

Wrong turn, right result for Bolden; Wheeler in a romp in Vir-Mar District YABA Invitational Scratch Tourney

By Bob Cosgrove

We've all heard of youngsters who've taken the wrong turn in life. One finalist in the 28th annual Vir-Mar District YABA Invitational Scratch Tournament literally took the wrong turn at the most inopportune moment, and it nearly cost him area junior bowling's most prestigious title.

Nathan Bolden of Mitchellville pulled off a 229-209 victory over tournament leader and defending champion Barry Tyler of Greenbelt in the eighth and deciding match to walk away with a 24-pin victory in the A Division (165 average and above) in one of most exciting and tightly-bunched finishes in recent years.

Meanwhile, there was less drama in the B Division (164 average and below), where Anthony Wheeler of Suitland cruised to the championship by a whopping 293-pin margin.

Bolden, 16, who had a 21-pin lead over Ronald Davis Jr. of Lanham entering the fifth and final round, had checked in and picked up his finalist's bowling shirt at AMF Clinton. Then, without notice, he disappeared.

"We looked everywhere in the center," said Tournament Director George Yarborough, "but there was no Nate. And then we looked outside in the parking lot, and someone said his car was gone."

Had Bolden been kidnapped by the parent of a rival finalist? Or could it be that

the DeMatha junior simply could not bear to finish second in the tournament for the third time in four years?

No on both counts.

"I went to McDonald's," said Bolden, "and then I took a wrong exit to get back to the bowling alley. It took me longer than I expected."

Upon his return to the center, three zeros in the first three frames reminded Bolden of his tardiness. Panic set in, he later admitted, but nevertheless, the right-handed future computer programmer hung tough.

"I kept telling myself that I've just got to get it together, and I can't worry about it," Bolden said. "I've still got a chance to win. I wasn't that far behind; I just had to bowl."

He did, finishing out the remaining seven frames with 103, and suddenly finding himself in fifth place, 117 pins behind Davis. Bolden, however, made good use of the 50 bonus pins awarded for each match won: Victorious scores of 194 and 231 in Matches 2 and 3 put him back on top, two pins ahead of second-round leader Omar Farlow of Hyattsville, who was aiming for his first Invitational title in his final attempt.

Farlow advanced to the top spot after the fourth game despite a losing score of 179, primarily because Bolden tossed only 151 in a losing effort. Barry Tyler jumped ahead of Bolden after a winning score of 227.

Tyler took command in the fifth game with a 198, remained the leader with a 175 win in Match 6, and he hung on to the No. 1 spot even after losing the penultimate

contest to Farlow, 206-175. Bolden recorded scores of 188 (Loss/4th place), 211 (W/2), and 186 (L/2) in Matches 5-7 to trail Tyler by 46 pins, lead Michael Price of Herndon by one stick, and turn the final game into a winner-take-all proposition which this year, at long last, would end in his favor.

"In past years, Barry Tyler bowled me in matches like today and beat me out of it," Bolden said. "There was a lot of pressure, but it feels good beating him this time."

Wheeler, 16, a junior at Suitland High, entered the final day of competition 27 pins behind Joseph Pennington of Arlington and 18 pins behind Paul Penrose Jr. of Waldorf. Wheeler took the lead after scoring 233 in his opening match, but a 155 in his only losing effort in Match 2 helped keep him behind Pennington through the fourth game, despite scores of 212 and 201. Three more victories, including a 223 game in Match 7, gave Wheeler an insurmountable 205-pin lead entering his position-round contest with Pennington, who then lost 195-121 to Wheeler to hand the left-hander his first Invitational title.

"I would have had to break my legs and throw straight gutter balls to lose," said Wheeler, who admittedly lives and sleeps bowling and ultimately intends to become a lawyer. "Last year, when I finished 11th, I felt that my equipment wasn't up to par. This year, I came in with the right equipment and the right attitude, so I knew I was going to win."

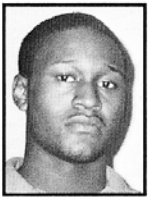
A DIVISION	Scratch	W-L-T	Total	Average	Position-By-Round					
Nathan Bolden, Mitchellville	4,774	4-4-0	4,974	198.92	3	4	4	1	1	
Barry Tyler, Greenbelt	4,700	5-3-0	4,950	195.83	23	9	8	7	2	
Michael Price, Herndon	4,707	4-3-1	4,932	196.13	1	3	2	3	3	
Ronald Davis Jr., Lanham	4,734	3-4-1	4,909	197.25	11	5	1	2	4	
Omar Farlow, Hyattsville	4,700	4-4-0	4,900	195.83	4	1	5	4	5	
Maurice Brown, D.C.	4,662	3-5-0	4,812	194.25	6	11	10	6	6	
Bubba Kennedy, D.C.	4,595	4-4-0	4,795	191.46	15	24	11	5	7	
Frankie Weaver, Stafford, Va.	4,545	4-4-0	4,745	189.38	7	15	12	8	8	
B DIVISION										
Anthony Wheeler, Suitland	4,613	7-1-0	4,963	192.21	13	12	3	3	1	
Keenan Yarborough, Oxon Hill	4,422	5-3-0	4,672	184.25	9	1	1	4	3	
Joseph Pennington, Arlington	4,434	4-4-0	4,634	184.75	4	4	4	1	3	
Scott Simons, Fort Washington	4,350	5-3-0	4,600	181.25	6	10	9	7	4	
Ronald Thompson, D.C.	4,348	5-3-0	4,598	181.17	18	20	13	6	8	
Kevin Howell Jr., Waldorf	4,322	3-5-0	4,472	180.08	1	9	5	5	8	
Renee Parker, Hyattsville	4,346	2-6-0	4,446	181.08	7	11	6	8	8	
Paul Penrose Jr. Waldorf	4,202	1-7-0	4,252	175.08	3	5	2	2	8	

Meet the 1997 Vir-Mar District YABA Invitational finalists....

A DIVISION



NATHAN BOLDEN, 16, Mitchellville ... 188 average ... bowls in Teenpinners league at Capital Plaza ... highest YABA-sanctioned game/series: 300 (2)/760 ... junior at DeMatha High ... plans to become a computer programmer ... hobbies include basketball ... has bowled in four Invitationals, finishing second twice (1994 and 1996) ... biggest bowling thrill was rolling his first 300 game ... favorite food: chicken / beverage: ice tea / TV show: "The Simpsons" / pro bowler: George Branham III



BARRY TYLER, 15, Greenbelt ... 177 average ... Teenpinners league at Capital Plaza ... 300/732 ... sophomore at Eleanor Roosevelt ... computer planning ... basketball, football ... three Invitationals—first in 1996, third in 1994 ... biggest bowling thrill: "I shot 300." ... chicken / Sprite / "Def Comedy Jam" / Steve Hoskins



MICHAEL PRICE, 17, Herndon ... 200 average ... rolls in the Pinbusters league at Dranesville ... 279/725 ... junior at Oakton High ... future plans include college and medicine ... first Invitational ... biggest bowling thrill was rolling a 279 game ... fajitas / pink lemonade / "Home Improvement" / Dick Weber



RONALD DAVIS JR., 15, Lanham ... 186 average ... Teenpinners league ... 290/689 ... freshman at DuVal ... plans to go to football camp ... hobbies include basketball, football, track, and reading the newspaper ... third Invitational ... getting past the first round of the Invitational was his biggest bowling thrill ... Taco Bell, Caribbean foods / water, tea, Mr. Pibb / "Good Times," "Jamie Foxx" / George Branham III, Curtis Odom, Norm Duke



OMAR FARLOW, 22, Hyattsville ... 174 average ... Teenpinners league ... 279/717 ... Dadelaus Books ... enjoys putt-putt, basketball, and Play Station ... seventh and final Invitational ... spaghetti / tea / "ESPN SportsCenter" / Amleto Monacelli



MAURICE BROWN, 18, Washington, D.C. ... 184 average ... Marlow Heights Strikers league ... 299/744 ... freshman at Delaware State University ... plans to graduate from college ... hobbies: basketball, going places ... sixth Invitational, finished third in 1996 ... bowling thrill: scoring 299 in league play ... chicken / Mystic / "SportsCenter" / Amleto Monacelli & David Ozio

B DIVISION



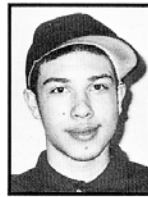
ANTHONY WHEELER, 16, Suitland ... 164 average ... rolls in the Parkland Youth league ... 262/667 ... junior at Suitland High ... future plans include University of Maryland—College Park, majoring in political science ... third Invitational ... pizza / pink lemonade / "Moesha" / Mike Aulby



KEENAN YARBOROUGH, 21, Oxon Hill ... 159 average ... bowls at Marlow Heights ... 278/690 ... junior at Prince George's Community College ... plans to graduate from college and get a comfortable job financially ... enjoys basketball ... third Invitational ... no bowling thrills ... various Chinese foods / iced tea / "SportsCenter"



JOSEPH PENNINGTON, 17, Arlington ... 157 average ... home center is Seminary, bowls in Saturday Youth league at Falls Church ... 257/827 (four games) ... senior at Wakefield High ... plans to graduate from school ... second Invitational ... pizza / root beet / "Amp"



SCOTT SIMONS, 16, Fort Washington ... 159 ... bowls at Bolling AFB ... 248/623 ... junior at Oxon Hill High ... future plans include college ... plays baseball ... second Invitational ... biggest bowling thrill: "I bowled a 248." ... pizza / Sprite / "Cops"



RONALD THOMPSON, 13, Washington, D.C. ... 164 average ... bowls at Parkland and Marlow Heights ... 268/665 ... eighth-grader at Stuart-Hobson ... future plans include school and becoming a "P.G. cop" ... enjoys basketball ... bowling thrill: tossing a 268 game in Round 4 of Invitational at Dale City ... McDonald's fries / Pepsi / "Jamie Foxx" / Pete Weber



KEVIN HOWELL JR., 16, Waldorf ... 164 average ... bowls in Saturday Morning Youth league at Waldorf ... 253/657 ... senior at Westlake High ... college (Georgetown) ... first Invitational ... biggest bowling thrill was beating his father ... pizza / Sprite / "NYPD Blue" / Norm Duke



RENEE PARKER, 18, Hyattsville ... 159 average ... bowls in Silver Hill Strikers league at Marlow Heights ... 232/624 ... plans to become a computer specialist ... enjoys hanging out ... sixth Invitational ... shooting first 600 series ... beef and broccoli / root beer / "Good Times" / Earl Anthony



BUBBA KENNEDY, 19, Washington, D.C. ... 192 average ... bowls in the University Strikers league ... 300/750 ... enjoys pool and football ... third Invitational ... the perfect game was his biggest bowling thrill ... crabs / Coke / "Martin" / Mike Miller



FRANKIE WEAVER, 15, Stafford, Va. ... 201 average ... bowls at AMF Fredericksburg and Planet Fun ... 279/730 ... sophomore at Spotsylvania High ... future plans include college ... hobbies: basketball and football ... third Invitational, finished 11th last year ... biggest bowling thrill was beating his uncle, 299-217 ... Chinese food / Pepsi / "Pro Bowlers Tour" / Brian Voss



PAUL PENROSE JR., 17, Waldorf ... 152 average ... bowls in Saturday Morning Majors at Waldorf ... 220/618 ... senior at Thomas Stone High ... future plans include college ... hobbies: model cars ... first Invitational ... biggest bowling thrill has been performance in this Invitational ... pizza / Coke / "King of the Hill"

Invitational finalists, 1983-1996

1996

A Division – Barry Tyler, Nathan Bolden, Maurice Brown, Brian Howze, Jason Lewis, Anthony Whitehead, Eric Kroeger, Omari Bennett.

B Division – Robbie Gift, Justin Barger, Patrick Thompson, Jonathan Emery, Lillibeth Jones, Gerald Brown Jr., Jeremy Brown, Mark Curtis.

1995

A – Chris Lambeth, Eric Brenemen, Mike Sheehan, Kevin Goeddel, Maurice Brown, Brian Tyler, Jason Lewis, Ira Darden.

B – Sean Moment, Brian Holt, Jason Libertini, Omar Farlow, Gary Estep Jr., Sabrina Fisher, Phillip Donnelly, Milton Arnett.

1994

A – Brian Tyler, Tim Gentry, Damon Fisher, Michael Sheehan, Willie Dugan, Sean Harrington, Kevin Suer, Ron Labardee.

B – Jamerson Tillman, Nathan Bolden, Barry Tyler, Bernard Harris Jr., Gary Steinberg, Travis Fisher, Sabrina Fisher, Rick Agee Jr.

1993

A – Chris Johnson, Debbie Myers, Todd Melikan, Harry Wood, Scott French, Maurice Brown, Chad Heft, Ron Labardee.

B – Michael Patrick, Keenan Yarborough, Tasha Freeman, Lee Ann Sincavage, Nicole Holmes, Jason Alexander, Aaron Alonge, Brian Johnson.

1992

A – Debbie Myers, Damon Fisher, Thomas Baguio, Anthony Whitehead, Jason Butler, J.P. Muller, Todd Melikan, Billy Blaney.

B – Tim Weyand, Reny Bandong, Keith Oxforth, Chris Hood, Marcus Shaw, Robert Stevens, Rickey Farrell, Leslie Trace.

1991

A – Rob Jardine, Danny Nicholson, Tim Colley, Damon Fisher, Daniel Krpata III, Anthony Whitehead, Chris Johnson, Jason Butler.

B – Julian Ayers, Larry Weatherholtz, Omar Farlow, Matt Kissel, Tim Weyand, Paul Wade, Yvette Duckett, Keith Van Brakle.

1990

A – Mike Manolis, Camden Rokita, Ronnie Sword, Jason Butler, Michael Lowry, Donny Buckingham, Paul Childers, Jeff Presley.

B – Jonathan Jackson, Scott Foor, Chris Roy, Lester Pitts Jr., John Benson, Donald Gaither, Marc Moore Jr., Kim Sain.

1989

A – Tom Ladenburg, Romeo Cruz Jr., Rusty Crawford, Marc Dudley, Anthony Chapman, Kevin Porter, Damon Fisher, Michael Muffley.

B – Catrina Smith, Anthony Whitehead, Ricky Thurston, Matt Howery, Nanette Berkeley, Dan Marton, Steve Castle, Mike Howery.

1988

A – Rodney Osborne, Jim Einhorn, Anthony Chapman, Bobby Hall II, Scooter Luther, Sean Habron, Sean Shaw, Kristen Harrison.

B – Anthony Gambill, Suzy Purcell, Michael Lowry, Patricia Ramos, Gregory Southerland, Shawn Thompson, Thaiseke Smith, Marco Washington.

1987

A – Ricky Wallace, Buddy Sain, Wendell Cronk, Chris Rives, Greg Scott, Barry Roberts, Anthony Chapman, Rodney Osborne.

B – Kevin Porter, Brian Lehman, Michael Rakes, Trent Horn, Brian Kauffman, Kiya Stewart, Tom Ladenburg, Derek Poole.

1986

A – Brian Marler, Ricky Wallace, George Torney, Rodney Osborne, Scott Bailey, Susan King, Jim Lewis, Greg Scott.

B – Derrick Lewis, Brian Lehman, Greg Wilson, Brian Kauffman, Trent Horn, Bryan Chatham, Kevin Vandergrift, John Baker.

1985

A – Thomas Mason, Gregory Frazier, Buddy Sain, Shari Brothers, Patrick Allen, Kevin Myers, Brian Poole, John Walton.

B – James Lindsay, Chris Sevier, Vanessa Orman, Keith Wallen, Howard Kamen, Ed David, John Rives, Kelli Harris.

1984

A – Thomas Mason, Michael Lynch, Dave Akowski, Roland Williams, Greg Frazier, Rodney Currence, Aaron Thompson, Doug Mentz.

B – Mark Coleman, Michael Houston, Todd Ulich, Andrew Post, Scott Riddle, Tim Conrad, Kevin Myers, Dylan Evans.

1983

A – Ritchie Wolfe, Greg Frazier, Lori Lehman, David Castle, Brian Marler, Leroy Horn, Richard Sakala, Wade Barnes.

B – Susie Brothers, Billy Szamborski, Mark Coleman, Steve Dimisa, Ira Haertzoff, Chris Sappe, Joseph Maloney, Rodney Angell.