

Monday, October 17, 2022

Spare Change

By Johnny Campos

Team Peoria Takes Home First Bowling War on I-74 Grudge Match against Team Bloomington

Home-lane advantage did not come into play for the inaugural Bowling War on I-74 on Saturday.

The host Team Bloomington squad did grab the early lead after singles competition. But after that, Team Peoria made themselves right at home and cruised to a 72-18 decision at Twin City Lanes.

Team Bloomington actually won the singles competition, 16-14, but managed just two more points the rest of the day. The Team Peoria lead was so large, the captains decided to eliminate the “captain’s choice” matches scheduled at the end of the tournament.

“Team Bloomington will tell you that they didn’t bowl very well,” said Tommy Barnwell, one of the Team Peoria captains who helped organize the event. “Neither team was at full strength. They didn’t have Andy Stone or Jason Jones, and we were missing a couple of our picks.

“I thought we would win, but I did not see a runaway win the way it went. I just think that they kind of struggled, and we really nailed them in doubles (28-2). We hit them hard.”

The tournament was bowled on a 39-foot sport condition – a little tougher than a regular house shot. And it showed with some of the scoring.

Team Peoria ended up with a pinfall total of 12,301 for a 205.02 average for their 60 games, while Team Bloomington totaled 11,589 for a 193.15 overall average. There were 17 games below 170 and 65 games over deuce (54 percent of the games).

“I discussed it afterwards and we thought the conditions were perfect,” Barnwell said. “If you shot 220, it was a good game. It wasn’t hard, but it wasn’t easy. If you missed an arrow to the right, you’re not going to strike.

“I thought the conditions played well. We just bowled better than they did today. They didn’t have their best stuff.”

Team Bloomington took the early lead when Eric Wurmnest, Tyler Adams, Dustin Hopkins, Adam Johnson, Mike Boogren, and Joey Czerniak all won their singles matches. Team Peoria singles winners were Brian Davis, Bob Baker, Anthony Schnack (by one pin over Dave Bartlett) and Donnie Sweet.

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Hopkins, one of the Team Bloomington co-captains, led his team in singles with a 471, while Wurmnest and Adams each posted 446. High singles bowlers for Team Peoria were Davis at 472 and Baker with 466.

But in doubles, it was a clean sweep for Team Peoria. Barnwell and Travis Anderson, Steve Taylor and Ryan Driskill, Mike McBride and Sweet, Schnack and Baker, and Davis and Andre Campos all won their matches.

The only two points by Team Bloomington in the event were by Wurmnest and Adams, who beat Barnwell and Anderson, 398-370, in the opening game.

Taylor and Driskill led Team Peoria with a combined 895, while McBride and Sweet totaled 865.

In the five-man team matches, Anderson, Barnwell, Taylor, Driskill and McBride went 2-0 against Wurmnest, Adams, Hopkins, Adam Johnson, and Boogren, while Sweet, Schnack, Baker, Davis and Campos blanked Mark Johnson, Bartlett, Justin Karnats, Rick Kidd and Czerniak.

The only team game that was relatively close was Game 1, when Driskill struck out for a 259 to give his team a 1056-1042 decision. Driskill was high man in team with 471 for his two games, while Schnack led the second Peoria squad with 466.

Boogren led Team Bloomington in team with 430 for his two games, while Adam Johnson added 425.

“We were missing a couple of key players, but it wouldn’t have made that much of a difference,” Hopkins said. “We just collectively, all 10 of us bowled like crap. There’s no other way around it.

“As a team, Adam and I missed every multiple-pin spare we shot. I didn’t think we’d get skunked in doubles, but that’s basically what happened.”

Despite the big disparity in the score of the first event between the cities, the captains are already planning next year’s event.

“I thought it was a good start for this, because we planned it in two weeks,” Barnwell said. “We’ve already nailed down a date for next year, Labor Day weekend. And we’re going to go back to how the Bud Cup used to be, two days – the first day here and the next day in Peoria.

“We’re going to tweak the format a little bit. My main goal is I want to at the very least add women. I know the Peoria ladies ask if they were going to be involved, and a couple of the Bloomington ladies were disappointed that they weren’t involved.”

Another possibility will be addition of seniors to the mix.

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“We’re also hoping to pull those guys in that we missed, and the captains are already talking about some format changes,” Hopkins added. “We’re talking about making some point changes. The way this was now, there was more emphasis on winning your doubles matches and team.

“We’re talking about some changes about evening that out.”

Until then, however, the bragging rights and the championship cup went home with Team Peoria.



Team Peoria members (left to right): Benny Barnwell (advisor), Pro Shop Tony Schnack, Tommy Barnwell, Donnie Sweet, Ryan Driskill (kneeling), Bob Baker, Travis Anderson, Steve Taylor, Mike McBride, Brian Davis, Andre Campos