**TenPinRap Bowling Column**

**By Joan Taylor**

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**BOWLING BOOT CAMP FOR THE 23RD TIME**

It was hard to believe that the Pro Image Bowling Camp at Rockaway Lanes had its 23rd edition last weekend. Both the sport and the camp have endured many changes, keeping up with the evolution and the revolution.

For starters, camp director, gold level coach, and PBA Champion Ken Yokobosky has gone from filming the campers onto VHS tapes, then to DVDs, and then being able to email videos with the Coach’s Eye and now OnForm, both cheaper in the long run. With the latest technology, he can send videos and his notes to the camper and even send previous sessions. He recorded both side and back angles of the bowlers.

There is more science and physics in bowling equipment and considerations such as lane play than ever before. Each camp has evolved accordingly. The younger campers brought an average of 6 balls each for the camp. We old timers brought two or three, including our spare ball. Myself excluded, three campers had been here before, Steve Caputo, Little Falls, Billy Degnan, Rockaway, and Barry Barone, Saddle Brook. Degnan couldn’t remember how many times he has attended, having “stopped counting after 11.” This means that there is always something to learn and then practice.

Oil patterns were set up including a house shot the first day, and long and somewhat shorter oil on alternating lanes the second day. We even walked down next to the end lane to look at the oil close-up and feel the dry and the “wet” areas.

As bowling knows no age limit, the oldest camper was 73, the youngest consisted of two teens: Logan Lorent, 17 a senior at Montville Township High School, and Gavin Mattes, from Roxbury High School. Lorent wanted to bring his A game when school started, as many key players on the schools’ bowling team had graduated.

It was amazing to see the many styles for the same objectives: making strikes and spares. The collegians were represented by Billy Miller, a junior at William Paterson and Marissa Cosentini, Wayne, a graduate of powerhouse Nebraska and now a grad school student at Monmouth University.

The theme of this year’s camp was “What you Need to Know.” The way it was presented was to make all the variables and intracacies more understandable with classroom and on-lane sessions. This included subjects such as the pre-shot routine, approach, timing, release and the finish position. Drills and games were suggested for practice sessions with the emphasis on spare-shooting that “wins or loses tournaments.”

I was fortunate to be crossing with Rick LeChette, New London, PA, a former proprietor. He brought a different perspective from his experiences. He still owns a pro shop, thus the pin placement, core, cover stock, etc. were nothing new. By the same token he spent both days “taking copious notes.”

This year’s finale was a new twist on “last man standing.” Teams were set up and each camper had to get a strike on their first lane to advance to the next lane, and so on until the final bowler on each team was named to go one-on-one in the rolloff. Andy Lewis, Leonia defeated Curtis Frazier, Rockaway and earned a big discount for next year’s boot camp. If you’re into saving the date, the 24th Pro Image Bowling Camp is already scheduled for June 28-29, 2025.

One of the features of this camp is that the coaches worked with the bowlers’ game, tweaking it here and there but never changing it.

It did not to unnoticed that two additional Rockaway Lanes staffers contributed to the success of the camp. Donna Ratta owns the Pinsetter Snack Bar and provided breakfast and lunch for both days of the camp, as she has done for many years. She ensured that there would be enough variety so there was “something for everybody.” Steve Baird helped the bowlers with drilling or de-oiling their equipment both days.

I have to give a special “thank you” to John Yankanich, a coach who lives outside of Philadelphia, PA. He was himself a Pro Image Bowling Camp participant many years ago. He got himself certified and is one of the best coaches. He had me try a major change and I stuck with it for the two days. It felt strange, but it also worked when I executed the shots. League starts next week, so we’ll see what happens. I think that John Neral has been coaching for all 23 sessions. A former teacher and founder of John Neral Coaching, LLC (not related to bowling coaching), he is enthusiastic and passionate about helping people bowl better, and it’s contagious.

So to my old friends and this year’s new friends, here’s to improving and emerging victorious!

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As we start fall-winter leagues and enter tournaments, please send in your news, funny or otherwise, tournament notices and entry forms, bowlers’ achievements, and tournament results electronically to [joaness2@yahoo.com](mailto:joaness2@yahoo.com) so that I can put all of them into tenpinrap. Have a successful and more than that, a super-fun season!