

*PBA throws a wrench
into Bowling Inc.'s
marketing plans*

*Should bowling forget
about the Olympics?*

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Lisa Rand

Fulfilling a Dream

Last month, WDCAWBA Hall of Famer Lisa Rand made three consecutive match-play finals on the Ladies Pro Bowlers Tour (Clayton, Del., Baltimore, and Canton, Mich.), only one year after she believed a knee injury would prevent her from ever again competing on the lanes as a right-hander. The Fairfax resident stopped by the BOWL Magazine Tournament at Seminary and discussed her injury, her comeback, life on tour, and other topics with BOWL Magazine Editor Bob Cosgrove.

How were you first made aware of your injury?

It started last year at the LPBT event in Baltimore. After the first two rounds, I was about 25 pins out of the Top 24, and then, all of a sudden, something happened in my knee, and it hurt really bad. I iced it up really good in my hotel that evening, but the next morning, I couldn't put any weight on it. I couldn't stay down at the line the next six games. I couldn't do anything, just walking through the shots and then going home.

I went to the doctor, and x-rays were taken. They couldn't find any problem, so he figured it was just severe tendonitis. He put me on anti-inflammatories, and I started physical therapy for two weeks and it wasn't getting any better. I went through another two-week session, and it wasn't getting any better. I went back to the doctor I don't know how many times, and he didn't know what to do. He changed my medications, but it was just getting worse. He said he could do surgery on it, but he didn't see anything from the x-rays, except that it possibly was my arthritis along with severe tendonitis. We already knew I had arthritis in my knees, so he just figured that the tendonitis was so bad that I just needed to lay off and take it easy. He didn't know if my knee would be getting better or worse or what was going to happen.

That's when I decided to bowl left-handed because I'm a naturally left-handed person. I'm quite ambidextrous.

I soon had to stop that because my right knee started hurting. I have the same condition in that knee for which I had corrective surgery on my left knee five years ago, but I needed to have that done on my right knee if I wanted to continue bowling left-handed.

So about that time, I was going back and

forth to the doctors, getting my right knee checked, and he said, "Let's take a look at your left knee again. We could go in and take a look at it or do an MRI."

I said to do the MRI first.

That's when the MRI showed I had a stress fracture right below the knee cap on the inside of my leg. It was about three inches in length.

I should have been on crutches the whole time instead of going to physical therapy and



working out with weights, riding bikes, walking on treadmills, and doing all those things. I should have been in a cast. All it was, was getting progressively worse.

So I did nothing: I avoided stairs, and I really babied my knee. About two and one-half months later, I tried to bowl again, and it didn't hurt at all. So I just started bowling, and it was fine.

When you were bowling left-handed, did you think you might have to bowl that way full-time?

Yes. I really had my mind set that I wasn't going to be able to bowl right-handed again because we just didn't know what it was. I had complete faith in my doctor; he did my surgery five years ago, and he's a great doctor.

Did you think that you could be as competitive as a lefty?

Yes. There was no doubt in my mind.

Was LPBT still a possibility at the time?

I wasn't sure what I was going to do with my

bowling at the time because I was very hesitant about my knees, thinking that my joints weren't very strong. So I started working out really good. I knew what I wanted to do with my bowling. I had already given up my job and done a lot of other things working towards that goal. So if it was ever going to do it, I needed to do it now. I just turned 30 this year.

I started getting more involved in bowling. I went to a USA Bowling coaching seminar given by Fred Borden, so now I'm a bronze-level certified coach. At the seminar, there was a TEAM USA qualifier. They didn't have enough women to bowl to hold the qualifier, so they talked me into bowling, and I ended up winning that.

I started getting back into tournaments gradually, and then my game started getting better and better, and that's when I decided to bowl two LPBT events this summer. The first week, I missed making the Top 20 in South Carolina by eight pins. I made the cut the following week in Franklin [Virginia]. Things just got better from there.

How many events have you bowled in this current swing?

Prior to Delaware, I bowled in Toledo, the U.S. Open in Indianapolis, then Pittsburgh. It was a very difficult three weeks. I spoke with the one of the ball reps from Ebonite. He went over my equipment with me because I told him that I thought I was bowling well, but I wasn't scoring well. He said my equipment was very good if I was going to be bowling on house conditions and in just regional events, but that it was not at all what I needed to be competing out on the ladies' tour because of the different lane conditions that they compete on. So he went over that and taught me a few things about different layouts and different equipment.

Last week, I worked with Aleta Sill. She helped me and recommended a ball with some new drill patterns, and I made the Top 32. It has everything to do with the equipment.

What is it like making the match-play finals?

It's very exciting. You have more of a feeling of accomplishment because it's totally different than bowling in any of the regional or local events. It's on a national level against all the top players that you see on TV from week to week.

Have you reached a point where you feel that you belong out on the tour?

No. I think once I learn more ... I can compete now, as long as I have someone helping me with my equipment. Until I get to the

level where I know my own equipment, where I know exactly what ball to throw on that condition, and how to have that ball drilled and what certain weights and everything to have in that ball to make that ball carry—strikes—until I get to that level, I'm not at their level.

Do you have any close tour friends yet?

I really don't know anyone out there. I'm starting to meet people, but they're not very open and willing to just make new friendships. They're out there bowling and trying to make a living. They already have their set groups of friends out there, so it's very difficult to try to become friends with them.

I'm going out to bowl; I'm not just going out to make friends with all of these girls. But it would be nice to have someone to go to lunch with once in a while!

Do you think you'll be more "accepted" as you continue to make match-play finals?

Yes. That's the way it seems to be going. Before, when I bowled a couple of tournaments last year and I didn't do very well, nobody ever spoke to me. Since I've made two finals out of six events, I guess you slowly graduate and gain a little respect from some of the players so they say more than just "hello" to me.

Quite a few of the girls showed some concern and sympathy for me when I was feeling pretty badly this past week. They were all giving me health tips and telling me what works really well. Michelle Mullen suggested I take Alka-Seltzer Plus. Robin Romeo told me I needed to find a doctor at home whom I could call when I get really sick so I could get a prescription phoned in to whatever town I was at.

What's been your most exciting moment on tour thus far?

Just bowling in match play and having my picture taken for the ESPN telecast. To know that my picture was going to be on with all of the other girls when they showed the Top 32 that week. That was pretty good.

Do you have that "killer instinct" that many champions are said to have?

I'm very competitive; I always have been. It started out a long time ago just competing against my brother for every little thing. I always want to win, and I never give up. That's just the way I am with everything. I don't care whether I'm playing cards or bowling or it just doesn't matter. I like to win.

It's not really against them; it just me pushing myself and doing the best that I can.

What are the differences between house and LPBT lane conditions?

On tour, there's a much heavier amount of oil. I'm using much more ball surface than I've ever used in my life bowling on a house condition. ... Having extreme wet/dry conditions where there is very heavy oil through the heads and the pines of the lanes and then the back-ends are just absolutely dry and flying. There aren't any blended shots out on tour like there are in the leagues, where you always have some dry boards to the right, and you can always swing it out and have the ball come back. There's not anything like that there. I find



myself playing very straight and sometimes even pointing the ball up out on tour, and I never have to do that on a house condition. A lot of times on tour, you have a little strip—there are dry strips on the lanes where you have to play up that two-board area. There's never a strip condition in a house shot.

Other than knowledge of equipment, which you earlier acknowledged, what is the difference between yourself and the ladies you frequently see on television?

Experience. They have a lot more experience ... to the atmosphere, to bowling that many games every week. I've been bowling that many games in practice, but it's just not the same as having been out there, year after year, being used to traveling and staying in hotels all the time. I'm still not used to sleeping in hotels, and it's very hard for me to get a good night's rest the first couple of nights that I'm out there, staying in a different place.

A lot of the girls adjust quicker: They know their equipment better; they change balls faster. I've been told that these are all things I'll learn

after being out there and that you can't gain this experience anywhere but being out there. It's not something you can learn at home. So hopefully, I'll learn this out there.

Have you been affected by spectators?

Yes. I get nervous. A lot of times, I don't even look up when I'm walking back off the lanes. I've had a couple of spectators ask me, "Why don't you smile?" and "Why don't you look up?" A lot of the times, it's because I'm nervous, and I'm kind of a shy person and it makes me more uncomfortable. So if I just try to stay focused on what I'm doing and keep my thoughts straight, I just look down a lot. That's my way of concentrating.

I'm more interested in bowling well and concentrating on what I'm doing staying focused than I am on looking around to see who's watching.

Is there anything that you'd change about LPBT?

I know a lot of the girls aren't very happy with the format right now. It's a lot of games to be bowling if you go all the way through the qualifying rounds. A lot of them feel it's hurting the qualifying players because they have to bowl that many more games than the exempt players. And a lot of the exempt players don't like it because they feel they don't get as much experience on that condition as the qualifying players.

They're gathering suggestions right now, and they're going to be having a meeting in Rockford, Ill., to decide what changes in the format might be necessary for next year.

Who's impressed you the most?

Probably the person who's helped me the most, Aleta Sill. She has a great deal of experience and knowledge about her equipment, and she can make recommendations.

Did you approach her for help?

Yes, I had to approach her. She is the person who works for Ebonite out there. There aren't many ball reps out there right now, so you have to get some of the players who are on staff and talk to them about equipment if you'd like to get a ball or something.

Have you spoken to other players?

Kim Adler is with Brunswick, and I've also spoken to Cindy Coburn [-Carroll]. It's very hard to get a Brunswick ball out there if you're not a regular touring player who's making the

bowling anymore, but instead it's a clean sport for the family and everyone."

Meanwhile, Holman jumped out of the broadcast booth Oct. 15 at Thunderbowl in Allen Park, Mich., and struck like lightning, beating Wayne Webb in the championship match, 246-235, to win \$22,000 and his 22nd title in his 22nd year on tour in the Ebonite Classic. After winning, Holman shouted, "Oh, baby, I'm back. I'm back, and I can't stand it. All right!"

Holman later stated, "I may be 42, but I still have emotions of a 20-year-old out there. It's great to know I can still relax and get a good ball reaction to win on the tour. My job as a broadcast commentator is now my primary focus rather than bowling as a regular on the tour. I appreciate the thoughts from Earl Anthony on getting his old job, and I'm glad to be here as the PBA's new analyst. As far as losing my moustache goes, it wasn't because of my new TV job at all. I felt like after having it for 23 years, I just needed a change."

Richard Kolb writes news, sports, and feature stories for Beacon Newspaper Publications in Tampa, Fla., and is a local sports talk radio host. He is the former editor of Sports Tampa Bay Magazine and is a nationally syndicated bowling columnist.

RAND, from page 9

finals regularly. It's a lot easier from some of the other ball companies.

Most of the girls are much better players than what you just see on TV. It doesn't show you their whole game and how versatile they are. They're much more impressive when you see them week after week playing on different shots.

What's it like now bowling on a house condition?

Last week, I struggled in Pittsburgh, and I came home early and was able to bowl in my league at Falls Church. First, I was thinking that my game was pretty messed up because I'm not scoring very well on tour, and then I came home and picked up my regular ball that normally works well at Falls Church and I shot 679 for my three games. It was so easy, whereas a lot of times I've struggled at Falls Church.

But now I know my game has really moved up, and it's gotten much better. It's just a matter of having the right ball in your hands to meet the condition, and that's what I had. It was much easier to come home and bowl at Falls

Church than it is to go out on tour and bowl on those conditions. The house conditions are much easier.

How have people reacted to you since your election to the WDCAWBA Hall of Fame?

Not much different. I had some negativity towards that. A lot of people felt that I'm too young to have been inducted. However, some people were very nice and congratulated me.

Can you envision yourself a full-time touring player?

I'm hoping to do this for a while—that would be like a dream come true. I've spent the last 12 years of my life working at jobs in offices where I've worked in the accounting field and worked on defense contracts, doing the marketing, but this is something that I really enjoy.

If there's any way that I can make a living doing something that I enjoy this much, that's the way I'd like to spend possibly the next 15 years of my life, and with the help of a sponsor, I've finally been given the opportunity to do that.

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