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Boys bowling state notes on New Trier, Glenbrook North

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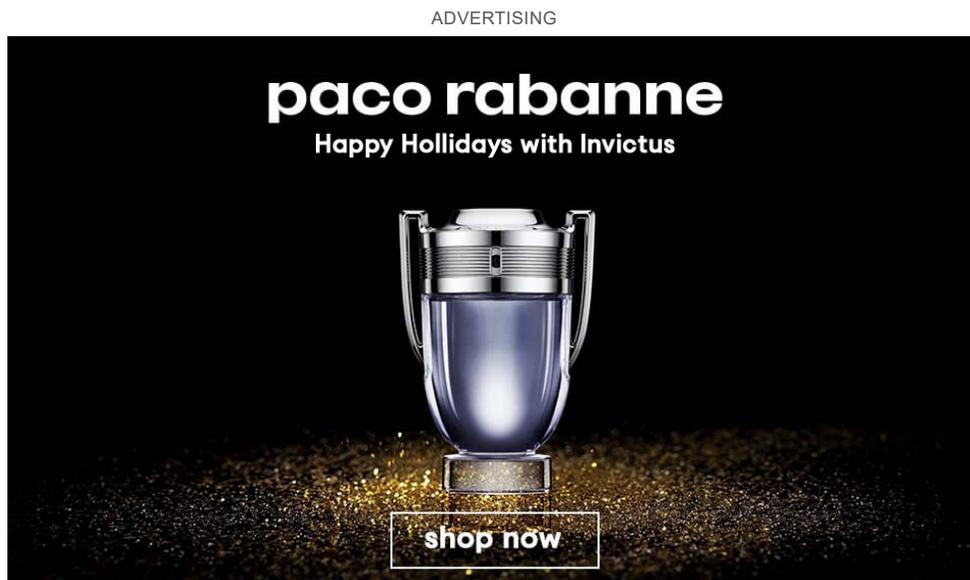


FEEDBACK

The Glenbrook North boys bowling team finished 23rd at the state tournament on Jan. 27 in O'Fallon. (Todd Rubin / HANDOUT)

New Trier senior Kalani Rennoe said he hit his stride in the final three games at the Glenbard East boys bowling sectionals. He threw a 6-split in the 10th frame of his final game, picking up the two pins on the left side to leave the frame open. Even with the split, he reached 1,237 total pins to grab the seventh and final individual berth in the state tournament.

The Wilmette resident made it with five pins to spare ahead of the next closest competitor.



However, Rennoe struggled and finished with 961 total pins on Jan. 27 at the boys bowling state tournament in O'Fallon. That left him in 126th place in the individual competition with an average of 160.2. The right-handed bowler, who also competed at state last year when the Trevians qualified as a team, said the oil patterns changed this year. He picked up most of his spares, he said, even if the strikes didn't come as easily.

"I couldn't really get the ball into the pocket shot or strike shot," he said. "I just kept missing."

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Although New Trier didn't make state as a team, seven members of the team drove down to support Rennoe. One of the dads rented an RV for the trip, according to Trevians coach Andrew Juedes. Rennoe said he was very happy to see his teammates and that he wasn't expecting such a large crowd.

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"We focused really on supporting Kalani," Juedes said. "It wasn't a surprise to me at all that several of his peers came down."

Success breeds success at Glenbrook North

Glenbrook North's bowling team featured four seniors last season and didn't make the state tournament.

"Some people thought this was going to be a step-back year for us," Spartans coach Todd Rubin said. "Over the last month, these guys have really stepped up."

Glenbrook North's high series for the season came at the Taft Regional tournament when the Spartans bowled a 6,132 and finished second. Everyone on the team averaged 196 or higher.

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However, the Spartans finished 23rd out of 24 teams at the state tournament on Jan. 27 with 5,618 total pins.

The Spartans' bowling program is just six years old and has already been to the state tournament three times (2013, 2015, 2017). It has a 71-12 overall record since day one. This year, Glenbrook North won the conference championship for the first time, going 11-1 in conference and 16-5 overall.

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There are two reasons for the success, according to junior Jacob Rosenberg, a two-year varsity bowler from Northbrook.

"One is that we're all very dedicated," Rosenberg said. "We work really, really hard. And the second reason would be that we're a family."

Rubin has built a solid program by recruiting bowlers who are competitive and want to work hard, he said. The program has grown in numbers. The team had 12 bowlers the first season. This year, 37 tried out and after cuts Glenbrook North had a 22-member team.

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"Our key to success was just to get good guys to come out for the team and having them work hard once they got to high school," Rubin said. "This is one of the few sports where you don't essentially need much experience to make a high school team."

Glenbrook North has strong bowlers in the younger classes, too. The freshman class this year averaged a 145 and sophomores averaged a 155. Freshmen are already starting to practice for next year and push for varsity spots, Rubin said.

Ikler still a member of the team

Cancer didn't stop New Trier senior Graham Ikler from being a coach/player on the school's boys bowling team.

When he finished his sophomore season in 2015, his average sat at 168, just a pin behind Kalani Rennoe that year. Rennoe qualified for state as an individual this year. While, Ikler wasn't able to bowl his junior or senior seasons because of his cancer, lymphoblastic T-cell lymphoma, his membership on the team was never in question.

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"We rostered Graham for every single match," Trevians coach Andrew Juedes said. "I would've done anything to keep Graham a part of this team."

In spite of the disease, Ikler came to practices when he could. Juedes asked him to take an interest in helping the younger teammates. He gave advice without talking down, Juedes said. He was soft spoken and humble, and well-respected by his peers, according to Juedes.

Heather Rule is a freelance reporter for Pioneer Press.

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