

Sunday April 2, 2023

Spare Change

By Johnny Campos

Lopeman brothers claim handicap title, Burdette, Campos, and Sweet win scratch division in PRC Team Trios

A family outing resulted in a championship afternoon for the Lopeman brothers in the handicap division of the recent Peoria River City Team Trios at Potter's Alley in Morton.

And a few doubles teams turned out to be formidable in trios as well in the scratch division of the tournament.

The official name of the winning team in the handicap division was "Dawgs," but the teammates were brothers Blake, Corey, and Shane Lopeman. Shane led the way with a scratch set of 663, Corey added 645 and Blake 562.

With their 396 pins of handicap they totaled 2,266, which was 56 pins higher than runner-up Ten Back (Jim Petty, Alex Surells and Jeff Webster).

Blake and Corey Lopeman then teamed up with Cass Hermacinski in a later squad and put up a 2,161, which was good enough for third place. Hermacinski was high man with a 740-scratch set.

It was the first title for the Lopeman brothers, who also bowled in a trios event at Mt. Hawley Bowl earlier this season.

"We finished just outside the stepladder finals there," Shane said. "But at Potter's, Corey carried us to the win with three very consistent games (206, 203, 236) and with his handicap. I believe he was up over 750 with his series.

"We definitely didn't expect the score to hold up for a win with the number of great bowlers out there. It was awesome to get the win, especially with both of my brothers. They have really worked hard on their game over the past year, and it's great to see it pay off in a tournament for them."

In the scratch division, the team of Pete Burdette, Andre Campos and Don Sweet took the top spot with a 2,122 set – just nine pins better than Timmy Blanch, Kevin Tockes and Kevin Audi.

All three of the bowlers on the winning team had bowled together before. Burdette and Campos have won doubles events and have cashed in the past two Holiday Doubles events,

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while Campos and Sweet placed third in doubles and were on the winning team of the recent Peoria city tournament.

“Andre and I have been bowling pretty well at Potter’s all year, and Donnie and I won a city doubles title at Potters,” Burdette said. “So I knew we had a solid team.”

Sweet led the team with a 758 set, Campos added 693 and Burdette 671.

“I wasn’t sure if it would be enough or not,” Sweet said. “I knew we left too many pins out there. But I know that Andre and I both doubled in the 10th.”

That turned out to be big because Two Kevin’s and Timmy bowled the last squad and had a chance to overtake the leaders.

They also had bowled well together in previous events.

Tockes, probably the hottest bowler in the area for the past two months, recently won a doubles tournament with Blanch, and teamed up with Audi to win the open division in last year’s Frank Vincent Memorial Doubles Tournament in Champaign.

Tockes was high man with 734, Audi added 710 and Blanch 671.

“I thought they had a chance to pass us in the 10th and had been watching them the whole last game,” Campos said. “So I was fairly relieved when I knew they couldn’t get past us, only get close.”

All three bowlers on the runner-up team doubled in the 10th, but still fell nine pins shy of the leaders.

The team of Bob Baker, Tony DeVita and Gary Robinson placed third with 2,096, Robinson closed out the event with a 300 game.

Frank Vincent Doubles

Gene Vincent ran another successful weekend of doubles tournaments at Western Bowl in Champaign, honoring the memory of his father, Frank, and raising money for the fight against Alzheimer’s.

The tournament attracted 144 teams and 200 bowlers competing in a weekend that consist of a ladies double on Friday, an open doubles on Saturday and a mixed doubles on Sunday.

Defending champions Amanda Warwick and Mollie Malone of St. Louis claimed the women’s title, beating out Sheila Kistner and Dani Berrien in the title match. Berrien rolled her first career 300 in the semifinals.

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High area finishers were Paige Anderson and Bobbie Sweet, who qualified for the finals in fourth place. Dawn Guerrero and Amey Huntington finished just out of the money in fifth.

In the open division on Saturday, the strong team of Tim Behrendt and Nick Kruml beat out Joe Alvarado and Chris Brown for the title. Jason Queen and Larry Larsen tied for third along with qualifying leaders Cam Crowe and Jorell Morris.

Former Peoria bowler Tyler Young and Gabe Howell of Decatur placed tied for fifth, while Mike McWethy and Camden Rokita tied for seventh.

High area finishers were Tony DeVita and Brad Moore, who placed 13th, while Steve Taylor teamed with Tyler Tornow to finish 16th.

In Sunday's mixed doubles, Bruce David and Jodi Oliver were the winners, beating Kenny Renfro and Amanda Warwick in the title match.

McWethy and Tammy Walsh, who were both recently inducted into the Illinois state bowling Hall of Fame (along with Jason Queen), placed third.

Andy and Laura Stone qualified third in the event and finished tied for fifth.

The mother-son team of Dawn Guerrero and Don Sweet originally had finished one spot out of the money on 21st place. But because of a disqualification of one of the tournament leaders, Guerrero and Sweet ended up getting last cash.

Apparently, a bowler had failed to disclose that he had been rerated in a previous tournament.

However, this was not discovered until the second round of match play, which was too late for the Stones, who would have gotten a bye in that round and would not have finished lower than tied for third.

It was a tough situation for tournament director Joseph Ward, who had to do damage control with the situation.

Unfortunately, the ninth-place team did not get to bowl (in the bracket finals)," he said. "This left me with third-place money forfeited by the qualifying leaders."

"So, after I got home, I messaged everyone who cashed (plus the first out) and paid them the difference between their paid position and their final position following the DQ."

The Stones also received an extra share because they should not have been bowling in the quarterfinals, and the remaining money after paying everyone else went to ninth-place finishers as extra compensation for not advancing to the bracket finals.

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“This was an unfortunate situation and misunderstanding resulting in the disqualification, and not anything intentional by the bowler,” Ward said.

Other area cashers in the mixed event were Steve Taylor and Hailey Jepson (10th), Sammy Taylor and Amey Huntington (11th), Tommy Barnwell and Danielle Vierck (15th), and Rick Kidd and Emilie Young (18th).

The tournament also marked the final event in the great career of tournament host Gene Vincent, who had many more highs than lows on the lanes. But he said that it was just time.

“Getting old sucks, but Father Time catches up eventually,” he posted on his Facebook page after the tournament weekend. “I’ll remember when I use to dominate with all the titles I won and my friends I met and memories. The young guys and girls are just good. I wish you all could have seen me in my prime, when I knew I was winning when I walked in a center. ’Til next time, friends. I’m DONE.”

But he will make sure the tournaments go on for years to come.



Don Sweet, Pete Burdette, Andre Campos, scratch division trios champions



**Handicap division trios champs,
brothers Blake Lopeman, Corey Lopeman and Shane Lopeman**