



William "Bill" Lillard
1927 —
Bowling
Inducted 1972

After winning his first two American Bowling Congress tournament titles in 1955 with the famed Detroit Pfeiffers, William Terrell (Bill) Lillard made bowling history on March 24-25, 1956.

On those two days, Lillard became the first man to win four titles in one ABC tournament. He was a member of the famed Falstaffs which won the team and team all-events title, paired with Stan Gifford to win the doubles crown and then captured the individual all-events crown as well.

But winning was natural to Lillard, who was born in Fort Worth, was raised in Dallas where he was graduated from Woodrow Wilson High School, and then attended SMU before joining the bowling ranks as a fulltime member when he was 23 years old.

Lillard went on to capture his seventh ABC title in 1962, and then tied Bowling Hall of Famer Fred Bujack for the most lifetime tournament championships when he notched his eighth title in 1971.

Success in team competition was a trademark for Lillard. In addition to the famous Pfeiffer and Falstaff lineups, he also competed with the Pacific Pulps of Tulsa, Okla., captained by Cecil Simpson and the St. Louis Buds, which later became the Carter Gloves.

In addition to being a member of the Texas Sports Hall of Fame, Lillard was elected to the ABC Hall of Fame in 1972.

Lillard was a charter member of the Professional Bowlers Association, which was formed in 1959. He captured one PBA title, winning the Milwaukee Open in 1966. His lifetime average in the PBA is a respectable 207.

Born Oct. 13, 1927, Lillard carried only 150 pounds on his 5-10½ frame, but had one of the most powerful balls on the lanes. He threw a booming, explosive ball which was the bowling equivalent of Jack Nicklaus' or Mickey Mantle's drives.

When his contemporaries hit the pocket, the pins simply vanished into the pit. When Lillard's ball dug in there, the pins leaped and twisted and climbed and tumbled in an explosive dance.

But even more so than on the lanes, Lillard was a winner ... a champion ... out of the arena. By his unflinching good sportsmanship and impeccable conduct, Lillard won friends and admirers both for himself and bowling wherever he went.

"Not only was he a tremendous competitor, but he was a true gentleman," said Don Carter, an all-time bowler. "Bill was a true competitor in the sense of the word, but off the lanes, he was a lamb. I believe he never met a man he didn't like."

Physical skills vary from sport to sport, but the intangibles are basic to all. Roger Staubach on the goal-line in the final seconds, Lee Trevino facing a birdie putt on the 72nd hole, or Bill Lillard needing a strike in the 10th frame of a climactic game — it was all the same. The pressure was immeasurable. One shot, make or break.

"There is a lot of pressure in bowling, no doubt about that," said Lillard, "but I've always enjoyed it. Being able to handle the pressure is what separates the winners from the losers, and I like to look upon myself as a winner."

In addition to his ABC and PBA titles, Lillard also won the 1955 and 1956 Bowling Proprietors Association of America's All Star, where he averaged 205 for 100 games. His other accomplishments include:

Best series, 782 in 1957.

Five sanctioned 300 games.

Two sanctioned 299 games.

Best average, 1956-57, St. Louis Masters, 223.