

## OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS

# ON A LEVEL FIELD, DUO REACHES THE TOP

### STUART SHECK AND ROBERT TONELLI

have shared more than two decades together on the lanes at the United States Bowling Congress Open Championships, enjoying the camaraderie and visiting a variety of locations that come with the annual pilgrimage.

Their journey has taken them to 11 cities in nine states, with the simple goals of having a

memorable time with friends and teammates and earning as much of



the event's multi-million-dollar prize fund as possible. They are motivated by friendship, the opportunity to compete in a sport they love, and proud to be part of such a prestigious event.

But earlier this year, they got more than they ever could've expected from their time on the lanes.

When Sheck, of Germantown, Maryland, and Tonelli, of Henderson, Nevada, made their way to the South Point Bowling Plaza for their 22nd and 41st appearances, respectively, they walked away with a place in the record book as the first doubles winners in the new Standard Division of the world's largest annual participatory sporting event.

"I've always looked forward



to Nationals, and I'll look even more forward to it after this," Sheck, 56, said. "Bob (age 72) wasn't getting any younger, and neither was I, so we are incredibly grateful for this amazing opportunity and very special moment. We always have been able to cash consistently, but knew we were not at the level of the top contenders.

"We hoped the new division

would give us a chance to be a little more competitive, but we never thought we'd be the first champions."

The Standard Division was created based on research that showed the largest demographic at the event wanted a

better experience by competing against bowlers of similar skills. For bowlers with entering averages of 181-209, the new division would provide a more





competitive outlook for many bowlers and a different path to claim one of the tournament's coveted Eagle trophies.

The Open Championships now awards an Eagle to winners in each of the event's three divisions – Regular, Standard and Classified. The 2017 USBC Open Championships marked the first time since 1979 there were three divisions.

"It was a pretty good feeling to win, and finally receiving the Eagle actually made it real and very special," Tonelli said. "We always enjoyed bowling in the tournament, but the new division gave us a chance at something we always thought may have been unachievable."

Sheck said he and Tonelli didn't approach the 2017 event any differently than they did in the past, and though they didn't hit the lanes at the South Point Bowling Plaza until nearly two months into the event, Sheck

didn't give much thought to the leading scores.

The two ended up claiming the inaugural crown with a 1,236 effort, a 206 average. Tonelli led the way with games of 213, 235 and 182 for a 630 series, while Sheck added 200, 179 and 227 for a 606 set.

"I knew there was a new division and that we fit into it (combined entering averages of 361-418), but it really caught me by surprise to find out we were leading," said Sheck, who has bowled doubles with Tonelli in each of his 22 trips to the Open Championships. "With the new division, we didn't know what to expect, so taking the lead and having the score hold up for two months was amazing."

To be fair, some of Sheck's focus in 2017 went to making sure his wife, Keri, and daughter, Adriana, also had a memorable time at the Open Championships. It was the first

time either had been to the tournament and marked Adriana's debut on the lanes.

The 2018 tournament in Syracuse, New York, also will be incredibly special for Sheck, not only because he'll be introduced as a champion for the first time, but because he'll get to bowl doubles with his

daughter.

Before taking the lead in 2017, Tonelli had planned to miss the 2018 tournament, which is returning to Syracuse for the first time since 1999. The brief hiatus now means the two will not be able to defend their title.

That's right, another duo will get to experience the excitement of winning Standard Doubles in 2018 and another tandem will enjoy the post-bowling interview and photo session Sheck notes as standing out from the overall experience.

The 2018 Open Championships, the 115th edition of the event, will run for 107 days from March 24 until July 8. The tournament is expected to bring more than 35,000 bowlers to the Oncenter Convention Center, where 48 lanes have been specially built. The bowlers will compete in team, doubles and singles in three average-based divisions.

In all, 32 Eagles again will be up for grabs across the three divisions in 2018. Who will be the next to rise to the occasion on the championship lanes?

## 2018 USBC OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS



**When:** March 24 - July 7 (last day of team competition)

**Where:** Syracuse, New York

**Venue:** Oncenter Convention Center (48 lanes)

**Information:** [BOWL.com/OpenChamp](http://BOWL.com/OpenChamp)



## TELEVISION

## ALL EYES ON BOWLING

**TELEVISION AND BOWLING** have a long, storied history.

In the late 1940s, *Bowling Headliners* took to the air and the sport was off and running on America's small screens. It would become a staple on Saturday afternoons and, as the *New York Times* reported in a 1983 article prior to the start of the PBA Tour broadcasts on ABC, bowling regularly pulled in 15-18 million viewers each week.

But live sports have always played an integral part in television's programming. It was television that brought sports such as the NFL and the NCAA Tournament into homes and helped those sports grow exponentially.

That's why USBC's recent announcement of a two-year deal with CBS Sports Network is important to bowling. Having the opportunity to televise talented individuals competing in the sport only can increase awareness of bowling.

And it's even better when you can bring events to bowling fans as they happen – live coverage from the U.S. Open, the USBC Queens, the U.S. Women's Open, the Professional Women's Bowling Association Players Championship and the PWBA Tour Championship.

How cool was it to watch Francois Lavoie's historic 300 on his way to the U.S. Open title in 2016, and Shannon O'Keefe winning a roll-off against Liz Johnson on her way to the 2017 PWBA Tour Championship?

It also is about developing player recognition. Who hasn't cheered – or even rooted against – a certain player. It simply gives fans more of a reason to follow a sport.

The PWBA will have a bigger spotlight in 2018 as CBS Sports Network will have live shows



from three events during the second half of the season – the PWBA St. Petersburg-Clearwater Open, the PWBA Twin Cities Open, and the PWBA Columbus Open. This marks a significant change to previous years, when events were taped for later broadcast.

"The addition of the live telecasts gives the PWBA greater exposure and the opportunity to grow even more to build future stars," PWBA Tour spokesperson Kelly Kulick said.

In 2018, there will be live finals every Saturday in August, in addition to the four events that will be shown live in primetime.

The package also includes coverage from the top youth and collegiate events which can only help bring more attention to the sport. The Intercollegiate Singles Championships kicks off coverage in April, part of four TV shows from the ISC and Intercollegiate Team Championships.

For the fourth consecutive

year, the title matches of the Junior Gold Championships presented by the Brands of Ebonite will be televised. The U12, U15 and U20 divisions each will have a TV show dedicated to the boys and girls title matches. Those who watched Solomon Salama strike on his first 11 shots of the U15 Junior Gold boys title match know the excitement and there might not be a better advertisement for youth bowling.

Youth team bowling also will be showcased as the U12 and

U15 title matches of the USA Bowling National Championships presented by Sixlets®, which features four-member teams, return for a third consecutive year.

The PWBA Tour, U.S. Open, Junior Gold Championships and USA Bowling National Championships are collaboratively funded by USBC and the Bowling Proprietors' Association of America.

Visit [BOWL.com/](http://BOWL.com/) BowlingOnCBSSN for the complete television schedule.

## Bowling on CBS Sports Network

**USBC and CBS Sports Network first teamed on a television package in 2015. A look at the last three years:**  
**56** bowling events nationally televised

**13** major championships finals

**65** champions crowned on TV

**80-plus** hours of bowling on national TV



# USBC QUICK STRIKES

NEWS AND NOTES FROM THE UNITED STATES BOWLING CONGRESS

## Still time to attend USA Bowling regional



USA Bowling's regional schedule has 10 events remaining to determine the 32 teams – 16 teams in the 15-and-under division and 16 teams in the 12-and-under division – that will advance to the 2018 USA Bowling National Championships set for July in Dallas.

Two regional events will be held in January, four in February, three in March and the final event in Birmingham, Alabama, is set for April. USA Bowling features a Baker format and rosters can have up to six bowlers, though only four compete at a time.

Visit [BOWL.com/USABowlingRegionals](http://BOWL.com/USABowlingRegionals) for the schedule and to register.

## USBC Coaching adds instructors in Italy

USBC Coaching announced it has two new international instructors in Italy.

USBC Silver coaches Debbie Waite and Massimo Brandolini completed instructor training and now will teach USBC Coaching Level I and Bronze certification classes. Gold coach Frank Buffa was instrumental in the training of Waite and Brandolini, and will continue working with them to offer classes.

"Becoming a USBC instructor is a great honor," Waite said. "For me, it means being part of an excellent team, the best I would say. Instructing people, and having USBC at my side, is going to be the best anyone could ask for."

## Dexter High School All-American applications being accepted



Each year, five male and five female USBC High School members are selected for the Dexter High School All-American Team and each student-athlete selected receives a \$1,000 scholarship.

Coaches or team administrators must nominate

eligible contenders and once nominations are accepted, the student-athlete receives an application packet. Selection is based on bowling accomplishments, academic achievement, extracurricular and community involvement, and applicants must have at least a 3.0 grade-point average and one letter of recommendation.

Nominations are due by April 2 and the team will be presented at the Junior Gold Championships. Go to [BOWL.com/Scholarships](http://BOWL.com/Scholarships) to apply.

## VIP, practice available for Open Championships

Competitors at the 2018 USBC Open Championships in Syracuse, New York, again will have the opportunity to enjoy some of the tournament's most popular features in one convenient package

The VIP program returns for its seventh year to enhance the USBC Open Championships experience. Among the program staples are a membership credential, commemorative Logo Infusion performance jersey, VIP locker access, photo and video discount package, Bowling Ball Express discount and other items for \$229.95. Visit [BOWL.com/OpenVIP](http://BOWL.com/OpenVIP) for details.

One-hour practice sessions featuring the same lane condition used on the championship lanes also are available, based on availability. Practice sessions cost just \$100 for an hour on a pair of freshly oiled lanes (up to 10 people) or \$50 for an hour on one lane (up to five people). Registration can be done online at [BOWL.com/OpenChamp](http://BOWL.com/OpenChamp).

## Mary Mohacsi dies at age 85

USBC Hall of Fame member Mary Mohacsi of Livonia, Michigan, died Nov. 2 at age 85. Inducted to the hall of fame in 1994 in the Superior Performance category, Mohacsi was active during the early years of women's pro tours, winning a regional title and a Professional Women's Bowling Association title.

But much of her success was as an amateur bowler in international, state and local competitions. A Team USA member in 1974, 1981, and 1983, she would claim seven medals – three gold, a silver and three bronze – and set or helped set five international records.

Mohacsi was named the United States Olympic Committee's Bowling Sportswoman of the Year in 1985.

## Team USA's Butturff wins titles at two events

Team USA's Jakob Butturff won the men's title at the 2017 QubicaAMF Bowling World Cup held in November in Mexico, and the 23-year-old left-hander also was part of the men's team to capture the team title at the World Bowling Championships that concluded in December in Las Vegas. Also on the men's team at the World Championships

## CALENDAR

**Now-Jan. 7, 2018**

**Team USA Trials/U.S. Amateur**  
Orleans Bowling Center  
Las Vegas

**March 9-11, 2018**

**Intercollegiate Team and Singles Sectionals**  
Dallas; Fairview Heights, Ill.; Smyrna, Tenn.; Stratford N.J.

**March 15-18, 2018**

**USBC Senior Queens**  
Gold Coast Hotel and Casino  
Las Vegas

**March 24-July 8, 2018**

**USBC Open Championships**  
Oncenter Convention Center  
Syracuse, N.Y.

**April 8-15, 2018**

**USBC Masters**  
Oncenter Convention Center  
Syracuse, N.Y.

**April 17-21, 2018**

**Intercollegiate Team and Singles Championships**  
Sun Valley Lanes  
Lincoln, Neb.

**April 19-July 1, 2018**

**USBC Women's Championships**  
National Bowling Stadium  
Reno, Nev.

**April 23-26, 2018**

**USBC Convention**  
Grand Sierra Resort  
Reno, Nev.

**April 26-28, 2018**

**PWBA Las Vegas Open**  
South Point Bowling Plaza  
Las Vegas

**May 3-5, 2018**

**PWBA Sonoma County Open**  
Double Decker Lanes  
Rohnert Park, Calif.

**May 10-12, 2018**

**PWBA Fountain Valley Open**  
Fountain Bowl  
Fountain Valley, Calif.

**May 16-22, 2018**

**USBC Queens**  
National Bowling Stadium  
Reno, Nev.

Go to [BOWL.com/Tournaments](http://BOWL.com/Tournaments) for complete information.

were Chris Barnes, AJ Johnson, Tommy Jones, Marshall Kent, and Chris Via. Barnes and Jones also teamed to win men's doubles.

For Team USA women, Shannon O'Keefe, Kelly Kulick and Danielle McEwan captured the women's trios title, and McEwan topped the field to win all-events.