

IT WAS REAL . . . BUT NOT REAL FUN

For Kelly Kulick, Being the First Woman on the Denny's PBA Tour was a Real Learning Experience

Kelly Kulick made history in 2006-07 by becoming the first woman to earn an exemption and complete an entire season of Professional Bowlers Tour competition. She won the spot on the Denny's PBA Tour by finishing 6th in last year's PBA Tour Trials, and now

that she has failed to keep her spot for next year, she'll be headed back to the Tour Trials to start over.

Kulick earned \$31,140 in her first year as a full time PBA player. She bowled in 19 events, and made the matchplay cut five times. She started

with high hopes, and she is disappointed in her year, but not too discouraged, and determined to try again.

Kulick was a rising star on the PWBA women's tour that folded in 2003, but with no new women's tour on the horizon, her only option is to bowl with

the men, or give up playing at the highest level. Giving up is not in her vocabulary, so look for her again in the next tour trials, and should she make the cut again, she will employ all the skills she acquired in year one to make more history the second time around.

You won the women's U.S. Open, Rookie of the Year on the PWBA tour – are you getting the respect out here and are you being treated like a rookie?

The gentlemen have been great out here. Of course, I haven't been a threat to any of them. It's not like I came out and started making shows or even the top 8. But they've all been great. Respectful. I've learned a lot from many of them.

I was watching you practice with Doug Kent and it looked like you are struggling with that deep inside line. Has that been your weakness?

Dougie was trying to show me something that I'm not used to seeing. I'm learning a whole new tool to put in my toolbox. If you don't see it right away, you try to manufacture it.

It's been 3 ½ years, but did you ever see a condition on the PWBA tour where you had to play 4th or 5th arrow?

Very seldom. Maybe once that I remember. That was at Cherry Bowl in Rockford because the wood surface was very similar to what we have here this week. It forces you in to a place where you normally don't play. I'm not afraid to play there. He was trying to teach me how to hook the ball at 30 feet instead of seeing the ball hook at the back. To try to throw it to a spot where I could make the ball work. It's more of just throwing it to a sport and let the lane pick it up and work for you, taking a lot of the effort out of it.

Generally speaking, how are the conditions out here compared to what you saw on the women's tour?

The conditions are fine, but they break them down much different. Many of them play to the right, and for the Tuesday move, you make a big jump. I usually creep to it by making smaller moves trying to parallel the oil and just move in slowly. You can't do that out here. A lot of the guys have high rev rates, and the transition is so much different than it was with the women. A lot of the women predominately play one part of the lane around second or third arrow chasing it left. Here, the men start at second or third and just keep breaking it down and take bigger leaps inside. Breakdown and transition are much more difficult.

Do you still have high hopes for a new women's tour?

Yes. A professional sport should have both a men's and women's tour.

Do you talk to many of the former PWBA players about the tour?

Liz (Johnson) is out here with us and I see Carolyn (Dorin-Ballard) from time-to-time, but we don't really keep in contact. I see them once a year at the Queens.

there are a few reporters usually asking the same questions. There were only two weeks where it was bothersome to me, when they were talking to me just because I'm a woman – not because I'm a bowler, especially when I was in 61st



Kelly Kulick

Do you think the industry is doing enough to try to re-start a women's tour?

No. But the industry itself is going backwards. The PBA has cut their prize funds, the prices keep going up to drill a ball, and transport a ball, yet the prizes are getting lower.

Who's the Ebonite rep?

Dino Castillo

But he's been bowling a lot. It must be hard to get help from a ball rep who is a competitor?

That's correct.

Has the publicity surrounding you bowling on this tour been more, less, or about what you expected?

It was very heavy at first; all summer long before we got started, the hype to get there, but it's not as bad as I thought it was going to be out here. Every week

Are you getting good advice?

I've tried not to listen to too many opinions because everybody has their own, but I've taken each little bit of advice and tried to keep what I think will work. Just work with little bits and pieces of each and every one. If it works, it works. If it doesn't don't bother bringing it back to the bag. Like today, what Dougie was showing me is something I can use. What I've been doing hasn't worked at all on this pattern and I know I can't keep making the same mistake over and over again.

Do you feel like you are close to finding the right formula for success?

Yes. I really do. My physical game is the best it's ever been. You can talk to any veteran out her and they will tell you they learn something every week. There are some areas of my game that need improvement. So if it comes down to going back to the tour trials and I make it again next year, I'll spend more of the summer training and practicing techniques and tools for my own game rather than what I did last summer. I'm just missing something maybe small or minute. Everyone keeps telling me you're close, you're close, and I need to find that little end of the needle. I just hope I haven't run out of time by the time I find it.

Last question – Give me your best and worst moments thus far on this tour.

Probably, from a performance point of view, the best was making the cut in the Masters to the round of 64. I'd never done that before. Starting out the tour, that was exciting to me. I really wanted to prove myself.

The worst was bowling in Medford on the Scorpion pattern, which is one of our highest scoring patterns, and I finished 63rd that week. I was crossing with Marshall Holman in his home center that week and everybody was there watching him. I bowled terrible! That was by far one of the weeks where I just wanted to hang my head down.

Another high was in Buffalo, when I bowled good on this pattern (Shark), and the cameras followed me all day and interviewed me afterwards. When you are shining in the sunlight and everything is great, the attention is wonderful, but obviously they also want to interview when you are doing poorly. To go in there and hold your head up and keep things positive is difficult. But no matter what happened, I've had the opportunity to do it, and we'll see where it takes me.

Interview by Jim Goodwin during the PBA Lone Star Classic