

Thursday December 1, 2023

Spare Change

By Johnny Campos

Drizzy's Shirt Stain team wins November Baker Challenge at Potter's Alley

The Drizzy's Shirt Stain team was spot on in the stepladder finals of the November Baker Challenge at Potter's Alley on Sunday.

The team of Ryan Driskill, Kenny Combs, Mark Stenger, Gary Alstott and Travis Anderson dropped its first game in both matches of the finals but came back to win the final two games each time.

In the semifinals, they beat Wurmnest Trucking (Eric Wurmnest Jr., Blake Wurmnest, David Bartlett, Justin Karnats, and Kaedynn Nash), 2-1, and then knocked off top-seeded Stone Cold Assassins (Mike McWethy, Andy Stone, Brandon Mooney, Steve Taylor and Camden Rokita).

They closed out their title run with a solid 279 game to claim the championship.

"It felt good to beat both of those teams, because they were strong," said Combs. "And it was nice to do it for the area, because those guys come here and take money from us all the time. Between the Iowa guys and the Springfield guys, people that come from Joliet -- all of these tournaments always draw the best bowlers."

In the final match, Stone Cold Assassins opened with a 279 game after leading the qualifying with a 240 average (including a tournament-high 289 game).

"I didn't think they were ever going to miss," Combs said. "You look at their lineup, and they're great!"

Stenger agreed.

"Any team that has Steve Taylor bowling second is a super team," he said.

But Drizzy's Shirt Stain proved to be stronger than dirt, coming back to win a close Game 2, and then rolling the 279 to seal the victory.

The team went 10-5-1 in qualifying, getting some clutch doubles in the 10th frame from Anderson to win some close matches.

"It was Kenny's spot in the tournament, but I put the team together," Stenger said. "Naturally my first call was to Travis, and he did all the heavy lifting for us. Whenever we needed a double, he gave it to us. The rest of us just got our hits when we could."

The winners never changed their lineup throughout the event.

"We just adjusted when we needed to, and that seemed to work out really well," Anderson said. "It was a good day."

For Stone Cold Assassins, they had to delay the start of the tournament because original team member Cam Crowe had some issues with the icy roads and did not make it to Potter's. So Taylor came into sub in his spot.

"I told Steve after we were done, 'Man, they got you out of bed just to finish second,'" joked Stenger.

Refty has a November to remember

While Kevin "Refty" Tockes did not cash in the Baker Challenge, he did have quite a run in the month of November.

He won a doubles tournament, won a singles tournament and in a six-day period rolled three perfect games, two 800 series and a 299.

Earlier in the month, Tockes teamed with Darren Dunning of Belleville to win the Hammer Open Doubles at Bel-Air Bowl in Belleville, against a loaded field.

Dunning averaged just shy of 250 for the eight qualifying games, including a trey, and Tockes 235.6 to help them qualify second behind Shea Bittenbender and Tim Behrendt.

Tockes was a last-minute replacement for Tom Partl, who came up ill. Tockes and Dunning had teamed up before, winning the September Doubles title at Landmark Lanes.

In the Hammer Doubles stepladder finals, Dunning and Tockes edged Nick Kruml and Jason Queen, 479-473.

They then defeated Bittenbender and Behrendt, 479-476, for the title.

A few days later, Tockes rolled an 821 series during the Bill Mastronardi/Perfect Angle Pro Shop Masters League, with a 299 game.

Two nights later, in the Thanksgiving Eve Scratch Singles Tournament, Tockes rolled two 300 games and won the tournament at Striketown Bowl.

He opened qualifying with a 790 set, including a trey, and qualified second for the stepladder behind sometimes doubles partner Timmy Blanch.

In the semifinal match, Tockes rolled his second 300 of the night and then knocked off Blanch with a 258 in the title match.

It was somewhat of a payback win for Tockes, who finished second to Blanch in the Singles Showdown at Plaza Lanes earlier in the season.

Then on Saturday of Thanksgiving week, Tockes closed out qualifying in the Over/Under 50 Tournament at Landmark Lanes with an 836 series on games of 279, 300 and 257.

He and partner Chad Barnes led qualifying with a 2,957 total but dropped their opening match in the bracket finals to finish in the 5-8 grouping.

By the way, Blanch had quite a run himself at Striketown. He opened the Thanksgiving Eve event with an 805 set on games of 259, 258 and 287, and led qualifying with a 1,065 total.

A few days earlier at Striketown, Blanch opened a league set with 25 straight strikes and finished with a career-best 856 series.

He and Bob Baker also finished third in the Over/Under 40 Tournament at Striketown.

Josh Cantrill teamed with Joe Roseman to win that tournament, beating Kevin Audi and David Colburn in the title match. Finishing behind Baker and Blanch were Irvin Johnson and Josh Grove fourth, Christina Davis and Kristen Cowan fifth, and Tommy and Benny Barnwell sixth.

Roseman started the tournament with an 837 series, including a 300 game. He and Cantrill easily led qualifying but might have had an even bigger advantage had they not been a little distracted.

They were also keeping track on the progress of close friend Scott Rains in the PBA50 regional tournament that was going on at Plaza Lanes (he finished fourth) and the NFL game between their favorite team, the Dallas Cowboys, and the Carolina Panthers (Cowboys won, 33-10).

And in a pairing that was so good it should have been illegal, Cantrill also paired up with Rains to win the Over/Under 50 event at Landmark.

So things worked out pretty well for the Cantrill/Roseman/Rains trio – as usual.

Other area cashers in the Over/Under 50 event were Debbie Blanch and Jade Frost, Andy Stone and Tom Adcock, Gary Alstott and Don Sweet, and Josh Barnwell and Paul Swanson.

A couple of days before Halloween, Steve Taylor and Hailey Jepson teamed up to win the Halloween Mixed Doubles at Striketown Bowl.

They knocked off top seeds Xavier and Danielle Davis in the title match. Eric Wurmnest Jr. and Jennifer Longmeyer placed third, Tommy Barnwell and Theresa Czerniak fourth and Trevor Callear and Kelsey Eslinger fifth.



November Baker team champs Drizzy's Shirt Stain (left to right: Ryan Driskill, Gary Alstott, Kenny Combs, Travis Anderson, and Mark Stenger).

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Hammer Open Doubles winners Darren Dunning (l) and Kevin Tockes.



Thanksgiving Eve Scratch Singles champion Kevin Tockes.

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Over/Under 40 Doubles winners Joe Roseman (I) and Josh Cantrill.



Over/Under 50 Doubles winners Josh Cantrill (I) and Scott Rains.

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Halloween Mixed Doubles champions Steve Taylor and Hailey Jepson.