

Thursday September 28, 2023

## Spare Change

By Johnny Campos

# Tournament season is in full swing in the Peoria area

The tournament season is well under way.

There have been singles tournaments, mixed doubles, mixed trios, over 50/under 50 doubles. And with the schedules available on social media, it's not going to slow down any time soon.

Probably the most significant tournament so far in October was the Peoria River City Association's Singles Showdown at Plaza Lanes in Washington. That could have Player of the Year implications at the end of the season.

Tim Blanch used his two-handed delivery to hold off a late rally by Kevin "Refty" Tockes and claim the scratch division title.

Blanch finished with a pinfall total of 1,453, averaging better than 242 for his six games and closing with a 766 series his final three games. Tockes, who trailed Blanch by just eight pins going into the last game, managed only a 200 his last game and was second with 1,398.

Left-hander Sammy Taylor placed third at 1,383, Dan Lee was fourth (1,379) and Mike Boogren fifth (1,371).

In the handicap division, Holly Soltow averaged better than 211 scratch for her six games. Added to her 204 pins of handicap, she had a winning total of 1,475.

Eric Lilienthal got off to a fast start, averaging almost 224 for his first four games. But he closed out with 188 and 181 for 1,264 scratch. He got 174 pins of handicap and was second with 1,438.

Dean Panagopoulos, who opened the day with a 277 game, was third (1,411), Adan Guerrero fourth (1,399) and Debbie Blanch, Tim's mother, fifth at 1,384.

The PRC also hosted the Senior Handicap Tournament at Landmark Lanes, where Marty Calvin repeated to win Class C singles and all-events.

He didn't match his 800 series from last year's event, but Calvin still won singles with a handicap total of 769 (edging Marcus Rutledge by one pin) and Division F all-events with 1,475.

Other singles winners were John Trapp in A, James Stapleton in B, Nancy Betts in D, and Debbie Blanch in E.

In handicap doubles, Dan Walker, one of the 2023 Hall of Fame inductees, teamed with Don Kellington to win Class B with 1,328; the Hall of Fame duo of Gary Robinson and Kenny Combs won Class C with 1,454; Pat McPherson and Sue Whitson won D with 1,236; Sheila Carver and Sia Hargrove Class E with 1,320; Marty Calvin and Terri Davis Class H with 1,338; and Debbie Blanch and Les Wernowsky Class I with 1,289.

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Other all-events winners were Val Anders in Class A, Steve Czaja in B, Nancy Betts in C, Don Robison in D, Dawn Guerrero in E, Sue Whitson in G, Combs in H, Tammie Roemer in I and Johnny Reynolds in J.

Jade Frost had a nice couple of tournaments early in the month, winning a pair of titles a week apart.

She first teamed with Brad Moore to claim the Mixed Doubles Shootout at Twin City Lanes in Bloomington.

Jeremy Grove and Bobbie Sweet led the field of 22 teams with a handicap pinfall total of 1,958. Second qualifiers were Michael Lutz and Stephanie Abernathy at 1, followed by Frost and Moore with 1,906.

Frost and Moore defeated Lutz and Abernathy, a duo from Champaign, in the best-of-3 Baker format title match, 2-1.

The Frost/Moore team won Game 1, 246-216, lost the second game, 268-218, and came back to win the deciding game, 250-190.

The following week, Frost claimed the second annual River City Singles Classic at Paddlewheel Bowl in Havana.

She finished ahead of runner-up Jason Shilling. Brian Kutzora was third, Brad Moore fourth, Jacquelynn Deters fifth and Steve Czaja sixth.

In the Over/Under 50 Handicap Doubles Tournament at Linn Lanes in Canton last Saturday night, Joe Robards teamed with Eric Wurmnest Jr. and ran away from the field to claim the title. Wurmnest led the way with games of 268, 255 and 279 for an 802 his first three games. He added 258 and 278 for a five-game total of 1,339 – a 267.8 average.

Robards, who just turned 50 a couple of months ago, added 1,156 for his five games (231.2 average). He had games of 277, 225, 257, 216 and 181.

Their 2,515 total (251.5 average) easily led the qualifying.

They beat out Andy Stone and Benny Barnwell for the title. Kenny Shockency and Jeff Johnson were third, followed by Jason Brumley and Garrett Lawson fourth and Brian and Mike Davis fifth.

In the two-game Baker format stepladder finals, Lawson and Brumley beat the Davis brothers, 440-329 (with handicap), before losing to Stone and Barnwell, 483-436.

In the semifinal match, Stone and Barnwell defeated Shockency and Johnson, 469-393.

In the title match, Robards and Wurmnest combined for 11 strikes and won the opening game, 266-218, over Barnwell and Stone.

“We were able to keep the second game under the 49 they had to beat us by,” Robards said. “I think we had them shut out by the eighth frame.”

Stone and Barnwell won the second game, 243-222, but fell short in the match, 492-464.

And last Sunday, the team of Michaela Mae Kelly, Josh Cantrill and Scott Rains beat out the team of Hailey Jepson, Tommy Barnwell, and Steve Taylor in the title match to claim the Halloween Mixed Trios event at Landmark Lanes.

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The top two teams crossed with each other during qualifying and represented five honor scores on the day.

Barnwell opened the day with games of 300, 257 and 300 for an 857 series. Rains had a trey in Game 2 and Cantrill in Game 6 to help secure their spot in the bracket finals.

The team of Jennifer Longmeyer, David Knowles and Garrett Lawson led the field with a 4,345 pinfall total, which included just 60 pins of handicap.

Jade Frost, Brad Moore and Sammy Taylor qualified second at 4,219; Bobbie Sweet, Donnie Sweet and Dave Colburn third with 4,173; Casey Goettel, TJ Lewis, and Nick Kruml (this year's all-events champion at the USBC Championships) fourth at 4,135; Kelly, Cantrill, and Rains fifth with 4,119; Holly Soltow, Alex Stauthammer and David McVey sixth at 4,113; Jepson, Barnwell and Talor seventh at 4,108; and Jen Nush, Dylan Schmidt and Aaron Dunn eighth at 4,040.

In the opening round of the bracket finals, Team Nush knocked off Team Longmeyer, Team Kelly beat Team Goettel, Team Soltow beat Team Sweet, and Team Jepson beat Team Frost.

In the semifinals, Team Kelly beat Team Nush and Team Jepson beat Team Soltow, and then Team Kelly beat Team Jepson for the title.

There were also some recent honor scores of note. There were 300 games by Andy Remelius (his first), PRC Director Kathleen Hermacinski (her first as an adult) and PRC Director Ray Ogden (his 11<sup>th</sup> career trey just before his 77<sup>th</sup> birthday), and an 813 series by Kevin Tockes, who closed the series with 18 straight strikes on Monday during the Bill Mastronardi/Perfect Angle Pro Shop Masters league at Plaza Lanes.

So the scoring pace has been keeping up with the number of tournaments.

There are a few more tournaments on the horizon, and chances are that a few of the folks who cashed in these events will probably be at or near the top of the next ones.



Singles Showdown scratch division champ Tim Blanch

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Ebonite Mixed Doubles winners Jade Frost and Brad Moore



Over/Under 50 champions Joe Robards and Eric Wurmnest Jr.



Halloween Mixed trios winners Scott Rains, Michaela Mae Kelly, and Josh Cantrill