

Windsor-Essex Chatham-Kent Bowling Association



WECKBA would like to congratulate 2025 Molson Masters Champions, Darren Alexander (OPEN Division) and Joe Amaral (SENIOR Division). This year's tournament, the 69th was completed on Saturday, February 15, 2025.

The Molson Masters has a very long, rich history. It has been hosted at Palace Recreation, Crescent Lanes, Revs Bowlero, and now at Revs Rose Bowl. Tournament Director Nick Stein deserves much credit for this year's tournament success, along with Jeremy Bas, Tournament Coordinator, and Tournament Sponsors Molson Coors Breweries, Reaume Chevy-Buick-GMC and Revs Rose Bowl. Cogeco Cable is now in its thirty-ninth year hosting the Molson Masters TV telecast.

Prize money totaled \$17,850 for the 2025 tournament including \$9,700 for the TV finals. The winner of the Open section earned \$2,000 and Senior winner received \$1,200.

In the Open Division, Corey Forfitt was the #5 seed and wasn't sure if he could bowl in match-play due to a bad back, but he persevered to win the group by 1 pin. The #4 seed, Team Canada's Darren Alexander, was trying to be the 3rd male to win 3 titles in a row. Alexander is a 4-time champ including the last two consecutively. Unlike his previous when he was seeded #1, he faced having to win four matches to win again. The #3 seed, London's Ryan Trussler, has participated in this tournament for many years and has been in the TV Finals on several occasions and was hoping to be the first from London to win the tournament. The #2 seed, Mike Snow, is a long-time top bowler and member of Senior Team Canada. Mike has been a TV finalist in both the Open and Senior Divisions. Winning the title would cap off a tremendous career. Skip Lyttle, who was initially from Calgary Alberta and now living in Toronto, is our #1 seed. Lyttle is vying to become a 1st time champ from Toronto.

For the Seniors, Joe Amaral was the #1 seed attempting to be the first bowler from the Toronto area to become a Molson Champ. The #2 seed, Charlie Yott, is no stranger to the TV finals as he has been High-Qualifier, Runner-Up, was the Senior Champ in 2016, and is a member of the Bowling Hall of Fame. The #3 seed, Ken Pinkowski, won the Open Men's title in 1992 but this is his first time in Senior Division. Chris Woodman, the #4 seed, went to the 10th frame last year to finish second in TV finals.

The **Molson Masters** runs over 4 weekends. It features a **Senior Division** (55+) and an **Open Division**. The tournament starts with two weeks of **Qualifying**, followed by one week of **Match-play**, and the fourth week is the **TV Step Ladder Finals**. To qualify in the Senior Division, you bowl 4 games over 4 pairs of lanes while the Open Division participants complete 5 games over 5 pairs of lanes.

The TV format is set up so that the Open Division and the Senior Division alternate bowling match-play in the stepladder finals. The Open Division bowls the first match then the Senior Division bowls their first match. The wait between matches is very challenging because it makes it harder to stay consistent because lanes can change between the starting and stopping. Sometimes the #1 seeds might see this as an advantage because they do not have to bowl then sit and wait to bowl again.

SENIOR DIVISION for Match-play - the top 15 Senior bowlers, plus last year's Champion, are divided into 4 groups of 4 bowlers each. They face each bowler once in their division. Then they bowl a final position round within their own group. Each time a bowler wins the match they earn a 30-pin bonus added to their score. They move over to a new pair of lanes for each new game bowled. The top Senior bowler from each of the 4 Senior Division groups advances to the TV stepladder finals.

Senior Division – Match-play – Final Results

MOLSON MASTERS

GROUP A

GROUP B

GROUP C

GROUP D

1 KEN PINKOWSKI 922

2 LARRY SALVATI 859

3 ROBERT HOPKINS 832

4 MARK LABORD 657

1 CHRIS WOODMAN 868

2 MARCEL PINARD 840

3 SCOTT KILLEN 815

4 ALLAN DUPUIS 677

1 CHARLIE YOTT 934

2 CHRIS MOXLEY 847

3 RON GOUIN 727

4 RANDY BLAKE 613

1 JOE AMAREL 948

2 BLAINE RANKIN 898

3 JOHN FAIRLIE 766

4 JON MYRONYK 758

Senior Division – Step Ladder- TV Finals

In the Senior Division Step Ladder finals, the results were as follows:

Chris Woodman (216) vs. Ken Pinkowski (201)

Chris Woodman (192) vs. Charlie Yott (173)

Chris Woodman (203) vs. Joe Amaral (224) –Joe Amaral is **2025 Senior Molson Masters Champion**

Chris Woodman (4th seed) bowls in the Tuesday Chrysler and Friday Night Drifter leagues where he carries an average of 210. He has bowled nine 300 games and two 800 series. Averaging 194 his match-play record was 3-1. He was the top qualifier in the senior division with a total of 876 when he bowled to get into match-play.

Woodman bowled well in the TV finals making it all the way to the final game, but he just came up slightly short in his final match. Woodman reflected that “for Molson TV finals he was feeling good just looking forward to the challenge. In match-play 1st and 4th games were good but had to go way out left on last game to make it work. Struggled with splits and 10 pins, shot was difficult, but I won.” Chris indicated that he started bowling 50 years ago around age 5 at Rose Bowl in Hiram Walkers boys/girls club. He took time off in his early 20’s then came back in his 30’s to bowl. Woodman indicated that many people helped inspire him along the way with different things at different times: Dan Aqwa with his equipment, and bowlers he bowled with over the years, Mike Beedle, Tim Bass, and Lou Dupuis, giving him bowling tips. Woodman indicated to get more people involved in the sport of bowling we just need to get more people to just come out and try the sport.

Ken Pinkowski (3rd seed) bowls in two leagues: Thursday Senior (186 average), and Saturday Night Mixed (185 average). His highest series is 776 with a single game of 299. He averaged 200 in match-play and posted a 4-0 record. He qualified eighth for match-play with a 4-game series of 815. Pinkowski bowled well against his opponent in the TV finals, but he was unable to convert two spares which proved to be costly. Pinkowski said that “for TV finals he just wanted to have fun. In match-play I had no real plan in place, just go out and have fun, relax, just bowl like normal-OLD SCHOOL.” Ken indicated he started bowling as a young kid and he just enjoyed being in the bowling alley. He worked at the bowling alley for Moe Parent at Bowlero and that was the highlight of his life. Pinkowski indicated to get more people involved in bowling just get people to come out so they can have fun and enjoy the game.

Second seed **Charlie Yott** bowls in four leagues: Monday Seniors (209 average), Tuesday Chrysler (201 average), Wednesday Major Handicap (198 average), and Thursday Seniors (192 average). He has fifteen 300 games and three 800 series. Yott averaged 210 in match-play and was 3-1. He qualified sixth for match-play with a series of 819. Charlie just missed being the top seed when he lost the last game in match-play. He was a Senior Molson’s Champ in 2016. Yott came up short in his TV finals match with two splits and an open frame but he has won before so he will be back. Charlie mentioned that “he enjoys bowling on TV, is not nervous, just wanted to focus better than I did last time. For match-play my plan was to just play outside and to keep the speed up.” Yott has bowled for over 50 years where he used to set pins at a bowling club in Amherstburg. He indicated that the manager of the bowling centre at the time taught him how to bowl. Yott indicated to improve the sport of bowling we need to try and get the next generation more interested in bowling.



Joe Amaral (1st seed) bowls in Monday Double Trouble at Bowlero Bramalea where he carries an average of 214. He has bowled twelve 300 games and four 800 series with a series high of 837. His match-play record was 4-0 and averaged 207 in match-play. He qualified 7th for match-play with a series of 817. Joe was trying to become the 1st bowler from Toronto to win the title. Joe only needed to bowl one game in the TV finals, and he made the most of it because he was able to consistently put strikes together to win the match. Amaral has become the first bowler from Toronto to **become the Molson Masters Senior Champion** for the first time. Joe indicated that “in match-play my goal was to take one shot at a time and see what the lanes were doing. When transitions came in game 3-4 make sure I was ahead of it. Game 3 the transition hit so I moved a little bit inside. That was the game plan and never deviated from it. For TV I was a little bit nervous because I had never bowled on TV before. The plan was to take it one shot at a time and follow the exact same game plan as I used in match-play.” Amaral indicated that he started bowling in 1990 by going out with friends and just practicing. Eventually he joined leagues and thought he could be good at this sport. His biggest inspiration was watching pro bowlers when he was younger. “In 2012 I was going to leave the sport of bowling, but I met Eric Beaton, a Pro Shop operator, who switched a few things in my game. The

Pro Shop owner told me to keep doing what you are doing, and you will be just fine.” Joe said to make bowling great again let Junior Bowlers PRACTICE FOR FREE. They are the future of the game, so we need to promote the youth in sport.

Amaral indicated that “It was a long day waiting for all the matches to complete – you would bowl then sit and wait between matches. I just had to bowl one game, so I just watched the earlier matches. All you could do was play where you thought it is going to play then just stick to the game plan.”

OPEN DIVISION for Match-play - the top thirty-nine Open bowlers, plus last year’s Champion, were divided into five groups of eight bowlers each. They bowled each bowler once in their division. Then they bowled a final position round within their own group. Each time a bowler wins their match they get a 30-pin bonus added to their score. You move over to a new pair of lanes for each new game bowled. The top Open bowler from each of the five Open Division groups advances to the TV step ladder finals.

Open Division – Match-play – Final Results

 MOLSON MASTERS MATCHPLAY 				
GROUP "A"	GROUP "B"	GROUP "C"	GROUP "D"	GROUP "E"
MIKE SNOW 1819	DARREN ALEXANDER 1800	SKIP LYTTLE 1907	RYAN TRUSSLER 1817	COREY FORFITT 1777
DYLIN HUNTER 1785	ROBERT BOZULIK 1780	BOB DUFOUR 1718	T.J. HOWARD 1703	RYAN BOISMIER 1776
JAMES GENDREAU 1714	BRAYDON HOSKINS 1753	ADAM GRIMMELL 1717	SHAWN LEGGE 1686	MATTHEW DAVIS 1763
CHUCK MENARD 1710	DAN AQWA 1749	JASON HERON 1706	PIERRE BELLIVEAU 1683	MICHAEL VITALE 1635
JARED LEWSAW 1691	BRAD WALTON 1717	MARC RENAUD 1643	JORDAN SMITH 1653	TYLER DUPUIS 1607
JEFF KOVACK 1620	CHRIS BEAULIEU 1675	AARON BRATT 1600	EARL DOE 1652	BARRY CHARLETON 1593
MATT WOOD 1574	BRENT RANKIN 1656	JASON GREENING 1561	STEVE KUBIS 1614	KURT RIDGEWELL 1522
MYKAELA HUNTER 1571	D.J. ROSE 1474	RENE KELICH 1517	TIM JOHNSTON 1590	PETE KONKEL 1519

Open Division – Step Ladder - TV Finals

In the Open Step Ladder finals, the results were as follows:

Corey Forfitt (233) vs. Darren Alexander (244)
 Darren Alexander (247) vs. Ryan Trussler (234)

Darren Alexander (241) vs. Mike Snow (200)

Darren Alexander (237) vs. Skip Lyttle (154) - Darren Alexander is **2025 Open Molson Masters Champion**

Corey Forfitt (fifth seed) bowls in Wednesday Majors and Rock & Bowl where he carries an average of 220+. He has recorded thirty-one 300 games and seven 800 series. In match-play he averaged 207 and had a 4-4 record. He qualified tenth for match-play with a 5-game total of 1072. Corey beat his group by one pin to make the TV finals. Corey bowled a very tight match in the TV finals but just came up a little short, needing to strike out to make it to the second round. Forfitt indicated that "The goal in match-play was to throw the MVP to start which was an older ball that does not hook all that much. Also used a new Snapshot ball to keep it clean. On TV was happy just being in the finals but was nervous because I did not bowl well the first time." Corey started bowling at age 3 where he first bowled 5-pin. At age 9 he moved over to 10 pin and never looked back. His bowling inspiration was his father who has always been a great bowler "Until the day I passed him!" Corey indicated that "I have started coaching on Saturdays for the youth programs hoping to make the next generation interested in continuing to bowl and compete at higher levels."



Fourth seed **Darren Alexander** bowls in Tuesday Chrysler League at Rose Bowl where he carries an average of 223. Darren has bowled numerous 300 games and 800 series with his highest series being 857. Averaging 206 his match-play record was 5-3. He qualified second for match-play with a 5-game series of 1162. Darren had to rally late in match-play just to get into the TV finals because with 3 games to go he was down 139 pins. Alexander has won the Open Championship 4 times (2015 & 2020 & 2023 & 2024), was Runner-up twice (2016 & 2022), and was High Qualifier on four occasions. This time around Darren needed to win 4 matches in TV finals to repeat as Open Champion. The first two games for Darren were very tight matches but he made the most of it largely because he was able to consistently put strikes together to win each match. Darren indicated "I thought the split with Corey in 1st match was going to cost me as it was a really close match." Alexander has become **Molson Masters Open Champion** for a fifth time. He is just the 3rd male bowler to win 3 consecutive titles.

"My game plan was to use the Black and Purple Hammer balls in qualifying and match-play. Had friction at the gutter that looked really good. On TV that did not work at all so I switched to reactive Effect Tour and really started to slow down and shape ball and that is what bailed me out allowing me to strike more often." Alexander surmised, "Usually I am 1-2 seed so being the 4th seed gave me more exposure to the lanes. It is a long time to be there and keep your head in the game. Sometimes starting and stopping you can over think and differ from your game plan, and I think I'm fortunate that I have been in the position before and was able to draw on that experience and stick with the plan I wanted to which ultimately ended up being very successful." Darren indicated "For me I am bowling tournaments almost every weekend somewhere so there was no extra preparation for this. It is just sticking with my normal routine and then executing the game plan I want to once I start bowling."

Alexander said he started bowling at the age of 4 and has been bowling competitively since the age of 15. His mother and grandparents were bowlers, so he enjoyed watching them and always wanted to bowl after. As a result, bowling became an obsession for him from a very young age. Darren said to make bowling great again "We need to get more youth active in the game and make them fall in love with it. They are the future and without them we cannot keep moving forward."

Ryan Trussler (third seed) bowls in Monday Night Sparoids at Fleetway in London and Wednesday Men's Memorial at Heritage Lanes in St Thomas. Ryan carries a 200 average. He has fifteen 300 games and an 800 series of 824. His match-play record was 5-3 while averaging 208. He qualified fourteenth for match-play with a five-game total of 1047. Ryan has been a prior TV finalist. Ryan stayed close to his opponent for the match, but he opened with a split to start the match which had him trying to catch up with his opponent for the rest of the game. He needed to strike out in 10th frame just to tie his opponent, but he came up short to lose the match by 13 pins. Ryan said his game plan is just to have consistent games averaging around 215. His match-play goal was just to stay calm because sometimes he gets too nervous. "Sometimes when you get nervous bad shots creep into your game. Main thing is to try to get lined up to make spares. The way I practice is 15 minutes before I start bowling is I start on the middle dot and 2nd arrow then move accordingly. Go for corners, then 2-8, then 3-6-10." Trussler has been bowling for approximately 32 years starting to bowl after watching his cousin bowling at Super Bowl.

Trussler indicated “As a member of the London and District Tenpin Bowling Association we are constantly trying new initiatives to increase participation in leagues and tournaments for both youth and adults.”

Mike Snow, the second seed, carries averages of 227, 222, and 207 in his three leagues. His highest series bowled is 836 with twenty-two 300 games and seven 800 series. He averaged 205 and had a 6-2 match-play record. He qualified 21st for match-play with a total of 1029. Mike bowled well but was unable to throw the strikes to match his opponent. Mike was a previous top seed in the Men’s division and last time he was a TV Seniors’ Finalist. Mike is also a current member of Senior Team Canada for seven consecutive years. Mike indicated that lanes 9 & 10 were quite tricky, so you had to stay in the moment because you only have five shots on each lane. “The game plan was to play outside with Urethane keeping up ball speed. Thought shot was outside with Urethane and tried for 1st game but had to move in a little bit then a little bit more around 12-13-14 the rest of the day. It was all a matter of ball speed and distance changes. I am probably the only person that wipes my shoe with a separate towel to take care of my knee since I need to make sure I am sliding every time. Make sure belt goes a certain way so it is not in the way of my arm.” He indicated that he has bowled on TV 6-7 times but has only won one match. Mike indicated that hopefully this time he can win two matches as the #2 seed. Snow indicated that “I am 63 years old and have been bowling since I was 5. My dad brought my brother and myself to Bowlero Bowl back when I was about 8 years old and I have bowled since then. This is my 43rd time bowling in the Molsons.” Mike became inspired in bowling by working with Dick Ritger running camps and clinics with Dick at the old Crescent Lanes, coaching with Ritger, taking courses at Ithaca New York, working with Team Canada Coaches, seeking out many other coaches he met along his lengthy bowling career, and lastly working with inspirational coach Jean Deslippe.

Skip Lyttle, the first seed, bowls in Side Action league where he carries an average of 221. He has bowled eight 300 games and twelve 800 series. He averaged 216 and had a 6-2 match-play record. He qualified 3rd for match-play with a series of 1104. Skip as the number one seed had to bowl just one game to win the open title but he struggled in the game against his opponent with open frames and splits. I watched this man bowl in match-play, and he bowled exceptional so he will be back to bowl again soon. Sitting all that time waiting to bowl is sometimes a struggle. In one game there is not much time to adjust. Skip indicated “The main goal was to go out there and have fun and stay focused to make one shot at a time and make spares.” This was his first time bowling in the Molson’s tournament. Skip indicated that he has bowled for 47 years, and his parents were both bowlers. Skip’s bowling highlights are bowling on Junior Team Canada, Senior Team Canada, eight-time Youth National Champ, 2021 Pins Game Champion, and 2002 CBC TV Show.

This year’s tournament did not disappoint as we had a mix of some previous champions, individuals with previous experience bowling in finals and some bowlers relatively new to the stepladder process. In most of the matches the momentum kept going back and forth between competitors right until the final ball. Setbacks like trouble reading a lane, a few missed spares, an untimely split in a late portion of the game or a run of strikes were the deciding factors in many of the matches.

It is important that we congratulate each of the finalists. Each of them considers it an honour to make it to the finals. Participants experienced nervousness and most had trouble reading the tricky 9-10 lanes all day. The lane conditions were very difficult so ball selection and choosing a line and then reestablishing that line between the Open and Senior matches were crucial. Each of these competitors reached a major milestone. It was exciting to watch the TV finals as each of these competitors made the matches nerve racking right down to the final ball.

Catherine Wilbur