

Personally, I wouldn't call myself a bowling prodigy; I must rather call myself the bowling jedi-in-training. That was really my thought when I looked at the contest email that I got from weplay. O.K., for myself being the bowling jedi-in-training, I know that I am not the best and I have a lot to learn still for a seventeen year old teenager with only a 143 average. I guess the only thing I can do is to start from the beginning of myself bowling for the first time without bumpers.

The first time I ever bowled just in general, was at a birthday party in a bowling alley at Red Bluff. I can't exactly say what bowling alley it was because it was about eight years ago that I cannot remember every detail of where I was and who's birthday party it was but it was my sister's friend who was celebrating their birthday there so my sister, my mom, my dad, and I all went to go to the birthday party. It was my first time bowling, yes, I know so I have the excuse to bowl horribly and bowl incorrectly. I didn't do the granny-style, no, I bowled using my pointer and my middle finger, my thumb also because I know that was right for sure. Do not worry; I will not bore you the exact details except for the best part. I through a 6, 7-10 split, the only thing that was really on my mind was to get the six and the ten pin because that was what my dad told me. I did, but I also got the seven pin. This was my first time bowling and I got a moderately-hard split that adults sometimes have difficulty to pick up. That split, basically made me wanted to play bowling as a sport because I like it; I'm (somewhat) good at it and I could go a lot further than baseball.

As a Jedi-in-training bowler, I will continue to at least do good to learn new skills as learning different ways to bowl and improve my average so I can go pro someday, which will hopefully be soon. Right now, I'll tell you about another story of how I placed high of the State of California of my 2009/2010 season by telling you at least the summery of what happened.

It was a year after I had to stop bowling; I had scoliosis and was placed into the E.R. room. Of course it was a time consuming thing because I knew I had it but it's just been getting worse. This was the year 2008, and after the surgery, the doctor said I couldn't bowl for at least a year. I was disappointed for a year without bowling, I use to wake myself up so my parents could just take me to the bowling alley and I send them away because I was 14, I didn't need my parents to watch me, so a year without bowling. It's tough because time just past really quickly and I love the sport. One year later, I signed back up again and did about ten pins above my average. I went for two leagues, one is the Orland Youth Bowling League which is home and the other is the North State travel league. It took me the whole travel league season just to get me qualified and I qualified because someone dropped out but I didn't care, I wanted to go to Pepsi Cola. When I bowled there, wow, for people who said I wasn't going to do it. I did it. I got fifth place in the qualification for state. If you want me to prove it, look for me at the California USBC website and you'll find me on District One. The only thing wasn't that bad but could have done better was the second game but oh well.

I ditch prom for State, I find it funny because the girl who I said no to because of it really wanted me there and was texting me the whole way down to Fountain Valley, and she thought that we were flying. Flying takes the fun out of it. Anyways, at California State I bowled my six games. I never had a disappointment because I had fun with my 174 average when I had a 143 average back at home. I did awesome at it for a person who skipped a year of bowling with health problems. Although my dad and I

believed that I did awesome with 1044 pin that are knocked down and beaten down with my bowling ball. It wasn't enough to make it to the top four BUT! I got 31<sup>st</sup> place and I believe-I know that that was amazing and I know that I did well enough to make myself proud for the trip back home.

So there, that is not the ending of my Bowling jedi-training. It will not be over for a long time because I know I have much to improve for next season and the one after that though I cannot stay as a youth bowler forever. All I can say is that if you choose me or not. I'm still going to continue my path that I'm at right now, or I should say the lane that I'm at right now as my bowling alley still have wooden lanes. More stability as I move forward to become a Bowling Jedi-master, or at least go pro someday. It'll happen when you put your heart and your mind into it.

Joseph Stokes