

# Alton has high hopes for bowler Ashley Heistand this season

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer  
December 9 2016 1:00 AM



**ALTON – Ashley Heistand** has been bowling since she was in third grade.

Last year, as a junior, Heistand reached the IHSA state tournament in Rockford as an individual, finishing in 28<sup>th</sup> place, finishing with a two-day, 12-game total pinfall of 2,518 after reaching the state tournament in her freshman year as part of a Redbird team that advanced to Rockford with a third-place Alton Sectional finish that year.

This year, Heistand, a senior, is a team leader for the Redbirds. Last weekend, Heistand came back from deep in the pack to finish 10<sup>th</sup> individually in the Abe Lincoln Invitational tournament and help lead the Redbird girls to a third-place team finish.

“I've been bowling since I was in third grade,” Heistand said. “My best friend brought me to (bowling); we did it for something fun to do on Saturday mornings,” much like many others who took up bowling as youths.

Heistand hopes to finish the high school season strongly and hopes to advance to the 45<sup>th</sup> IHSA state tournament, set for the weekend of Feb. 17-18 at The Cherry Bowl in Rockford. Past that, Heistand is hoping to bowl for a collegiate program. “I'm kind of in-between decisions on what to do; there's a lot of schools that have what I want to do, but don't have bowling programs.”

As far as pro bowlers, Heistand looks up to Australian Jason Belmonte, known for his two-handed style; Belmonte has won 12 PBA championships in the United States, including six majors. “He's a two-handed bowler,” Heistand said. “He's unique in the way he bowls, and not a lot of people bowl like him. It's becoming (Belmonte's two-handed style) becoming more popular.

“I don't model my game after anybody; I just think, like overall, try to stay within myself. I know what I can do and just try to do my best.”