

Holman, Never Mediocre

By Bob Weaver

Among headlines of the past few seasons Marshall Holman is a standout in a sport requiring something special to foment a new rise in interest, a regeneration in bowling participation.

When there is such a standout, particularly one given to saying what he thinks at any time and in the presence of everyone, the sport is indeed in luck. Tennis has its McEnroe and we, Holman.

Much of the success from such a personality is spawned from the press, and perhaps advertisers. With McEnroe both are evident. An example of the latter is the Italian commercial which shows McEnroe being calmed down, almost placid, after using an Italian soap product. The advertisers have somehow overlooked this great potential in Holman—too little thought and ingenuity as compared to the Italian, and French, advertising.

Marshall does, however, get his "press." He doesn't always handle it as well as an experienced Hollywood press agent would prefer, but still everything "Marshall Holman" is worthy of newsprint. He is news! And it is good for bowling.

McEnroe usually has very vocal "haters" in his audiences and yet in his win at Wimbledon the hissing was not obvious. There were probably many who saw McEnroe as a great athlete and some who would like to secretly emulate him in their own opposition to "authority."



The haters are in the Holman crowds, too; you can hear them at the lanes. He is as great an athlete as McEnroe, but somehow the crowds don't identify with him to the point of wishing to emulate his defiance.

Further, Frank Esposito, the fine gentleman from Paramus, does seem to control the crowds for the televised portions, to elicit only roars, not hisses. More boos and hisses will bring more interest and more roars for success, as with McEnroe, if Marshall's personality can take it.

In yesteryear it was Don Carter who was the charismatic catalyst, the crowd gatherer. Today we have a greater need to bring forth all of the interest in the game possible, particularly from outside the regular viewing audience. There are only a handful of stars who can aid the game as "draws," the foremost being Earl Anthony, Marshall Holman and Nelson Burton, Jr.

Marshall Holman is in a class by himself! Even while faltering in the finals during the past two years, his super competitive spirit continued to get him "there."

Isn't second place, or even fifth, great, too?

The competitiveness of Holman is one reason for his superstar status. His superior intelligence is yet another, but it is his "bad guy" image that brings people to their feet. Holman is the "heavy" in our game today. He may bring even more attention from the viewing public than the nice-guy image of an Earl Anthony.

Holman reportedly said during the Professional Bowlers Association (PBA) punishment period, "If I were to let this (punishment) change the way I work, I'd become a very passive, mediocre player..." His prediction was proven correct. He tried to be passive, even a nice guy, he continued to be great but he couldn't win.

"Success" requires that he appear angry, sullen, bitter; and if you study his face closely you may get a glimpse of his soul through his ever-ready smiling eyes.

(On the recently-completed Summer Tour, Holman appeared in the winner's circle for the first time in 2½ years with back-to-back wins in Austin, Texas and Venice, Florida.)



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