

Lowering of eligibility requirements by USBC slows awards processing at NCAUSBCA office

From the current USBC Playing Rules book under "Rule 51a – Single Game Awards":

2. Adult Awards.

A member is eligible for one award in each of the following categories during a fiscal year (August 1 - July 31):

- | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| a. 300* | | |
| b. 275 to 299 all averages are eligible | (last season: 200 average or below) | +52 pins difference** |
| c. 250 to 274 with a 225 average or below | (180 average or below) | +45 |
| d. 225 to 249 with a 200 average or below | (160 average or below) | +40 |
| e. 200 to 224 with a 175 average or below | (145 average or below) | +30 |
| f. 175 to 199 with a 150 average or below | (130 average or below) | +20 |
| g. 150 to 174 with a 125 average or below | (110 average or below) | +15 |
| h. 125 to 149 with a 100 average or below | (90 average or below) | +10 |
| i. Eleven (11) strikes in a row when the score is 299 or less* | | |

* Cannot be earned while pre or post bowling unopposed.

** Based on highest individual Standard league individual average of 252 in 2009-2010 season.

The delivery of United States Bowling Congress (USBC) awards to league secretaries by the NCAUSBCA office staff has taken longer than usual this season, and there are several reasons for the delays. Among them:

➤ Page 26 of the current *USBC Playing Rules* book shows that information under "Rule 51A – Single Game Awards" has changed from last season. The information above shows the text that currently appears under "Adult Awards" under that rule—and how it compares to the requirements last season. Some of changes indeed are radical, such as the requirement for the "250 Game" award, whereby a bowler can have an average as high as 225 to be eligible versus last season when a bowler with an average no higher than 180 was eligible—a difference of 45 pins!

➤ This season, all members are eligible for the "275 Game" award. Last season, only bowlers with an average no higher than 200 were eligible. It can be a safe assumption that the majority of these particular scores are recorded by bowlers with averages over 200.

➤ USBC award changes don't only apply to games (see Rule 51b), and thus some of our highest average bowlers *don't even have to bowl their average* to be eligible for an award. For example, anyone with an average of 234 or higher—and NCAUSBCA has a few of these bowlers—can roll a *below-average* series of 700 or higher yet still earn a "700 Series" award.

It is estimated that submitted applications for USBC awards to the association office have quadrupled this season, and these requests are being processed by the same size office staff as last season, as always, on a first-in/first-out basis. There also are other reasons for the delays:

➤ There was a three-week problem with the USBC-issued WinLABS software used at the association office to process membership-related issues, including league and award applications. Thus, no leagues or awards could be processed during that period.

➤ Some secretaries applied for awards before submitting the completed certification and membership card applications for their league. Awards cannot be processed for a league until that league is certified.

➤ Of course, as noted last issue, USBC apologized in a letter to NCAUSBCA for the delay in USBC members receiving their 2010-2011 membership card due to the failure of a fulfillment vendor used by USBC to process and mail the cards to members. In addition, during vendor fulfillment of some applications, the welcome letter and membership card were mismatched.

Needless to say, these actions have helped bring about an awards processing bottleneck at the association office. It is hoped that this article will help league secretaries and their bowlers understand why the awards processing is taking additional time this season. The office staff greatly appreciates your patience.

Incidentally, there are two recent actions announced by USBC that the NCAUSBCA office staff noted with interest:

➤ In its December 7, 2010 *Association Operations eNews* report, USBC wrote, "It is important to remember that all local associations have a time line to process memberships and awards after receipt from their league secretaries. The *USBC Association Policy Manual* states that it is the responsibility of the local Association Manager to process membership and remit USBC national and state dues to USBC Headquarters within 20 days of receipt as well as ensuring member's awards are fulfilled within seven days. USBC is currently reviewing *delinquent* [italics ours] associations and will be making contact with them at the beginning of the year to determine the next course of action."

➤ USBC will no longer mail end-of-season award kits to league officers. Instead, USBC will directly send them to the local associations, which then must incur all mailing-related costs to the league officers.