

Jazmine C. Price keeps rolling along



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Jazmine C. Price, of East Providence, shows her best form during a summer league tournament at East Providence Lanes. She's the first Rhode Island woman to win a full NCAA bowling scholarship.

Bowling standout from East Providence wins a full NCAA bowling scholarship to St. Paul's College, in Virginia.

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EAST PROVIDENCE — She's entered a bowler's utopia after graduating from East Providence High this year.

Her game is the flagship sport at St. Paul's College, in Virginia. The bowlers are sought after, praised and written about. Football rarely wins, basketball is mediocre, and so their team's winning record gets the pride and recognition.

And with less than 850 students total at the educational institution, a stark difference from East Providence High School's massive population, nearly everyone knows Jazmine C. Price. She was even named freshmen princess for Homecoming this weekend.

Rhode Island's residents should also get to know the 17-year-old Riverside resident. She is, after all, the state's first to earn a full, NCAA bowling scholarship for college. She signed her letter of intent to bowl for St. Paul's College in November.

A teammate of hers in the Providence Senate Youth Program — a well-respected statewide bowling league — also received a NCAA bowling scholarship this year. Courtney

Varin, of West Warwick, signed her letter of intent in the spring for Delaware State University. She and Price started this fall.

"I'm proud of that scholarship," Price said Monday by telephone. "I don't have to pay anything, but I'm not [going to abuse it.] I make sure I go to class early and study hard."

Her first bowling coach and father, Marty Jones, who started the Providence-based league, said Price always made education her focus. She finished high school as a member of the Rhode Island

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JAZMINE C. PRICE



Jazmine Price showed "how important it is to stay calm and focused" in a competition, says her coach and father, Marty Jones.

Honor Society and graduated from Upward Bound, a pre-college preparation program financed by the federal government.

"... I always told my kids that keeping up your grades was the most important thing and that the bowling aspect would take care of itself," Jones said.

Price began to bowl at age 7, but didn't join the league until she was 9.

"When I got older I got tired of it," she said. "I took a break and then returned after two years or so."

In her seven seasons with Providence Senate, she won the

league championships, several high game and high series achievements, made the highly successful travel team and won the Queen of the Hill Tournament. She also won accolades on the state and regional levels, such as her division's last Eastern Regional Doubles and Teams Championships.

"As her coach, I must say that I was most impressed with Jazmine's mental game and consistency, for these are two areas of the game that will have a dramatic

effect on your overall scores in general," Jones said. "Jazmine demonstrated how important it is to stay calm and focused during competition despite any obstacles that may or may not go your way."

St. Paul's head coach Steve Wallace said Price appealed to him because she was, among other things, a "coach's daughter." He heard about her from a former coach at Delaware State University.

"Being a coach's daughter, I know she is fundamentally sound," Wallace said. "She's willing to learn and will be moldable."

As for his team, Wallace said, "We're good, one of the best in the nation. [Because of the school's small size], we're considered giant killers."

Last season, the team's record was 56 wins and 32 losses. It finished 18th in the nation. Vanderbilt University in Tennessee was first.

He put her on the starting lineup in the college's first match of this season last weekend. The freshman, one of two on the eight-member roster, bowled second. She averaged 153 out of 300, with a high game of 209.

Wallace said a good collegiate average is 180 and above.

"She got her feet wet and did well," he said. "She's someone who's going to just blossom."