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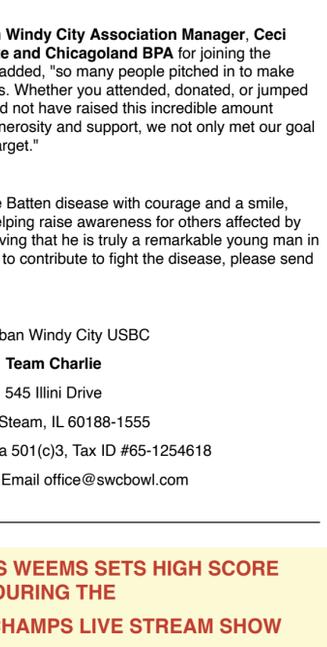
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SUBURBAN WINDY CITY USBC HOLDS FUNDRAISER TO FIGHT BATTEN DISEASE TO HELP ONE OF OUR OWN

Charlie Sims, Grandson of ISBPA Legends Tom & Kim Sims, battling Disease

Batten Disease is a group of rare genetic disorders that cause cells to accumulate waste instead of eliminating it. Over time, this leads to seizures, vision loss, and progressive difficulties with thinking and movement. As the disease advances, symptoms worsen and, tragically, Batten's often results in early death during childhood.

It is a devastating disease—made even more painful when it affects a beloved family member. Former Illinois State PBA President, **Louie P. Petersen Award Winner**, and current ISBPA Tournament Director **Tom Sims**, along with his wife Kim, have watched their 8-year-old grandson Charlie courageously battle Batten disease since its onset.



Charlie with caregiver at Elgin Lanes.

"It is heartbreaking to watch," Sims said, "but we are grateful that Charlie remains happy and lovable throughout the ordeal. We are also deeply appreciative of how the bowling community has stepped up to support Team Charlie, especially the **Suburban Windy City USBC** for organizing a fundraiser to join Team Charlie to help fight the disease."

The fundraiser was held this past Saturday evening at **Elgin Lanes**, where more than 100 people participated in supporting Charlie while raising funds to fight Batten --- with a current tally of \$10,743, with more dollars expected to roll in over the next several weeks. One-Hundred percent of the contributions will be forwarded to the **N-of-1 Fund** at the **Rush University Medical Center**.

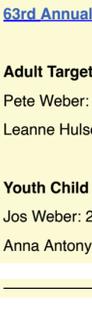
Following the event, **Suburban Windy City Association Manager, Ceci Bylls**, thanked the **Illinois State and Chicagoland BPA** for joining the events fundraising efforts, and added, "so many people pitched in to make **Pins for Charlie** a true success. Whether you attended, donated, or jumped in to help serve dinner, we could not have raised this incredible amount without you. Thanks to your generosity and support, we not only met our goal --- we surpassed our \$10,000 target."

Charlie Sims continues to face Batten disease with courage and a smile, inspiring "Team Charlie" and helping raise awareness for others affected by this devastating condition—proving that he is truly a remarkable young man in a child's body. If you would like to contribute to fight the disease, please send a check to:

Suburban Windy City USBC
Team Charlie
 545 Illini Drive
 Carol Stream, IL 60188-1555
 SWC/USBC is a 501(c)3, Tax ID #65-1254618
 Questions? Email office@swcbowl.com

16-YEAR-OLD JOS WEEMS SETS HIGH SCORE DURING THE 63RD BEAT THE CHAMPS LIVE STREAM SHOW

Pete Weber, Leanne Hulsenberg, Jos Weems & Anna Antony



by **Brendan Heneghan**
*Heneghan is a 28-year-old novelist, poet, newspaper reporter, and author of the book **Hard Road**. Since he is not tied to the bowling community, the ISBPA sought his perspective on the event as an "outsider" -- so to speak.*

Arena Lanes hosted the **63rd Annual Beat the Champs Target Score Show**, in Oak Lawn, Illinois, on January 17th. The event drew an energetic crowd that spanned across a wide range of ages and backgrounds. Bowling fans from all over Illinois and beyond enjoyed food, drinks, conversation, and good-natured competition. Leading up to the tournament, **USBC Hall of Famer, Storm Pro Staffer** and Chicagoan, **Diandra Asbaty**, entertained the crowd with trivia and prizes leading up to the exhibition.

Most alluring to fans was the chance to see bowling legend **Pete Weber** --- the 37X national PBA titlist. Standing among the best bowlers of all-time, it was more than Weber's skill, but his energy and humor that enamored the crowd. To set the adult Women's scores, **Leanne Hulsenberg**, one of the greatest female bowlers of all time who holds 27 professional titles, joined Weber in pairing the Adult targets. Bowling alongside the two hall of famers were a set of 16-year-olds ---Connecticut native **Anna Antony**, and Chicago's own **Jos Weems**.

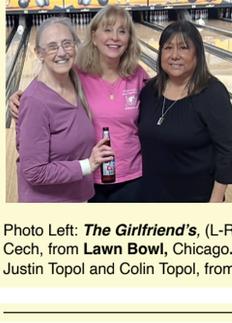
As the tournament opened, Weber threw a strike on his first ball, turned to the youth bowlers on his right, and with a smile on his face, began the on-lane banter that set the tone for the day, "I'm showin' you young'uns how to do it!"

As the match advanced to the second game, fans were treated to a near repeat of Brady McDonough's 300 the year prior, as Weems cleared the rack on his first 10 shots before missing, shooting a 289. Weber said of Weems after the tournament concluded, "I see a true champion here."

As part of the tournament's tradition, all net proceeds are donated to charity. This year's beneficiary is **Bowlers to Veteran Link**, an organization that provides funding for programs benefiting veterans' needs. In addition, during the Target Score Show, strikes recorded in the 5th and 10th frames triggered additional donations to the **International Bowling Museum and Hall of Fame** and the **Make-A-Wish Foundation of Utah**.



For spectators, the *Beat the Champs Target Score Show* provided a great atmosphere to meet and receive autographs from the sport's greatest bowlers. With appreciation to our event sponsor, **Storm**, who produced the live stream show, the show once again featured a great slate of bowlers who captivated the audiences who were there in person or watched online.



The autograph lines were long --- but the fans were patient.



The fans not only enjoyed seeing two of the game's all-time greats, but two of the more accomplished bowlers dominating the youth game today. And they didn't walk out of **Arena Lanes** empty handed, as another event sponsor, **Coolwick Apparel**, passed out free merchandise, and from the **Chicago White Sox** Public Relations office, **Sam Lawson** who passed out Storm / ISBPA / Chicago White Sox themed baseball caps.

About the history of the event, Weber said, "the importance of the event is that it brings people together, and that fans can see us have fun instead of competing on TV."

A pair of spectators chimed in as to what they enjoyed the most: "the best part of the show was watching Jos nearly hit the perfect game," said a student from Evergreen Park High School. Another spectator added, "my favorite part of the tournament is seeing how incredible these kids are at bowling," said 52-year-old Travis from Marion, Illinois, who added, "I look forward to following them throughout their careers. To view show, please click on link >>>

[63rd Annual Beat the Champs Target Score Show](#)

Adult Target Scores
 Pete Weber: 238, 237, 202 --- 677
 Leanne Hulsenberg: 210, 169, 223 --- 602

Youth Child Scores
 Jos Weber: 226, 289, 244 --- 759
 Anna Antony: 225, 205, 220 --- 650

KEGEL / ISBPA MIDWEST COLLEGIATE CLASSIC A GREAT SUCCESS

Calumet College of St. Josephs (Men) / Mount Mercy (Women) Crowned Champions



128 Teams competed at Stardust Bowl, Addison, Illinois, January 17-18, 2026.

The **2026 Kegel / ISBPA Midwest Collegiate Classic**, presented by **Hammer**, was held at **Stardust Bowl** in Addison, Illinois, concluded on January 18 and crowned two champions from a field of 128 competing teams.

In the Men's Division, **Calumet College of St. Joseph**—coached by ISBPA member and **Lynwood Bowl** owner **Mike Kubacki**—edged out the **University of Wisconsin–Whitewater**, 8,962 to 8,947, to capture the title.

Mount Mercy University convincingly defended its title with a score of 8,163, besting runner-up Judson University, which finished with 8,032, to secure the championship for a second consecutive year.

To review the full standing lists, please [CLICK HERE](#).

Thanks in part to a new management team, **H2M**—owned and operated by **Nick Hoagland** and **Steve Harman**—the tournament experienced a 20% increase in entries. **ISBPA Executive Director Keith Hamilton** spoke glowingly of the event, noting, "We wanted this prestigious Tier 1 tournament to evolve into something special by creating an environment that felt more like an event, rather than just another tournament." Hamilton added, "With the help of Nick and Steve, we not only saw an increase in entries, but a more enthusiastic and energetic vibe throughout the event."



With the addition of the Kegel / ISBPA Midwest Collegiate Classic, H2M (left) and Steve Harman, owners of H2M, now run nine collegiate tournaments, including three Tier 1 events.

Hamilton was referring to several enhancements that elevated the tournament experience, including:

- Raffle drawings that awarded product throughout the event
- More evenly balanced squads
- A streamlined registration process for coaches
- Separate lane patterns for the men's and women's divisions, replacing the long-standing tradition of using the same pattern for both

In addition, the **ISBPA** funded the **All-Tournament Team** bowlers with \$400 deposits into their respective SMART accounts. The 2027 Kegel / ISBPA Midwest Collegiate Classic will return to **Stardust Bowl**, January 16-17.

All-Tournament Team (each received \$400 in SMART)

1. Luke Winter, Wisconsin-Whitewater --- 245 average
2. Jacob Bockstie, Mount Mercy University --- 242 average
3. Nate Trentler, Calumet College of St. Josephs --- 236 average
4. Mason Doan, Calumet College of St. Josephs --- 233 average
5. Aidan Furukawa, Savannah College of Arts & Design --- 233 average

1. Rachel Moore, Culver-Stockton College --- 222.2 average
2. Ashley Gorman, William Penn University --- 218.4 average
3. Zandria Davis, Oklahoma Christian University --- 216.8 average
4. Hailey Bozich, Lindenwood University --- 214.8 average
5. Kenzi Nieman, Rochester Christian University --- 214 average

A PAIR OF TRIOS SHARE 2026 MILLER LITE BAKERS BLAST TITLE

Notable, Unique Accomplishment for each Co-Champion

The **2026 Miller Lite Baker Blast Target Score Tournament Finals** concluded on Sunday with a pair of trios sharing the title. Thirty-seven teams qualified to compete in the finals of this fun, unique tournament which were held at **Stardust Bowl** in Addison, Illinois. While both teams were proud to share the title, each had a unique milestone to celebrate along with receiving a \$2,000 check.

#1 – The Girlfriends: Fran McManus, Rexalyn Darr and Liz Cech from **Lawn Bowl** set a tournament record by winning the tournament with the lowest target score in event history (137).

#2 – The Topols: Ed Topol, Justin Topol and Colin Topol were the first all-family team to win the tournament. The *Topol's* were one of 10 teams from **Stardust Bowl** to compete in the finals.

The **Illinois State Bowling Proprietors' Association** congratulates our 2026 Co-Champions and thanks our sponsor Miller Lite (Molson Coors), for the ongoing support of the association and its tournaments.

To review the full standings, [CLICK HERE](#).

2026 Miller Lite Baker Blast Co-Champions

Photo Left: **The Girlfriend's**, (L-R) Fran McManus, Rexalyn Darr and Liz Cech, from **Lawn Bowl**, Chicago. Photo Right: **The Topol's**, (L-R) Ed Topol, Justin Topol and Colin Topol, from **Stardust Bowl**, Addison.

BRUNSWICK A2 MECHANIC SCHOOL RETURNS TO CHERRY BOWL

Only 12 Spots Available - First-come First-Served.

Back by popular demand, the **Illinois State BPA** is returning to Rockford, Illinois to hold a school for beginner to mid-level mechanics. The four-day school will be held at **Don Carter Lanes** from June 15 - June 19. To register, please fill out the provide registration waiver (click on **"REGISTRATION WAIVER"** to copy and print the form) and send to ISBPA via email by [CLICKING HERE](#).

Each member center may register one mechanic. Space is limited to the first 12 who register. If there are spots remaining after May 15, we will contact the centers who have registered to see if they would like to register additional mechanics. The cost per mechanic is \$995, which includes four full days of instruction and includes a continental breakfast and lunch. **Classic Products** will be providing the education, led by instructor **William Pike**.

June 15 - June 19
 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., each day
 Don Carter Lanes - 4007 E. State Street, Rockford, Ill. 61108
 Price is \$995 per mechanic

Only 12 Spots Available - First-Come First Served

YIANNI MAVRAKIS TO RECEIVE BPAA MEDIA AWARD

Mavrakis joins eight others to Receive Award at Bowl Expo.

The **Bowling Proprietors' Association of America** announced that eight industry service awards will be given during this year's International Bowl Expo in Nashville.

The honorees were announced during the business meeting of the **BPAA Bowling Summit**, held at the **Marriott Rivercenter** on The River Walk in San Antonio, Texas. Illinois' Yianni Mavrakis, of **Dolton** and **Town Hall Bowl**, will be receiving the associations **BPAA Media Award** for his presence on social media.

- **Media Award** — Yianni Mavrakis, Illinois
 - **Proprietor of the Year** — Erik Gialdella, Wisconsin
 - **V.A. Wapensky Award** — Bill Kuczinski, Ohio
 - **Ruben A. Dankoff Award** — Jay Burnett, Virginia
 - **Special Projects Award** — Michael Hall, Maryland
 - **President's Award** — Frank Wilkinson, New York
 - **Dick Weber Bowling Ambassador Award** — PWBA champion Stefanie Johnson.
 - **BPAA USBC Association Award** — Greater Omaha Bowling Association.
- The Victor Lerner Award will not be presented in 2026.

JOIN US FOR LYLE ZIKES HALL OF FAME INDUCTION CEREMONY

Lyle Zikes will be inducted into the **USBC State Hall of Fame** on Saturday evening, March 21, 2026. This is the second time in as many years as "one of our own" will be inducted in the state's hall, with last year being **Bill Duff**.

We invite all ISBPA members to attend his induction as we come together to recognize Lyle's outstanding contributions to the sport. His contributions to the industry mirrors what our association means to bowling in Illinois, so in some ways, the ISBPA / CBPA share in this honor.

If you would like to join us—and we truly hope you do—please let me know by Friday, February 13, whether you and a guest will be attending so that we can reserve seating with our group. The ISBPA and CBPA are pleased to cover the cost of attendance for our members.

Please **RSVP** to keith@bowlillinois.com as soon as possible, but no later than February 13, as I will need to submit the list to USBC Illinois. Thank you all — and once again — congratulations Lyle.

EVENT DETAILS

Saturday March 21, 2025
 Cocktails at 5:00 p.m. | Dinner at 6:00 p.m.
 Hoffman House/Holiday Inn Rockford
 7550 E State St, Rockford, Illinois 61108
 (If you have any special allergies to food, please let us know)

2026 INDUCTEES

Meritorious Service - Billie Roberts & Lyle Zikes
Outstanding Bowler - Tracy Anderson & Steve Rogers
 In Memoriam — Nancy Betts

[CLICK HERE TO RSVP](#)

PBA / PWBA NEWS

PBA hires CEO / Kulick, Honeychurch, Wagner to be inducted into PWBW HoF

Lucky Strike Entertainment and the **Professional Bowlers Association (PBA)** issued a press release announcing that it has hired a Chief Executive Officer, **Peter Murray**, as CEO of the PBA and the Head of Media for **Lucky Strike Entertainment**.

Peter Murray, new PBA CEO

Murray's experience is vast, coming to the PBA from the Professional Fighters League (PFL), where he was the founding CEO and played a key role in redefining MMA and building PFL. He also held executive leadership roles at Under Armour, Insignia Sports, William Morris Endeavor (WME), and the National Football League.

Tom Clark will continue to be the commissioner of the PBA.

On the women's side, the **Professional Women's Bowling Association Hall of Fame** will induct two players in the Performance category and one in the Meritorious Service/Builder category during tournament week for the **USBC Queens**, which runs May 13-19; the induction ceremony will be on May 13.

Kelly Kulick of Union, New Jersey, and Australia's **Cara Honeychurch** will be enshrined in the Performance category while **Leila Wagner** of Annapolis, Maryland, will be inducted for her off-the-lanes accomplishments.

LEGISLATIVE REPORT

by *Trevon Sylvester*

Spring Session Underway

The Illinois General Assembly's spring legislative session is now in full swing. The Michael Best Strategies team continues to vigilantly track all legislative activity related to iGaming and tax revenue proposals, as well as any other

initiatives that could adversely impact bowling centers across the state.

We are currently monitoring two internet gaming bills: SB 1963 and HB 3080. Both would establish the Internet Gaming Act, legalizing and regulating online gambling in Illinois. The bills create an internet gaming license and would allow out-of-state iGaming companies to offer casino games and poker online through up to three apps per licensee. This would divert gaming revenue away from brick-and-mortar establishments like bowling centers, reducing foot traffic and undermining local businesses that rely on in-person entertainment and video gaming terminals.

Though still early in the session, neither bill has advanced or been assigned to committee. As we return to Springfield next week, the Michael Best Strategies team will continue engaging legislators and staff to oppose this measure, and will keep you informed of developments.

To review the list of bills on the docket, [CLICK HERE](#).

2026 ISBPA Lobby Day

We're excited to share that ISBPA will partner with the Support Main Street Coalition and Illinois Gaming Machine Operators Association for a joint Lobby Day on Tuesday, March 24. Details on the itinerary and member participation opportunities will follow in the coming weeks. The schedule of key dates is below.

Important Dates

- Feb. 6, 2026 - Introduction of both House & Senate Bills Deadline
- Feb. 18, 2026 - Budget Address and State of the State **(Could include VGT's)**
- March 13, 2026 - Senate - SBs out of Committee Deadline
- March 27, 2026 – House – HBs out of Committee Deadline
- April 17, 2026 - Senate - SBs Third Reading Deadline
- April 17, 2026 - House – HBs Third Reading Deadline
- May 8, 2026 - House - SBs out of Committee Deadline
- May 8, 2026 - Senate - HBs out of Committee Deadline
- May 22, 2026 - House - SBs Third Reading Deadline
- May 22, 2026 - Senate - HBs Third Reading Deadline
- May 31, 2026 - Adjournment