



Fit for a King

Burke Snowden is 2016 King of Bridge

BY PAUL LINXWILER

Burke Snowden, 18, of Fort Collins CO has been selected as the 2016 King of Bridge by the ACBL Educational Foundation. The annual award, which includes a \$2000 scholarship, recognizes a graduating high school senior for their playing record and overall participation in the bridge community.

“Burke is a fine example of everything needed to be successful in life,” said Barbara Heller, Educational Foundation president. “He worked hard at learning the game and fostered that love for the game into a way to give back to all beginning players around him.”

Snowden, a freshman at Yale University, began learning bridge at age 6 from his parents and grandmothers.

“In the evenings after dinner, they would play some bridge over dessert, often putting a movie on to keep me entertained. However, being the curious kid that I was, I would frequently wander over to their table, trying to see what this game was that was keeping them so entertained.”

So he convinced his parents to let him sit on their laps during the games. “First, they would ask me to help count their points. Then they would ask me to pull a card for them. Eventually, I convinced them to let me hold a hand of my own.”

Snowden’s parents divorced, and a few years later, his father began dating

a woman who was an ex-duplicate player. She convinced the elder Snowden to play at the Fort Fun Bridge Club, a new club for intermediate and newcomer players in Fort Collins.

“Dad brought home a hand record one night. I got hold of it and, of course, wanted to know what it was. Before long, I convinced him to take me to that club.”

Snowden was hooked. He started to play more, became a club director at age 11 and began directing at Fort Fun. When he was 14, he bought the club and renamed it the Ace of Clubs.

Snowden continued to progress as a player and he became a Life Master in 2011 at 13. He is currently a Silver LM. His accomplishments in bridge are lengthy and remarkable for one his age. A member of the U.S. Junior teams for several years, Snowden has played in three World Youth championships (2012–2014). In 2013, he was a member of the U.S. squad that captured the gold medal in the under-21 team championship. A frequent participant in Youth NABCs, Snowden captured first place in the pairs and team event in 2011 in Toronto, and was also first in the team event in 2013.

In non-Youth events, Snowden was

second in last year’s Grand National Teams Flight B contest, and he has had two top-25 finishes in NABC pair games.

Snowden’s interest in directing has expanded to ACBL tournaments. In 2011, he became a tournament assistant at age 14 (ACBL requires tournament directors to be at least 18 years old), allowing him to gain experience by helping run sectionals in his local unit. After turning 18, he became a local TD (the lowest rank of ACBL directors) with the help of TD mentor Bill Michael.

Other bridge mentors for Snowden include Billie Turner of Greeley CO, a frequent partner who helped him become a Life Master. Marilyn Pultz and Bill Follis of the Fort Collins area helped Snowden earn his club TD certificate. Marlene Aranci and Dawn Foltz were other club directors who gave Snowden opportunities to direct. They also pitched in to help in a variety of ways at the Ace of Clubs. Greg Herman, a graduate student at Colorado State University, is Snowden’s current partner.

“The passion he exhibits for bridge will propel him to success in all of his future endeavors,” Heller said. ■

King/Queen of Bridge previous winners

2015	Amber Lin	2000	Gavin Wolpert	1986	Martha Benson Katz
2014	Adam Kaplan/Allison Hunt	1999	Ari Greenberg	1985	Adair Gellman
2013	John Altman	1998	Josh Heller	1984	Jim Munday
2012	Murphy Green	1997	Joel Wooldridge	1983	Billy Hsieh
2011	Blake Sanders	1996	Kent Mignocchi	1982	Steve Weinstein
2010	Thomas Walsh/Adam Grossack	1995	Tony Melucci	1981	Doug Levene/Steve Cochran
2009	Nicholas Flores	1994	Sam Hirschman	1980	Tony Marks
2008	Jeremy Koegel	1993	Eric Greco	1979	Regina Barnes
2007	Andrew Dubay	1992	Frederic Pollack	1978	Matt Franklin
2006	Sam Katz	1991	Andrew Moss	1977	Marc Franklin
2005	David Banh	1990	Eric Sutherland	1976	Warren Spector
2004	Robert Glickman	1989	Brad Moss	1975	Bobby Levin
2003	Scott Waldron Jr.	1988	Holly Zullo	1974	Jeff Meckstroth
2002	John Kranyak	1987	Rich Pavlicek Jr.	1973	J Merrill
2001	Erin Anderson				