

## 20 QUESTIONS

# Erv Raines III

*On February 9 in the Monday Night Classic league at Bowl America Bull Run, Erv Raines III of Manassas established NCAUSBCA and Virginia State records with his 887 series on games of 297-290-300, rolling 34 strikes in 36 attempts. Raines, 40, the father of a four-year-old girl and boys ages 17 and 14, first got involved with bowling at age five in Hawaii when his father “dragged” him to the local center and made him join a league. He works in the Test and Evaluation Management Center with the Defense Information Systems Agency and recently discussed his record-breaking performance and other topics with editor Bob Cosgrove.*

**Had there been any recent indications that you would bowl such a series?**

Bowlers such as Ronnie Angles and [NCAUSBCA Hall of Famer] Mark Glover each had mentioned that my game has really improved. I had thrown six 800 series, a few 299s, a bunch of 750s and above. I was averaging 230 at Mathis [Bowl America Manassas], 226 at Bull Run, 228 at another league at Mathis, and 224 up at Falls Church.

**How have your fellow bowlers reacted?**

They’ve all been very encouraging; they come up and congratulate me for a great set. I walk into the center, and it’s like I’m the center of attention now, and I don’t know most of the people. It’s kind of odd just having people I’ve never met before come up to me and congratulate me as if they know who I am.

**How were you able to handle your emotions that evening?**

I was really calm up until the last ball of the last game, and then I got really excited and ran about five or six lanes to the right and then come running back to where my pair was. A friend of mine, Chris England, came down on the lanes with me and was running at me, and we did a chest bump in front of everybody!

I was excited at that time for breaking

the house record, which I know was 872. I had no idea what the state record was.

**What were your thoughts after starting with two big games?**

I was amazed that I was at 587 after two. I just was like, *I can’t believe this; I’ve never seen a series this high after two games.* And then I never thought about it again; I just

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kept concentrating on throwing a good game. I wanted a 300; I’d missed it twice that night. In the first game, I thought I was going to have it. I left the 3-6-10 on the fill ball in the first game, and then the 2-pin on the first ball in the second game. They were both *bad* shots!

**How does this performance change your perception of yourself as a bowler?**

It’s actually given me a lot of confidence. I now go in knowing that I can adapt to any lane condition that’s out there. It may take me a few frames, but my confidence level has really increased.

**Does this affect your future bowling plans?**

Oh, yeah. I’m going to stop bowling as many leagues as I have been and start focusing more on some of the scratch tournaments and regional tournaments. I will go online in the next week to look at the schedule and prepay for as many tournaments on the east coast, south, and northern sectors, as [friend Tim Davidson and I] can.

I’m also hoping of becoming a Storm Team member. I talked to them a few weeks ago, and they told me to submit a résumé, a video clip, and the news article

[by freelance bowling writer and NCAUSBCA member Gil Sanchez] that was printed in the Prince William County [News & Messenger] paper. They’d consider putting me on the team this year. They couldn’t guarantee me, but they’d look at it.

**What was your biggest bowling accomplishment before the 887?**

I would say bowling my first 800—my 811. More recently, it would be placing second in a King of the Hill [tournament] because I started with a 145 game and was at the bottom of the pack, and then I came back with 268, 230-something, 240, 220, and I ended up getting into the stepladder.

**What constitutes a satisfying night of bowling for you?**

For me, anything above a 225 average for the night—I’m happy with that.

**Is there anything beyond just that?**

If I’m throwing the ball well and I’m just not carrying, I’m happy. As long as I don’t make the mistakes in my approach to the line, I think that would constitute a good night for me—that my approach to the line was flawless. I’d worked so long and so hard on making it second nature that my pre-shot—my pushaway, my walking to the line, my release, my hand position—all that [would be] perfect every single time.

I’ve been doing that for the last 10 years, working on it. And over the last three years, I’ve been doing it more so than ever before. I was averaging about three or four nights a week just going down to either Bowl America Manassas or Bowl America Shirley, and practicing from 9 o’clock until they shut down. I took advantage of a \$10.99 special they had!

**Do you believe you’ll feel additional pressure in future events as a result of being the current record-holder?**

To be honest with you, I don’t even think about it. I go in to a center and somebody will come up to me and tell me, “Great set!” and it takes me a couple of seconds to realize, *Oh yeah, that’s right—you’re talking about my 887.* Okay. “Thank you.”

Tim Davidson and I went to a tournament at Glen Burnie, and when I walked in, someone stood up and said, "Now we've got both state record-holders in the same tournament." And I'm thinking, *Oh, that's right. I'm the Virginia State record-holder. Wow!* To this day, I'm still amazed how people recognize it and remember it. I think it's flattering. I never thought in a million years that's what people would recognize me as.

**What would you say is the strongest part of your game?**

I would have to say my single-pin spare shooting. I'm pretty consistent at it, and when I miss one, it shocks a lot of people, and it shocks *me*. As soon as I do, I know it's four hours of practice that I've gotta go do. And then I go and shoot 10-pins for four hours. If it's a 7-pin, I shoot 7-pins.

**What part of your game do you work on most these days?**

Probably my timing and my approach to the foul line if I had to categorize it because when I go to practice, I don't keep score. I'll get up there, and I'll start with just my approach to the line, not caring where my ball goes. And then as the night goes on, about an hour or so into it, I'll stop doing that, and I'll stand up at the foul line and just throw the ball, working on my release, not worrying about my footwork anymore; I'm just worried about how my hand release is.

So if I had to put things into a category and number them, my approach to the line would be first, then my hand release would be second, and then my timing would be third.

**How do you classify your game in terms of the amount of hook?**

I'm more of a very small hook, probably straight, down-and-in [player]. About 12 years ago, I used to be a big cranker, and I busted up my wrist and my left leg—my left hip. [NCAUSBCA Hall of Famer] Berlin Myers took me under her wing and kind of straightened everything out. I was going more small hook to down-and-in.

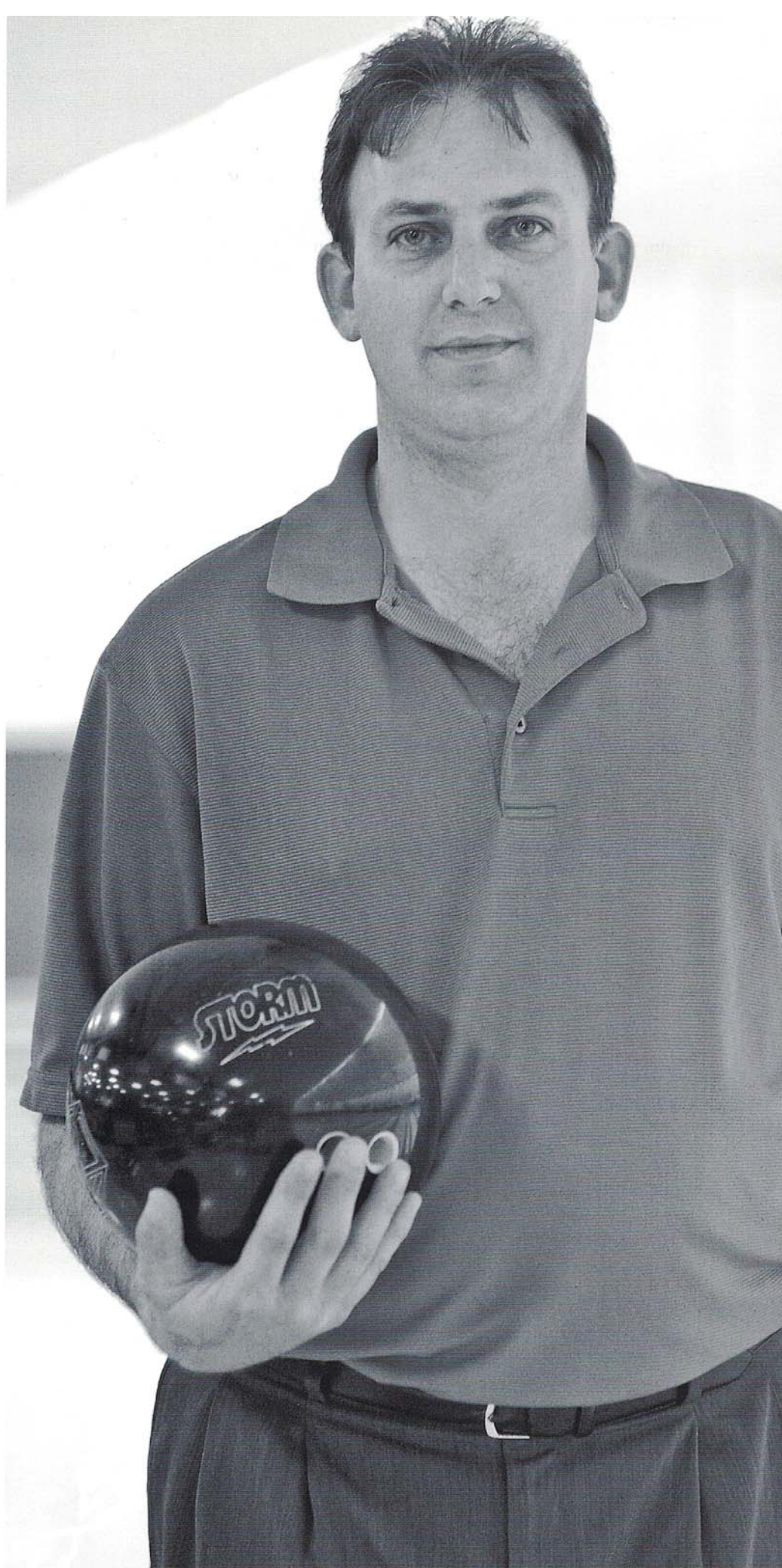
**What area players do you admire the most?**

Keni Lowe, Bobby Hall II, Bryant Mehio, [NCAUSBCA Hall of Famer] Larry Wallace, and Chhoeun To.

**How would you rate yourself among your fellow bowlers?**

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## **RAINES, from page 11**

I'm probably just the middle of the field. It's odd that you ask that because in the last, I guess, 12 or 15 tournaments I've been in, I've qualified or cashed in two of them, and I'm always right on the bubble—if they're cutting to 12, I'm 13<sup>th</sup>. If they cut to 10, I'm 11<sup>th</sup>. So I'm right there, but I'm a spare or two away from making the cut. The Red Eye was the last successful tournament I had; I placed sixth. And I placed second at one of the King of the Hill [events].

### **Are there pros you admire more than others?**

I've always been watching Walter Ray Williams Jr., Norm Duke. I used to admire Amleto Monacelli, and I used to try to mimic him, but there was no way I could get my backswing that high, but I'd try. My all-time favorite bowlers would be Walter Ray Williams Jr. and Earl Anthony. When I was a little kid, I used to watch Earl Anthony all the time.

### **How important is bowling in your life?**

It's very important. I would love to eat, breathe, sleep bowling.

### **Do you drill up a lot of bowling balls?**

I know absolutely nothing about equipment. I don't know any drill patterns. I look to see if there's a ball that's come out that I might like, and I either take it to [NCA-USBCA Hall of Famer] Jim Lewis or I take it to Tim Davidson or take the information with me and say, "This is the ball that I'm thinking about getting. What do you think?" And then they'll say, "Yeah, that's a good ball for you. Bring it on in, and we'll drill it up for you this way." And then they drill it up. Tim Davidson drilled my Second Dimension [used during the 887 series].

### **What do you do on days you don't bowl?**

I sit at home and watch sports and hang out with the family. I like to watch movies or take my daughter and my girlfriend's daughter up to the playground. I golf occasionally, but I haven't done that in seven or eight months.

### **What is your most immediate bowling goal?**

My goal is to be a PBA member, and I want to have exempt status. If I don't make the PBA Tour, at least make myself ready for Senior Tour, but my immediate goal is by this time next year to be exempt.