

Monday May 6, 2024

Spare Change

By Johnny Campos

Landmark Lanes team wins final third of Bill Mastronardi/Perfect Angle Pro Shop Masters league, then claims title in post-season invitational tournament

Contrary to popular belief, the Landmark Lanes team of Tony DeVita, Chad Barnes, Kile Hardin and Irvin Johnson did not win the overall title in the Bill Mastronardi/Perfect Angle Pro Shop Masters league last week.

The foursome, however, did win the final third of the league, after making a late charge to overtake the Johnson Accounting team on the final night of the season.

That earned them a spot in the post-season invitational tournament at Potter's Alley, which was open to the winners of each of the three thirds of the season as well as to the wildcard team that earned the most overall points.

Three different teams won the three segments of the league, and a fourth won the points title to earn spots in the invitational event.

So, a word to describe the league under first-year president Kayla Johnson would be "parity."

"Overall we had a very good year, and I think we had one of the most competitive years from team to team that we've seen in a while," she said. "We didn't have anyone run away with it.

"We had a very consistent group of 12 teams, which is fun and makes it exciting. In the final third, we had six teams within 22 points of the leader going into the last night. It was very tight and anything could have happened."

The Landmark Lanes team defeated Johnson Accounting, 36-14, on the final night of the league to finish in first place with 316 points – 13 ahead of Linn Lanes. Johnson Accounting fell to third.

But the league decided not to have a post-season playoff this year that would have determined the overall league champion.

"It was a vote from the captains that they would rather send three teams to the Tournament of Champions (which starts this week at Landmark Lanes) than have a league championship," Johnson said.

Representing the league in the T of C this year will be first-third champion Wingstop (Adam Burnette, Bobbie Sweet, David Colburn and Travis Anderson), second-third winner Linn Lanes (Sammy Taylor, Terry Chase, Jason Jones and Andy Stone), and the Landmark Lanes team.

Also advancing to the league's invitational tournament was the Potter's Alley team of Gary Robinson, Eric Lilienthal, Don Sweet and Bob Baker. The team did not win any of the thirds but finished second in each of the first two thirds (just one point behind Linn in the second third) and fourth in the final third and totaled a league-best 922 overall points.

In the invitational semifinals, Landmark Lanes defeated Wingstop, 34-16, (getting a 300 and a 779 from Irvin Johnson) and Linn Lanes beat Potter's Alley, 33-17.

In the title match, it was all Landmark Lanes, which cruised to the win over Linn.

It was quite the comeback by a Landmark Lanes team that finished 10th in the first third, seventh in the second third and was as far down as ninth in the final third. The team was never in first place until the final night.

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"We changed the lineup and then we started winning," said DeVita, the captain who put the Landmark team together. "I was at anchor, then went to leadoff, started bowling good and went back to anchor. I bowled good for two weeks, but couldn't win a point, so I put Irvin back at anchor.

"The night we were at Potter's (week 30) we won 44 points and that jumped us four or five spots and put us in contention. And then I started bowling good, had a couple of good nights and almost got a captain's spot."

Barnes did earn a captain's spot, finishing 10th in average at 225.67. DeVita just missed, finishing 13th (223.4) and Irvin Johnson was 15th (223.13).

"We all started bowling well at the end," Barnes said. "I'm not sure what it was. We knew we had it in us to win, but it seemed like we were always like fourth, third or second.

"It's been a few years since I was a captain. I'm glad I'm back, and it's going to be nice."

DeVita said he was not surprised that his team made a late charge to win the final third and the invitational tournament, despite a slow start.

"I was never really worried about this team, and I figured we'd get there eventually," he said. "The last few weeks we were on house money, and we shouldn't have even been here, the way the season's gone. Whatever we get, it's a bonus.

"If we had finished in the top half, it would have been a good season. I wouldn't have picked these guys if I didn't think we had a chance to win. And we won the tournament, so, to me, we still won the league – whether it's official or not."

Maybe their momentum can carry over into the Tournament of Champions.

Masters awards

Donnie Sweet, this year's No. 1 draft pick, finished with high average in the league with a 236.71 average for 87 games – more than a full pin ahead of runner-up Travis Anderson (235.26). Sweet was named league Bowler of the Year.

Dan Shinall, who was on the Striketown team, led the league in individual points, going 167-97 for a winning percentage of 63.26. Mike McBride was second at 160-104 and Anderson third at 150-98.

The bowlers with the high 12 averages earned spots as captains for next season.

Joining Sweet and Anderson as captains were Steve Taylor, McBride, Bob Baker, Kevin Tockes, Tommy Barnwell, Andy Stone, Kevin Audi, Chad Barnes, Gary Strait and Andre Campos.

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The Landmark Lanes team (left-to-right) of Kile Hardin, Irvin Johnson, Chad Barnes and Tony DeVita won the final third of the Masters league and the post-season invitational tournament.



The Linn Lanes team of (l-to-r) Terry Chase, Sammy Taylor, Andy Stone and Jason Jones won the second third and was runner-up in the invitational Masters tournament.

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The Wingstop team of (l-to-r) Travis Anderson, David Colburn, Bobbie Sweet and Adam Burnette won the first third of the Masters to qualify for the invitational tournament.



The Potter's Alley team (l-to-r) Eric Lilienthal, Gary Robinson, Bob Baker and Donnie Sweet won the most overall points in the Masters league.