

Thursday April 20, 2023

Spare Change

By Johnny Campos

Plaza Lanes team has perfect ingredients to win Perfect Angle Pro Shop/Bill Mastronardi league title

The Plaza Lanes team that included three bowlers eligible for AARP and the league Bowler of the Year was too tough to stop in the championship roll-off of the Perfect Angle Pro Shop/Bill Mastronardi Masters traveling league on Tuesday night.

And it wasn't even close.

The team of Gary Robinson, Kevin Tockes, Garrett Lawson, and team captain Mike Boogren cruised to the title with a 45-5 decision over runner-up iAM BOWLING at Potter's Alley in Morton, sweeping the last two games and winning all four individual series.

Lawson, who is 55, sparked the winning team with a 779 series; Tockes, the BoY, added 703; Robinson, who turns 60 in a few months, 669, and Boogren, another senior player, 659.

Lawson opened the night with nine strikes and games of 275 and 268 to give the winners an early boost.

"Everybody's been bowling pretty good all year and it kind of helps and loosens up your arm swing when you've got a guy that's shooting 250 – and Garrett's shooting 270," Boogren said. "It makes it a little easier when you know that the guys are literally coming out of the gate are going to shoot 250."

Plaza won Game 1, 916-860, and all but put it away with a 990-905 decision in Game 2, sweeping all 12 points. Through the first six frames, the Plaza team had 20 strikes and four frames with nine-spares.

The winners also swept Game 3, getting a 255 from Tockes, 236 from Lawson and 225 from Robinson.

"Tonight we just couldn't get clicking, and they did," said Travis Anderson, the captain of Team iAM.

Andre Campos led iAM with 665, Kile Hardin (subbing for the injured Johnathon Hermacinski) added 654, Bill Maher 651 and Anderson 649.

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The iAM team advanced to the title match with a 30-20 win over Johnson Accounting (Kevin Audi, Dan Rogers, who was subbing for Kayla Johnson, Jason Hester, and captain Mike McBride) on Monday night in a much higher-scoring match on lanes 15-16.

The iAM team won with a 2,921-team series. Anderson was high man with 762, Maher added 754, Campos 728 and sub-Gary Alstott 677.

Johnson Accounting, which won the second third of the league, lost despite rolling 2,834 (236 average per man), getting an 805 from Audi on games of 268, 268 and 269, a 696 from McBride, 670 from Hester and 663 from Rogers.

In the title match, however, Boogren had the choice of lanes, and moved iAM to lanes 13-14.

The iAM team won the final third of the season with a 374-176 record, the highest winning total of any of the three champions in the roll-off.

Anderson's team had three of the top six individual point winners. He was third (147-109), Campos fourth (146-118) and Maher sixth (144-96).

"We won a lot of points, and we won when we needed to," Anderson said. "The chemistry on our team was huge.

"I actually texted everybody before we started the last third that this was our third if we were going to make a run. Things just fell into place early for us, and we just kept our lead."

The iAM team took the lead in Week 2 and never looked back.

The team that finished closest to them was Plaza Lanes, which led the league in total points with 980 – 42 more than runner-up iAM BOWLING.

Boogren put the winning team together in the draft, taking Robinson in the first round, Lawson in the second and Tockes – at 29 the youngest member of the team by more than 20 years – in the third.

"I knew that Kevin had a poor year last year, but people in this league have too much recency bias," Boogren said. "He had a bad year and he'll tell you he had a bad year. But he was never going to be that bad twice in a row.

"Did I think he was going to be Bowler of the Year? Of course not. But he was not a third-round pick. He should have been a second-round pick, in my opinion. The fact that he lasted as long as he did, I felt like I got a steal."

Tockes led the league in individual points with a record of 173-75, well ahead of runner-up Andy Stone (158-98). He did most of his striking in the final third, averaging 243.24 for his 33 games and going 68-20 in individual points – despite going 0-8 on the final night of the regular season.

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For weeks 29-through-32 Tockes went 32-0, averaging 255.74 during that stretch including a high set of 809.

He started the final third in 16th place in average and ended in sixth at 231.14 to earn a captain's spot in the draft for next season.

Boogren also said he got Lawson because of recency bias in the league.

"He had a bad year a couple of years ago, but I knew Garrett was bowling well," Boogren said. "And I just wanted to bowl with Gary because he's always solid."

Plaza won the first third of the season but needed a roll-off to beat a strong Wingstop team to do it.

"We would have made it anyway as a wild card, but that shows you how competitive this league is," said Boogren, who was on last year's runner-up team. "We won a roll-off, then finished third, then finished second. So we had the most points and never finished lower than third.

"But if something breaks the wrong way, we don't make the roll-off."

The three senior bowlers and the league BoY, however, came up big when it counted to claim the league title.

Average leaders

Tommy Barnwell led the league in average at 233.99 for 90 games, ahead of Travis Anderson at 233.04. Brian Davis was third at 231.46, followed by Steve Taylor (231.46) and Mike McBride (231.32).

The next five spots were Kevin Tockes (231.14), Tony DeVita (229.97), Andy Stone (229.17), Paul Lippens (228.10), and Mike Boogren (227.4).

Ryan Driskill (227.2) and Gary Strait (226.63) grabbed the final two automatic spots for captains in the draft for next season.

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Perfect Angle Pro Shop/Bill Mastronardi league champs Plaza Lanes team members (left to right) Kevin Tockes, Gary Robinson, Mike Boogren and Garrett Lawson



League runner up iAM Bowling team members (left to right) Andre Campos, Travis Anderson, Johnathon Hermacinski and Bill Maher