

Windsor Essex Chatham-Kent Bowling Association



I asked all the youth bowling programs to give me an update on their bowling seasons to date. I asked if they would do a short summary of last season and give another brief update for the start of the current season. Some of these bowling programs there has been a changing of the guard because the previous people running the programs stepped down. With the Covid pandemic some programs needed to almost be rebuilt from scratch because there was no program last season, or they lost many prior bowlers. I asked the bowling programs to give me a short synopsis of each of their bowling programs. We have not followed up on our youth bowling programs for a while so I thought I would contact each program to find out what each program was doing. These bowlers are our future, so we need to ensure that these programs are successful and slowly build from year to year. Each youth program has excellent program directors, so each program is successful in their own unique format used to run their programs.

Chatham Youth

When Stacie and Ian Formosa took over the program there were only 12 registered bowlers. In under 2 years, while fighting Covid shutdowns, there are now 21 regular weekly bowlers. At one point during the season, they had 28 bowlers, but some bowlers were lost to hockey and other sports.

Stacie indicated “We saw every single bowler’s average increase. 11 of our 21 have improved 10 pins or more.” Leading the way is Ethan Vethaak +33, Yvan Morin +30 and Caleb Rahn +21.

They have handed out 3 watches last season to Luca Formosa 237, Morgan Mallette 249, Ethan Vethaak 252. They had 10 different bowlers break 200. Six of those broke 225 (Joseph Carter, Robert Bondy, Morgan Mallette, Grady Marvin, Luca Formosa, Ethan Vethaak). They had 2 bowlers break 600 series (Grady Marvin, Colin Houweling).

Stacie indicated “We have been well represented at local tournaments at end of last season.”

Youth Doubles March 20th

- Ethan Vethaak/Joseph Carter placed 1st in division B
- Luca Formosa/Yvan Morin placed 2nd in division C
- Arjen Beaman/Patrick Goodyear placed 3rd in division C (Arjen is the youngest bowler at 6 yrs old)

Annual Team Event

- Class B – Ethan Vethaak, Joseph Carter, Luca Formosa and Yvan Morin placed 2nd

Annual Doubles Event

- Class B – Luca Formosa/Yvan Morin placed 1st (They finished 192 pins ahead of 2nd place)

After getting Provincial results, the Chatham program had bowlers bring home scholarship money, \$845 in total.

- Team Event: Luca Formosa, Yvan Morin, Colin Houweling, Benjamin Bondy finished 3rd in Division C
- Doubles Event: Luca Formosa and Colin Houweling finished 3rd in Division B
- Singles Event: Grady Marvin was the winner of Division B, Grayson Widenmaier finished 3rd in Division D

This season is further building on last season. They have grown to 30 bowlers, up from 21 last season. Stacie indicated “In the short season as it stands to date we currently have seen Prep bowler Tristan Godreau shoot his first ever 200 (451 series). Junior Luca Formosa shot his personal best of 248 (596 series). Seniors Colin Houweling shot 244 (610 series) and Morgan Mallette shot a 250 (565 Series).”

Scratch Singles tournament

- Tristan Godreau finished 3rd in Division C
- Yvan Morin finished 2nd in Division D
- Luca Formosa won division E
- Joseph Carter won Division F

Tilbury Youth

Mike Ouellette indicated, after being idled for the 2021-22 season, The Tilbury Youth Bowling League (TYBL) has emerged at the Alley Bar and Grill (formerly J&D Lanes).

Currently there are 14 bowlers in the league. Eight of the participants were previously involved before the Covid stoppage. The young bowlers' range in age from 8 to 17 years old.

Ryan Hill has replaced Joe Cartier as Chief Adult and Mike is Secretary-Treasurer. Both of us coach. Three Moms, Amy Bellaire, Shelley Mackay and Sarah McLeod are great helpers. Two of the older bowlers, Karissa Wray and Jonah Bellaire assist in recording scores and providing leadership for the younger ones.

Having missed a year the current group is not yet tournament ready, but we are hopeful that some will have progressed sufficiently to do so in early 2023.

Revs Rose Bowl – Club 240

Jordan Smith, who used to bowl in the program from 1995-2008, took over the program that was previously run by Bob and Virginia Oliver for 50 years. Jordan Smith works together with Scott Gates, Andrea Gates, and his wife Maddy to run the program as a cohesive team. Jordan said when he first aged out of the Club 240 program, he coached for six years. When Bob and Virginia stepped away, he joined together with friends and his wife to jointly take over running the program.

At the start of the current season the program only had 22 bowlers. Within approximately 3 weeks they have since grown to 56 youth bowlers. Jordan indicated "We put an advertisement on Facebook which was a huge success." After the first scratch singles tournament of the season, the program directors were very proud to mention that they had four bowlers place 2nd in their respective Classes, and two bowlers placed 3rd in another. The scratch singles places youth bowlers in different classes according to their average. The program youth coordinators would like to recognize the success of the following youth bowlers in the Scratch Singles Tournament from their bowling program.

- Skylar Poisson finished 3rd in Division A
- Anthony Casey finished 2nd in Division B
- Savy Walls finished 3rd in Division B
- Andrej Musialowicz finished 2nd in Division C
- Alyssa Batson finished 2nd in Division E
- Luke Gates finished 2nd in Division F

Revs Rose Bowl – Unifor 444

Dan Dumouchelle is the program coordinator for this youth program. In 1991 Unifor had 320 youth bowlers. This year they have 62 bowlers in the program. Youth programs are way down from what they were years ago, but the program is slowly starting to rebuild. The first week of bowling they charge the youth bowlers \$40 for bowling and sanctioning. They run weekly raffles to help raise money for their program. Any youth bowler from the program that enters an end of year local or provincial tournament, the program helps that bowler with some money towards the tournament entry fee.

Dan said "It is all about the kids – their success is your success. You need to love the sport of bowling and enjoy working with kids to make the program successful." Trophies handed out in the past have been eliminated because they are too expensive. This program makes an emphasis to give each child in the program scholarship money. Over the past 20 years the program has awarded \$100,000 in total scholarship money. On a yearly basis the kids come and make requests for \$3000-\$4000 per year to be paid out towards post-secondary education. Some kids in this program have earned \$3,000 in scholarship money.

The first year a youth bowler joins the program they get a plaque. Each year following the bowler gets a chevron that contains all their accomplishments for that season to be placed on the plaque. The plaque has enough space to include chevrons for 9 years. After 9 years, if the bowler is still in the program, then they are provided with another plaque to collect their bowling achievements in the way of chevrons over the next additional nine years.

When Dan said it is all about the kids, he means what he says. Dumouchelle has had individuals donate about 10-12 bowling balls yearly. Some also donate bowling shoes and bowling bags. He gives these kids a donated bowling ball, bag, or shoes. If they need a ball, then they just pay to replug, then redrill the ball. When the child

outgrows the bowling ball, they return the bowling ball then he checks to see if he has a heavier weight bowling ball in exchange for the ball they just returned. Dan said new bowling equipment is expensive. People are always getting rid of equipment, so he encourages them to donate old equipment to the youth program. Anything to help youth bowlers is his number one goal.

The program used to pay for a formal banquet, but banquets became too costly. He replaced the banquet with a two-hour Rock N Bowl Pizza and Pasta party at the bowling centre, where they give out scholarship awards in the league. He indicated "I can save money and pay out much more scholarship money to the bowlers if I eliminate the formal banquet."

Dan told me advertising does not work that well for youth bowling, it just costs more money than it is worth. The program tried many different advertising options, but he found that word of mouth works best. The league has their own Facebook page (Unifor Program) and email address. He has pens he hands out that advertise the Facebook page and the email address. People, generally the parents, want information readily available or need a mechanism to send a request for information so this is his way to get the information out there. Dan indicated it would be nice if we could go through the school board to inform parents about our youth bowling programs. Most school boards have these online portals accessed by parents. We could let parents know that we offer a sports bowling program that enables their children to earn scholarship money while they are learning to bowl.

Dan is not just the coordinator of this youth bowling program, he is the Youth Chairperson of the Youth Committee for the Local Bowling Association, he sits on the Local Bowling Association Board, and he is also a member of the Provincial Board. He said he fits these additional duties along with a 16-hour workday. Trying to keep all this information organized can be difficult at times, but while he is driving, he is thinking and dictating ideas to his phone.

Dan has a large backdrop he ordered that will be used for taking bowling pictures. He indicated people will see this backdrop at all youth tournaments. The backdrop will make the organization look more professional. He said usually people running a tournament will be in a back office. He wants these people to be more up-front with the backdrop behind them, so they are more accessible to people. He set up another Facebook page and an email address for the Essex County Youth. He has special pens advertising this Facebook page and email address as well. Dan said social media helps get information out to people and the email address helps solicit feedback.

As Chairperson of the Youth Committee, he is trying to arrange one tournament a month. Kids seem to want more tournaments in both scratch and handicap format tournaments. Tournament awards that used to be trophies are being replaced by medals and a bowling towel. Dan indicated "We need to find a way to bring these kids back. In the past proprietors used to think about the kids and give them rebates whenever possible in reduced lineage for tournaments or reduced bowling fees to pay for practice time. Bowling centres in Windsor Essex County help with lower lineage fees for youth programs and tournaments, but out of town youth tournaments are getting more expensive."

He said in the end it is all about the kids – they are our number one priority if we are going to keep youth bowling successful. Dan is just as hard working as everyone else in these diverse youth bowling programs. He just wears many hats dealing with youth bowlers on multiple different levels.

Super Bowl – Youth bowling

Richard Taylor, one of the individuals that helps run the program, indicated that "It is never too late to join a youth bowling program." Our program now has 66 bowlers total between the Saturday and Sunday Programs combined. They do a few in-house tournaments and give out scholarships to winners. The weekly bowling fees cover sanctioning, bowling, trophies, banquet, and scholarships. Richard indicated "Weekly they enlist the parents to help on a weekly basis."

Currently they are preparing to host the Super 5 Tournament which is open to all houses wanting to participate. The entry fee is \$25 per person (\$19.00 scholarship, \$5.00 lineage \$1.00 expenses). The Super 5 Tournament groups four sanctioned youth bowlers in a team format with a bowling coach (captain). Photos of team captains are posted on a wall. Under the picture of each captain is space for four names. All a youth bowler needs to do is pick a captain (coach) you wish to bowl with, fill in an entry form, pay your entry fee then show up to bowl. This is a Bakers style tournament format that allows each team member to bowl two frames per game. First Bowler bowls 1st & 6th frames, then the second bowler bowls 2nd & 7th frames and so on. After completing 10 games the top four teams move onto the stepladder finals. It may sound like a huge number of games but remember each bowler just

bowls 2 frames per game. The guaranteed payout for the event is \$400 for 1st (\$100 each), \$300 for 2nd (\$75 each), \$200 for 3rd (\$50 each), and \$100 for 4th (\$25 each) all paid out in scholarship money.

I asked Richard who has run his program jointly with Guy Taylor, no relation, for years how we go about further building on our youth bowling programs across the city. I asked him if he has been in contact with the schools. What I found out is that the schools used to have bowling programs within their schools but busing and liability insurance became issues. We need to find a way to get our bowling programs to be broadcast to all our schools through our school boards to hopefully rebuild the youth bowler base. Other sports like soccer and hockey seem to be taking a larger youth base, so I think we need to try to work with the school boards to advertise youth bowling to parents.

Catherine Wilbur