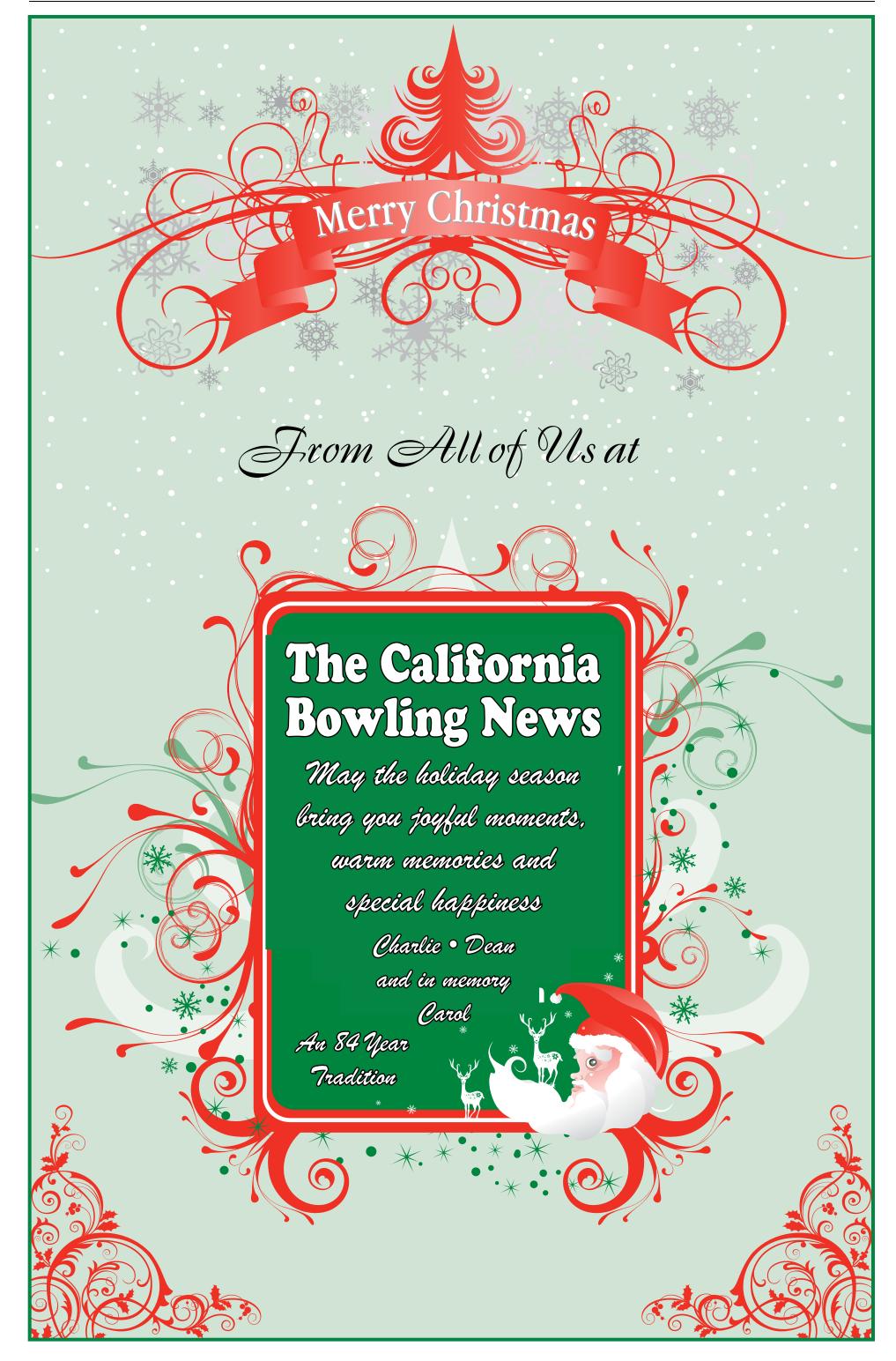


the Year.

Purches received 70.16% of votes from PBA members and the media. Alec Keplinger, the only other nominee, finished second garnering 29.84% of votes.

Purches led all firstyear PBA Tour players in points, earnings and average. He earned a season-high finish of seventh in the PBA Cheetah





# In The World Of Bowling, Detroit Is Still Number One

#### by Dave Williams

The tremendous loss of bowling centers and league bowlers throughout the nation since the COVID confusion of 2019 prompted me to take a look at some of the local associations in which this column is published.

There's absolutely no question that Detroit is still number one when it comes to bowling. With more than 80 bowling centers in the area of Macomb, Oakland and Wayne Counties, there's no association even close to that number of bowling centers and lane beds, according to Metro Detroit USBC's Association Manager Mark Martin.

Thunderbowl Lanes in the Detroit suburb of Allen Park (Wayne County) is the largest center in the tri-county area, as well as in the nation, with 90 lanes. Next up on the metro Detroit list is Imperial Lanes (Macomb County) with 80 lanes, followed by a pair of 60 lane centers that are both in Wayne County — Westland Bowl and Super Bowl Lanes.

Rounding out the top ten locations are 300 Bowl (52 lanes), Century Bowl (52), Hartfield Lanes (52), Five Star Lanes (50), Astro Lanes (48), Rosebowl Lanes (48), and Shore Lanes, also with 48 lanes. Wow... that's a lot of lane beds!

With 80-plus bowling centers, you would expect the number of league bowlers to be quite high, but I was surprised to learn that there are only around 50,000 certified members in the Metro Detroit USBC, according to bowl.com. But that still makes them the largest local bowling association in the country.

However, dividing 50,000 league members by 80 bowling centers leaves us with only 625 league bowlers per location. Even the famous Thunderbowl Lanes has a mere 614 certified league members. I can remember visiting Thunderbowl Lanes and Imperial Lanes as possible acquisitions for AMF way back in the mid-1980's.

My boss, Bruce Gobbi, would always warn me not to get too involved with the management and staff at the locations and just investigate the league bowler counts each evening to be sure that they were accurate, because many times owners were only using us to see what their center might be worth on the open market.

Imperial Lanes was "stuffed" with leagues and would have made a fine addition for AMF, but as Gobbi had warned, they were just shopping to see what sort of price the location would command. Even today, Imperial reports a healthy total of 2,205 league members, and that's the highest league count among the bowling centers listed at mdusbc.com.

In those days (1980's), AMF boasted of two locations with more than 5,000 league members — AMF Wallington Lanes in Wallington, N.J. (5,400 league members), and AMF Main Lanes in Columbus, Ohio, with 5,200 sanctioned keglers. In spite of those lofty numbers, both AMF Altamonte Lanes in Altamonte Springs, Fla., and AMF East Meadow Bowl in East Meadow, N.Y., reported higher revenue because of a more elevated pricing structure.

#### Where Have All The Bowling Centers Gone

As I investigated further, I discovered that the Greater Los Angeles USBC (including Antelope Valley, Santa Clarita Valley, San Fernando Valley and Los Angeles County) reports only 15 certified bowling centers, with another 9 that have no certified leagues. The largest location is Cal Bowl (68 lanes), another location that AMF came very close to acquiring in 1985.

while I was working for them in the 1990's. The team of Vince Dwyer and Phyllis Holm put together some fantastic numbers and innovative promotions. Their league numbers hovered around the 2,200 mark, with the overall revenue from leagues, casual bowling, lounge and snack bar at a most impressive level.

In one of Carol Mancini's Looking Back segments (1975 - Part 2, appearing on October 12, 2017), Carol notes that "Phyllis Holm (was a promotions) tiger — she was ggrreeeattt." In the same column she remembers Pete Weber ("Pete Weber was 12 years old and averaged a monstrous 232 in a St. Louis Junior League"), and yours truly: "Dave Williams (AMF Rep) shot 6-300's this year, two in one week. Was a state record in '75. Dave is retired, writes articles and remembers 'The Good Ole Days.'"

#### The Metroplex Is Stable

In contrast to Detroit (loss of league bowlers due to lifestyle changes) and Los Angeles (loss of bowling centers due to land values), we have the North Texas USBC that's still growing at a moderate pace, primarily due to a population base that is migrating from northern climates, and already familiar with the game of ten pins.

The Dallas-Ft. Worth Metroplex boasts 26 bowling establishments. It's interesting that among the list of centers at nctusbc.com, some of AMF's and ARC's underperforming locations (Bowlero-Desoto and Cowtown Bowling Palace) are now thriving enterprises, while powerful locations from the past (Forest Park Lanes and Triangle Bowl-Irving) have succumbed to the land value scenario.

I always enjoyed visiting Forest Park Lanes. It was on the second floor above a popular pancake house. The smell of butter, pancakes and coffee permeated the lanes! Cowtown was also an interesting experience, as past BPAA president C.C. Bearden kept his offices on the ground floor of the building, after selling the bowling operation to AMF, and was always up for a conversation about what was happening with the game in other parts of the country.

#### **Phoenix Continues To Grow**

An area that shows little sign of slowing down is the Metro Phoenix USBC (phxusbc.org). Although many of the locations have a prior affiliation with AMF, I'm not at all familiar with them because they were a part of the acquisition of Fairlanes, a few years after I had left AMF. Fairlanes had the great foresight to build many locations in the rapidly growing metropolitan areas of Phoenix, Denver and Houston.

Of the 14 locations in Metro Phoenix, half of them are adorned with the name of AMF or Bowlero: AMF Desert Hills, Bowlero Union Hills, AMF Peoria, Bowlero Christown, Bowlero Avondale, Bowlero Via Linda, and Bowlero Glendale.

What will the future hold for bowling? Trends usually begin in California, so we will probably continue to see new entertainment centers that provide boutique bowling segments, along with a mixture of other activities. It's also possible that we will see an expansion of locations with little or no certified league members.

One more among the fifteen certified locations at glacusbc.com is Bowlero Cerritos, which was American Recreation Centers (ARC) top performing location

LONG TIME FRIEND LOSES BATTLE — Stacey Karten, who served as director of marketing at Fairlanes for many years, has died at the young age of 70, after battling Parkinson's disease for many years. Following the sale of Fairlanes to AMF, Stacey transitioned into an executive director position with the Bowling Proprietors of New Jersey, where he remained for many years. Stacey will always be remembered for his kind and gentle nature.

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REDLANDS – Tom Collins bowls in a variety of leagues within the Citrus Belt, including several senior leagues. In every league that he competes he is among the top average bowlers. In some of his leagues he carries the high average.

Tom is a "Power Stroker" rolling from the left side. That means Tom can score with speed and revolutions or score slowing things down and using a consistent accurate style to knock down pins. With his multifaceted bowling style Tom regularly demonstrates that variety is not only the spice of life but also





## JIM SHEPPARD – Senior "Bowler of The Week"

by Frank Weiler

REDLANDS – Every once in awhile a bowler's performance on the lanes is so impressive or so unique that you have to wonder how he did what he did. You wonder whether you have seen anything like it before. You wonder if you will ever see it happen again.

That's how I feel when watching Jim Sheppard bowl. He is **"poetry in motion"** on the lanes. Always executing every shot to **perfection**. That's executing perfectly, shot after shot after shot. It's unbelievable. It's so impressive to watch. That's when you wonder if you'll ever see such accuracy, such consistency again?

That's why Jim Sheppard is the Citrus Belt's **MIS-TER CONSISTENT** on the lanes. His perfect execution of every shot translates into Jim being the best spare maker this area may have ever seen. While **Walter Ray Williams Jr.** is nicknamed **"Deadeye"** because of his accuracy as a spare maker, many call Jim Sheppard **"Hawk Eye"** because he is a great spare maker as well.

Jim's reputation as a spare maker shouldn't be construed to mean that he doesn't strike. His accuracy as a spare maker easily translates into his also being a consistent striker. As an outstanding spare maker and striker, it is not surprising that Jim Sheppard continues to roll huge scores.

Last week Jim rolled a 626 scratch series in the Golden Agers League. Just another above par series by **MISTER CONSISTENT**. I don't know how many consecutive weeks Jim has rolled par scores but would guess it would at least be a couple of dozen weeks and maybe up to 50 consecutive weeks! That's **incred-ible**! Another incredible week on the lanes for Jim Sheppard, just like his last 50 weeks.

a doorway to scoring.

As a "Power Stroker" it means Tom is a bowler who can do it all. That's why it surprised no one when Tom rolled a perfect 300 game a few weeks ago.

By the way, Tom's perfect 300 game is special because it is one of the few rolled on the newly installed String Pins here.

Tom's perfect game and 735 (300 - 256 - 179) scratch series are both league highs in the Fun Time Laughlin League. Tom's 198 average is the fourth highest in the league.

Tom's scoring and consistency on the lanes demonstrate again that "California bowlers are the best bowlers in the world". That's why Jim Sheppard is Senior "Bowler of The Week"! He has had another great week on the lanes. Another week in his long string of consecutive weeks rolling a scratch par series.

The exploits of Jim Sheppard again proves that "CALIFORNIA BOWLERS ARE THE BEST BOWLERS IN THE WORLD".

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#### PBA Rookie of the Year continued from page 1

be on an elite list and part of PBA history."

Purches, who attends Marian University in Wisconsin, was in finance class one recent Monday morning when his phone rang. The caller ID read "PBA Commissioner Tom Clark" and Purches didn't know how to react.

"You should probably answer that call," the student sitting next to Purches said. And who was this mysterious, yet assured student? Only the commissioner's son, Rory Clark.

"It turned out it was the Rookie of the Year call, which was very funny and probably the best five minutes I took out of class," Purches said.

Purches, who turned 21 in April, is the first PBA Junior player to earn PBA Rookie of the Year honors.

In the inaugural PBA Junior Boys National Championships, Purches finished as the runner-up. Purches moved from Marlborough, Mass. to Wisconsin that summer, in 2021, to start his college career.

After one unsatisfying season of collegiate bowling, Purches opted to join the PBA ahead of the 2023 season. Not only did Purches earn PBA Midwest Region Rookie of the Year honors in 2023, but he was named the region's Player of the Year as well.

Purches said he talked to as many of his competitors as he could to learn and try to lessen the learning curve.

"I talked to EJ Tackett, Benjy Martinez, Kevin McCune when bowling the regionals," Purches said. "I learned a lot about what the national tour is like from them. I used what they said and (experience from) the regional tour and applied that to the Masters and World Series this year."

Purches' spectacular rookie campaign on the PBA Regional Tour earned him a spot in this season's PBA All-Star Weekend. Paired with EJ Tackett and Pete Weber, Purches competed in the PBA Legacy Cup: Legends and Rising Stars.

The youngster said a few words of wisdom from those PBA legends proved instrumental.

"Pete Weber told me not to get too energetic on the TV show. Ultimately, I ignored him and it cost us a little bit," Purches said. "But I remember EJ told me you have to go into every tournament saying that you're going to win. You have to have that mindset, or else you're not going to win. Since then, I've been telling myself that I'm the best bowler in the building and I'm going to win every tournament. It's been helping a lot."

Purches's rookie campaign started slow — he missed the cut in his first three pre-tournament qualifiers — but in the first title event after All-Star Weekend, Purches kick-started his eventual ROY by earning a 26th-place finish in the USBC Masters.

Then at the PBA World Series of Bowling XV in Allen Park, Mich., Purches had his coming-out party. He made three of four match play cuts and earned three top-12 finishes.

While Purches fell to the Rookie of the Year runner-up, Keplinger, in the PBA Cheetah Championship Round of 8, Purches showcased the disposition that has allowed him to buck the learning curve in the Round of 16.

Down 0-2 in a best-of-five-games match against Jason Belmonte, Purches rallied to force a Game 5. Late in Game 4, Purches delivered a clutch strike and exclaimed "Game 5, let's go!" to anyone and everyone within shouting distance.

"It wasn't a bash at Belmo at all, it was about me showing him that I'm here and I mean business," Purches said. "Knowing that this next game decided everything, the other four games did not matter, I wanted to keep myself in it. To show myself that I've got one more game to pull off probably one of the biggest upsets that bowling has seen in a little bit."

Purches will have every opportunity to prove his ROY season is only the beginning. In August's PBA Tour Trials, Purches finished fourth and earned an exempt berth on the 2025 PBA Tour. Therefore, he will be entered in every PBA Tour event for his sophomore season.

"The main goal next season is to stay exempt," Purches said. "I'd like to make at least one show. I feel like I can do that. I've been close three times so far in my one year, so I feel like I could definitely pull it off next year.

"The Hall of Fame is obviously the goal for everyone," Purches continued, speaking of his career goals. "I want to be a multi-time titleist. I feel like I could pull off at least five to six titles, and maybe give myself a chance to be inducted into the Hall of Fame one day."

**Recent Harry Golden PBA Rookie of the Year Winners** Nate Purches, 2024 Mykel Holliman, 2019 Cortez Schenck, 2023 Kamron Doyle, 2018 Santtu Tahvanainen, 2022 Matt Sanders, 2017 Matt Russo, 2021 François Lavoie, 2016 not awarded in 2020 Jesper Svensson, 2015





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#### **PBA Player of the Year**

continued from page 1

enough to create. Hopefully I can add to it as we move forward," Tackett said.

No matter the oil pattern, the bowling center or the format, Tackett performed at an elite level this season. In his worst finish of the season — 40th place in the PBA Cheetah Championship — he averaged 231.67.

His week-in, week-out consistency led to Tackett tallying the second highest single-season average in PBA history.

"Everything has clicked together the last two seasons," Tackett said. "I've been able to make the right moves at the right time, maybe a little bit quicker than most. When you can make the right move a frame or two quicker, that adds up. That's been the biggest difference for me. It's not necessarily that I'm throwing it that much better; it's my recognition of what's happening on the lane that has been really, really good the last two seasons. When you're recognizing stuff faster, it gives you more confidence to throw better shots, too."

How close did Tackett come to breaking Jason Belmonte's 2017 record of 229.39?

Tackett needed just 10 more pins somewhere in his 440 games to have broken the record.

Entering the final game of the season, Tackett needed to shoot 299 to narrowly eclipse Belmonte's mark. With a flair for the dramatic, Tackett fired 10-consecutive strikes before leaving a 4-pin to shoot 289.

"It sucks that I missed the record by that much," Tackett said. "But at the end of the day, would it have been cool? Yeah. Is it going to change anything about my career? I don't think so. I'd rather have 48 titles and 16 majors."

Tackett is almost halfway to the former, notching both of his titles — the 22nd and 23rd titles of his career — during the PBA World Series of Bowling XV in Allen Park, Mich.

He defeated Simonsen and Japan's Shota Kawazoe to win the PBA Shark Championship, then climbed an all-left-handed stepladder to defend his PBA World Championship title.

Each time Tackett has won the PBA World Championship — 2016, 2023 and 2024 — he went on to earn Player of the Year honors. But he said this year's World Championship victory meant more to him than any previous or future title.

"The biggest thing for me was winning the PBA World Championship and having Natalie and Tripp there," Tackett said. "It was such an amazing feeling to be able to share that moment with our child. Everything else doesn't mean as much anymore. He's the most important thing."

Despite winning back-to-back titles, Tackett's best stretch of bowling perhaps came earlier in the season. He reached the championship round in five consecutive events from the U.S. Open presented by Go Bowling through the PBA Delaware Classic.

The streak ended at the USBC Masters, in which Tackett finished in sixth place and 25 pins shy of making a sixth consecutive show.

Tackett was born in the small Indiana county of Huntington — as was Chris Schenkel, whose Hall of Fame sports broadcasting career included more than three decades as the voice of the PBA and whose name is immortalized on the Player of the Year trophy.

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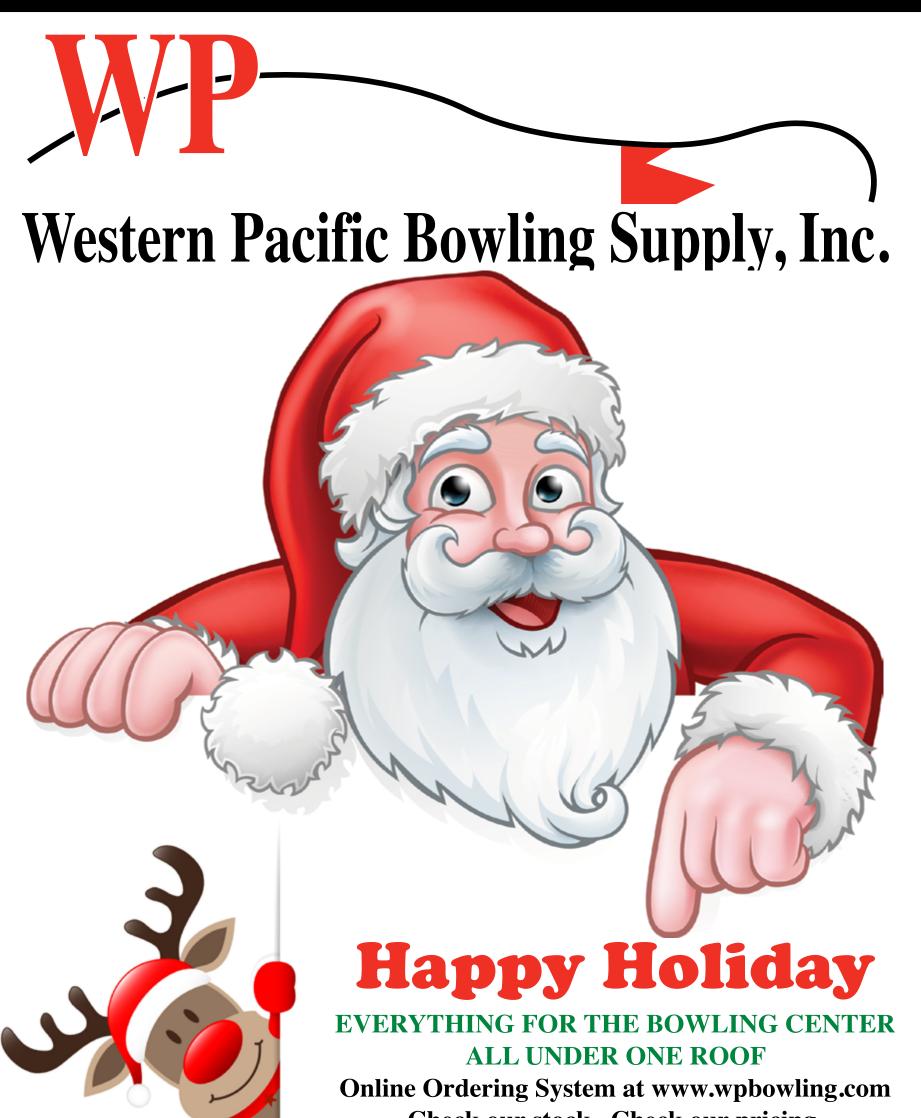
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Complete list of Chris Schenkel PBA Player of the Year winners

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# 38th Year! Brunswick Four Teams Sweep To Start The Long Oil Round

DOWNEY – The Brunswick Invitational took to the lanes to start the third round. Teams geared up to take on the longer, but low volume modified Mexico City oil pattern. Teams were paired up based on season wins to start the round.

The "A" match featured the two round winners, Pro Approach Oak Tree (Leonard Ruiz Jr.) and Love Laundry (Ramsey Basurto). Pro Approach Oak Tree, coming off their round two win, kept the momentum going with a 5-0 sweep of Love Laundry. Ramon Torres continued to be hot, leading the Oak Tree bunch with a 615 set while Marguan Rivers posted 563 to lead Love Laundry.

The "B" match paired **Family Ties** (Bobby Campagnale) and Threadworks (Eric Snow) with both teams coming up just short the first two rounds. Family Ties took the first two games by enough to bank a 4-1 result over Threadworks. Bobby Campagnale led Family Ties Eric Snow was huge putting up a 650 to be the lone light for Threadworks.

**US Foods** (Gabriel Martinez) took on Don Julio Tequila (Gabe Garza) with the two teams sitting around 5 games out of the overall lead. US Foods took the first game by 48, then lost the next two by 31 and 3, for a 3-2 win and a 15-pin total pins win. Mike Bogue led US Foods with a 599 set while Phil Sujo put up 584 to pace Don Julio Tequila.

Junior Amateur Tour (Kevin Valmonte) was looking to get some wins against their old leadoff bowler now anchoring the **Taco Bell** (Kaven Massey) bunch. Taco Bell held on to take the first game but J.A.T. stormed back with two close wins and a 22-pin totals win

#### by David Yamauchi

for a 4-1 result. Michael Marmolejo was huge for J.A.T. with a 623 set while Kaven Massey rolled to a 645 series to lead Taco Bell.

Bowlium (Billy Myers Jr.) and Touchstone Homes (Christian Eichelkraut) matched up in the 10th vs. 11th match. This match was all Bowlium as they cruised to a 5-0 sweep of Touchstone Homes. Kevin Jones was huge for Bowlium with a soid 658 set while Anthony Rieger put up 563 to lead Touchstone Homes.

Forest Lanes (Jon Diso) and DV8 (Matthew Zweig) were looking to add some wins to their season totals. Forest Lanes had two huge wins but dropped game three for a 4-1 result. David Schiada subbed to a 612 set to lead Forest Lanes while Tony Brunning was big for DV8 with a 643 series.

Del Rio Lanes (Michael Barnett), Weaverbird (Eric Williams Jr.), Pro Approach Cal Bowl (Austin Wasielewski) and Pro Approach Del Rio (Augie Labrado Jr.) rounded out Monday's action. Weaverbird swept through Del Rio Lanes led by sub Phillip Castro's 541 series. Eric Williams Jr. was big for Weaverbird with a 634 series in the losing effort. Pro Approach Del Rio won the battle of the pro shops as they swept Pro Approach Cal Bowl 5-0. Augie Labrado Jr. led Del Rio with a 586 set while Austin Wasielewski managed 544 for Cal Bowl.

Financial Advisors Pot went to AJ Garcia (278) for \$160 with 2nd to Ramon Torres (268) for \$70. Sidepots went to Bobby Hornacek (252) and Ramon Torres (268) for \$66 each with 2nd to Kevin Jones (234) and J.T. Diso (246) for \$33 each. SuperPot went to Mike Boque (259) for \$198 with 2nd to Eric "Legend" Snow for \$99.

#### TOP 10 ROUND 3 WEEK 1

Weaverbird ..... 5 Pro Approach Oak Tree \$\$. 5 Bowlium.....5 Pro Approach Del Rio . 5 Forest Lanes . . . . . 4

Family Ties ..... 4 Junior Amateur Tour. 4 Don Julio Tequila . . 2 DV8.....1

#### **TOP 10** HIS WEEK

658 Kevin Jones 650 Eric Snow 645 Kaven Massey 643 Tony Brunning 634 Eric Williams Jr. 623 Michael Marmolejo 623 Ramon Torres 620 Bobby Campagnale 615 AJ Garcia 612 David Schiada





Southern California's Richest League take the lanes at Del Rio as they continue the trek on Mexico City next week.



## *7502 Florence Ave.,°Downey CA 90240 • (562) 927-3351*

## **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 12/17: House / 12/24: Bye / 12/31: Bye

## 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** 

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