

## THE SPOTLIGHT IS ON YOU

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### Austin W. Luther III

In a new series beginning in this issue of BOWL Magazine we will attempt to "SPOTLIGHT" personalities in the bowling family, sometimes bowlers, sometimes proprietors, sometimes sponsors and others who have helped to promote and improve the game of tenpins in our area. It seems appropriate to start the series with a young man who is a bowler and a bowling center manager, Austin W. Luther III, better known as "Little Butch", who was the host for the team event of the NCABA Annual Championship Tournament at St. Charles Bowl.

Austin W. (Butch) Luther III started his bowling career when he was four years old. At that time his grandfather drilled an old duckpin ball for Butch to use. Even with the smaller ball, it was not easy for him to guide the ball, but a steady desire to improve and knock down the pins was soon generated and time and again he would persuade someone to take him to the bowling center to practice. Butch entered organized bowling when his father moved to Troy, Ohio, to accept a position at the Wright-Patterson Field near Dayton, Ohio.

When Butch was 12, he rolled a 276 game in practice. At 13 years of age, he rolled the first sanctioned 600 series by a Junior in Troy, Ohio. Luther was the scratch division champion of the Ohio Junior BPAA tournament in 1961. In 18 league sessions that year he averaged 191 and had seven series between 601 and 640. Of eighteen games over 200, 221 was the lowest and 246 the highest.

In the McKaig Junior Boys League in Troy, he rolled two 640 series and his last six games were over 200. In a match game with the renowned Johnny King, Butch came out on top 214 to 202. Butch represented Ohio in the first BPAA National Junior Tournament held at Bowl America Silver Hill in 1961.

The Ohio 1961 Junior match game champion moved to the "big leagues" in the summer of 1962. The "king of the juniors" wasn't the least bit nervous about the move up and on the first night fired a 638 series.

Shortly after, in 1963, the Luther family moved to the Nation's Capital area and both Butch, Sr. and Butch, Jr. continued to roll well. Butch, Sr. won the singles championship in the City

Tournament in 1964, both scratch and handicap.

In 1974, when he was 17, Little Butch finished third in the Metropolitan Washington Bowling Proprietors Invitational tournament. Eli Levine won it that year.

For the next several years Butch was away at school in Kentucky and then attended the University of Maryland. In 1969, he just missed the top ten ranking as he finished in 11th place.

Butch joined the D.C. Fire Department, was married and started raising a family. He did not do much bowling in those years.

In 1977, when Butch, Sr. and his partners in the Lord Calvert Bowling Center opened St. Charles Bowl, Austin Luther III became the manager of the new center. He was back in bowling and has a 193 average for the past season. When he finds time to bowl in another center, he will be shooting for the top ten ranking.

Butch was a very gracious host for the tournament and we received only good comments about the lane conditions and the friendliness of the management at St. Charles.

Watch for further stories of bowling personalities in "The Spotlight is on You."



Austin W. Luther III poses with the other junior representatives of Ohio in the first National BPAA Junior Championship Tournament Finals held at Bowl America Silver Hill in 1961.



Little Butch, right, accepts the first dollar of income at the opening of St. Charles Bowl from Assistant Secretary Bob Hennessy as Big Butch proudly looks on and holds the other end of the bill.