

North Dakota bowler leads CAE at 2013 OC

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RENO, Nev. - Nobody was more surprised than LeRoy Krein of Mandan, N.D., when he found out he took the Classified All-Events lead at the 2013 United States Bowling Congress Open Championships on Wednesday.

The 64-year-old right-hander got stronger with each event at the National Bowling Stadium, firing a 600 series in singles, 593 in doubles and 569 in team for a 1,762 all-events total. Mitch Soeffker of

Gaylord, Minn., previously held the lead with 1,746.

Krein needed a mark in his final frame to secure the top spot and didn't realize nine games had helped him to the top of the leaderboard. He delivered a strike moved him just outside of the top 10 in Classified Singles. George Atkinson Jr

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lenderson, Nev., leads with

"I didn't think I was close to the lead," said Krein, who made his 29th USBC Open Championships appearance. "Next year will be my 30th year, and this is the highlight of my tournament career. To take the lead feels fantastic."

Krein admitted he tends to struggle as the lanes dry out but was able to average more than 205 in his final five games by moving further outside on the 39-foot doubles and singles lane condition. After a 164 start in doubles, he struck on eight on his next 10 shots and never looked back.

"I usually struggle on drier lanes," said Krein, who bowls regularly at Ten Spot Lanes in Mandan. "I tried playing in the middle of the lane to start, but there wasn't enough oil. I went out to the edge, and the ball got down the lane further. I didn't have to throw it hard, and the carry was good from out there."

After falling at work nearly 15 years ago, Krein has struggled with back problems. He struggled to walk after the accident, but his love for the sport never went away. With a title at the Open Championships now in sight, he hopes to enjoy his spot at the top as long as he can.

"I love to bowl," Krein said. "I never get burned out on it, and it doesn't matter how well I do. I just love to throw the ball. I've had a couple of chances to win here and there, but somebody always knocked me off, so it might happen again. I would be ecstatic if it held on. It would be unreal."

The Classified Division is for bowlers with entering averages of 180 or below, doubles teams with combined averages of 360 or below and teams with combined averages of 900 or below.

Presenting sponsors for the 2013 USBC Open Championships include Circus Circus Reno, Eldorado Hotel Casino Reno and Silver Legacy Resort Casino Reno.