

Balta helps Jazzy Apes place 2nd in Vegas

Written by Eric Littig

Saturday, 30 June 2012 20:15 - Last Updated Saturday, 30 June 2012 20:40

Jazzy Ape Sports Apparel, a squad that included five of the Midwest's finest collegiate bowlers, brought home a runnerup finish at the 17th Annual Junior World Team Challenge bowling tournament in Las Vegas.

The event, one of the nation's most prestigious scholarship bowling tournaments, was held at the Suncoast Bowling Center in Las Vegas from June 21-24.

One of the team members, 19-year old Drew Balta, is a Cedar Rapids native and Prairie High School graduate who currently attends William Penn University in Oskaloosa. Balta led the squad by averaging 224.3 for his qualifying round, which earned him a spot on this year's All Star Team.

Team member Austin Porter, of Blue Grass, Iowa, averaged 219.6 to narrowly miss this year's All Star Team.

This year's tournament drew 45 teams from around the country. The field included many of the top high school and collegiate bowlers, who also competed in singles and doubles competition.

Besides Balta, the Jazzy Ape team members were Porter, Bryan Thompson, Jacob Boresch and Kyle Anderson. All five members are prominent college players from their respective teams. Boresch attends Clarke University in Dubuque, while Porter is a student at Midland University in Fremont, Neb.

Anderson and Thompson attend St. Ambrose University. The five combined their talents to bring home the second-place finish, which earned the team a \$1,875 scholarship. Anderson and Thompson also captured the doubles event, which earned the pair a \$600 scholarship.

After a slow start, the Jazzy Apes got rolling, finishing their five-game qualifying block with games of 1149, 1044 and 1022 to close at 5168 (a 206.7 average for 25 games) heading into the six-game baker block. There, they logged a 1212, which allowed them to qualify in fourth

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place heading into the 16-game semifinals.

At the midway point, they remained in fourth place, but came out strong after that. In their first baker match, they rolled games of 264 and 215 which enabled them to surge into the lead. They continued to add to that lead, establishing a 103-pin lead heading into the stepladder finals.

In the two-game baker championship match, three open frames proved too much to overcome and they lost 419-379 to claim the runnerup finish.