

As I've been trying to keep a schedule of writing a blog entry every two weeks, it would seem pretty obvious what the subject of this blog should be given the turbulence in the bowling community the last two weeks – the impacts of COVID-19.

As far as Oregon State USBC matters go, there have been some cancellations and postponements due to concerns with the virus – the High School All-Star tournament cancelled, the State Youth Tournament cancelled, postponements to the State Finals of the Pepsi tournament, and the postponements of all April dates for the Open Tournament with new dates opened on the back end of the Open tournament to now include May 30-31 and the first three weekends in June to accommodate the April teams that need to reschedule.

I don't want to get too much into the decisions regarding the need for the cancellations/postponements or the closing down of bowling centers across the state as I have no desire to initiate a discussion regarding these decisions as I've noticed these kind of discussions tend to veer off into divisive political sermons. I have neither the time nor the desire to weigh in on the merits of influence be it from the media or politicians on the actions or inactions taken in dealing with the virus. I'm sure you can go to the social media platform of your choice and get your fill of whatever it is you would like to see and hear if you need – I don't need to rehash it here. There's already enough divisiveness without me injecting further rhetoric to fan the flames.

I will say though, the decisions made by the OSUSBC regarding our tournaments were not made casually or without considerable thought and discussion. Regarding the different youth tournaments, those decisions were made out of concern for our youth and were admittedly on the conservative side because it was our youth. The decision to alter the Open tournament schedule was made to try and get in front of the situation to give our bowlers as much time as possible to change travel plans. This decision was made before the state government mandated limiting gathering sizes to 25 and effectively closing bowling centers and was the result of a productive discussion between the host center and our association. In retrospect it was a good decision as less than two weeks later the government mandates would have forced the decision anyway. This way, it gave us at least a few days head start on moving things around.

What I'd rather speak to with this blog are some of the remarkable ways bowlers have come together in this very trying time. What I've seen once again reaffirms that bowlers are some of the most caring and giving people in the sporting universe. Leagues have had discussions about donating their league prize money back to the bowling centers or at least a portion of their prize money as a tip to the workers that serve them during their league as a way to help the centers and center personnel stay afloat. What is even more remarkable are the follow up discussions pointing out some league bowlers themselves might need that money, however small the amount may be, and may feel uncomfortable to speak up. The point is, the discussions by the bowlers (with maybe a few exceptions) were not about what the money could do for themselves, but what it could do for others, be it the bowling center or others in the league, demonstrating once again how the bowling community looks after each other.

Other good ideas I've noticed to help the bowling centers were the purchasing of gift cards and the idea of posting online take-out menu items by the bowling centers for those centers that will try to generate some revenue in that manner. There have also been some creative ideas tossed about by bowlers in ways bowling centers may be able to stay open to serve very small groups and adhere to the social distancing recommendations to generate at least a little bit of revenue. Whether or not these ideas are practical or not isn't what struck me, its that they were offered in the first place. And of course, there

has been a strong call to not end the leagues prematurely, but to hopefully finish out the leagues when the centers re-open to support the centers.

Again, the care and concern for those in our bowling community is just so needed in these very scary and trying times and once again bowlers are coming through with such compassion. So, to everyone, with that spirit in mind, please stay safe and stay positive.

Gary