
Joe Tremper sets NCABA series mark with 874 at Laurel

By Bob Cosgrove

Joe Tremper of Laurel scored 299-278-297/874 in the April 14 session of the Men's Continental league at AMF Laurel to establish a new NCABA series record. The score topped the previous high of 869 (279-300-290) performed by NCABA Hall of Famer Larry Wallace Sept. 26, 2000 at AMF Fredericksburg.

Ironically, Tremper, a left-hander who turned 31 on June 11, at first didn't find the lanes to his liking that evening.

"I was complaining in practice because [the lanes] were hooking about 10 times more than normal," he said. "I switched to a [Columbia 300] Messenger Pearl."

It was the correct choice: Tremper tallied 299, leaving a 9-pin on a light hit he admitted wasn't a great shot. After being handed an ABC award form to complete for his honor score, Tremper said he was going to keep it because he felt he had a chance to shoot a "big number."

"I liked what I saw, and [the lanes] just got better all night," he said.

A most prophetic statement indeed, as Tremper began his second game with a double, spared a 7-pin, and then strung eight strikes before leaving a solid 10-pin on the fill ball that Tremper described as one of his better shots of the night.

Final tally: 278 and 577 for two.

"I tried not to put a number in my head," Tremper said about thoughts of his potential series. "When I'm thinking of series, I try to think *big number*—that's a term I like to use. I don't want to say I can shoot this or I can shoot that. It's *big number*."

After he began his final game with another splurge of strikes, Tremper's sudden main concern was avoiding fellow league

members and spectators who kept wanting to talk to him about his performance.

"I would say, *Why don't we wait a few minutes until I'm finished, and then we can talk about it all you want.* That's basically what it came down to there."

Distractions aside, Tremper continued striking until his final toss was "right on the beak," resulting in a 4-7-10 split, a 297 game, and the 874 total. He was well aware of the association series record he just achieved in part because former teammate Chaz Velasquez held the NCABA record prior to Wallace with an 868—also without a 300 game—at Laurel on Dec. 30, 1991.

Tremper was so happy after rolling the 874 that he wasn't concerned about twice failing to score a perfect 10 that evening. In fact, he remembers encountering far more pressure while recording an 836 (239-300-297) in the Men's Continental league two weeks earlier.

"I had a chance for back-to-back 300s," he said. "I had those 23 strikes, and I just needed the fill ball, and I messed it up. [In the 874,] there was no pressure for back-to-back or anything like that. I was more concerned with throwing the second ball in the tenth frame of the last game than I was with throwing the last one. The last one, I said, *Just hit the headpin; don't do anything silly!* It was just more fun."

Tremper will receive the American Bowling Congress Award of Merit should his 874 series not be topped by a fellow NCABA member through the end of the 2002-2003 season on July 31.

Asked if he celebrated his achievement, Tremper said, "I went home and told my girlfriend that she was about to sleep with the NCABA record-holder!"

Editor's note: Joe Tremper is the subject of the Mini-Bio on page 11.