

Observerland prep bowlers win state title again

TEN-PIN ALLEY



AL HARRISON

The boys and girls singles competition took place on Friday followed by the team events on Saturday. The team event uses two different formats, with the regular scoring system during qualifying rounds and the Baker System used for the step-ladder finals.

In the Baker competition, the bowlers each roll two frames, as the lead-off would bowl the first and sixth frames, the next bowlers has the second and seventh frames, etc. . . sort of like the batting order in baseball. With the Baker format, all emphasis is on team play rather than the individual. Each region

in the state sent their four top winners from the various regions in each of the boys and girls divisions.

The Observerland high school teams are in the Southeastern Conference, which had its tournament two weeks ago and sent the Plymouth Salem boys and Livonia Churchill girls to Muskegon.

Both schools can look with great pride on the performance of their teams.

The defending state champion Salem team, coached by Cliff Richards led from the very beginning and was not to be denied as it dominated each would-be usurper of the title. Much credit goes to coach Richards as he had only one holdover from a year ago. The Churchill girls team was the real story, however. They could be called a Cinderella team and a definite longshot.

With the fine coaching of Angela Sopher, along with Debbie Blanchard, the Chargers put together a team of two sophomores, two juniors and one freshman to compete against

mainly seniors and juniors from the other cities.

The Churchill girls gave it their all and appeared to be winning the second in the step-ladder finals until Escanaba woke up from the moonlight and rallied for the win.

As it turned out, the Churchill team showed a lot of class and finished proudly in the final four out of a starting field of 66 teams.

The Churchill team was comprised of Stephanie Folk, Danielle Kaluzny, Kimmy Cichon, Aleigh Cichon and Jenny Long.

Sterling Heights Stevenson captured the girls team event, but Churchill stole the show.

"In singles, Adrianna Buford (Flint Central) and Tim Huizenga (Wyoming-Kelloggsville) took home the state-championship hardware as well as \$1,000 each in scholarships at the finals on Friday.

The boys division team championship trophy and scholarship money was awarded to Salem for the second straight year. One of the unsung heroes was

Leon Walsh, who rolled a fine 270 game, leaving only the four-pin in the fifth frame after he struggled with the wrong ball in the first game.

"I realized the ball was wrong for the conditions, so I sat out the second game and came back with the right equipment in the third game," Walsh said.

When the finals shifted to Baker play, Walsh said: "The team needed strikes from me and I delivered."

The whole team delivered from wire-to-wire behind the fine bowling of Jeff Thomas, Eric Pawlus, Justin Bonkowski, Phil Whitman, Leon Walsh, Matt Bowden and Matt Lipford.

One of the more unusual features of the tournament was the great enthusiasm generated throughout. The atmosphere was electric with the cheering of friends parents and spectators in the grand-

stand seating. Northway Lanes was bursting at the seams with a full house.

The strikes and spares were punctuated by jumping high fives, and lots of spirit displayed by all of the entrants.

Last year at Waterford, the story was "We build Excitement" and the same was true again this year on the shores of Lake Michigan.

"The prep bowling movement was originated by Harry Burkey about 15 years ago, but was limited by lack of an organization. Five years ago, Ronald Tomassini of Iron Mountain started a new movement in the Upper Peninsula by going directly to the Michigan High School Athletic Association, learning its ways and conforming to their rules."

He sold the Bowling Centers of Michigan (BCAM) and BCAM executive Director, Scott Bennett

applied his energy to the concept, got the bowling proprietors support enlisted the help of Harry Burkey and a new concept was born.

The goal is to make high school bowling a varsity sport in all schools and to embellish the school spirit of fair play and competition to a whole new level with the sport of bowling. It has been gaining in numbers every year.

"With the rapid growth and success of this program," Burkey said, "I expect to bring the concept to the middle schools next."

"Perhaps all of this hard work, mostly on the part of volunteers will be rewarded with a greater number of future competitors entering the game and giving these athletes an opportunity to excel at and enjoy this great game."

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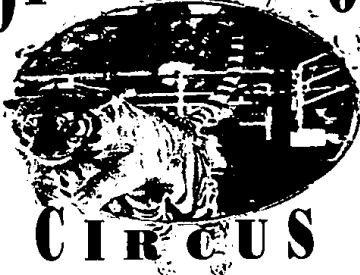
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