

# NCAUSBCA 28th Annual Youth 600 Club Tournament of Champions

MARCH 17, 2018 • BOWL AMERICA MANASSAS



During the six-game qualifier, Jordan Jackson had the high game (290) and top series (1,375, a 229.2 average), but as third seed in the finals of the “180 Average and Above” division, he dropped the opening contest to fourth seed Gene Blair, 256-216.

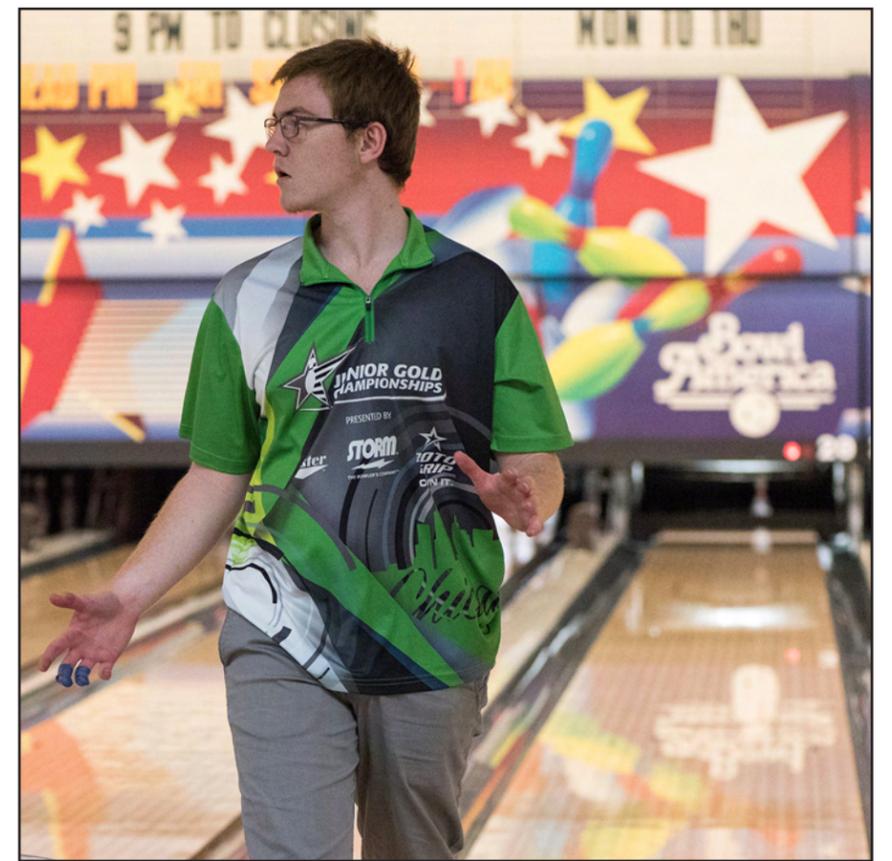


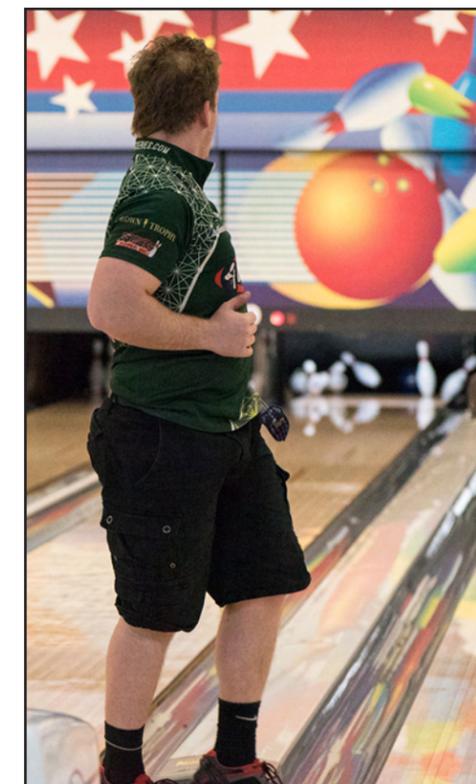
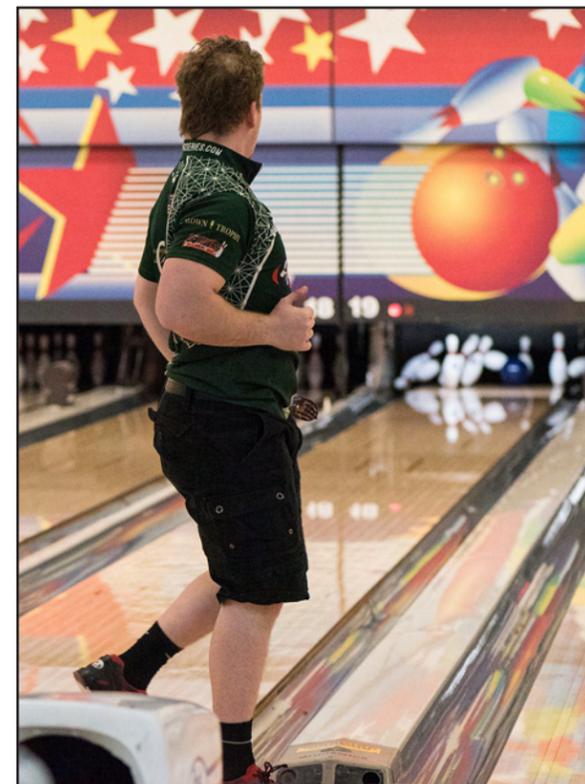
In the “Under 180 Average” division, third seed James O’Bryant (left) defeated fourth seed Gavin Brannon (right) 205-195 to advance to the semifinal match.



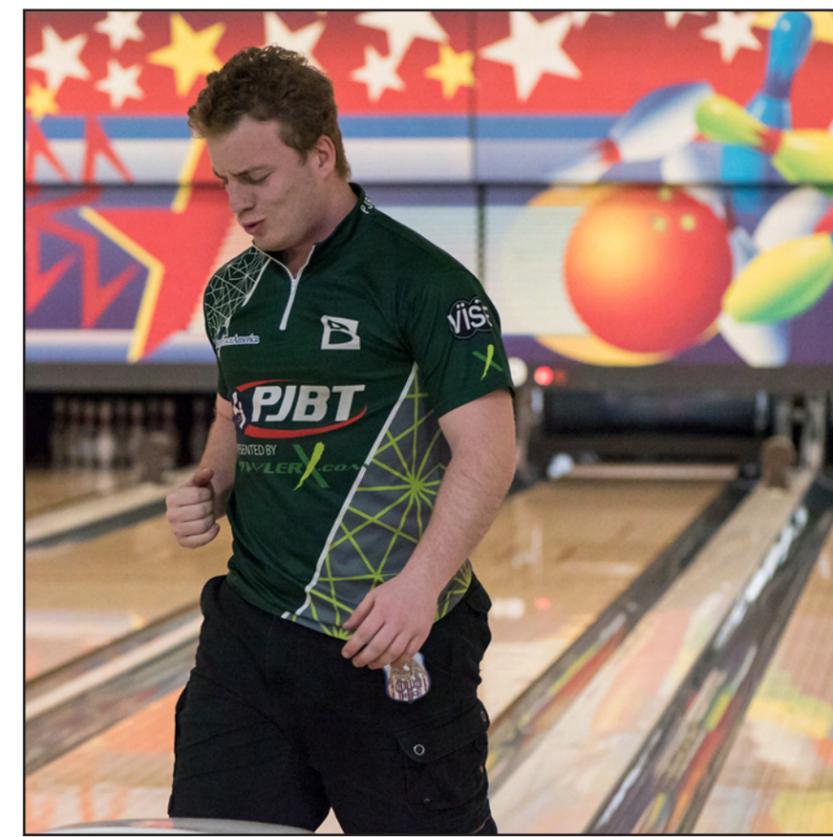
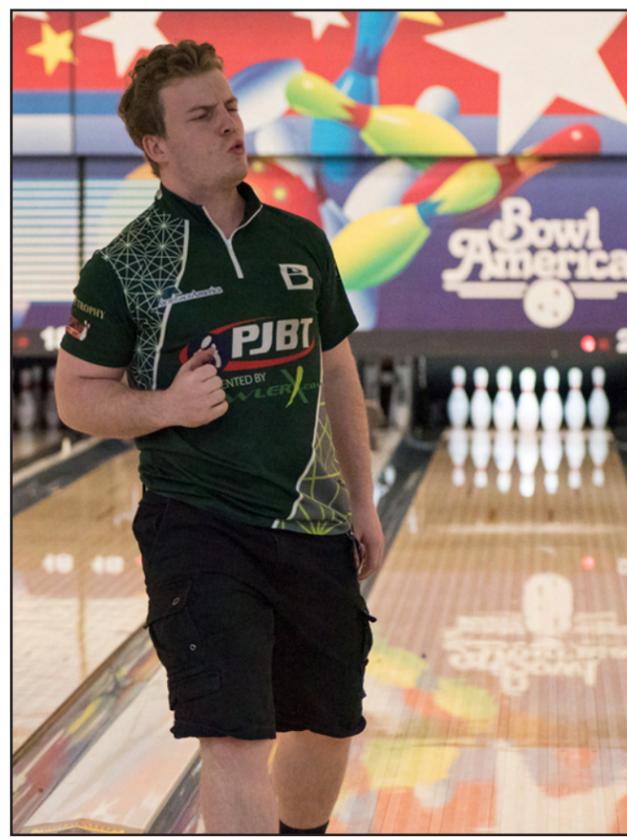
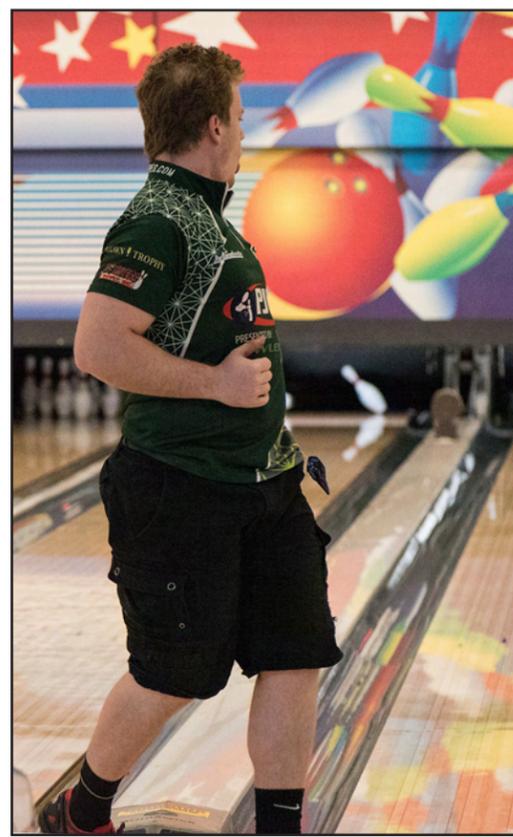


In the "180 Average and Above" division, second seed Zac Preston performed admirably. However, several single-pin spare leaves during his semifinal match against a near-perfect Gene Blair helped end Preston's day in third place.





Meanwhile, Blair had no problem with pin carry in his first two games of the stepladder finals. In fact, he began with 10 consecutive strikes in his semifinal match against Zac Preston, winning 289-218. Blair thus earned the right to face top seed Denard Bankston II in the championship match of the “180 Average and Above” division.





During qualifying and match play competition, Rajsaun McCray rolled many explosive strikes with his two-handed delivery. However, in the title match of the "Under 180 Average" division, his strikes came not often enough, while Ben Martin's kept coming. Final score: 279-206.



McCray, who rolled the high six-game qualifier (205.2 average) and entered the finals as the top seed after 10 total games, could do little but watch as Martin rolled strike after strike. However, there undoubtedly will be brighter days ahead for this left-hander.



Martin walks off the approach after scoring the final strike of his 279 game. The "Under 180 Average" division champion then accepted congratulations from fellow bowlers and spectators.

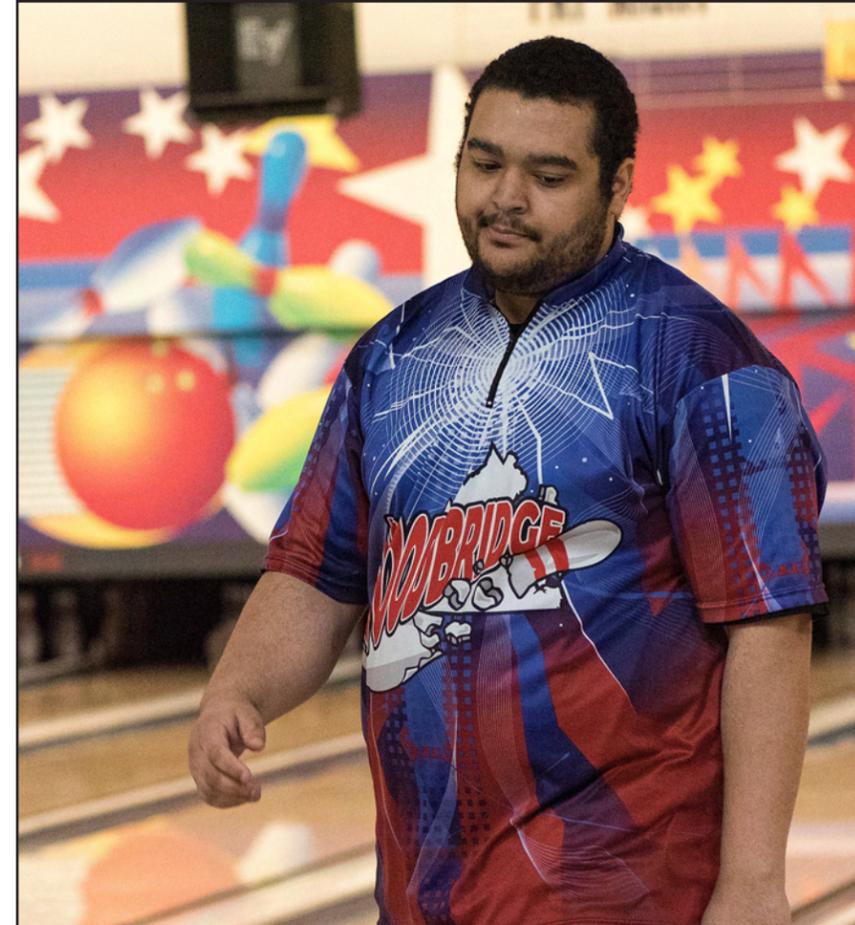


Martin, who defeated James O'Bryant 203-195 in the semifinal match, credited much of his success in the tournament to his ability to stay focused as well as having total confidence in his equipment.





Top seed Denard Bankston II, a past Invitational winner, lofts his powerful ball onto the lane during the title contest of the "180 Average and Above" division against Gene Blair.

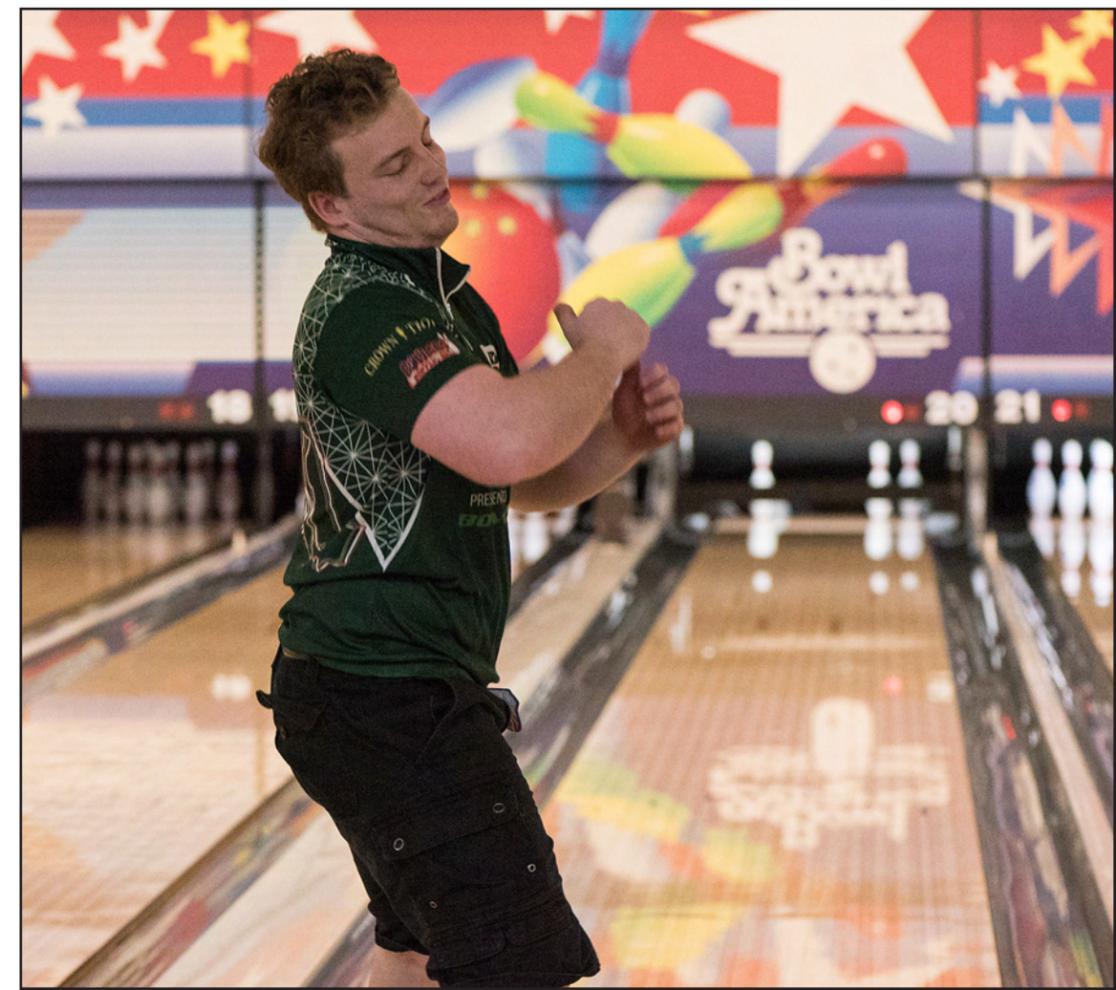


By failing to strike on his second ball in the 10th frame, Bankston suddenly gave Blair, who trailed 176-157 after eight frames with a strike in the ninth, an opportunity to win the tournament by one pin if he could score three additional strikes in the final frame.



Bankston, who afterwards admitted to being well aware of Blair's opening finals scores of 256 and 289, hurts his chances early in the match by missing a 10-pin.

Blair's chance for victory, however, dissolves following his first toss in the 10th that results in a 4-6-10 split and a second-place finish. Final score: 216-183.



# 2018 TOURNAMENT OF CHAMPIONS DIVISION WINNERS



In the final frame of his final Tournament of Champions, Blair, a past Invitational champion and Ted Gruskowski Jr. Youth Star Award recipient who won the "Under 180 Average" division in the 2014 T of C, is left to wonder what might have been.



**DENARD BANKSTON II**  
"180 Average and Above"



**BEN MARTIN**  
"Under 180 Average"

NCAUSBCA Youth Committee officials Tom Dale (left) and Adam Mitchell tally the qualifying round totals to determine which bowlers advance to the four-game match play round.

