

Friday January 17, 2025

## Spare Change

By Johnny Campos

# Board ruling does not affect final standings, as Sunset Lanes team vaults from fourth to first to win second third of Masters League

The Board of Directors of the Bill Mastronardi /Perfect Angle Pro Shop Masters had to work through a Gray area in the league's rules on Monday night.

But even after they made their decision, it turned out to be a moot point.

The Sunset Lanes team of Steve Taylor, Joe Robards, Ryan Walker and Jason Jones of Bloomington ended up as the champions of the second third of the season, making the leap from fourth place to first in the position round at Plaza Lanes in Washington.

Sunset defeated T&D Windshield, 43-7, after a points adjustment made by the board that involved an illegal substitute in the match.

Corey Gray was subbing for Kayla Johnson, a first-round pick in this season's draft. According to league rules, the maximum average allowed for a first-round sub is 228. Gray was one pin above the max, with a composite average of 229 and a high average of 230 during the 2023-24 season.

But the league does not have a rule stating what score to give for an ineligible sub. The board decided on giving T&D a zero for each game bowled by Gray (pending USBC clarification), which did not affect the final standings.

Gray opened with a 287 game and finished with a 682 set, beating Robards, 6-2. But even without the extra six points because of the ruling, Sunset had just enough of an edge to beat out runner-up Linn Lanes.

The Plaza Lanes team entered position round just three points ahead of Linn Lanes, seven ahead of T&D and eight ahead of Sunset.

Linn beat Plaza, 30-20, to go around them in the standings.

But Sunset originally beat T&D, 37-13 and had vaulted into first by just two points to win the second round of play. The extra six points just gave the team a wider margin of victory.

Plaza Lanes ended up in third place and T&D in fourth. Even after losing the extra six points, T&D still had enough points to finish ahead of Striketown by two points, so the board's decision did not change the standings.

"It kind of took the drama out of everything," said Taylor, who was the only bowler on his pair to break 700.

Jones beat Kyle Mauerman 7-1 in his match, Walker lost to Matt Liening 6-2 and Robards ended up going 8-0 with the ruling.

Ironically, Sunset finished second in the first third of the season in almost the same scenario. They were in second place going into position round, but beat Wingstop, 30-20, to go around them in the standings. But Potter's Alley (Bob Baker,

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Chris Feger, Jason Jones of Peoria and Brian Davis), which was in third place, went 46-4 to go around both of the leaders to finish first.

All of the games were fairly close between Sunset and T&D (before the score adjustment). Sunset won the first game, 948-920, Game 2, 867-822 and the last game, 802-781.

"We struggled a little bit there in the middle, but we threw some good shots when we needed them," said Taylor, who had games of 300, 249 and 237 to sweep Mike McBride.

Jones added 616, Walker 614 and Robards 601.

"We got as many pins that we needed to win," Taylor added. "We've been bowling well together the whole year. But tonight we really needed Linn to win 30-20, and then we took care of our business."

Linn Lanes put up the biggest team set of the night, rolling a 2,859 series, getting a 773 from Vince Pollard, 713 from Mike Boogren, 705 from Andy Stone and 668 from Irvin Johnson. But Plaza put up a good fight, rolling the second high team set of the night with 2,772.

Pollard had a 4-4 split against Kenny Combs (731). Boogren also split with Bill Maher (666), while Johnson dropped a 6-2 decision Plaza leadoff bowler Kevin Tockes (702). Stone went 6-2 over Pro Shop Tony Schnack (673) in the anchor spot.

But Plaza won the final game, 985-937, which at first glance had prevented Linn from staying ahead of Sunset. The final margin of victory for Sunset was eight points ahead of Linn.

The league starts the final third on Monday at Potter's Alley in Morton.

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Sunset Lanes team of (left to right) Ryan Walker, Joe Robards, Steve Taylor and Jason Jones winners of the second third of Masters League.