

The Next Prodigy

What is the definition of a prodigy? Not just a gifted or intelligent young person or someone who is destined for greatness. A prodigy is someone who goes above and beyond to accomplish their goal, their dream...their destiny. The ones who become prodigies are the ones who truly work hard to achieve greatness and stay humble to the ones who got them where they are.

The road to success began for me almost 5 years ago at the young age of 10. Unlike most of the kids now I was far behind where competition was, most would start at younger ages, as little 3 years old. But that didn't worry me cause everything in life takes practice and more practice to be perfect at. As time passed my level of skill grew higher and higher, I moved up from a measly plastic ball to my first reactive. After a year into the sport I only averaged a measly 97. Two years had gone by and my average slowly increased to 115 then 138 the next year. Then finally destiny brought me to the coach I been searching for. His name was Kolin, though he was just a regular league bowler the way he executed was like the characteristics of a pro, smooth, balanced, agile, and of course just plain out good. He watched me bowl one day and decided to give me pointers from there we made a connection and I became what he called his "apprentice." After spending every single bowling related time with him my average jumped from 138 to a 167. As tournaments came I finally reached a level of competition with others around the area. But my ultimate test would be the major tournament that would occur that same year, Jena Kay Hutchings memorial scholarship tournament. 1st place was \$1,500, even though I was only a handicap bowler back then I still had a high shot at winning. During qualifying I managed to pull something out of this 167 bowler and shoot 178, 204, 162, 186, 153 which placed me 4th in qualifying. Match after match I finally made it to the final game. The game was in my grasp until the last frame where I left the 2-4-10 split. Rudely my opponent had an early celebration thinking I would miss and he had won so he ran off to the bathroom to let it "all" out. In that instance I was determined to not let him win. So I picked up the split dead on and struck to win the game by 3 pins. Kolin bursted into tears of joy and hugged me while shaking like a nervous wreck as if the game was still on. My dad hugged me and like all those happy ending competition movies he simply said "You did it!" After this major accomplishment I got my name out there into the area.

The next year my average increased to a 184 and I was prepared to take another shot at the same tournament. Before the tournament I left to Florida for vacation, Before I left I told Kolin as soon as I got back we had to train hard for Jena Kay,

he smiled and said "...of course, why wouldn't we." Little did I know but that what would be the last words I would hear from him.... 2 days before leaving to head home my dad got a phone call from the pro shop manager. After talking for about 5 minutes he looked over to my brothers and I and said "Kolin passed away guys...." I was in complete shock and I slowly broke out into tears in tremendous denial. At the memorial service, which was where he worked, I received what was left of his equipment which was 5 bowling balls and a tote. He worked at an art gallery and in his office there was only one picture he hung up... A picture of me, him, and the plaque I had won at Jena Kay. From there I made it my mission to win it again for him. Unfortunately I came up short and took 2nd and won \$1,250 but I took what I had learned from him and used it throughout the entire tournament. The year after I once again came in 2nd and had won \$1,350. Every year I use that tournament to commemorate the reason why I got to where I am now.

Today I average 210 and I have 1/ 299, 2/ 300 games under my belt. I have won over \$10,000 in scholarships from all around Texas. At some events, I somehow tap into my true potential which shows me a glimpse of what I'm capable of. As I progress into a scratch I know that I will need to unleash what is inside me, so that I can bring a higher caliber to my game. What the future holds for me? I want to attend a college where my educational course and bowling are balanced, but in the event that I am unable to find that college, bowling will be dropped to minimum so that I can focus on the career I wish to pursue. People always said I was Kolin's protege, the one to take over after him. Yet, Kolin would say that I wouldn't take his place but make a name for myself so he would call me his "Prodigy." I may or may not become the world's bowling prodigy but I became his and that is an honor I'm truly grateful to have. I believe in order to become a Prodigy one must know the very essence of what it takes to achieve their goal.

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