



WISCONSIN MASON MICHAEL SCHLUND WINS, "SUPER BOWL OF MASONRY!"



The Wausau, WI native (above left) takes home top honors at the SPEC MIX BRICKLAYER 500® World Championship, while Houston, TX mason Mario Hernandez wins SPEC MIX TOP CRAFTSMAN® Award.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

LAS VEGAS, NV (1/18/23) – Although the proud and dedicated Packer fans in the Dairyland State will not be celebrating a 2023 Lombardi trophy victory, Wausau, Wisconsin mason Michael Schlund did the state proud by winning the Super Bowl of Masonry, the SPEC MIX BRICKLAYER 500® World Championship. Schlund, along with his mason tender, Arron Kowalski, laid 759 bricks in one hour to claim the title, “World’s Best Bricklayer,” is now the proud owner of a new Ford F250 4x4 Super Duty truck, an Essick Pro12 Mixer, and more than \$15,000 in additional cash and prizes.

Marking the event’s 21st anniversary, SPEC MIX, LLC®, hosted the world’s largest and most prestigious masonry competition, the SPEC MIX BRICKLAYER 500®. This action-packed bricklaying battle took place on Wednesday, January 18th, 2023, at the World of Concrete expo in Las Vegas, NV.

For sixty-minutes, Schlund and Kowalski, paired against 23 other masons and tenders from across North America, battled to lay as many bricks as they could, with as few craftsmanship errors as possible. The champion team

working together like a finely tuned machine, proved the competition is a true test of human skill, speed and stamina designed to determine the best craftsman in the masonry industry.

Although it was Schlund's fourth time competing in the Championship round, he was never called to winner's circle. This year his experience and determination, and eight practice sessions paid dividends. "When I heard my name called as World Champion, I was overwhelmed with joy and relief, in addition to 100 other emotions. I thought I had a chance, and some of the other bricklayers came over after the competition to tell me I built a nice wall. For a farm boy in northern Wisconsin, this was a dream come true!"



Houston, TX mason, Mario Hernandez, (above) wins SPEC MIX TOP CRAFTSMAN® Award, shown sitting in his new Kubota RTV-X1140 utility vehicle.

The event's second most coveted award, the SPEC MIX TOP CRAFTSMAN®, went to mason Mario Hernandez and mason tender Gerson Lux. In the 2022 World Championship Mario laid 730 bricks in one hour, which earned him third place and \$3,000. For building a wall that judges deem "the most sellable wall," Hernandez was handed the keys to a new Kubota RTV-X1140 utility vehicle including more than \$15,000 in additional cash and prizes.

"My first thought was 'Thank God for giving me the ability and strength to win TOP CRAFTSMAN award.' My goal was to build a perfect wall no matter how many brick I laid—and after the competition I was confident this year I did." This was only Hernandez's second time competing in Las Vegas, and 686 flawlessly laid bricks were his magic number. Hernandez with a huge smile said, "Winning the TOP CRAFTSMAN title in a field of so many world-class masons is a great honor to me and my family—we couldn't be happier!"

Second place was taken by mason Scott Tuttle, and tender Brian Tuttle, with Quik Trowel Masonry, Clearfield, UT, with 716 Brick. Brian is a past World Champion, and SPEC MIX TOP CRAFTSMAN winner. Both Brian and Scott Tuttle are among the most experienced competitors in this year's field.

Third place was mason Luis Prado, and tender Eduardo Ramirez with Brazos Masonry, Waco, TX - 709 Brick. This was Luis' first time placing in the World Championship.

The TOUGHEST TENDER® award went to Jeff Head, with a winning time of 17 min. 31 sec. Jeff is with Foeste Masonry, Cape Girardeau, MO. The TOUGHEST TENDER is a preliminary competition where the tenders are timed as they set up the workstations for the SPEC MIX BRICKLAYER 500.

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For sixty-minutes, masons and tenders from across North America battled to lay as many bricks as they could, with as few errors as possible. Both working together like a finely tuned machine, it's a true test of human skill, speed and stamina designed to determine the best craftsman in the masonry industry.

To reach the championship, 23 regional competitions were held across North America, as hundreds of world-class masons competed to qualify for a spot on the event's grand finale roster.

"We created this competition in 2003 to highlight the incredible skill and pride that bricklayers all over the world dedicate every day to the projects they build. Now it's the masonry industry's most celebrated annual event that gains more popularity each year and become the top recruiting tool for the next generation of skilled masons. We are thankful to have so many great sponsors and industry partners to help us highlight masonry as a solid, rewarding career choice," said SPEC MIX Vice President, Brian Carney.

To download the event still images, logo, and random b-roll video for supporting news features, link to:

<https://we.tl/t-1WkklNJBE>

If you have any further questions, or would like to set up an interview with any of the winning competitors, please contact Brian Carney at 612-859-4505 or by email at Brian.Carney@specmix.com or Jeff Farmakes at 612-306-5672 or by email at Jeff.Farmakes@specmix.com.

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Regards,

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