

Brightside Ten Pin Bowling League

By John Fioravanti

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It began in the summer of 1959 over a few beers at the Brightside Hotel. Most of the men were very sports-minded (football, baseball, hockey, etc.). The idea came up about forming a bowling league under the Brightside name. We decided to bowl "ten pin" not "five pin." Dave Polango was the actual initiator. We started with a summer league that year (June-Aug 1959), but the league actually got started in September after Labour Day. We played on Tuesday nights at 6:30 pm and this time remained the same for sixty years. At the beginning we had twenty-four teams of five men each. To accommodate people working night shifts, men who could not bowl on Tuesday night were able to bowl out on the following Tuesday morning and the scores added that night for that team. These were strict rules. You could only bowl out Tuesday morning. If you missed, the team had to take the bowler's score, less ten, for each game. (There were three games during the night). This rule remained for the duration of the 60 years. However, bowl-outs were permitted once the machines were all automatic and the scores computerized. Over all the years, the league went through many bowlers, some quitting some retiring, some dying. We had a variety of Presidents, Secretaries and Treasurers. We had banquets every year, and were considered to have one of the best bowling leagues in the city. When we started in 1959, 95% of the bowlers were Brightsiders; the other 5% were good friends of Brightsiders. In later years the number of teams dropped, but we had 24 teams for many years, well into the 1970s. As bowlers dropped off or quit, we recruited bowlers from the bowling alley or other alleys. Many older bowlers quit and some died. It got to a point that we had to cut back teams from 24 to 16. We remained at 16 until the end of the league, just before COVID 19, in 2018. Actually, the bowling alley, Skyway Lanes, was sold and the new owner closed the lanes in April, 2018. The end.