

COVER STORY

JUNIOR GOLD PROVIDES TRIP OF A LIFETIME

BONJOUR. COMMENT ALLEZ-VOUS?

When Junior Team USA member Kamerin Peters of Toms River, New Jersey, won the first médaille d'or (gold medal) of her career, it came on a special two-lane installation in the heart of Paris.

It was an unforgettable, once-in-a-lifetime moment for the Garden State teenager and her doubles partner, Mabel Cummins of Elburn, Illinois, who were selected to represent the United States at the inaugural World Bowling Junior Championships in March.

The opportunity for Peters to travel nearly 4,000 miles to the City of Love to do something she's passionate about was part of a multi-step process that began months before at the 2018 Junior Gold Championships presented by the Brands of Ebonite International.

Peters, 16 years old at the time, entered the event knowing it would feature thousands of the best youth bowlers in the country. She knew she would test her skills against other top-tier talent and possibly compete on CBS Sports Network, if she performed well enough.

What she actually didn't know is that a successful week at the event also could land a spot



Solomon Salama, Anthony Neuer, Kamerin Peters and Mabel Cummins saw the Louvre during their trip to the World Bowling Junior Championships.

on Junior Team USA. After 16 qualifying games on four challenging lane conditions, Peters was second among the 856 participants in the girls 20-and-under category, and through an additional 10 games she held her position to qualify second in the 16-player double-elimination match-play bracket.

Though she came up a win short of earning the No. 3 seed for the U20 TV stepladder, her

26-game performance was enough to earn her a spot on 2019 Junior Team USA, setting the wheels in motion for her international debut.

"I honestly had no idea you could make Junior Team USA at Junior Gold," Peters said. "I just wanted to see how I could perform at the highest level, and making the team was an awesome bonus to a memorable week. It's still crazy that I then

got to go to France and won a gold medal, something I'll always get to share with Mabel."

The doubles gold medalists were joined in France by Anthony Neuer of Lewisburg, Pennsylvania, and Solomon Salama of Beverly Hills, California, a pair of two-time Junior Gold champions.

For approximately 10 days, the four 16-year-old bowlers were immersed in French culture, saw the Louvre Museum and the Eiffel Tower and met bowlers from 34 other countries.

They also competed in singles, doubles, mixed team and Masters match play, and the memorable trip ended in a special bowling venue constructed inside Paris' Institut du Judo. Both duos qualified for their respective doubles finals, so they got to bowl on the special stage.

"France was so much different than what we're used to in the United States, and it was amazing to see the architecture and history everywhere we went," Peters said. "Then, getting to bowl in such an awesome setting and having it end on the medal stand like that was incredible. It was more than I ever expected, and there definitely was a lot of emotion. I never thought it would be me standing up there."

Every step of the way, Peters had her mother, Jessica, by her side. She is her No. 1 supporter and coach.



Junior Team USA coach Bryan O'Keefe watched the boys team win silver while the girls team brought home the gold in doubles.

"It meant a whole lot to have my mom there with me for what could be a once-in-a-lifetime experience," Peters said. "Most of the things I do or bowl for are for her, and having her by my side made the trip that much more amazing."

Peters (277) and Cummins (201) claimed the doubles gold medal at the 2019 World Junior Championships with a 478-452 victory over Korea's Hong Soree and Jeong Youngseon. Neuer and Salama fell to Korea in a high-scoring final, 534-502, and settled for the silver medal.

While Peters' long-term bowling goals include time on the Professional Women's Bowling Association Tour, after possibly winning a collegiate national title, bowling for the United States wasn't something she previously thought about.

Now that she's had the opportunity, she'll see the 2019 Junior Gold Championships in Detroit through new eyes and take the lanes with extra confidence. That, and the motivation

born from just missing the TV show at Junior Gold in 2018.

Neuer, Salama and Cummins likely will have some extra swagger when they walk into the 2019 Junior Gold Championships, and rightfully so, as they have been among the most dominant young bowlers in recent years.

Cummins is a Junior Gold champion (Girls U15 in 2016) and is looking to become the next two-time champion, while Neuer and Salama have their sights set on being the first boy to win three Junior Gold titles. PWBA stars Shannon Pluhowsky and Stefanie Johnson each won three consecutive times on the girls side.

Neuer won the U20 division last year and will compete in that division again, despite the addition of a U17 category. Only U20 bowlers are eligible for spots on Junior Team USA, while U17 and U15 competitors will compete for spots on the program's developmental team.

Neuer's first win came in the U12 division in 2014. His move to U15 competition resulted in finishes of 25th (2015), third (2016) and second (2017), before moving divisions again and picking up his second title.

Even at 17, Neuer's success and recent experience in Paris have

him feeling like a different competitor heading into the 2019 Junior Gold Championships. Though he did not leave Paris with a gold medal, Neuer left with a better understanding of how to handle certain situations, such as minimizing the damage when you hit a pair of lanes you just can't figure out.

"Being with the team and coaches made me think about how it's not always all about you, and you just need to do your best for the team and your teammates, who are there to help," Neuer said. "Going into the Paris trip, I thought it was going to be really cool. Looking back, I realize it was a once-in-a-

lifetime experience, and I'm very proud to have been selected. I'll use it to push me and drive me to hopefully get another chance at something like that."

Along with a new mental toughness, Neuer has been working on understanding his arsenal better, playing different angles and just being more versatile. He also has an extra set of eyes behind him — his father, Professional Bowlers Association Tour champion Andy Neuer.

While he has thought about the possibility of winning a third Junior Gold title, that's something he'll push out of his mind once the 2019 event gets underway.

"Sure, I think about that now, but once it comes, I'm just going to take it one day at a time," Neuer said. "I feel like I've matured as a player and learned how to handle things better, on the lanes and off. Once you're head goes, your whole game goes, so you have to stay composed. That's probably the biggest thing I learned this year."

BowlTV.com will have live coverage of the 2019 Junior Gold Championships, which will take place July 13-20 in the metro Detroit area. The event features the top youth bowlers in the country seeking national titles in four divisions — 12-and-under, 15-and-under, 17-and-under and 20-and-under — and spots on Junior Team USA. The title matches of all divisions once again will be televised on CBS Sports Network.

2019 JUNIOR GOLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

A look at the 2019 Junior Gold Championships presented by the Brands of Ebonite International:

When: July 13-20 • **Where:** Eight centers in the metro Detroit area

Who: Youth bowlers who qualified in four divisions — U12, U15, U17, U20

Finals: Three-person stepladder finals, all held at Thunderbowl Lanes and taped for broadcast on CBS Sports Network. U12 finals are Friday, July 19, with the U15, U17 and U20 finals on Saturday, July 20.

Visit BOWL.com/JuniorGold for more information on the 2019 Junior Gold Championships

TEAM USA

MAKING THE TEAM

THE PAN AMERICAN GAMES is the second-largest multi-sport event after the Olympics and is held every four years in the year before the Summer Olympic Games.

For members of USBC Team USA, it likely is the most important tournament in which they will compete. Athletes earn their spots on the United States' Pan American Games team through a qualifying process approved by the United States Olympic Committee.

The two women who will represent the U.S. in bowling at the 2019 Pan American Games in Lima, Peru, this summer are no strangers to international competition.

Stefanie Johnson of McKinney, Texas, and Shannon O'Keefe of Shiloh, Illinois, each have been members of the Team USA program for the last 15 years, as each first made the team in 2005. Though they have won World Championships together in team, doubles, and trios, neither made the Pan American Games team until this year.

O'Keefe was close to making the U.S. Olympic team



Stefanie Johnson (left) and Shannon O'Keefe won doubles gold at the 2013 World Bowling Championships

as a softball player when she was 15 and thought that might have been her only shot at experiencing an Olympic-type of competition.

"Here we are, 25 years later, and I get to have my Olympic experience with my sister," O'Keefe said, referring

to her close friend Johnson. "I don't even know how to explain it. It's such a dream come true."

Johnson came close to making the Pan American Games team on a couple of occasions but fell short.

"It's just an incredible experience because we are getting older," Johnson said. "Having the opportunity we've been afforded by qualifying, and not being selected, is really cool. It's icing on the cake to do it with my best friend and to represent our country."

The Pan American Games

will take place July 26 through Aug. 11, with the bowling competition scheduled for July 25-30.

The four-member Team USA bowling contingent also has 2019 USBC Masters champion Jakob Butturff of Tempe, Arizona, and Nick Pate of Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota.

Both men and women will compete in two medal events – singles and doubles – at the Pan American Games.

While Johnson and O'Keefe have a combined 30 years on Team USA, Butturff (3) and Pate (2) have a combined five years. Both Team USA men were only 11 years old when Johnson and O'Keefe first made Team USA.

"They're both extremely great players and, yes, they might not have as much Team USA international experience as we do, but they have a lot of bowling experience," O'Keefe said of Butturff and Pate. "They are incredible players and I don't think they'll need too much from us."

2019 PAN AMERICAN GAMES

When: July 26 – Aug. 11

Where: Lima, Peru

Participants: 6,800 athletes from 41 countries

Events: 419 in 39 sports (61 disciplines)

Visit BOWL.com/TeamUSA for more information on Team USA and the Pan American Games.

USBC QUICK STRIKES

NEWS AND NOTES FROM THE UNITED STATES BOWLING CONGRESS



SMART distributes \$1.75 million from earnings

For the second consecutive year, the Scholarship Management and Account Reporting for Tenpins (SMART) has made a distribution of \$1.75 million to providers' funds from investment earnings.

The SMART Board determines any possible income earnings distribution and releases the funds to providers by the end of May each year. SMART has returned more than \$4.3 million to Providers accounts in the last year, including \$2.2 million in expired Recipients Funds and \$430,000 in Expired Provider accounts.

Reno set to host 2020 Masters

The Grand Sierra Resort Bowling Center in Reno, Nevada, will host the 2020 USBC Masters, a major event on the PBA Tour. The event will kick off March 23 and the stepladder finals on Sunday, March 29, will be televised live on FS1 as part of the PBA's television package with FOX Sports.

Reno also will be the host city for the 2020 USBC Open Championships. The event, which will be held at the National Bowling Stadium, will get underway March 21 and run through July 5.

USBC Convention heads to Chicago area in 2021

The USBC Convention and Annual Meeting will take place in the Chicago area in 2021 as the Westin Lombard Yorktown Center in Lombard, Illinois, will be the host hotel for the event.

The 2021 USBC Convention is set for April 26-29, continuing its Monday-Thursday format of the last several years. The USBC Board of Directors recently

approved the site selection, as it continues the organization's commitment to host its annual meeting near a USBC Championships event. The 2021 USBC Women's Championships will take place at Stardust Bowl in Addison, Illinois, just six miles away.

The 2020 USBC Convention will take place April 27-30 at The Orleans in Las Vegas.



USBC, South Point extend partnership

USBC and the South Point Hotel and Casino have extended their partnership agreement to bring USBC Championships events to the 60-lane Tournament Bowling Plaza in Las Vegas through 2033.

The extension of the agreement will have the USBC Women's Championships taking place at South Point Hotel's Tournament Bowling Plaza in 2029 and 2032, in addition to previous announced events in 2020, 2023 and 2026.

The USBC Open Championships, already set to visit the venue in 2021, 2024 and 2027, also will take place at the Las Vegas venue in 2030 and 2033. The extension keeps each event at the Tournament Bowling Plaza every third year.

New York bowler rolls 900 series



Jeremy Milito, a 26-year-old left-hander from Patchogue, New York, became the 35th bowler

to roll a 900 series, connecting for 36 consecutive strikes during the Epic Edge Trios league on April 25 at Farmingdale Bowling Center.

Milito's 900 came on the first pair of the center, and he had recently shot 640 on that pair. He explained that Lane 1 was a lot tighter, and Lane 2 hooks early, so he used a stronger ball on Lane 1 and a weaker ball on Lane 2. He stuck with the same two balls the entire series.

The first USBC-approved 900 occurred Feb. 2, 1997 when Jeremy Sonnenfeld rolled three consecutive perfect games in Lincoln, Nebraska.



Delegates elect three to USBC Board

Delegates elected Anthony Colangelo of Meridian, Idaho, Bo Goergen of Sanford, Michigan, and Lowell Lovgren of Kelso, Washington to the USBC Board of Directors at the 2019 USBC Annual Meeting in Las Vegas. The newly elected board members begin their three-year terms on Aug. 1, 2019.

Also joining the USBC Board starting with the 2019-2020 season will be new USBC Hall of Fame member Chris Barnes, who was elected by Team USA athletes earlier this year. He replaces Bill O'Neill, who did not seek another term.

Chris Floyd and Aaron Yuratovich will join the International Bowling Campus Youth Committee, which also returns current members Melissa McDaniel and Chrissie Kent.

The 2019 USBC Convention celebrated a special milestone, as it was the first convention in which every association was fully merged. USBC announced Skagit Valley USBC of Burlington, Washington, was selected for the inaugural USBC Association Excellence Award.

CALENDAR

July 11-12, 19

USA Bowling National Championships

Astro Lanes, Thunderbowl Lanes
Detroit

July 11-12, 19-21, 27-28

Youth Open Championships

Sterling Lanes
Sterling Heights, Mich.

July 13-20

Junior Gold Championships

AMF Rose Bowl Lanes, Astro Lanes,
Bowl One Lanes, Century Bowl, Skore
Lanes, Sterling Lanes, Super Bowl Lanes,
Thunderbowl Lanes
Detroit

July 25-28

PBA/PWBA Striking Against Breast Cancer Mixed Doubles

Copperfield Bowl
Houston

July 26-Aug. 11

Pan American Games

Lima, Peru

Aug. 1-3

PWBA East Hartford Open

Silver Lanes
East Hartford, Conn.

Aug. 6-9

USBC Senior Championships

Western Bowl
Cincinnati

Aug. 8-10

Pepsi PWBA Louisville Open

Executive Strike and Spare
Louisville, Ky.

Aug. 10-18

PABCON Youth Championships

Brunswick Sebelén Bowling Center
Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

Aug. 15-17

BowlerX.com PWBA Orlando Open

Boardwalk Bowl
Orlando, Fla.

Aug. 22-30

World Bowling Women's Championships

South Point Bowling Plaza
Las Vegas

Sept. 2-10

World Bowling Senior Championships

South Point Bowling Plaza
Las Vegas

Sept. 3-8

QubicaAMF PWBA Players Championship

Buffaloe Lanes North
Raleigh, N.C.

Sept. 15-18

PWBA Tour Championship

Old Dominion Building, Richmond Raceway
Richmond, Va.

Oct. 23-30

U.S. Open

Victory Lanes
 Mooresville, N.C.

Go to BOWL.com/Tournaments for complete information.