

## Kevin Dwyer

By Christina Lund Madsen

Having just played his last junior championship, Kevin Dwyer is the youngest participant in the Bermuda Bowl. A quiet guy with an unrevealing expression, seeming to keep his thoughts to himself.

Kevin started to play bridge at 14. His brother had read all the poker books in the library and then picked up a bridge book from the shelf next to the poker. At first Kevin wasn't interested in playing.

"He kept egging me by saying things like 'You know I'm gonna beat you.'" Kevin's competitiveness prevailed and he started playing at the club with his brother. Already after two years, he was asked by a member of the club to play and teach a woman for 45 dollars pr. session. That was a lot of money for the 16 year-old and the beginning of his bridge career and beginning to the end of his studies.

Having never even played in a major national event such as the Spingold, he was invited on a team with Gavin Wolpert, John Kranyak and Kevin Bathurst who were looking for a fourth player.

*What do you think made them have so much confidence in you?*

"I have NO idea. I only played against them once or twice. I never played all the best American players. I owe a lot to Gavin and our teammates. It is an amazing year for me. Winning a national event with Gavin, winning the trials and playing the quarterfinal of the Bermuda Bowl."

In the US trials Kevin faced all the giants of American bridge such as the legendary Bob Hamman.

*How did you feel playing the trials?*

"I was nervous in the very first set. I even doubled Kevin's double at one point. But after the first boards it was over. No more nerves. We are here to win. I knew we had a great team."

In this moment we are sitting at the pool bar having lunch. Kevin sat out the morning session of the quarterfinal and is going in to play now. His captain Shane Blanchard has instructed me not to talk to him within 30 minutes before game time.

His calm composure changes as the clock approaches. He seems calm on the outside, but barely eats his pizza. His left leg is rapidly going up and down.

*How do you handle the feeling of being nervous?*



"I listen to music. It is my oasis." Before play time he walks around by himself with his earphones.

*What makes you a good bridge player?*

"My patience I guess. And I am good at not showing emotions. I can go for 1100 and just move on to the next board."

*What is it like playing on USA1?*

"We have a great team. Even if we have a bad set, we have two amazing pairs. We might have a minus card but still win the match. Kran is our cheerleader. He is a pool of energy. Shane has been the best captain I have had by a mile. I have had a lot of junior captains. At first when the team said 'Let's get Shane' I thought 'Cool, another guy for us to hang out with.' I had no idea he would be so on top of things. Steve and Bobby are the rocks of our team. At and away from the bridge table."

*What makes you really happy?*

"Playing the BB. I never thought I would be here, especially so young. It is an incredible opportunity for me. And my girlfriend. She makes me happy."

He met her three years ago at the White House junior tournament in Amsterdam. She is a Venezuelan beauty and played Kevin's team in the first match. He was so magnified that he and his partner were minus in the butler.

"At first I didn't think I would ever have a shot at her. I just thought of her as out of my league, so it was very easy talking to her. Then I thought 'I am in Amsterdam', so I went to talk to her. It is not normal for me to just go over and talk to women. It was amazing. She brought her teammates the first night and all hang out and had an actual date the next night. Amsterdam is a great memory for me going out with her."

After only one date in Amsterdam he went to visit her in Venezuela. She never expected him to accept, but he went and after a while she abandoned her home country to go study in Florida where Kevin lives.

How would you describe her?

"She is waaay too smart for me." He pauses. "She is just... perfect. Amazing, beautiful. I love her accent. That Venezuelan accent is just to die for."

Kevin is just at the beginning of his career. He plays with clients as a bridge professional and dreams of being hired to play on a good team for the main American tournaments such as the Spingold and Vanderbilt. However bridge may be his way of life, but not his entire life.

"I don't want to play 30 weeks a year the rest of my life. I love doing it now, I love to travel. But at some point I want to settle down and have a family and a dog."