



The Best Thing I Saw at State: Two Days, Two Titles

Beckham Lieu's Unforgettable State Run for Patrick Taylor

By Ethan W. Anderson

The *Best Thing I Saw at State* is a new column that brings to life the moments that make high school sports so meaningful. Through the stories, emotions, and details that often go unseen at the state championships, it captures what the box score can't.



GONZALES & BATON ROUGE, La. — The best thing I saw at state last week wasn't just a championship performance. It was composure. It was leadership. And it was a senior delivering in the smallest of margins and the biggest of moments.

Patrick F. Taylor Science & Technology Academy's Beckham Lieu didn't just win at state, he owned it.

In a span of two days, Lieu led the Tigers to the program's first-ever bowling state championship, then returned a day later to claim the Division II singles title.

Images taken by GeauxPreps



But the story doesn't start with a trophy. It starts with two pins.

In Friday's singles qualifying round, 81 bowlers competed across four games, with only six advancing. Lieu entered as the No. 8 seed, averaging 216, and delivered scores of 227, 213, 235, and 235 for a total of 910. It was just enough.

Barely. Lieu made the cut by just two pins.

"I'm just grateful that I even made the cut," Lieu said. "Initially I thought I didn't bowl good enough to make it. Hearing that I only made it by two pins, I was just proud of myself for being here."

That mindset never left him.

"I said that no matter what happens I'll be proud of myself. I'm not going to get down if I mess up," he said. "I made some mistakes—I missed a single pin in the championship match—but I just kept pushing through... just happy to be here."

That calm showed.



After advancing through the second round with a 244 game that included eight strikes, Lieu set up a championship showdown with Carson Childers of French Settlement who bowled an impressive 993 in the first round of that day. In a tightly contested final, Lieu delivered once again, winning 215-186 to secure the singles title.

"Honestly, frame by frame," head coach Brittany Walls said. "One bad ball isn't going to determine the match. He's so good at just staying in the zone. He was smiling out there whether he was winning or not."

That performance came one day after Lieu helped deliver something even bigger: a team championship that had been years in the making.

Patrick Taylor, the No. 5 seed entering the bracket, put together a dominant postseason run. The Tigers defeated Belle Chasse in regionals, then rolled past No. 4 Vanderbilt Catholic (21-6), upset top-seeded Episcopal in the semifinals, and closed with a commanding 22-5 victory over No. 3 Archbishop Shaw in the Division II final.



For Walls, the moment was years in the making.

“It was incredible,” she said. “To watch the kids, the hard work they’ve put in... they’ve really worked for it the last three years. It was really rewarding to see that work pay off.”

And at the center of it all was Lieu. Not just as a bowler, but as a leader.

“He’s been with us from team manager in eighth grade all the way to senior year,” Walls said. “It’s incredible to see how much he’s grown. He really stepped into that leadership role and owned it this year.”



Lieu was quick to turn the spotlight to his teammates. The mark of a true leader.

“I’ve got a lot of impressive bowlers on my team,” he said. “A lot of young people—especially Xander and Logan. Middle schoolers starting for a varsity team... you don’t see that very often. I’m kind of here as a mentor to help them on the mental side, but they’re very talented.”

You could see it begin to sink in that this was Lieu’s last high school bowling match.

“I’m really excited to see what this team is going to do in the future when I’m not there. I think they’re going to do just fine without me.”



That future feels bright. But this moment belongs to Lieu.

A senior, a National Merit finalist, and a future student at Duke, Lieu isn't planning to bowl collegiately, but in a fitting extension of his leadership, he's already thinking about building something new.

He hopes to start a bowling team at Duke.

It's an ambitious idea. Then again, so is winning two championships in two days.

The best thing I saw at state wasn't perfection. It was perspective.

It was a bowler who nearly didn't make the finals, who missed shots, and who smiled anyway. From team manager to team leader, Beckham walked away with two titles because he never let a single moment define him.

Sometimes, the difference between going home and making history is just two pins.

Author's Note: *In my role as the Director of Communications, I have the unique privilege of attending nearly all sanctioned LHSAA State Championship events. Although the schedule is demanding, I have the privilege of seeing student-athletes from all walks of life, united by two things: their participation in Louisiana high school sports and their pursuit of a state championship. In my first year in this role, I've gained a deeper appreciation for high school athletics and for all the dedication that goes into making each season and event possible. Although my current role involves less writing than my previous positions, it has given me the opportunity to return to something I've always loved. While much of my work now focuses on press releases and public statements, I also have the chance to reconnect with my passion for feature writing, this time highlighting what I consider the purest form of sport: high school athletics. The goal is to highlight the best thing I saw at each state championship and share the unknown stories behind these events, capturing memorable moments for student-athletes, coaches, administrators, officials, and fans.*

