

## PREP BOWLING

# Rolling right along

Coronado claims back-to-back state championships

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After winning the school's first boys sports state title last year by beating Palo Verde for the championship, Coronado's bowling team came back for a second helping this year and defeated Sunset Region champion Clark, 5-2, at The Orleans on Feb. 3 to earn the title of repeat champions.

Coronado, which was the only team to eclipse the 40,000-pin mark (40,070) during the regular season, made it to the title match by beating Chaparral in the Sunrise quarterfinals (7-0), Silverado in the semifinals (5-2) and conference rival Green Valley in the Sunset finals (7-0).

Bob McKee, who has been Coronado's coach since the school first opened its doors four years ago, talked about the squad's goals heading into the season.

"This year we wanted to win the Sunrise Region," McKee said. "We wanted to win the Southeast Division first because we hadn't done that before. Our goal was to win the division first then the Sunrise Region and then state, of course."

Mission accomplished.

In getting to the state playoffs, the Cougars notched an impressive 86-12 overall record and went 13-1 in match play, their only loss coming in their first match against



SPECIAL TO VIEW

The Nevada state champion Coronado High School boys bowling team includes, from left, Sam Ficalora, team captain Nathan Heckman, Matt Cossey, Chris Hooks, Josh Fisher and Joe Nacion.

Green Valley.

McKee said consistency was the key for the Cougars, who outscored Clark, 3,105 to 2,778 in the finals.

"The key to winning state was that we bowled good all three games," he said. "We hadn't bowled over 1,000 all week in the playoffs as a team and then we bowled 1,000 each game there (state finals)."

"I think everyone got on a streak at different times for strikes. Two of the kids would string like four or five in a row and the other kids were marking if they weren't striking for

the most part."

In the finals, Coronado won the first game and then Clark won the second game, setting the stage for a decisive third game. The Cougars came up big in that game, outscoring the Chargers 1,044 to 852 as senior captain Nathan Heckman rolled a 248.

McKee raved about Heckman, his only departing bowler.

"It was nice to see him come up big in the end, rolling a 720 series," McKee said. "He had a real big playoff for us. He's important for us because he's

our leadoff. He does a great job for us at leadoff because he strikes so often."

Heckman's 720 series (221, 251, 248) was the best of any bowler in the finals and his 251 in the second game was the second highest championship match total behind Clark's Kenny Ramirez, who rolled a 255.

Also helping Coronado defend its title were juniors Sam Ficalora and Chris Hooks, both members of last year's state

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Left-hander threw perfect game

## ► BOWLING: Junior threw a perfect game

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champion team, and junior Matt Cossey, sophomore Josh Fisher and freshman alternate Joe Nacion.

"Sam had his best week of the season," McKee said of the left-hander who rolled a 618 series in the championship match. "He had a couple 600-plus series and he's had some pretty good games over the past couple years. He's actually shot a 799-series once."

"And Chris actually bowled a 300 in our last regular-season game against Del Sol. He had a great end of the season for us and start of the playoffs. He finished up big, too." Besides etching his name

in the record books with the other three bowlers who had perfect games in the regular or postseason heading into this season, Hooks also came up strong in the state quarterfinals against Chaparral, where he tied for the individual high series (719) and posted the second highest individual game (256).

McKee also lauded the play of Cossey during the playoffs.

"Matt became the anchor for our team during the playoffs," McKee said. "He did a real nice job closing the door for us."

Also helping the Cougars defend their crown was sophomore southpaw Fisher, who was called up to help the team midseason.

"We lost one of players during the season and pulled Matt up from our junior varsity squad during the season," McKee said. "He really had a great night in the championship match."

Losing only senior bowler Heckman after this season, McKee should have a strong roster next year, which will give Coronado a chance to become the first boys team in Nevada to win three straight bowling championships, as well as the first boys team to have a total of three state titles.

"We should have a strong line-up next year," the coach said. "There's always at least four teams that have a real good chance every year. You just never know."