

History of the Melbourne Tenpin Cup

It was 1973 and at the time there was very little happening on the tournament scene, and the bowling industry was recovering from quite a downturn in lineage. Proprietors enjoyed a huge boom in the 1960's where everywhere you turned there were bowling centers built, at the time there were 60 centers in Australia, today we have a hundred more centers.

One of the best entrepreneur's in the industry was the late Ed Fleming, and with his partner Charles Zenan they built Ringwood Lanes in 1962 together, this was one of the most modern centers of its day, and from original building design to finished building created a record in 1962 for the quickest building to be erected. When it was all ready to go, the true entrepreneur Fleming did anything to get people into Ringwood Lanes. It was not unusual to have Ed Fleming organise flower shows, baby shows or community events in the concourse at Ringwood Lanes, it was all in the name of creating exposure and lineage, "Anything that builds traffic" was Fleming's motto.

In 1973 Ed Fleming put together the Melbourne Tenpin Cup, he collaborated with the leading tournament organisers VCBA at the time (now the ATBA), obviously inspired from what the PBA was doing in the U.S, they created the well known format you see in major tournaments today. Many other similar events followed such as the Sydney Cup, Brisbane Cup, Adelaide Cup, Perth Cup and Canberra Cup, it will be Ed Fleming's lasting testimony to a game that he proudly loved.

In 1973 it was Steve Mackie who won the inaugural Melbourne Tenpin Cup and the \$1000.00 first prize check, the highest at the time, Mackie won again in 1975.

Another innovation with the MTC was to import overseas bowlers mainly from America to add prestige to the Cup. They brought out stars from the PBA and LPBT such as Glenn Allison (Mr.900) Mike McGrath, Barry Asher, Steve Neff, Donna Adamek and the great Dave Davis graced our shores and educated and entertained us all.

1981 Steve Neff finished as runner up to Ron Powell who had a brilliant year, 1983 it was Dave Davis who led all the way with John Sullivan in hot pursuit, Davis also won a Holden car for a 300 game. Donna Adamek showed us how talented the ladies on the U.S professional tour are by outlasting a determined Steve Lovell in the 1988 final.

The years have passed and overseas bowlers have entertained us many more times, along with the very talented bowlers we have always produced in our own country. It would be difficult to mention all the bowlers who have inspired us, and the highlights have been so many.

However, the goals and aspirations are the same as they have always been, firstly the goal is to make the cut in the Melbourne Tenpin Cup, and you know you have truly performed well to outlast the best in the country. And secondly to be fortunate enough to win the Melbourne Tenpin Cup, you have truly etched your place in the history of tenpin bowling in Australia.

Throughout the years the MTC has had 3 venues

Ringwood for 14 years from 1973 - 1987

Moorabbin for 3 years from 1988 - 1990

Ed Fleming Lanes from 1991 – The Present

Former Champions of the Melbourne Tenpin Cup:

- 1973 – Steve Mackie (NSW)
- 1974 – Terry Wenban (NSW)
- 1975 – Steve Mackie (NSW)
- 1976 – Vic Bubniw (VIC)
- 1977 – Paul Madden (VIC)
- 1978 – Joe Velo (NSW)
- 1979 – John Sullivan (VIC)
- 1980 – Len Hogg (VIC)
- 1981 – Ron Powell (VIC)
- 1982 – Brian Bridges (VIC)
- 1983 – Dave Davis (USA)
- 1984 – Gary Kee (NSW)
- 1985 – Tom Kury (NSW)
- 1986 – Steve Lovell (NSW)
- 1987 – Ian Bradford (VIC)
- 1988 – Donna Adamek (USA)
- 1989 – Fred Alsopp (NSW)
- 1990 – Peter Selakovic (VIC)
- 1991 – Billy Gardiner (NSW)
- 1992 – Ian Bradford (VIC)
- 1993 – Chris Batson (NSW)
- 1994 – Andrew Frawley (NSW)
- 1995 – Mike Muir (WA)
- 1996 – Brenton Manning (SA)
- 1997 – Alex Liew (Malaysia)
- 1998 – Craig Bourke (NSW)
- 1999 – Frank Ryan (VIC)
- 2000 – Bill Gardiner (NSW)
- 2001 – Mike Muir (WA)
- 2002 – Jason Belmonte (NSW)
- 2003 – Carl Bottomley (QLD)
- 2004 – Jason Belmonte (NSW)