

Gateway GTO Annual Pinball Tournament

by Marty Howard



The 10th Annual Gateway GTO Pinball Wizard Tournament was the best ever! And, we had the largest turnout with 35 players.

It was a beautiful, sunny day, inside and out. Everyone arrived on time at noon. Upon entry, each player was issued a raffle ticket, with 2 to be drawn at the end of the day as attendance prizes. With the money I collected, I was able to pay for the rental of Atomic, the tournament prizes, a 'tip' for our host (James) who normally does not do a tournament when ATOMIC is rented for private parties. Since we have been going there for so many years, he makes an exception for us. They do have regular tournaments for ATOMIC that can be found on their website. NOTE: the more players, the more money collected, the more attendance prizes.

Even prior to the games starting, sweat was pouring profusely from all the players. This may have been due to my shouting out instructions after James had explained it all to everyone. (You know my explanations tend to get long.) Each game had 2 players. Each player played about 20 games each, so the pace was fast and furious. There were many disappointments and arguments as the 'themed' games progressed, mostly on the playfields and back-glasses as in the machines themselves since there were games such as "007 James Bond" with lots of killings, shootings and action. Also, so many games with rock bands such as "Metallica" which played some words that I cannot share here. However, no animals nor members, were hurt during the tournament, as per FCC rules.

The tournament lasted 2 hours. This tournament was a faster pace than any prior tournament due to resetting the software to accommodate the speed. There were a couple of players

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that decided that they were not going to be in the tournament. Either they just wanted to watch, play the games that they enjoyed, or just wanted to talk with everyone when the players were in-between games. Everyone ‘ewwd’ and ‘ahhd’ at the beautiful trophies that were awarded at the end of the tournament. Players had fun trying to beat their opponent whether they were better or worse at playing pinball. We were all there to have fun and to learn from better players.

Here are the 4 top players in order from 1st to 4th place before the final game which determined the true champions.



Here are the champions, with their 1st to 4th place prizes. (Notice their happier faces.)



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Now it was time for the raffle prizes. Matt Busch selected an Atomic Pinball cap. An Atomic pinball shirt was also given away.

Dinner was a real treat since all of us were really hungry after participating in such a grueling tournament. I had booked a restaurant over a month prior to the event. However, I was not able to secure that restaurant on the same day so I had to shop for another. I was fortunate enough to get Bluff City Grill at the last minute. I phoned them the day before as well as at noon time on play day. They were very accommodating and assure me that they could handle our group. This was my first time there as were many others. After ordering, a really nice variety of food was evident as you looked across the tables. The service, the restaurant, and the dishes were just what we deserved...well done.



Should next year's event be even more popular with a larger turnout, I suggest that Chuck (owner of Atomic) get a larger place.

Looking forward to having a small pinball tournament at Club Howard in the near future.

Thanks to our Club for participating in this fun event.

Until our next event, Signing off, Marty Howard, CEC

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