



Blayne's Fully Automated Lego Bowling Lane



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By: Lynne Clay

'A very nice machine', 'This is really cool, elegant design', 'Awesome, just like an actual bowling alley! Excellent job', 'It gets better with every version. Keep it up!', 'where can I get one?' Just some of the feedback that 16 year-old Blayne Fletcher has received in response to an ingenious combination of his two major skills – engineering and bowling!

Watch this incredible clip at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pUyLIcBtTQ>

Blayne became interested in tenpin bowling at the age of four when he began bowling on a lane next to his two older sisters who bowled league in Durban, South Africa. Now a student at North Lakes State College north of Brisbane, Blayne joined the Robotics Club at his school and excelled in this subject, becoming the Queensland State Champion two years ago and finishing fifth in the Nationals for the past two years.



Blayne has been bowling league at Chermerside since the age of 11 and started bowling as a one-handed bowler. He won the Restricted division of the first tournament he competed in at Caboolture Bowl at the age of just 12.

He became interested and experimented with two-handed bowling, began studying the technique on YouTube and tried to replicate it ... "it was FUN," declared Blayne, who lists two-handed stars Jason Belmonte and Osku Palermaa as his heroes.

Blayne was selected for TBAQ's Development Squad for the SQ President's Shield team and 2013 was his first year at the Junior Nationals. He was pleased to make the cut to the Junior Masters, despite early-round elimination at the hands of South Australia's Adam Sims who went on to finish runner-up in the Boys' division of the Masters.

Blayne returned to Sydney's Tenpin City Bowl just two weeks after the Junior Nationals to participate in an IAB Bowling Bootcamp conducted by Jason Belmonte and fellow 2012 AMF Masters champion, Diandra Asbaty.



During the weekend sessions of theory and practical on-lane tuition, Belmo and Blayne's fellow students became aware of the incredible project that Blayne has designed and created – a completely functioning bowling lane with a fully-automated ball return constructed from 13,000 Lego pieces!

"When I was young I found Lego fun - I got into bowling and always wanted my own bowling alley in my house ... it took a lot of time, including the programming, but it's about creating something that nobody else has," Blayne explained.

"Blayne has got to be one of the cleverest guys I know," Belmonte told participants during the final session of the recent IAB Bootcamp.

"Bowling is everything to him," his mother Lyn stated. He has been Bowler of the Year at Cherside the last two years running and is focusing on entering as many tournaments as he can in the next year. "Blayne was soooo thrilled to finally get his first 300 recently," Lyn continued. "His games have just improved so much since the camp with Belmo and Diandra."

"I was very lucky to witness it too as I had been downstairs shopping with my daughter when we decided to go and check on Blayne and he was just about to bowl his last shot," she added, smiling.



Blayne in action at the IAB Bowling Bootcamp in May

"Inspired by his love of the sport, Blayne used his knowledge of robotics to begin building his own fully automated Lego bowling alley... .. it took him about nine months of designing and building in his spare time and was completely all his own work, with no outside help whatsoever," his mother said proudly.

Photos courtesy of Lyn Fletcher
