

Friday February 18, 2025

## Spare Change

By Johnny Campos

# Andre Campos and Jade Frost finally click on the lanes at the same time to win PRC Mixed Doubles title

After a few frustrating tournaments where their chemistry on the lanes didn't quite match their connection off of them, Andre Campos and Jade Frost finally found their groove at the same time last Saturday afternoon.

Bowling in the Peoria River City Bowling Association Mixed Doubles tournament at Plaza Lanes, the duo had a post-Valentine's Day celebration by posting a 1,554 total to win the event by 56 pins.

Campos opened the second squad of the tournament with 23 straight strikes and had games of 300, 296 and 257 for a tournament-high 853 series.

Frost, also an accomplished bowler, added a 701 series on games of 247, 237 and 217.

Kathleen Hermacinski and Bob Baker made a late run at the leaders and had a chance at the title going into their final game of the last squad on Sunday.

But they fell a little short, finishing with a 1,498 total. Baker led the way with a 770 series and Hermacinski added 728.

Pro Shop Tony Schnack, bowling on the same pair with Campos, opened his 837 series with 26 straight strikes. He rolled back-to-back 300 games for the second time in less than a month and had 26 straight strikes before a 4-pin halted his run.

He teamed with Jennifer Mauerman (638) for third place in the event with 1,475. Schnack (748) and Brandi Johnson (720) finished in fourth place with a 1,468.

Campos and Frost said they were just happy that they bowled well together at the same time.

"We had never bowled good together, really," Frost said. "But we had only bowled together a few times."

And watching her boyfriend start with 23 straight strikes didn't add any extra pressure on her to try and keep up.

"I don't ever get nervous when I bowl with him, really," she said. "It's more support than anything."

Campos was trying to keep up with Schnack.

"It probably made it easier and harder for me at the same time," he said. "Tony was bowling first, so then it put more pressure on me. But it was still fun."

Schnack, who was bowling leadoff among the men, finished his second 300 first.

Campos threw the first two strikes in the 10<sup>th</sup> – his 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> in a row – but then left the 2-4-5-8 "bucket" on his fill ball to end his run.

"On 24<sup>th</sup> shot, I just missed it at the bottom," he said. "I hit my target, but I just didn't have anything on it. I'd like that shot back, that would be nice."

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“But by not striking, it probably took pressure off me going into the last game. I didn’t have a shot at 900 anymore. I probably wouldn’t have thought about it until after 24 strikes.”

It was the second longest strike string and the second career high series for Campos. He strung 25 strikes during the 2023-24 season at Potter’s and opened a Friday Sweeper at Landmark Lanes with an 855 series to start this season.

Both Schnack and Campos work in the BowlersMart Pro Shop inside Landmark Lanes and are members of the Radical staff, so the tournament was a nice endorsement for the business.

Frost, who entered the tournament with a solid 216 average, said she was not even aware that she was close to shooting a 700 series. She struck out in the 10<sup>th</sup> frame of her last game to get there.

“I didn’t even know what my series was,” she said. “I was paying no attention at all. I didn’t even know I was close to 700. I was just trying to stay clean, get a couple of strikes and help him out. I’m just happy we bowled well together at the same time, finally.”

In the Central Illinois Tournament last month, while Campos struggled with carrying the corner pins, Frost rolled a 300 game in team event and then had another trey in singles the following day.

She also received the National Team Recognition Award last month for being on the team that led the nation for a three-woman team series. They shot a 2,120, getting a 742 from Hailey Jepson, 689 from Frost and a 689 from Nicole Polhemus.

The 1,554 by Campos and Frost currently is second in the nation for mixed duos, two pins behind the 1,556 rolled by Amanda Warwick and Kenny Renfro on Sunday at the Central Illinois Tournament in Springfield.

But the 547 put up by Campos and Frost in Game 1 of their series will probably be high mixed game in the nation when scores are posted.

Hermacinski and Baker had a legitimate shot at taking over the lead on the final squad. They opened with a 492 and added a 511 in Game 2.

Hermacinski split in the first and got a spare in the second frame. She then put together four straight strikes, while Baker opened Game 3 with the front nine.

But when Hermacinski left back-to-back 4-pins in the seventh and eighth frames, the lead was out of reach.

“We didn’t talk about it, but I did the math,” Baker said about going into the third game. “When she left that first 4-pin, I knew we both had to go sheet. And we would have won by four pins. But then when she left that second 4-pin, I knew we were done.

“I was afraid to have her move a little bit, because her ball wasn’t really hooking in the back end. I wanted her to speed it up a little bit.”

Hermacinski thought that the first 4-pin that she left was pilot error.

“The first 4-pin, I felt like I tugged it, so I didn’t move,” she said. “After the second 4-pin, Bob and I agreed on a small adjustment left. I was in the pocket all day, so we didn’t want to make a big change like move to the Phaze AI, which I would have done if we had another game to go.”

Campos and Frost were among the interested spectators in the last squad, seeing if their lead would hold up.

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"I was watching (Baker and Hermacinski), because I knew they were capable of doing it," Campos said.

"I was watching it a little bit, but it's always support for everybody," added Frost. "I wanted to win, but if they're going to shoot good, they're going to shoot good."

Baker left a solid 10-pin his first ball in the 10<sup>th</sup> and finished with a 279.

"I didn't finish my 10<sup>th</sup> frame at all," he said. "I had 259, 279 and 300 left (if he had struck out in all three games), and I didn't finish the 10<sup>th</sup> frame. If I had finished the 10<sup>th</sup> frame, we'd have been there."

Last year, the duo finished in sixth place with a 1,462 total, and they have bowled well together in a few other tournaments.

"He reads the ball motion and I bring the energy!" said Hermacinski, who rolled her first career 800 set, an 802, in November. "We communicate very well together and we break down the lanes in a similar enough way to keep the oil in our favor."

Schnack said he had no idea he was going to shoot so well at Plaza.

"I shot 614 at Landmark on Friday night, and I really haven't done anything at Plaza this year," he said. "It's been really inconsistent. But for some reason I was able to pick up my mark. All my timing just clicked, and I just let my body take over and just roll the ball.

"I told Andre after he left the bucket that I wanted him to keep striking because he pushed me."

It was the second time Schnack has bowled back-to-back 300 games in the past month. He did it during the PRC Open Championships at Potter's Alley in January.

Last year in this event, held at Potter's, Schnack had 21 straight strikes and rolled a career-high 852 series. He and Mauerman finished second with 1,550. Last year's winners Tommy Barnwell and Hailey Jepson led the nation with their 1,562 total and received their National Team Recognition plaques for their achievement.

Jepson rolled a 300 game during her set with Barnwell this year and was among several other bowlers who posted honor scores.

There were 300 games by Steve Taylor and Irvin Johnson, while Josh Barnwell had a 299.

In the handicap division, Fred Flores and Kibby Flores were the winners with a 1,509 total, just eight pins ahead of Jake Yerly and Renae Yerly.

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PRC Mixed Doubles winners Jade Frost and Andre Campos

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PRC Mixed Doubles second-place finishers Kathleen Hermacinski and Bob Baker