



The USBC Youth Scratch Championships presented by SMART

The United States Bowling Congress is introducing a new era for one of its most successful grassroots youth events. Beginning with the 2025-2026 season, the tournament previously known as the Pepsi Youth Championships will be rebranded as the **USBC Youth Scratch Championships presented by SMART**.

This rebranding represents more than just a name change; it reflects a new increase in scholarship funding at the grassroots level driven by SMART. The foundational structure of the event remains unchanged, continuing to connect youth bowlers through league-level qualifying into regional or state-level competition with age and gender-based state champions being awarded an entry to the Junior Gold Championships.

Key Enhancements and Program Commitments:

- **Doubling the added funds for Youth Scholarships:**
As part of this transition, USBC, through the SMART program, is doubling the added funds for event operators, increasing the program's scholarship funding from \$150,000 to \$300,000 annually. This expanded funding means more youth bowlers than ever before will receive scholarships through the event.
- **New Name, Same Mission:**
The USBC Youth Scratch Championships presented by SMART honors the program's rich legacy while bringing its identity in line with USBC youth's strategic priorities, membership value through tournament competition with scholastic opportunities.
- **SMART Scholarship Funding:**
Investment earnings from USBC's Scholarship Management and Account Reporting for Tenpins (SMART) program will now fund the added scholarship awards associated with the event. This elevates the program's credibility and stability by tying its financial foundation to USBC's scholarship platform.
- **Program Structure Remains Grassroots-Focused:**
Youth bowlers will continue to qualify through league competition, with progression to regional or state-level events based on each state's format. The event's scratch format remains intact to reward raw skill and performance. Following the changes with Junior Gold, the Youth Scratch Championships will shift to U12, U14, U16 and U18 divisions.
- **Support for State and Local Integration:**
States can still pair the USBC Youth Scratch Championships with handicap-based events just as they have in the past. The flexibility for local execution remains even as the national brand and scholarship engine is strengthened.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. **Why is Pepsi no longer part of the event?** As the youth sports and marketing landscape continues to evolve, Pepsi has shifted its national marketing strategy away from youth audiences, guided by clearly defined internal policies and pledges to uphold responsible advertising practices.

The previous branding of this event was part of a long-standing relationship through the BPAA Smart Buy program, a partnership that remains strong and ongoing.

With the transition of youth programming from IBC Youth to USBC, the timing was right to rebrand this foundational championship under the USBC and SMART identity. This move strengthens alignment with USBC's mission, reinforces our commitment to scholarship support and allows USBC to take full ownership of the program's future.



2. **What does SMART's involvement mean?** USBC's SMART's program has committed to funding added scholarships for the event. This ensures a consistent, reliable source of scholarship funds for youth athletes.
3. **Will the program structure change?** No. The core structure remains depending on the individual state format:
 - League-level and/or Regional qualifying for state-level events
 - The competition continues to be a scratch format.
 - States may continue to offer handicap events in conjunction with the scratch competition.
4. **Will participation suffer without a commercial brand like Pepsi?** We recognize that Pepsi's name brought familiarity, but the real value of the program is its competitive pathway, scholarship awards and opportunities for youth bowlers. By aligning the event directly with SMART and USBC, we are reinforcing its long-term stability and competition purpose, two elements that matter most to families and athletes.
5. **Is this rebranding permanent?** Yes. The USBC Youth Scratch Championships presented by SMART is the event's official name going forward. This rebrand offers consistency, increased control and a direct tie to USBC's scholarship efforts and youth development programs.
6. **Will directors still be required to use Pepsi pouring centers for their events?** No. With the transition away from Pepsi sponsorship, there is no longer a requirement to use Pepsi pouring centers for the USBC Youth Scratch Championships presented by SMART; however, to maintain consistency and support within the bowling community, all participating centers must still be active BPAA members.
7. **Will Junior Gold spots still be awarded through this event?** Yes. The USBC Youth Scratch Championships presented by SMART will continue to serve as a Junior Gold qualifier, consistent with previous years. States that use this program to award Junior Gold spots will continue to do so.
8. **Are there any changes to the schedule or timing for state event completion?** Starting in 2025-2025, the dates will be:
 - Oct. 1 – Feb. 28 League-level qualifying window
 - Mar. 1 – Apr. 30 Center/sectional qualifying (if applicable in your area)
 - Mar. 1 – May 1 State/zone competitions
9. **Will the divisions be updated to match Junior Gold (U14 & U16)?** Yes. Beginning with the upcoming season, the USBC Youth Scratch Championships presented by SMART will adopt the same age divisions as the Junior Gold program (U12, U14, U16, U18). This alignment creates consistency across youth programs, streamlines athlete progression and supports competitive fairness by grouping athletes into more balanced peer-to-peer age brackets. The U8 and U10 divisions will still be offered, but only as part of the Youth Scratch Championships.
10. **Can states or coordinators use the national USBC Youth Scratch Championships presented by SMART logo to create and sell merchandise?** No. The national event logo is a trademarked asset of USBC and may not be used on merchandise for resale purposes without prior written permission; however, State Coordinators will be provided with a custom state logo suite for promotional use or participant giveaways through the USBC Youth marketing team.