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Why I'm the next bowling prodigy

Ever since I won my 1st league championship in the 08-09 season, I've imagined myself up in the 10th frame needing a strike to win my 1st PBA title. Hundreds of fans are watching anxiously in the audience and millions are watching around the world. All of my hard work and preparation coming down to one shot that can establish my career as a PBA tour player. As calmly as the 1st frame, I step on the approach, visualize my target line and go. My approach is like poetry in motion as the ball leaves my fingertips, glides down the lane, and "STORMS" through the 1-2 pocket sending all ten pins straight off the pin deck. Coincidentally, that defining shot happened to give me 4 in a row, so I turn around and say "Hey Rob Stone", Here's Your HAMBONE!!!," as Pete Weber did in the 2008 Pepsi Championship. But before I can live that dream, I have to put in the time and effort to get me to that plateau and become the next bowling prodigy. A prodigy as defined by dictionary.com is "a person, especially a child or young person, having extraordinary talent or ability". I feel that a prodigy in the sport of bowling has a much more difficult challenge of being successful at the highest level of competition than in other sports. A bowling prodigy has to master many different aspects of his or her game in order to be successful and is continuously striving to be the best bowler he or she can. In other sports that's not always the case. You can get by with being gifted in one aspect of your game such as jump shooting in basketball or having great hands in football. I feel that I'm the next bowling prodigy because I put in the time and effort to learn not only how to improve my physical game, but to strive to

master the art of the mental game and learn about different adjustments to better prepare myself for any situations I may face. I feel I'm the next bowling prodigy because I'm open minded and determined to better myself and the people around me. I'm the next bowling prodigy because I have an unconditional love for the game regardless if I win or lose. I know that if I continue to strive to be the best I can be and push past adversity I know I'll be the next bowling prodigy.

One essential quality I feel a bowling prodigy must have is a willingness to change and adapt. Whether it be making equipment choices or adapting to the ever changing lane conditions, you have to be on top of your game to continue to play at a high level. Norm Duke didn't win 33 career PBA titles only playing down and in. He played different parts of the lane to put him in the best position to strike. I feel I can play different parts of the lane when the lanes call for it. I'm open minded and never stubborn to play an outside line or an inside line or any line in between. I know if I'm going to be the next bowling prodigy, I'm going to have to play different parts of the lane to take my game to the next level. Versatility is a must have quality in becoming a bowling prodigy and I'm continuously practicing that part of my game to bring me one step closer to become the next bowling prodigy.

Another critical quality in becoming a bowling prodigy in my eyes is the mental game. I feel so many bowlers overlook this important aspect of a prodigy's game that I feel it gives me an advantage over them. You can have an amazing physical game, but when it comes to stellar competition, they all have a great physical game. It's the mental game that can determine whether you walk out of a title match a champion or a runner-up. My favorite example of how a strong mental game can be the difference between winning and losing a championship is when Norm Duke and Ryan Ciminelli squared off in the 2009 Cheetah Championship. Norm Duke was down 42 pins in the second game and was in danger of going down 0-2 in the best of 7 championship match. With his back to the wall and the Cheetah Championship on the line, Norm dug deep inside himself, joked around with the crowd about being down by 42, and recalled a line from an Al Pacino movie. The rest is history. All of a

sudden Norm Duke became "STORMIN NORMAN" striking out and winning that game and the next 3 games in an awe inspiring performance to win the championship title. That moment inspires my mental game significantly and till this day it has taught me to never give up. When the chips are down and nothing seems to go your way, one mental trick can change the whole momentum of the game. When I'm bowling in competition, I feel that if I can just stay in the match and believe in myself, I can win. That is one aspect of being a bowling prodigy I feel I have and other bowlers don't. My positive mentality is an all important quality that I feel puts me on the path to become the next bowling prodigy.

Finally, the last precious quality I feel a bowling prodigy must have in order to be successful is an everlasting passion for the game. You can have the best physical game and the sharpest mental game but if you don't have the passion to keep going when things get rough, you can never reach your full potential. Everyone wins and loses in every sport no matter how gifted a person is. Even the greatest of PBA tour players have a bad week, but they don't let losing prevent them from coming back and believing they can win. They practice even harder and come back driven by a burning desire to win the next title. I have an unconditional love and passion for the sport of bowling. I practice several times a week, working diligently on my game and giving everything I have to insure I strive to reach my full potential. When I'm not on the lanes, I'm at home watching clips of all time greats such as Norm Duke and Parker Bohn III to get some key insight into what I'm doing right and what I still need to work on. Whenever I can, I help out the kids in my league so I can pass on some of the knowledge I have to help them in becoming accomplished bowlers. I feel that growing the sport of bowling is just as important as participating in it and if I can give some of my knowledge to other aspiring bowlers to help benefit them, then I'm glad to do it knowing I'm helping to grow the sport I love. All of these qualities I feel I possess to become the next bowling prodigy has helped me achieve some great accomplishments in just a short amount of time.

I've only been bowling for 4 years and I've jumped from a 97 avg from when I first started

bowling, to a 198 avg in my league this past season in my local bowling center. I have a high game of 289 and a personal best 824 series that I'm very proud of. I've had many runner-up finishes in tournaments such as the annual all-star classic and the Joe Soares invitational as well. Every time I fell short in those hard fought battles, I kept my head up and thought to myself "just come back in the next tournament and try even harder." That's when the Massachusetts USBC Youth Association State Tournament came around this past season. After not performing as well as I expected in my 1st state tournament, I was determined to do much better this time around. At the same time I was extremely excited to test my skills I've worked so hard to improve against the best youth bowlers in the state. I went into that tournament with a mindset that I'm going to give it everything I have and let my bowling do the talking. Little did I know that my bowling would be talking all tournament long. All of my hard work and determination to elevate my game to the next level led me to win the state tournament, placing 1st in singles w/handicap and 1st in all events scratch in the highest division, averaging 221 for the tournament! It's those kinds of moments that I live for in the sport of bowling. It gives me that all important confidence that if I keep practicing, I can do whatever I set my mind to.

I feel my versatility, positive mentality, and my everlasting passion for the game of bowling sets me on the right path of becoming the next bowling prodigy. It's these qualities I feel I possess that separate the "prodigies" from the "wannabes" in the sport of bowling. I work passionately on all aspects of my game so I can become the best bowler I can be. When I'm not working on my game, I'm helping out other aspiring bowlers so they can continue to hone their skills and enjoy the sport that I have come to love so dearly. I've never had the benefit of a coach to help me along in my journey to become the next bowling prodigy, but I won't let that or anything else keep me from doing everything I can to maximize my bowling potential. I'm taking the HY-ROAD to success and if I keep working hard and never give up, one day I'll be up in the 10th frame needing a strike to win my 1st PBA title and send all 10 pins to the pit, taking the world by STORM and establish myself as the next bowling prodigy.