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## Suer makes his mark in Masters

By Bob Cosgrove

A local teenager who has tried since last fall to make his mark in the area's most prestigious scratch event recently made his presence known—twice.

First, Kevin Suer of Alexandria not only made the finals at the Nation's Capital/Baltimore Area Masters Scratch Tournament last month at Bowl America Falls Church, he substantially advanced his qualifying position during match play to finish seventh and take home \$225.

Two weeks later in the Masters at Crofton Bowling Centre, Suer again qualified for the finals and fired a 269 in his final position-round match to jump from seventh place to second and pocket \$700.

"I was excited that I finally made it," said Suer, a science major at T.C. Williams High School who this fall will attend the University of Virginia.

In fact, he almost didn't make it at Falls Church. A 234 in his fifth and final qualifying game—which included an open in the tenth frame—was enough for Suer to eke into the 12-person match-play finals by three pins. The 17-year-old right-hander then proceeded to win four of five match games—an accomplishment topped only by tournament champion Lee Brosius of Fort Meade. For 10 games, Suer averaged 200.7.



**Kevin Suer (left) receives an ABC ring for his 300 game at Manassas from NCABA Vice President Gray Ransom.**

At Crofton, he went 3-2 in match play and averaged 219.5.

Suer was pleased with his match-play records, but he wasn't surprised. As a junior bowler, he said he normally did better in head-to-head competition compared to qualifying while a participant in the Mid-Atlantic Scratch Bowlers Association (MASBA).

Suer first went bowling at age 11 with his family. He thought the game was fun, and joined a league a few years later. He finished seventh in the 1994 Vir-Mar District Invitational Scratch Singles Tournament, and last spring he shot a 299 game en route to victory in the MASBA 9th annual Sports Classic.

After learning last summer that several of his tournament competitors were headed for adult competition, Suer also took the plunge.

"My parents encouraged me," Suer said, pointing to the lack of youth competition and the challenge of participating alongside better

bowlers. "It would help me learn more, too."

Prior to his first adult league session last August, Suer admittedly was nervous: He was closing the book on an important part of his youth.

"After I threw that first shot, I knew I couldn't turn back [to junior competition]," Suer said. "Initially, it was such a big change and I wasn't sure if I wanted to do it, but now I'm glad I did it."

Suer's Thursday league's 9:10 p.m. start at Alexandria Bowling Center "hasn't been too negative" on his school work or his bowling—he's currently averaging 200. However, there have been nights when he's had to do homework between frames, and he's thankful that his strenuous junior academic year is over and that UVA accepted him last November. His teammates, which include his father, mother, and sister, also have helped make the transition easier.

Suer's next transition takes place in late summer when he leaves home to begin classes in Charlottesville, Va. He currently is undecided about his major, but pre-med is a possibility and so is becoming an orthopedic surgeon. He was intrigued by that occupation after he tore ligaments in his knee a few years ago and had a lengthy recovery. Suer still wears a knee brace when he bowls, but only as a preventative measure.

There isn't a Cavalier bowling team (the sport is only an intramural activity at UVA), and the school has no bowling lanes. Suer is unsure about how much time he'll have to bowl, but he plans to practice off-campus and when he visits his family.

In the meantime, Suer, who rolled a perfect game at Bowl America Manassas in November, will attempt to improve on his recent Masters performances. He also plans to participate in some Professional Bowlers Association regional events this summer, including an event that could earn him a spot in a national PBA tournament.