



BERNARD TAYLOR
*Senior Tournament
champion tackles
the "Mini-Bio"*

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**ANNUAL MEETING SET
FOR FEBRUARY 26
AT BOWL AMERICA
GAITHERSBURG**

**SCRATCH TOURNAMENT
PARTICIPATION
SURVEY**

**BOB KORTH
DEALING WITH DRY LANES,
SLUMPS, AND "OVER/UNDER"
REACTIONS**



TOMMY McLANE

Second "Top 10" finish is a winner!

Tommy McLane, a 35-year-old left-hander from Lusby, Md., earned the top spot in the association men's ranking for the 2010-2011 season with a 231.8388 composite average. In 2007-2008, he placed third.

He scored a scorching 833 series in NCAUSBCA's 2011 Open Championship Tournament to win the scratch singles title and finish second in handicap singles. Having rolled three 800s and an equal number of perfect games thus far this season, he certainly is a threat to revisit the "Top 10."

McLane, a parts specialist at Rosenthal Jaguar at Tysons Corner, recently responded to questions posed by editor Bob Cosgrove.

How did you get started with bowling?

I grew up in a bowling alley. My parents actually met at Rinaldi's Riverdale Bowl. I grew up in Marlow Heights, in Clinton, but I've been bowling my whole life. My mom started teaching me when I was probably three or four because she was a coach back then.

I always tend to bring out the best in whoever I bowl against, and it just makes me better. I don't like to lose!

When did you realize that bowling could be something at which you could excel?

Probably my late teens. My dad asked me to join a doubles league with him at Lord Calvert. He bought me my first ball when I was 18 that I can actually remember—a 3-D Offset Hammer that I still have. I believe I shot 290 with it that night! So it's been ever since then.

What leagues do you bowl regularly in this season?

Tuesday Men's at Lord Calvert, Saturday Sociables at AMF Waldorf, and I've been subbing in the Monday Night Mixers for a while at Waldorf.

How many 300 games and 800 series have you bowled?

Quite a few, I know. I think I'm up to 15 or 16 800 series, and I want to say 25 or so 300s.

What is your highest series?

My highest series is 852 about three years ago at Lord Calvert.

Were you surprised to do as well as you did in last season's NCAUSBCA Open Championship Tournament?

Yes, I was, really. I really liked [AMF] Capital Plaza, and I thought I carried pretty good there. I was happy that I did what I did. I've done a couple of tournaments there.

What other tournaments have you won?

Nothing major. I won some Sunday night events at Waldorf a couple of times. I've cashed in a couple of the Money Bags tournaments. At the Lilac Tournament last year, I won one of the men's singles

divisions. Of course, we won in Williamsburg a couple of times.

What were your thoughts the night of November 8, 2011 when you started your league session with two 300 games?

I was trying my best to stay calm, but I can't say I wasn't thinking about a 900. It was a pretty nice starting out with two instead of finishing with two.

My dad was doing really good at trying to get my mind off of it ... but I was thinking about it! People were watching, and I was trying not to pay attention to all the guys that were standing behind me, but we were on the wall pair on

[lanes] 1 and 2, and it was pretty much packed behind me. [McLane tallied 231 in Game 3 for an 831 series.]

How do you normally handle pressure situations?

Honestly, when it comes to bowling, it doesn't usually bother me. I try not to focus on it. Tuesday night is the night I get to bowl with my dad and my brother, so I try to just spend the time talking to them. I don't focus too much on what's going on out on the lanes.

Who has helped you with your game?

My brother, Mike McLane, helps me out a lot. The person locally would be G.G. [George G.] Jenifer, who helps me out with adjustments and keeps my mind right.

Do you keep up with all of the changes taking place in bowling equipment or do you just do what others decide is best for you and your game?

I spend a lot of time online. The only ball I've ever thrown is Hammer. I check their Web site, and they E-mail me when new balls are coming out and stuff like that.

If it's something that I want, then I deal with the guys at Spare Time [Sports] in Waldorf. If I have any questions, I'll go in there and ask Dale [Underwood], and my friend Matt [Kerzic] does a lot of research for me, too.

Matt doesn't work there, but he drills all my equipment for me. I think of all the ones he's done, I've done at least four 300s out of the box with pieces he's drilled for me, including the consecutive 300s I rolled with the Hammer Vibe [on November 8, 2011].

Are the folks at Hammer aware of this?

I tried to get on [the Hammer amateur] staff a while ago, but they told me that I don't bowl enough. I've talked to them over the years because it's been almost



Tommy
McLane

20 years that I've thrown nothing but Hammer equipment.

I would love to be on staff, but it's just that my weekend is my only free time with my son and my wife, and I try not to bowl every weekend, but if there are local tournaments—and she lets me go—then I want to bowl.

Your high average last season was 241. What pressure or stress or quicker heartbeat can occur when even rolling three consecutive nine-spares frames—much less an open frame—can result in a “below-average” game?

When my average is that high, I try not to focus on hitting my average. The league I did that in was in Lord Calvert, and it was an individual point system, so I try to focus on whatever I need to do to beat my opponent. Usually in that league, I was giving up 30 pins a game every night, so it was kind of hard to catch 'em.

It takes me a while to figure it out, but once I do, adjustments are probably the hardest part of my game, especially

if I have a couple of spares in a row or whatever. I know because once I find it, I won't lose it, so I just have to try to focus on finding it and then beat my opponent.

on it is pretty good, and I'm pretty good on focusing on what I need to do in trying to find a shot. I like the harder patterns because there's more of a challenge.

I never talk myself about how good I am, but I know how accurate I am and how accurate I can be. If I can hit a two-board area 40 feet down the lane, I leave happy.

Was it a problem being the center of attention while carrying that average?

Yeah, there was a target on my back, to say the least, but it didn't bother me at all. I always tend to bring out the best in whoever I bowl against, and it just makes me better. I don't like to lose!

Which bowling balls do you bring to a tournament?

I usually only have a heavy oil ball, a dry lane ball, and, of course, my spare ball—all Hammers. I take five inside, and if I need more, I always have a truck full of bowling balls, so I just run out to the car.

I have my favorites that I always like to use. The Hammer Hawg Wild is my favorite ball by far; that's the one I used at nationals when I placed [17th] in singles [in 2006], so that ball goes with me to every tournament.

My Hammer Razor is a ball I don't like, but it scores very well. A lot of people actually pull that ball out of my bag and put it in my hand; I just don't like to use it.

My Hawg Wild, my Black Widow Pearl, my regular Black Widow ... of course, the new Vibe ... those are the ones that always come out of the trunk. Usually I get one of those four. All are 16 pounds.

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

Consistency. My mental focus

What part of your game do you work on the most?

My timing is what I'm always working on and trying to hit my mark. I'm pretty accurate, but it's always my goal to find a mark and hit it consecutively.

I never talk myself about how good I am, but I know how accurate I am and how accurate I can be. If I can hit a two-board area 40 feet down the lane, I leave happy.

I bowled the U.S. Open, and to bowl on that pattern, you have to be very accurate, very far down the lane. I think last year I averaged 190 in that tournament, and I was ecstatic when I came home because I averaged 190 in that tournament. Accuracy is what I mainly work on.

What spare combination is most challenging to you?

I really don't like the 2-4-7 because I'm forever chopping that 2-pin off. It's cost me more than a few points!

Is bowling an important part of your life or just an enjoyable activity?

It definitely important; it's a good way to make extra money for me. I try to do it as much as I can, but with my work hours—I leave at five in the morning and I'm lucky to be home by 6:30 or 7 o'clock at night—the time I get to spend with [my wife and child] is more important. But bowling ... anytime somebody asks me to sub, I'll always volunteer to sub. It's a good opportunity, and it's a good stress release for me. It gets me out with all my friends, and I can make some extra money.

How often have you bowled in PBA regional tournaments?



Tommy McLane with his wife, Laurie, and son, Chance

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I've done a few. I always desire to, but the way the Tour is now, it's just so expensive to get in the door. To do a regional for a non-member, I think it's \$300 or \$350, when I can just go and do a scratch tournament that has all the local guys at it for \$100—and I have a much better shot at cashing with the local guys than I do with the PBA guys.

I do the [U.S.] Open every year that I can, but that one also is expensive. Last year, some good friends of mine the week before the Open offered to sponsor me to go bowl in it, which to this day I'm very appreciative to them for that. It's \$500 just to get in the door, and then you have to do at least a week's hotel just for all the days that you are there, so it's an expensive trip.

Anything that I can do in a day that I can drive to, I'll make an effort to go. Anything that can get me off of the house shot, too. I love harder shots.

Do you or have you ever had any physical ailments that affect your bowling?

Every summer! Last year, I had the typical stuff—the sore elbow, the bad knee on the sliding leg. I've battled kidney stones at least every other year. Last summer, I had gallstones, and I had to get my gallbladder out. That's usually about it.

There's the soreness after taking off the summer and getting back into it; it takes me a month or so to get my body to where I can remember how to bowl. I start slow and then build up!

So you bowl very little in the summer?

I like to, but like I said, the last couple years there's always been something that happened—my gallbladder ... the year before that it was kidney stones.

Summer leagues are so short; if I have to miss the first month, I'm not gonna pay to catch up. So I'll try to do at least the Sport shot league or something like that just to stay loose at least one night a week in the summertime, and whatever tournaments come up on weekends, I'll usually do.

What do you do on evenings when you're not bowling?

[My four-year-old son, Chance] and I bowl, either on the [Nintendo] Wii or on

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the floor because my son loves to bowl because he's growing up in a bowling alley just like I did. Every other night when I come home from work, we have a family Wii battle going on, and he usually wins, or he'll ask me to bowl on the floor, and I'll set the pins up on one side of the living room, and I'll stand on the other side, and he'll show me his form. He can emulate every PBA player that you can think of. He's very good!

What area bowlers do you most admire?

The top of the list would probably be [Keni Lowe \[Jr.\]](#) just because he makes an effort, and he's a very nice person, and he's always trying to get people out to bowl. He is arguably one of the best in the area, and he's an all-around nice guy.

He actually saw me out in front of my job one day, probably 10 years ago, and

... I would never say that I'm one of the best in the area, but against anybody, I don't give it away. You have to work to beat me, but I can hold my own—I'm good.

he stopped and turned around and came into my work to say *hi*. I thought that showed a lot of respect.

Any other bowlers come to mind?

Just the local guys—G.G. is number one ... [Billy Blaney \[III\]](#)—anybody that wants to get out and do tournaments. But those are my friends, and I always try to get out to bowl tournaments—of course, if [my wife] lets me!

How would you rate yourself among area bowlers?

That's hard for me to answer just because every time that I go to these tournaments, they've got [Keni Lowe \[Jr.\]](#), [Chris Johnson](#), [Bobby Hall \[III\]](#)—those guys are always there. I would not put myself at their level, but I can hold my own.

You know, I'm pretty good, so ... I would never say that I'm one of the best in the area, but against anybody, I don't give it away. You have to work to beat me, but I can hold my own—I'm good.

Do you travel to other parts of the country to bowl in tournaments?

We go as far down as South Carolina, North Carolina, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. I've driven to Reno; I've driven to Vegas to do tournaments out there. For me, the sky is the limit.

I prefer the ones that I can drive to in five or six hours—it's less money than flying—but I'll go anywhere if I think I have a decent shot at making money. I'll definitely make an attempt to go.

What's been your biggest thrill in bowling thus far?

Shooting a 300 two months ago with my son watching—by far the best because he was actually sitting behind me when I was on the lane after I hit the 11th one. He goes, "My daddy is about to shoot 300!" He said it, quietly loud to himself! So that was a thrill.

What's been your most embarrassing moment on the lanes?

In a tournament at [Brunswick] Perry Hall, I fell. That was an embarrassing thing. I think it was in Game 7 of an eight-game block, and I fell right on my butt. I just went right over the foul line, and I was sitting there for a minute, and I kinda looked down because I didn't want anyone to be staring at me, even though I knew they were all looking at me. That was embarrassing, and that's about it.

What is your next bowling goal?

The immediate goal I have is to bowl the U.S. Open and make it to Friday. The only thing I'm really shooting for is I want to get an eagle in the nationals—that's probably the biggest goal that I have. •