

IKAN bowler helps paraplegic bowl from wheelchairs

Bobby Lewis, WTSP 6:17 p.m. EDT October 8, 2015



(Photo: WTSP)

Orlando 17-year-old Daniel Bolan couldn't help but stare at the bowler next to him.

"If I was in a wheelchair I couldn't do that," he said. "It makes me happy to see them."

Bolan stood and watched as Bill Miller and Romy Camargo rolled bowling balls down the lanes with the help of a device Miller helped invent. The **IKAN bowler** (<http://www.ikanbowler.com/>) is a ramp that connects to a wheelchair and helps propel the ball towards the pins when the chair comes to a stop.

"People who have seen it before are usually pretty amazed at what we can do," said Miller.

On September 16, 2008, Camargo was shot in the neck while serving in the Army in Afghanistan. He'd never bowled before his injury. On Thursday, he hit a strike on his third roll with the IKAN bowler.

"It was a miracle he got a strike on his third one," joked Miller's dad, Jim.



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The IKAN bowler was developed by Bill and retired-engineer, Claude Giguere. They started tinkering with the idea in 2002. Bill dislocated two of his vertebrae after a fall in college. He never thought he'd be able to bowl again.

"I bowl with my mouth," he said. "It's a whole lot of fun. I'm paralyzed from my neck down and on a ventilator and yet I can bowl."

Bill uses his mouth to maneuver his chair and line up the IKAN bowler with the lane. A 'caddy' places the ball on the top of the IKAN ramp and the driver powers the chair forward. The momentum generated by the chair's wheels pushes the ball down the ramp and onto the lane once the chair comes to a stop.

Bill holds the world record for the highest score from a wheelchair.

"My top score is a 255," he said with pride.

Bolan, who once bowled a 289, was touched by the idea that others were bowling from a chair. Both of his grandfathers are U.S. veterans. So, Bolan decided to organize a tournament fundraiser called **Strike for Vets** (https://stayinstep.org/strike-for-vets/#.VhbYn_IVhBc) bowling on Saturday. All proceeds from the event will be donated to Camargo's Tampa business, **Stay in Step Spinal Cord Injury Center** (<http://www.stayinstep.org>). Bolan's hope is that bowlers will show up and admire, and donate to, the men and women who continue to live life to the fullest, even from a wheelchair.

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