



Crystal Singh becomes second bowler from Broward County to ever win state title; Coral Springs Charter girls second



Crystal Singh, Coral Springs Charter (Jim Rassol / Sun Sentinel)

By **Gary Curreri**, correspondent

Even with a bum ankle, Coral Springs Charter School senior Crystal Singh was able to climb back through the consolation bracket to win the FHSAA girls individual state bowling championship at Boardwalk Bowl in Orlando on Thursday afternoon.

Needing to beat top-seed and undefeated Veronica Petrinec, a Titusville High School junior, twice in the best of three matches to win the state championship, Singh overcame a sprained ankle to cap her senior year with the her school's first individual state championship and the second in Broward County history.

"It was a crazy match, something I have never seen before," said Singh, the reigning Sun Sentinel Broward County Girls Bowler of the Year, in a phone interview. "In the last game of the match, I opened in the ninth frame and I struck out in the 10th. I thought I lost and she left a 10-pin in the 10th frame and missed it for me to win by one pin (216-215)."

Just two weeks ago she sprained her ankle and admittedly wasn't at her best, yet she saved her best for last.

Petrinec was the top seed with a total of 888 and had won her four matches, including an earlier victory over Singh, 198-197, and 248-166 to advance to the final, while Singh entered the round of 16 as the 12th seed after rolling a four-game series of 787.

Singh fought her way back in the consolation rounds and needed to beat Petrinec twice to win the championship. Singh won the first match, 226-199, 202-236 and 222-199 to set up the final match. They split the first two games with Singh winning, 197-162 and Petrinec taking the second, 246-176.

Singh captured the final game 216-215 to become only the second Broward County bowler to ever win a state title since the sport became sanctioned in 2003. Coral Glades' Krystina Nealon defeated Coral Springs Charter's Jessica Mellott for the state championship in 2013.

"I am still in shock because when I did the turkey (three strikes in a row), I thought I had already lost," Singh continued. "I didn't know I had a chance, then I thought we would go to a roll off and when the score came up, I thought, 'Oh my God.'"

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(continued, pg 2)

Coral Springs Charter School girls then made history as they finished second in the state; the highest finish ever by a Broward County team at state and eclipsed the previous best finish by the Panthers when they finished sixth two years ago.

Coral Springs Charter fell to defending state champion Oviedo in bracket play and battled back in the consolation round to reach the final. Needing to defeat the Lions twice for the championship, Coral Springs handed Oviedo a 3-1 setback in the first match, 189-164, 234-147, 64-175 and 206-171 to force the decisive match.

The Lions then swept the Panthers, 179-164, 203-189, and 173-163 to win the title.

“I’m unbelievably proud,” said Panthers coach Nelson Martin. “They worked so hard and it showed. They hung out there with the best and we came up a little bit short. My God, it was the closest we’ve ever come.”

Three South Florida boys’ teams (Jupiter, Coral Springs Charter, and Coral Springs High School) qualified for the round of 16, but came up empty.

The third-seeded Jupiter High boys’ team lost in the consolation round of the Baker games as it dropped three straight games to the fifth-seeded Tampa Bay Heat. The Warriors fell, 199-174, 219-211 and 259-210 and ended up fifth overall.

“The boys had a tremendous year,” said Jupiter coach Rick Emery. “We had the top five averages in our district and broke three county records this season.”

Tampa Bay had eliminated the seventh-seeded Coral Springs Charter boys in five games. Tampa Bay won the first two games, 201-136, 212-186 before the Panthers battled back to win the next two games, 189-142 and 200-178, Tampa Bay prevailed in the third 200-168.

Coral Springs High, which entered the Baker games as the 13th seed, dropped its opening match to the fourth-seeded Seabreeze High and rallied to sweep Oviedo and Lyman High in three games before falling to Mainland High in three games, 197-178, 226-212, and 225-166.

Two boys reached the round of 16 of the individual bracket – Coral Springs Panthers’ Cody Stevens and Jupiter High’s Daniel Bostic – however they each lost both matches and was eliminated.

Berean Christian junior Nichole Lewis was seeded eighth after rolling a four-game series of 802. Lewis split her first two matches and eventually fell to the seventh-seeded Kim Forthofer (Sebring High School Blue Streaks), 258-199 and 173-163 in the second round of the consolation competition.

Wellington High School’s Samantha Hesley also won a state championship in 2004. Jupiter’s Nick Speanburg won the lone boys’ state title for either Broward or Palm Beach when he defeated Olympe Heights’ Shaefer Shepard in 2010.