
Babcock upsets Lewis, wins Masters at Alexandria

By Bob Cosgrove

There weren't many spectators who liked the chances of second seed Jon Babcock of Fairfax as he entered the final, position-round match that would determine the champion of the Nation's Capital/Baltimore Area Masters Scratch Tournament held April 16 at Alexandria Bowling Center.

Babcock, who admits he's had limited success in scratch competition, prepared to face one of the area's best, Jim Lewis of Waldorf, a two-time Professional Bowlers Association regional champion who the game before had tossed a 298 game against his future opponent.

"Lewis really got the best of me that game," recalled Babcock. "Mentally, it was tough watching him throw all those strikes. It made me nervous a little bit, but I knew what was happening and I just tried not let it get to me."

Apparently so.

Babcock opened the title match with five strikes and then received a break when he converted the 6-7-10 split only after the 6-pin had bounced off the pit cushion to topple the 7. A relaxed Babcock later rolled five additional strikes to finish with a 265-215 win over Lewis that earned Babcock the \$1,300 top prize.

Babcock, 33, a software developer with an engineering degree from George Mason University, truly savored his victory because he didn't expect it. He had reached the match-play finals in only one earlier Masters event—and then sunk to the bottom of that 10-player field. He cashed in a

PBA regional event in March in Richmond, and entering this competition, Babcock was hopeful that he'd bowl well enough to cash and perhaps reach the finals.

"I'm throwing the ball so much better than I was two months ago," said Babcock, who primarily credits Bob Pendergraft of Bowl America Manassas for many recent changes in his game, especially those concerning ball speed. "I would have been lost out there two months ago—I really believe that—by the time match play came around."

When match play began, Babcock was happy with his fourth-place qualifying position because he was only 21 pins off the lead—and he wasn't the leader.

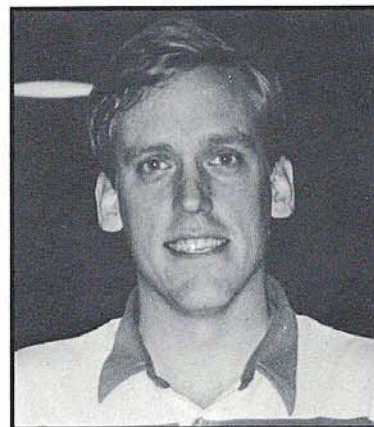
"By not being the leader," he said, "my name wouldn't be remembered during match play, and they wouldn't be gunning for me."

However, Babcock soon *was* the target, taking the lead after the opening match and maintaining the top spot until Lewis crushed him 298-206 in the penultimate contest to grab an 18-pin advantage.

"The fact that I felt I bowled well and executed under pressure means more to me from this tournament than anything," Babcock said.

| April 16 — Alexandria Bowling Ctr. | Qualifier | Matches | W-L | Total | Prize |
|--|-----------|---------|-----|-------|---------|
| 1. Jon Babcock, Fairfax | 1,113 | 1,385 | 5-1 | 2,648 | \$1,300 |
| 2. Jim Lewis, Waldorf | 1,101 | 1,365 | 4-2 | 2,586 | 700 |
| 3. Danny Mitchell, Forestville | 1,093 | 1,362 | 4-2 | 2,575 | 425 |
| 4. Ray Breeden, Manassas Park | 1,133 | 1,260 | 4-2 | 2,513 | 350 |
| 5. Gary Parsons, Suitland | 1,088 | 1,267 | 4-2 | 2,475 | 300 |
| 6. Norman Smith, Landover | 1,086 | 1,287 | 3-3 | 2,463 | 250 |
| 7. Lewis Twine, Mechanicsville, Md. | 1,117 | 1,242 | 3-3 | 2,449 | 230 |
| 8. Doug Mentz, Centreville | 1,108 | 1,308 | 1-5 | 2,446 | 210 |
| 9. Chris Johnson, Mitchellville, Md. | 1,134 | 1,190 | 1-5 | 2,354 | 190 |
| 10. Todd Larson, Herndon | 1,085 | 1,152 | 1-5 | 2,267 | 175 |

- Other cashers: 11. Billy Drumheller, Riverdale (1,083 for five games), \$155; 12. Rick Wallace, Stafford, Va. (1,079), \$140; 13. Anthony Chapman, Landover (1,073), \$120; 14. Bobby Hall II, Landover (1,070), \$110; 15. Lincoln Da Costa, Fairfax (1,069), \$100; 16. John Smith, Laurel (1,068), \$90; 17. Ron Hyson, Laurel (1,067), \$85; 18. David Leatherman, Herndon (1,057), \$80; 19. Mike Whittington, Richmond (1,055), \$75; 20. Bobby Hall, Landover (1,052), \$70; 21. John Parks, Herndon (1,046), \$65.
- High game out-of-the-money: Greg Wilson, Woodbridge (264), \$30.



Jon Babcock