

O'Fallon Bowler Aiden Toohey Throws First-Ever Perfect Game In Zach LeCuyer Invitational, Is Primed For A Very Good Season

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O'FALLON - Aiden Toohey, a junior for the O'Fallon Township High School boys bowling team, made personal history recently when he tossed his first-ever perfect 300 game, helping the Panther junior varsity team finish sixth in the Zach LeCuyer Invitational Tournament at Camelot Bowl in Collinsville.

Toohey, who's expected to be one of the Panthers' top bowlers this season, felt nervous during the game, and felt very relieved when pins on the final strike of the game fell, giving him the 300.

"I was very nervous as the strikes started to string together," Toohey said in a recent interview, "and I was very relieved, in all honesty, because I've never been able to do that, and it doesn't happen to a lot of people, so I was very relieved."

The key to achieving the 300, according to Toohey, was keeping his cool and concentrating on hitting his targets, which he was able to do consistently.

"I was keeping calm, not let anything get into my head," Toohey said, "and consistently hitting my shots. Practice definitely helped that day," he said with a laugh.

Panthers head coach Mike Imes was surprised by Toohey's perfect game, as he was bowling with the JV team while he gave some of his other bowlers varsity time as he sets his lineup for the new season.

"Yes, it was a surprise," Imes said. "We actually had him on the JV team while we're trying to get things squared away for my varsity, giving some of the other bowlers some playing time. He got his 300 playing with mostly JV players."

The perfect game was a big part of Toohey's overall performance, where he bowled very well all day, and hitting the targets has been a big point of emphasis for the Panthers in their preseason practices.

"He bowled good all day," Imes said. "We've been working on targeting big-time in practice, and he managed to get locked in on the target, hit it very consistently, and just plain bowled well."

The funny thing for Toohey, a junior at O'Fallon who's been bowling for 12 years, is a family connection to both the team and a first-time perfect game.

"It's weird, because my highest game before was 269," Toohey said, "and I held that for a couple of years. "I feel like I'm following in my brother's (Matthew) footsteps, because he also bowled for the Panthers, and he threw his first 300 while bowling for the school."

Imes plans on having Toohey on the varsity for much of the season, and feels he's primed for a big season on the lanes, while also being a very good team player as well.

"He'll end up being on varsity," Imes said. "I think he'll have a really good season this year. He's just a team player, a really good attitude, he works hard in practice, and he's just a good team player."

For Toohey's part, he's looking to keep his scores consistent, mainly in the low-to-mid 200's, and true to form, look to help the Panthers enjoy team success and get to the

IHSA state finals, which again will be held at O'Fallon's home house, the St. Clair Bowl in Fairview Heights. It's the only IHSA state tournament held in southern Illinois or the St. Louis area.

"I'm looking to help the underclassmen get better, so we'll have an even stronger team next year," Toohey said.

As far as individual goals, Toohey has them set pretty high as well.

"I want to place higher in any tournaments that I bowl in this year," Toohey said, "and to raise my average."