

Miller-Mackie's AMF Gold Cup victory yet another blessing

By Bob Cosgrove

At age 42, Dana Miller-Mackie knows her days as a full-time touring player are coming to an end, and she is cognizant of what lies ahead—occasional touring, teaching and coaching, and hopefully motherhood. Thus, the slender left-hander from Albuquerque, New Mexico clearly savored her October 15 victory in the PWBA \$175,000 AMF Gold Cup at AMF Hanover Lanes in Mechanicsburg, Va., knowing so well after nearly 20 years on tour the difficulty of obtaining such a conquest—and that this one indeed could be her last.



"There's a real joy in going out well like Michael Jordan," Miller-Mackie said after collecting her 15th career tour title and \$28,000—the biggest paycheck of her career—by opening the deciding contest with seven strikes and crushing Dede Davidson, 278-170, despite bone chips or spurs (doctors aren't yet sure which) in her left wrist. "It's sad when you see athletes who've been really good, and they don't know when to retire. It's a shame.

"I want to go out and say, 'That was great!' I want to say to other bowlers: 'Look, if you take care of your health and treat your body well, you'll have longevity in our sport.' I hope to leave that legacy for these other bowlers who are out there."

Miller-Mackie, who is married to AMF executive Steve Mackie, believes she's a more cerebral player today than she was in her 20s and 30s—then, her game often was a matter of "feel." Her knowledge of equipment and adjustments is far greater, largely due to the help she receives from her bowling ball tour consultants (she's an AMF Pro Staff member), and it's made her much more versatile on the lanes.

However, despite her emphasis on keeping fit, she admits the years have taken a toll on her physically. She has to work hard at stretching and icing down because her body takes longer to recuperate after hours of intense competition.

Miller-Mackie expressed amazement at fellow Gold Cup finalist Michelle Feldman, 22, who "covers a zillion boards" yet is never seen holding an ice pack.

"She probably doesn't even hurt," Miller-Mackie said wistfully. "When you're like me and spending more time at the ice machine than you are bowling finals, that is a definite sign your time is expiring!"

Whether or not she remains on tour, bowling will be a large part of Miller-Mackie's life. She believes she has the good eyes of a quality teacher, mainly due to a close relationship with her brother, two-time PBA titlist Mike Miller, whom she describes as "very analytical and a great teacher and coach." Beyond that, she simply feels that bowling needs more people who are willing to give back and serve as good role models.

Another legacy Miller-Mackie, a devout Christian, hopes to leave the tour is her Bible study class.

"That's been one of the most enjoyable things to me, and it was really hard to get going," she said. "A lot of girls felt threatened by it. We've got quite a few regulars who now come, and it's very informal and very non-threatening. That's a joy to me, and I hope it continues even after I retire."

Miller-Mackie hopes the AMF Gold Cup win wasn't her tour



PWBA President John Falzone helps Dana Miller-Mackie put on her champion's jacket.



Dede Davidson



Anne Marie Duggan



Carolyn Dorin-Ballard



Michelle Feldman

swan song, but she doesn't care to remain on tour full-time simply to exist with her fellow pros.

"That isn't my deal," she said. "I want to feel competitive and able to win—it's too expensive, for one thing, to be out here hanging out."

Miller-Mackie advanced to fourth place on the yearly earnings list with \$81,725 as a result of her Virginia victory. Her strong faith was most evident when she was asked by a reporter if her impressive win gives her hope of achieving a longtime goal of becoming player of the year.

"I know it sounds kind of trite, and I don't mean it to be, but with God you can't ever rule anything out. I don't think it's all that realistic, honestly, but it wouldn't be a disappointment to me because I think I've received a lot out of bowling. I've truly been blessed."

AMF GOLD CUP CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND

1. Dana Miller-Mackie, Albuquerque, N.M., 278 pins (1 game) \$28,000.
2. Dede Davidson, Woodland Hills, Calif., 425 pins (2 games) \$15,000.
3. Anne Marie Duggan, Edmond, Okla., 451 pins (2 games) \$10,000.
4. Carolyn Dorin-Ballard, N. Richland Hills, Tex., 455 pins (2 games) \$8,000.
5. Michelle Feldman, Skaneateles, N.Y., 228 pins (1 game) \$7,000.

PLAYOFF RESULTS

- First match: Dorin-Ballard def. Feldman, 233-228.
 Second match: Duggan def. Dorin-Ballard, 235-222.
 Third match: Davidson def. Duggan, 255-215.
 Championship match: Miller-Mackie def. Davidson, 278-170.

NOTE: AMF announced that it will increase next year's Gold Cup purse to \$200,000. Tentative dates for the event are October 2-7.

For more post-tournament comments by Dana Miller-Mackie, visit NCABA's web site at www.ncaba.org.