



MALTA TENPIN BOWLING ASSOCIATION
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MTBA National Championships

Sara Xuereb is Youngest Ever Champion at 14yrs

Malta's latest sporting sensation, 14 year old Sara Xuereb has engraved her own name in bowling history, by winning the 2016 MTBA National Championships, and so become Malta's youngest ever National Champion. The new men's Champion is Justin Caruana Scicluna, and the pair will be representing Malta in the European Champions Cup to be held in the Czech Republic later this year.

Sara's incredible victory puts an end to the formidable 11-year reign of Sue Abela, who has held the ladies' title since 2005 but had to settle for a third place this time around, uncharted territory for the illustrious former champion, who has an astonishing 21 championship titles under her belt.

Xuereb was in second place on 1553 pins after her initial eight game session, bested on the day by Cynthia Duca in first place on 1558, with Melissa Swift lying third on 1476. Then Sara shot a 1560 on day two to go top with 3113, as Sue Abela shot from seventh to second place (3024) after a much better 1593 set, as Duca dropped to third (3019).

Xuereb carried an 89 pin advantage into the third and final day, and began taking more pins from her mentor, and now rival Abela in the early games to consolidate her lead. Abela appeared uncomfortable on the lanes while the teenager displayed a collected calmness way beyond her years, and simply could not be caught. Sara emerged the victor with a 1529 series for a 4642 final tally from her 24 games (193.4 ave), and second place was snatched from Sue by Melissa Swift (4604) in the penultimate game, sending the outgoing Champion down into third on 4588.

Justin Caruana Scicluna claims First Career National Title

The men's championship is always a fiercely fought contest among a good number of potential winners, and the latest edition was no exception. First day honours went to Mauro Anastasi for his big 1631 set, closely followed by Mark Spiteri on 1613. Kenneth Arpa lay in third place on 1596, with Justin Caruana Scicluna snapping at his heels, just a single pin behind on 1595.

There was a change at the top on day two which saw Caruana Scicluna bowl a great 1676 8-set to take him into first place, above Anastasi on 3213 after his 1582 session. Mark Spiteri was in third and still in touch on 3195, with a further eight games to go. On day three, Justin stamped his authority on the event over the early games with a 209-226-223 flurry, before a low 160, which was cancelled out by an inspired 266 later in the set which helped on to a 1672, for a title winning 2943 tally (205.9 ave). Mauro Anastasi managed to stave off a late but strong challenge from Mark Spiteri to stay second on 4894 (203.9 ave), keeping Mark in third place on 4845 (201.8).

The 2016 European Champions Cup will be held at the Bowland Bowling Centre in Moravia, where Xuereb and Caruana Scicluna will compete against national champions from the whole of Europe, for the titles of European Champion for 2016.