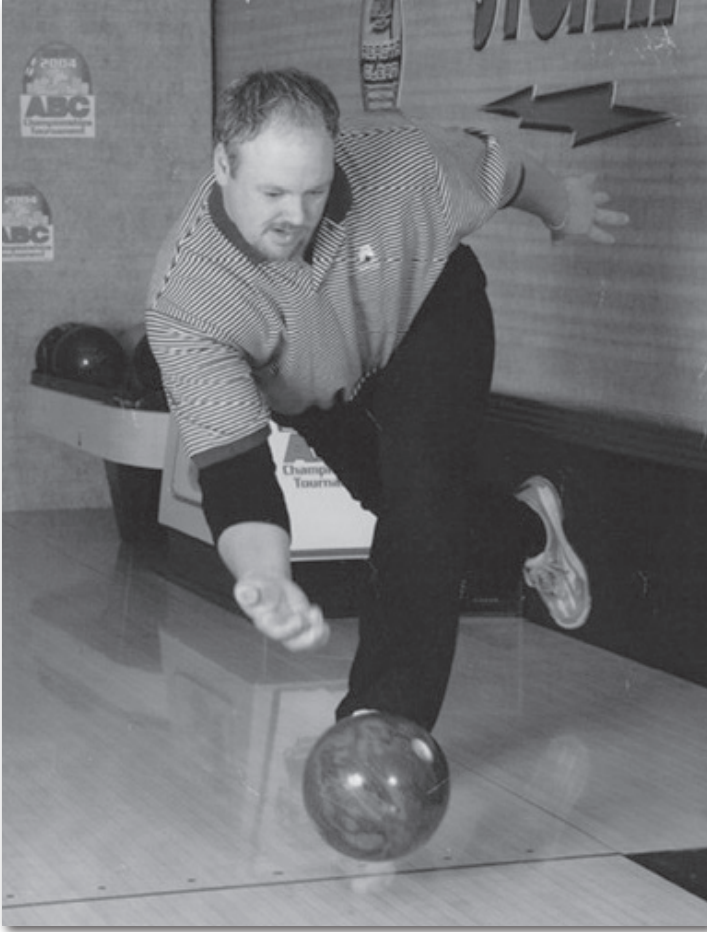


INDUCTEE PROFILE



Whether it was knocking down pins or lining up putts, Artie has competed with and defeated the best.

Achieving greatness in two sports

After Pro Bowlers Tour, Fink became dominant golfer

By Ken Love

An all-around athlete growing up, Blair County native Artie Fink was a particularly successful bowler as a young teenager.

He would go on to achieve great success in the sport on both the state and national scenes, and for most, that might be enough. Not so for Fink.

As an adult, he took up the game of golf, and, amazingly, Fink would quickly excel at this sport too, becoming a highly skilled golfer and eventually earning recognition as the most accomplished golfer in Blair County history, as well as its best bowler.

Fink seemed destined for sports star-

dom from birth.

His father, Artie Fink Sr., was a stand-out wrestler at Hollidaysburg Area High School who captured both district and regional titles before placing in the state championship wrestling tournament. His mother, Melody, also came from an active sports family. Her dad, Bill Noye, was one of the area's best bowlers, and her brothers, Jim and Ed, were among the better high school athletes in Blair County.

From a young age, Fink was active in football, baseball, wrestling and bowling, but baseball was always his first love.

Nearing graduation from Altoona Area High School in 1988, Fink was set to

accept an athletic scholarship to James Madison University, but his plans changed when local businessman Greg Dempsie offered to sponsor Fink's attempt to join the Professional Bowling Tour.

Fink was already a highly ranked bowler, but one of the requirements for PBA membership at that time was attending a one-week PBA school in Torrance, California.

"The school was really helpful for getting young professionals started on the right track," Fink said. "Getting my card allowed me to start competing in regional events across the eastern U.S."

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“I got to play a lot of golf with Artie when he first started competing.”

— Ed Strickler

Artie, who played in the 2013 U.S. Amateur and has won 38 individual area golf titles, is the most dominant golfer in Blair County history.

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Through the early 1990s, Fink excelled at the regional level and eventually gained entry into national PBA events held across the country, competing against the likes of Pete Weber, Marshall Holman and Mark Roth.

By 1994, he was at the top of his game and earned a third-place finish in the USBC Open Championship. That year, he also finished third in the 1994 Cincinnati Open, earning \$25,000.

By the mid-1990s, however, the traveling lifestyle and being away from home began to wear on Fink. He eventually said good-bye to his professional bowling career but has remained active as a local bowler. To this day, he continues to compete in area league play and participates in weekend tournaments across the mid-Atlantic Region on a regular basis.

In 2004 and 2006, Fink captured the PA State USBC Scratch Singles Championship. He was also the PA USBC Scratch All Events Champion in 2004.

Amazingly, Fink has recorded 90 certified 300 games and 55 certified 800 series in his 38 years of organized bowling competition. These many impressive bowling accomplishments earned Fink induction into the Pennsylvania State Bowling Hall of Fame in 2023.

If all those accomplishments weren't enough, Fink set his sights on a second sporting career where he eventually equaled, and in many ways surpassed, his bowling successes.

Fink recalls his earliest memories of golf involved good friend Randy McKee, who switched from the Altoona football squad to the school's golf team in 10th grade.

Fink couldn't understand why someone would choose to play golf over any other sport, but that changed when his professional bowling career was winding down.

With a bit more free time, Fink joined Sinking Valley Country Club and began to learn the game with a foursome that included his dad, uncle Jim Noye and his pap, Bill Noye.

“We teed off every Saturday morning at 6:45 a.m.,” Fink said. “And it didn't take long for me to fall in love with the game. I soon started playing golf from sun-up to sundown.”

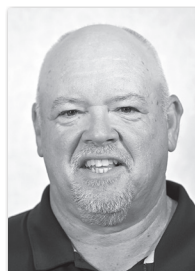
Most golfers who take up the game as an adult struggle

to become proficient, but it wasn't long before Fink worked his way to become a single-digit handicapper.

During that time, Sinking Valley was home to many of the area's top golfers, and they quickly took notice of Fink. Several members went out of their way to help him early on, including Bobby Sweitzer, Greg Ferguson and Eddie Strickler.

“I got to play a lot of golf with Artie when he first started competing,” Strickler said. “Without a doubt, he had the greatest raw talent of any local golfer I'd ever seen, and on top of that, Artie has the best competitive mind of anyone I know.”

Within a short time, Fink was competing for local championships, and in 1996, he won his first Sinking Valley title. He also



Fink bio

Sport: Bowling, golf

High school: Altoona Area

Hall of Fame achievement: Former PBA member who placed third in USBC Open and Cincinnati Open, both in 1994. Inducted into the PA Bowling Hall of Fame in 2023. Has 90 certified 300 games. As a golfer, he played in three USGA events, including the 2013 U.S. Amateur. Has won 38 individual local titles and 59 best-ball titles spread over every local course.

partnered with Jim Roseberry that summer to win the Down River Classic.

From there, Fink never looked back.

Through 2023, he has captured 24 local club championships, eight Greater Altoona individual titles, six Central Counties Individual Championships and an incredible 59 local best-ball titles -- Iron Masters (13), Sinking Valley (10), Summit (10), Down River (9), Scotch Valley (8), Mount Union (5) and Park Hills (4).

Local standout golfer Leonard DeIBaggio has been a member at Sinking Valley for decades. He was there to witness Fink's progress, from beginner level to becoming the best in the area.

"When Artie started, you could see he had a lot of talent, but what really impressed me was how hard he worked on his game," DeIBaggio said. "Within a few years, Artie was competing with the best players in the area. Soon after that, he was beating absolutely everybody."

Fink's meteoric rise in the game of golf wasn't limited to the local scene.

On the state level, he captured a Pennsylvania Four-Ball Championship title with Greg Ferguson in 1999 and a second trophy with Anthony DeGol in 2018.

On a national level, Fink has been one of just a few Blair County natives to ever qualify for a USGA championship. In 2005, he competed in the US Public Links Championship at Shaker Run C.C. in Lebanon, Ohio, and in 2010 he was selected for the USGA State Championship in Santa Rosa, California.

Perhaps his greatest individual achievement, however, was qualifying for the prestigious U.S. Amateur Championship in 2013, playing alongside future PGA stars Scottie Scheffler, Justin Thomas and Max Homa.

Fink's golf game has made a big impression on Scotch Valley's Anthony DeGol. The two have played many rounds together as partners in a number of local tournaments.

"The way Artie was able to pick the game up later in life and get to an elite level, competing on a national level multiple times, is just flat out astonishing," DeGol said. "There were long stretches where he would beat his opponents by large gaps."



Artie was inducted into the Pennsylvania Bowling Hall of Fame in 2023.

Having gotten to know Fink well in recent years, DeGol has witnessed several traits that have served Fink well.

"Competitiveness, grit, structured work ethic and immense talent," DeGol said admiringly. "Artie is always understanding what his weakest points are at any given time and works on them with purpose."

Though Fink is now 54 years old, he is still winning local championships and has his sights set on additional competition in the near future. When he turns 55, he'll be eligible for the many senior championships conducted at the state and national levels.

As he looks back on 40 years of competition, though, one particular event may have been the spark that lit Fink's competitive fuse.

When he was just a teenager competing on Altoona's football team, coaches would typically give each player a written review at

the end of the season. At the close of his senior year, defensive back coach George Geishauser gave Fink a report that made huge impact, one that remains with him to this day.

"Coach Geishauser said I was a good defensive back, but if I'd have just practiced a little harder, I could've been great," Fink said. "Those words really hit home with me. From that moment on, I told myself I'd never let anyone outwork me again."

Fink's competitive results over the past 40 years are proof of that promise, and he's gratified by his selection for the Blair County Sports Hall of Fame.

"When you're young, you don't think about it much," Fink said. "But the older you get, the more you realize what an accomplishment it is. It gives you chills."

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