

MATTHEW D. SMITH

Matthew Smith didn't have an instant connection to bowling. He first tried a league in Germany while his dad was serving in the military. When he came to Kirtland AFB in 1982 it was a different story. When he joined the Junior Bowling league he found his groove and the journey began. He remembers his early years with Peg Botkin, she gave him his fundamentals. Peg taught him the game and the physical aspects of it. Matt was able to bowl in youth leagues not only at Kirtland but also Leisure and Fiesta lanes. That is where Mike Miller helped as a teenager and eventually his transition onto the PBA tour. Mike became a role model/mentor/and coach, helping further his development and harnessing his abilities. As a youth bowler Matt represented New Mexico in the Coca Cola Championship in 1991 and 1993 finishing 3rd and winning a \$2000.00 scholarship. While Matt attending Highland HS he played basketball and was named to the All State Tournament team in 1993.

A memorable game to Matt was at Fiesta Lanes at 13 year of age when he bowled his first 297. He was so close, it would be years later in October of 1993 at the ripe age of 18 when he bowled his first 300 at Holiday Bowl. Although it was a great moment in his career his most memorable 300 was at the 2012 USBC national during singles. Currently Matt has 45-300 games and 26-800 series', rolling his first at 20 years old, 857 being his highest bowled at sun Valley. Matts highest book average was 241.

While in attendance at UNM Matt participated with the Lobo Bowling Team for three years and later became a coach for the team. In 1995 he was on the National Championship team for UNM.

Matt has toured with the PBA with his top finish in 11th. He has has had a 300 and 800 on tour.

Matt became a member of our association in 1983 but left us in 1999 to venture out to Iowa for employment. Where he met his lovely wife, Jodie. In 2015 Matt returned to New Mexico, where he hangs his heart and call home. During his time in Iowa Matt was inducted to the local hall of fame.

Early success is what hooked Matt into bowling at a young age... but the desire to continue getting better and the thrill of competition is what keeps him coming back. He is constantly learning and encourages himself develop and apply his new knowledge. Each time Matt steps onto the lanes he wants to improve and challenge himself. He not only wants to challenge himself on the lanes but in all aspects of his life. He said he will continue to bowl until he can not throw the ball anymore. He enjoys teaching others about the game and offering any sort of tips that may help them succeed as well. As a secretary of a larger league you don't always notice individuals but Matt being a little tall and just a little handsome, he is hard to miss but it was his style and flow that captures your attention. He is a joy to watch and has inspired many young bowlers in youth leagues that have had the opportunity to watch him. It is my honor to know Matt as a bowler, a person and a friend.

By Delfina Eddington

