

Zahir Holmes honored with Ted Gruszkowski Jr. Youth Star Award



Zahir Holmes

Prior to the start of second round of the Youth Invitational Scratch Singles Tournament at Bowl America Gaithersburg on January 22, it was announced that Zahir Holmes of Beltsville, Md., was selected as the 2012 recipient of the prestigious NCAUSBCA Ted Gruszkowski Jr. Youth Star Award, which is named in honor of the late association Hall of Fame member who was a strong supporter of area youth bowling.

Zahir wasn't always serious about bowling. Basketball was his first love, and he was good at it. He played recreational basketball during elementary, middle, and his first year of high school. Although he still plays basketball, bowling is now his true love. Exposed to bowling as a baby because both of his parents bowled and took him to the bowling center, he started bowling around the age of 6. As he got older, he got better, and before you know it, he was bowling as good as his Dad, who is also his coach.

Since his bowling average has increased, Zahir has become more competitive, joining youth leagues that incorporate chal-

lenging Sport shots, primarily participating in scratch tournaments, and bowling events around the D.C. Metro area and out of state. He works hard and practices every available weekend with his Dad. He wants to take his game to the next level and plans to attend the Kegel Training Center Lake Wales, Fla., and the Bowling Combine for College Prospects held at the International Training and Research Center in Arlington, Tex.

"Z," as family and friends affectionately call him, is a member of the NCAUSBCA 600 Club and has won numerous bowling awards, including high average, high series, and he's scored just shy of a perfect game, with 11 in-a-row for a 290. He won first place twice at the Coventry Commonwealth Games in Virginia, receiving his first gold medal at the age of 12 in 2008 and his second gold medal the following year when he scored a high game of 287—both times competing against opponents much older than him in the 13-20 age group. In 2010, he placed sixth in the Invitational, and at his first U.S. Youth Open in 2011, he placed 12th out of 280 in the doubles event, 103rd out of 545 in the singles event, and 26th out of 352 in all events.

Winning his first Junior Gold qualifier gave him the opportunity to travel to Las Vegas and compete in the 2011 Junior Gold event. He loved the challenge and experience of competing with other bowlers his age and older from around the U.S. and anticipates going to Indianapolis this year.

Zahir attends Archbishop Carroll High School, a parochial college preparatory school in Washington, D.C. He participates in his school's annual food drive and is very active in community service. After school, he volunteers by helping to prepare sandwiches for the homeless, while balancing schoolwork and extracurricular activities.

Zahir loves to play chess and is a member of the chess club. He also plays baseball and has been on the school baseball team since his freshman year in high school. He received an honors award for math during his freshman year and has been on the honor roll.

Now in his senior year, Zahir understands that slacking off is not an option and believes he will reach his academic goals as long as he studies hard and stays focused. He plans to major in

engineering technology. He loves math and the challenge of solving problems, but his biggest wish is to participate on the Professional Bowlers Association Tour.

Zahir Holmes has a bright future ahead of him, which will include the sport of bowling. He knows that it will take a lot of hard work, determination, patience, and a good mental game. It's expected he will make all of his dreams a reality.

Past Gruszkowski Youth Star honorees

2008 – Eric Helmrich, Adam Mitchell, Allen Windsor

2009 – Alonso "A.J." Kinney Jr.

2010 – Malcolm James

2011 – Jason Eman, Brandon Lowe, Kayla Meadows