

# Billiards Buzz

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## PLP Champion Is Crowned

Volume 10, Issue #113

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# FROM THE Head Rail

MIKE HOWERTON

One of the things that comes with the recent surge in interest in the sport is podcasts. All it takes is a quick scroll through Facebook and you will find a ton of different podcasts, and they all can start to sound the same after a while.

One of those podcasts that I think has really set itself apart from the pack though is the Legends of the Cue podcast. Instead of giving yet another opinion on what's happening in the sport today, The Legends of the Cue podcast focuses on the people who helped build the sport over the last 20-30 years.

Mark Wilson, Allison Fisher and passionate fan Michael Gonzalez host this show and they have interviewed a plethora of recognizable names from Mike Sigel to Ewa Laurance, and these aren't just short conversations with the stars. They are deep dives into their lives.

Check out the show at [legendsofthecue.com](http://legendsofthecue.com) and I think you will be impressed.

Until next month,  
Mike





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## 22 Hoang Wins PLP Event

Photos by Austin Cofran/Matchroom Pool



## 26 Chou Comes Back in Florida

Skip Maloney - AzB Staff / File photos by Erwin Dionisio

- 6 Pool Watcher Part 3**  
Phil Capelle
- 12 Keys to Long-Shot Consistency**  
Anthony Beeler
- 14 Chalkin' Up The Memories**  
Mary Kenniston
- 18 World Class Pool**
- 32 Filler Takes Two in Vegas**  
Predator Pro Billiard Series
- 33 Wei Wins Women's Open**  
Predator Pro Billiard Series
- 34 Killer Fillers Mixed Doubles Champs**  
Predator Pro Billiard Series
- 37 Oi Owns Carabao International Open**  
Ben Hudd ([www.absolute-pool.com](http://www.absolute-pool.com))
- 38 Gorst Holds Off Chohan in Texas**  
Skip Maloney - AzB Staff / File photos courtesy Erwin Dionisio
- 40 Gorst Completes Texas Sweep**  
Skip Maloney - AzB Staff / File photos courtesy Erwin Dionisio
- 42 Thorpe & Salim Take Indianapolis**  
Mary Kenniston / Photo courtesy Pool Action TV
- 45 Appleton Wins Straight Pool Face-Off**  
Predator Pro Billiard Series
- 46 James Cabal Undefeated at Swanee Memorial**  
Skip Maloney - AzB Staff / Photo courtesy Griff's
- 48 Predator Launches Women Pro Billiard Series**
- 50 Florida Open Returns to Orlando**
- 53 WNT Expands in Arizona**
- 54 Tournament Results**
- 58 Upcoming Events**
- 59 AzBilliards Money List**



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# I'M A POOL WATCHER, PT. 3

## INTRODUCTION

In part 3, the final one of this series, I am going to continue our examination of the various shots and concepts that come from my notes from watching the pros play in recent months. For a complete introduction to this series, please see the January issue.

## WATCHER'S HIGH!

The idea that so many of our activities can result in the release of dopamine does much to add to the attractiveness of these pursuits. Some of these include playing the slots, gaming, running and, best of all, playing or watching sports.

To satisfy my curiosity I sought the findings of Google AI by asking it this question: can watching sports cause a release of dopamine. The beginning of their reply began like this: "Yes, watching sports causes a significant release of dopamine, the brain's "feel-good" neurotransmitter."

So, you can get what I am going to call Watcher's High by watching sports, including pool.

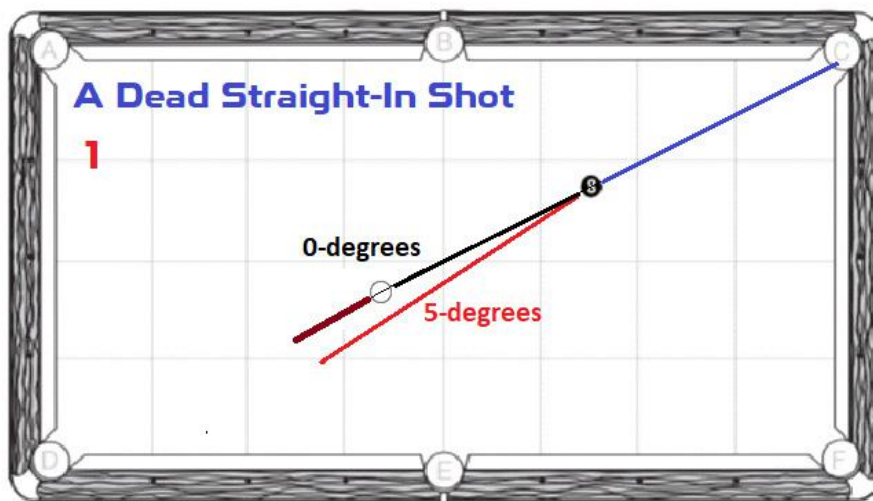
As I mentioned, slots and video games can produce dopamine thanks to their short time cycles and irregular rewards. That idea also applies when watching pros play pool because of its similarly short intervals between shots, their unpredictable results, and the wonder that comes from seeing a super shot.

Indeed, when I think of pool compared to other sports, I would argue that our great sport offers viewers like you and me the greatest potential to experience an ongoing procession of dopamine hits of various levels of intensity.

In sum, another big reason why I believe pool is the best sport to watch is that, when you are truly engaged with the action and are a skillful pool watcher, that you will, as a big bonus, receive pleasurable jolts to your psyche from regular doses of dopamine, and the you experience Watcher's High!

## STRAIGHT-IN SHOTS

When watching the pros you hear the term "straight-in" to describe so many shots. However, for a shot to be truly straight-in, it must have absolutely no cut angle when aimed at the dead center of the pocket. So, even on shots that announcers say are straight-in, most of them actually have a small cut angle ranging for about just beyond 0 degrees to about 1-3 degrees. In other words, near straight-in shots up to a certain point are commonly called a straight-in shot.



**Diagram #1** shows a dead straight-in shot on the 8-ball. Sometimes you will actually want a shot with no cut angle whatsoever when a stop shot is needed to give you ideal shape. This happens quite frequently in Straight Pool. But, most of the time, it will be all but impossible to leave yourself with a dead straight-in shot because trying for these is one of the hardest position plays of all.

When you do have a perfectly straight in shot, there is no angle to allow for, so this means that your stroke must be near perfect to make the shot. This is why many player's like to have a small angle as this helps them to allow for a slight cut, which helps with the aiming process.

The 5-degrees line gives you a point of comparison. The kind of cuts we're talking about fit between this line and the 0-degrees line. When you are faced with a very small angled cut shot, it helps to pay special attention to planning your position route because small cuts can lead to unpredictable results. For example, the cue ball will often follow or draw on a wider path from the straight-in line after contacting the object ball than you think it will.

Finally, when you do have a slight cut angle and you need to play a shot where the cue ball stops dead in its tracks, and the distances are not too great, consider cheating the pocket to get the desired result.

### STAYING MENTALLY STRONG

When watching sports, you will hear commentators talk about a players current state of mind. For example, you will hear about a golfer needing to make a short putt to regain

their confidence after having missed one or more of these short ones on previous holes. I know, it makes no sense – top pros should be confident all of the time because they are pros, after all. Still, confidence and skill experience their ups and downs over the short run.

Turning to pool, you could miss a ball because of a stroke that you know was flawed in one or more ways. So, rather than letting it deflate your level of confidence, you need to be extra determined on your next shot, and maybe several shots, to employ your very best routine, which will help you to quickly get back on track.

I still remember long ago during a money game when I ran out to the 9-ball and missed it, badly. The very next rack I got a shot after the break and this time I ran out the entire rack! From that point forward, by ability to close out a rack soared to whole new level.

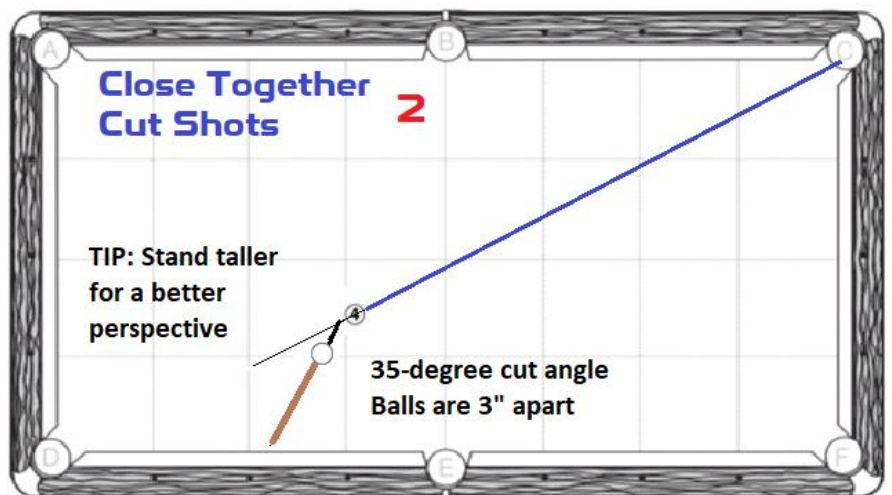
### VERY CLOSE TOGETHER SHOTS

When facing a shot such as the one shown in **Diagram #2** the emphasis

falls heavily on aiming part of the shooting process. You don't need a long, powerful, and accurate stroke as the cue ball is only going to travel a few inches to contact. But what you do need is to aim the shot as precisely as possible. This is not easy when the balls are this close, the cut angle is relatively pronounced, and, in this case, when the object ball is several diamonds from the pocket.

The problem comes due to the loss of perspective that you have when you play a "regular" shot. On these shots, it helps to stand taller as this helps to regain a sense of perspective, and to see the Shot Picture as accurately as possible. As you are getting ready to shoot, keep in mind that aiming on these shots is largely guess work. So strive for the feeling that you are aiming correctly and give it your best. And don't be too hard on yourself if you occasionally miss this kind as they are a major challenge even for the best players in the world.

One final tip" When the cut is thin, it can help to aim a bit fuller and to throw the ball in with some outside english.



## **JOSHUA FILLER, THE DANCER**

Recently I viewed a documentary on Tiler Peck, the lead dancer for the New York Ballet. I was mesmerized by her dancing – the moves, the jumps, the spins, and everything else that she does so amazingly well. This got me to thinking about a scene in *The Hustler* in which Fast Eddie (Paul Newman) was remarking to Charlie, his road partner, on the way Minnesota Fats (Jackie Gleason) move around the table. Below is an excerpt from the screen play:

EDDIE (whispers, to Charlie)  
Boy, he is great! Jeez, that old fat man. Look at the way he moves. Like a dancer.

So, Fats moved like a dancer. And straight pool legend Willies Mosconi also moved like a dancer – something I can attest to having seen him play in nine exhibition matches.

Fast forward to today's top ranked player, Joshua Filler, and it dawned on me that he, too, moves like a dancer. Indeed, I have noticed that Filler moves around the table fast, and he thinks fast, and it seems that the only time he's not moving is when he's over the ball and yet, even then, he is still moving, only it's his shooting arm that is in motion!

In sum, much can be said for playing pool like a dancer. To do so, you need extensive knowledge, which gives you the ability to size up most shots in a moments time, to quickly make a plan, and to then have the confidence to believe in it. The combination of these elements enables

you to swiftly move into the Execution Cycle of the shot.

I am sure there are more pros that meet this criteria, so I am going to add a new filter to my watching that is dedicated to identifying other pool players who move like dancers.

## **PLAY THE HIGH PERCENTAGE SEQUENCE**

Principle #13 in *Play Your Best Pool* advises student to Play The High Percentage Sequence. The rules for following this principle are:

- Do not play a tough shot so you will have an easy shot.
- Do not play an easy shot that leads to a tough shot.
- Try to play a sequence of shots with the greatest odd of success.

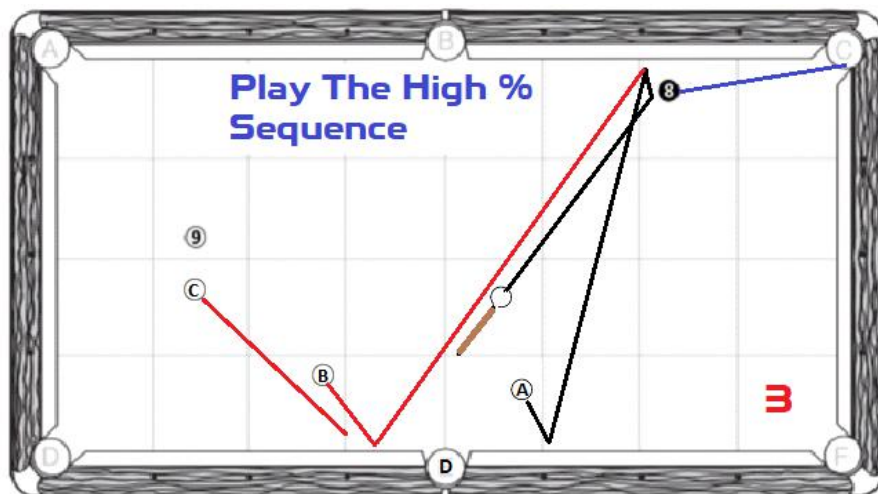
Let's consider the example in **Diagram #3**, which shows a position which comes up quite often in 9-Ball and 10-Ball. Player A wisely played for Position A. This routine route leaves him with a very makeable shot on the 9-Ball. Player B chose to play a far more difficult route, aiming for Position B, which leaves him

with an easy shot on the 9-ball. But Player B had opened himself up to an awkward shot on the 9 from Position C (or other poor locations), and a possible scratch as shown by Position D.

I am going to assign some arbitrary but realistic percentages to these two sequences for purposes of illustration. Player A selected a 90% route for that left him with a 90% shot at the 9. This computes to a success rate for his sequence of 81%. Player B played a 70% route for a 98% shot on the 9. His overall rate of success for his sequence is about 69%. The lesson: learn to balance your shots by playing the high percentage sequence.

## **WHEN PLAYING CALL SHOT, CALL A SHOT!**

Rotation games such as 9-Ball, and especially 10-Ball, are often played using rules that require that you call your shot. While most shots are quite obvious during a runout, sometimes you have a chance when playing a kick shot or safety to make a low percentage shot. And some of these shots are on the game winner,



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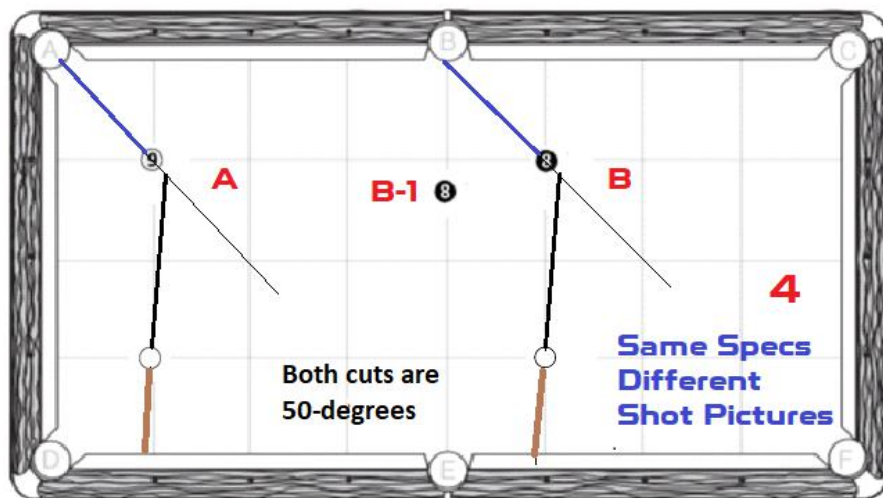
most notably the 10-ball in 10-Ball. So, the smart move is to call the ball. Even though the chances of making it may be only 5% (or less) that is not zero which is will be if you don't call it. So make that call when playing call shot!

### THE AMAZING MR. MORRA

Canada's John Morra beat Jesus Atencio 13-6 in the finals to win the Turning Stone Classic XLI in January. Throughout the final day's play he put on an awesome display of cuemanship, beating Jayson Shaw in the semis, 9-1 before dominating play in the finals.

By now I am sure that all fans of the pros knows of John's amazing transition from a righthanded pro to a lefty – and one who may now be playing the best pool of his life. So, even though he plays the vast majority of shots lefthanded, he will play certain ones righthanded, often to avoid stretching, and he will also break using his right hand.

Morra, interestingly, has his cue under his left eye when he plays with either hand! So, he must line up better with his cue under that eye even though it's his outside eye when shooting lefthanded and it's his inside eye when playing righthanded! If he had switched to his right eye, I expect that learning to shoot lefthanded would have been that much more difficult to master. Interestingly, one of his eye is his dominant one, so he must have his cue under it when playing with one hand, but not the other! In any case, I would cast my vote for Morra as the best ambidextrous player in the world.



While it would be asking a lot for any of us to match our skill with our shooting hand with our opposite one, being able to play certain shots opposite handed would be a valuable skill for any player to have in their arsenal, as Morra has shown us time and again.

### SIDE POCKET VS. CORNER POCKET

The two shots shown in **Diagram #4** each have the same specs: The cue ball's distance to object ball, and object ball distance to the pocket. And both are cuts of 50-degrees. And yet, when you look at their Shot Pictures, there are big differences between the two. For starters, Shot A is played on a diagonal line into the center of the upper left corner pocket, while Shot B is a backcut

that is being played the into a side pocket. And, because of Shot B's angle of approach, the pocket is playing far smaller than it does when the object ball is close to or lying in front of it like the 8-ball in Position B-1.

Now, if you were using a system such as fractional ball aiming, you would have to calculate both of these shots (with their identical specs) in the same way. But, as we can see, their Shot Pictures are anything but the identical, and so this has to be factored in to the aiming process.

In the final analysis, we play our shots by seeing the Shot Picture, developing a feel for the correct line of aim during our WUS cycle and, on our final stroke, we trust our chosen line-of-aim, our stroke, and the miracle that is called our eye/brain/hand coordination.

### ABOUT PHIL CAPELLE

Beginning in 1968, Capelle spent 27 years competing in money games, leagues, and tournaments. In late 1994 he founded Billiards Press, and has since written 12 instructional books on pool. Over the last eight years he has conducted extensive research in preparation for his upcoming book, *Pool Is The Answer*. For a detailed profile of Phil Capelle, see his interview with Melinda Bailey in the April 2019 issue of the Billiards Buzz.

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# Three Keys to Long-Shot Consistency

ANTHONY BEELER

**I've seen it a hundred times. A player pockets balls fine within two or three diamonds.**

**T**hen a long “tester” shows up and everything changes: they rise a little, they move their head up and down, and their eyes bounce—cue ball, object ball, cue tip—searching for certainty. The miss feels mysterious, but it isn't. Long shots don't miss themselves. Our eyes miss them.

Distance shrinks the margin of error in a way most players don't fully un-

derstand until they start missing balls they “know” they can make. When the cue ball and object ball are far apart, even a slight visual alignment flaw (something you'd get away with on a short shot) turns into a miss. And the silent enemy behind many of those mistakes is eye movement—your eyes bouncing between cue ball, object ball, and cue tip, working harder than they need to.



Here's the good news: whatever aiming method you use, long shots get easier when your eyes are quiet and your setup is more repeatable. Below you will find three keys that reduce unnecessary eye movement so your aiming system can operate effectively.

## **Key #1: Chin Behind the Joint: Put Your Eyes in the Triangle**

When your tip is set, your grip-hand forearm should be near 90–95 degrees. Your eyes should be inside an “imaginary triangle” formed by your shooting elbow, grip hand, and bridge hand. If your eyes are outside that triangle, your eyes are having to work too hard.

It's imperative that you get your chin behind the joint; this moves your eyes back into the biggest part of the triangle. I call this “rifling.” Remember, the farther forward your head goes on the cue, the lower it must be to get the same sight picture. If you don't get low enough, your eyes will view the shot from outside the triangle. This will create unnecessary eye movement and make long shots a lot more difficult to execute.

## **Key #2: Aim With High Center: Cut Down Vertical Eye Travel**

Many players aim low center under pressure. They do this because they



often find it easier to find the vertical center at the bottom of the cue ball. The problem is, this also creates unnecessary eye movement.

With a high center aim, your eyes work between the top of the cue ball and the bottom of the object ball—short and clean. With low center, your eyes start at the bottom of the cue ball, travel up about 2¼ inches to the top of the cue ball, then go to the object ball. When you re-check the alignment, your eyes travel down about 2¼ inches again—then back up. That’s roughly 4½ inches more eye movement than high center. On long shots, that extra movement often creates misjudgment and misalignment.

### Key #3: Crouch a Little More: Get Lower in the Triangle

Old-school philosophies still win. Bend down lower. In the 1970s, “Wimpy” Luther Lassiter was known as one of the best long-shot makers

in the business. Grady Mathews asked how he made those tough shots. Wimpy said, “Get in your stance... then crouch just a little bit more.”

That small crouch reduces eye movement even further. A lower head means fewer shifts between cue ball and object ball, tighter focus, and a steadier aim. It moves your eyes into the center of the triangle. The lower you go, the less your eyes have to work.

### Put It Together

All three keys have one goal: quiet your eyes so you can align better.

1. Chin below the joint: move back into the tallest part of the triangle.
2. Aim high center: reduce vertical eye travel.
3. Crouch a little more: lowering your head eliminates unnecessary eye movement.

Long shots don’t demand magic or luck—they demand quiet eyes. When your eyes stop bouncing between the cue ball, the object ball, and the tip, your alignment will be better. Put your head in the right place, reduce eye movement, and let a calm, stable sight picture do the work. Distance isn’t the real problem—busy eyes are.

Anthony Beeler is the current *Billiards Instructor of the Decade* and is a former BCAPL National Champion. He has numerous “Top 25” national finishes and is the primary author of the ACS *National Billiards Instructor’s Manual*. He has also authored the book *Unstoppable! Positive Thinking for Pool Players*. Anthony currently has the highest established Fargo Rating of any Master Instructor. He has won over 300 tournaments and has defeated numerous professional players in tournament competition.

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Pool ball: 8

# CHALKIN' UP THE MEMORIES...



**Since I'd been back in southern California, I'd made the rounds checking out all the different pool rooms. Most of the room owners remembered me from when I had lived in southern California before, so as a professional courtesy, I was granted free time if I wanted to come in and practice.**

I asked some of the guys that were regulars at the House of Billiards at Sixth and Western in Los Angeles if there were any other rooms in the area that I could check out and maybe get some action. A few of them mentioned Hollywood Billiards but they all said there was no action there plus nobody liked the owner, Arnie Satin. They also said there was no way I'd get free time – Arnie was tight and gave no one free time.

Anyway, since it was nearby, I decided to check it out one afternoon.

The original Hollywood Billiards was in the basement on the corner of Hollywood and Western. I went down the stairs and there was a counter where you got the balls. On the right were quite a few ten foot three cushion billiard tables and to the left were nine foot Gold Crowns – all the tables were in excellent condition. I asked the house man for a rack of balls and practiced for a couple hours. It was the best table I'd played on since I'd been back.

I took the balls back to the counter and the house man introduced himself as Arnie Satin – he was one of the owners. He complimented me on my game and asked if I was new to the area. When I told him that I'd been around a while, he asked where I nor-

mally played and I told him House of Billiards. He disparaged the room and asked how I could play there since the tables were normally in such terrible condition. I told him I played there because I got free time.

Not missing a beat, Arnie told me that he'd give me free time too. I thanked him and said I'd be back.

I couldn't wait to tell the guys back at Sixth and Western. When I did, they all said I had to be the only living human that got free time from Arnie!

It turned out that Arnie had been around the Los Angeles pool scene since he was a young man and was instrumental in producing the Los Angeles World Pocket Billiards Championships in the sixties with Fred Whalen and several others. He knew all the players from that time.

So, I became a regular there. Once a week, Kelly & I would go out to eat – always trying a different restaurant and afterwards we'd head over to the pool room to play more races to



Lori Shampo - 1979 BCA National 8 Ball Championships - Louisville, KY  
- Photo courtesy of the National Billiard News-AZBilliards.com

seven – although only \$25 a set this time.

After about a month or so went by, I asked Arnie if he'd host a women's tournament once a month & add some money. Again, I told him that I had lined up a few other rooms to host us so he agreed. In exchange, I'd have to start and run a Tuesday night low entry open nine ball tournament. So, I put the word out and within a month, we'd fill the 32 player limit. It might've been the toughest \$10 entry tournament in town drawing the likes of Keith McCready, Ernesto Dominguez, Tony Banks, Dickie Renk, Jerry Matchin, Cecil Tugwell, Dana Laidman, Jack Ide, Frank Robutz and so many others. I even won it once!

So, maybe Arnie was no dope after all – by giving me free time, I put Hollywood Billiards on the map and filled up his place with players from all over southern California and action every night of the week!

Over dinner one night, Kelly told me that the wealthy man she was seeing agreed to send her to the WPBA events and asked me if I'd go with her. I turned her down saying that since almost all the tournaments were back east, it would be very expensive for me to go and it just wasn't worth it. The next day, she called me and told me that he didn't want her to go alone so he'd stake the both of us! Talk about an offer I couldn't refuse...

The first tournament we went to was the 1984 McDermott Masters in Milwaukee, WI. Hosted by cuemaker Jim McDermott and featuring both a men's and women's division, the place was action central! Almost all the great players of the day were there – Earl Strickland, Buddy Hall, David Howard, Mike Sigel, Jim Rempe, Jimmy Reid, Larry Hubbart, Willie Munson, Grady Mathews, Danny Medina, Jimmy Mataya, Wade Crane, Jeff Carter, Danny Jones, Belinda Calhoun, Robin Dod-

son, Peg Ledman, Ewa Mataya Laurance, LoreeJon Ogonowski-Brown, Vicki Paski and Lori Shampo, to name a few. Even Minnesota Fats was there holding court, stamping out one autograph after another and doing trick shots!

It was like old home week for me as it was the first time I'd played in a major event since winning the 1980 World Pro-Am 9 Ball Championship in Las Vegas. I was having a blast seeing all my old friends and playing great. As the women's event wound down, there were only a few of us left. My next match was with Lori Shampo – the 1982 McDermott Masters champ.

Lori was known as one of the best action players in the country – she had come on the scene a year or so after I came off the road and ended up out in California. From Detroit, she had many fans there as well as others from all over the country. My own reputation was pretty sporty itself and many of the players and spectators there knew of me. By the time that round of matches started, ours was the one that everyone wanted to watch and that most people had bet on.


The match was a dogfight, 1-1, 2-2, 3-3. Every time one of us made a great shot or won a game, the crowd went wild. Lori reached the hill first and then I tied it up at 6-6 – my break. After the crowd died down, I broke the balls – the nine was heading toward the corner pocket but was left hanging by a passing ball that dropped into the pocket. The one ball was near the nine – leaving me a simple carom to win the match.

Her supporters groaned while mine were celebrating! Just as I bent over to tap the nine in for the win, Lori hollered, "Let's get someone to watch the hit!"

The crowd erupted into laughter while my side was furious! I turned

JANUARY, 1985

**MARY KENNISTON**  
**BEATS THE MEN**  
 Hollywood, California



MARY KENNISTON, one of the top professional women players in the world, went up against 26 tough men in the Hollywood Billiards 9 Ball tournament, December 12th and smoked them all.

Mary was the only woman in the field and she had the guys talking to themselves. Dickie Renk, who came in second, said quote, "I'm hanging up my cue, and going back to work", unquote. Jerry Matchin was third, and Mary's true love, (at least he was) Fred Guarino, came in fourth.

1. MARY KENNISTON	\$230.00
2. DICKIE RENK	140.00
3. JERRY MATCHIN	95.00
4. FRED GUARINO	65.00

January 1985 issue of the National Tavern News

around to look at Lori in disbelief and she was laughing too – really hard as she pointed at Red Jones, the Tournament Director.

Red was an elderly man who was once a very good player himself, but at that time, we knew him as one of people involved with the BCA.

He hobbled down off the dais and we all watched him dodder over to our table. Wearing glasses about a half inch thick, he bent down to within six inches of the shot to see it better. Then he reached into the ball return and pulled out a ball to hold it over the shot.

I couldn't believe it and said, "What are you doing? It's a hanger!"

Startled, he dropped the ball onto my dead nuts carom and balls flew every-



*Efren Reyes - Buddy Hall behind on left - 1985 Red's 9 Ball - Houston, TX - Photo courtesy of Scott Frost*

where while we're both trying to grab them.

Well, the place turned into pandemonium. Lori's side absolutely loved it and my side was raving mad! Her side wanted a rerack while my side didn't.

Red, totally embarrassed, vetoed the idea of a rerack and attempted to place the balls back where they'd previously been.

Well, it was no longer a hanger – it was a tough shot now. I didn't want to take the chance of missing it and leaving the nine hanging so I played a safety.

Lori got up and studied the table. She had no way to pocket the nine so had to kick three rails to try to make a good hit on the one. She missed the hit by a hair. With ball in hand, it now was a simple carom to tap the nine in for the match.

I turned around to shake Lori's hand. She grabbed my hand, pulled me down and whispered, "When Red

dropped that ball on your dead nuts combo, I peed my pants!"

I looked down and her pants were wet to the middle of her thighs! We both started laughing uncontrollably! I had a sweater hanging on the back of my chair so I grabbed it and handed it to her. She wrapped it around her waist and we left the arena – still laughing and that was the day we became friends.

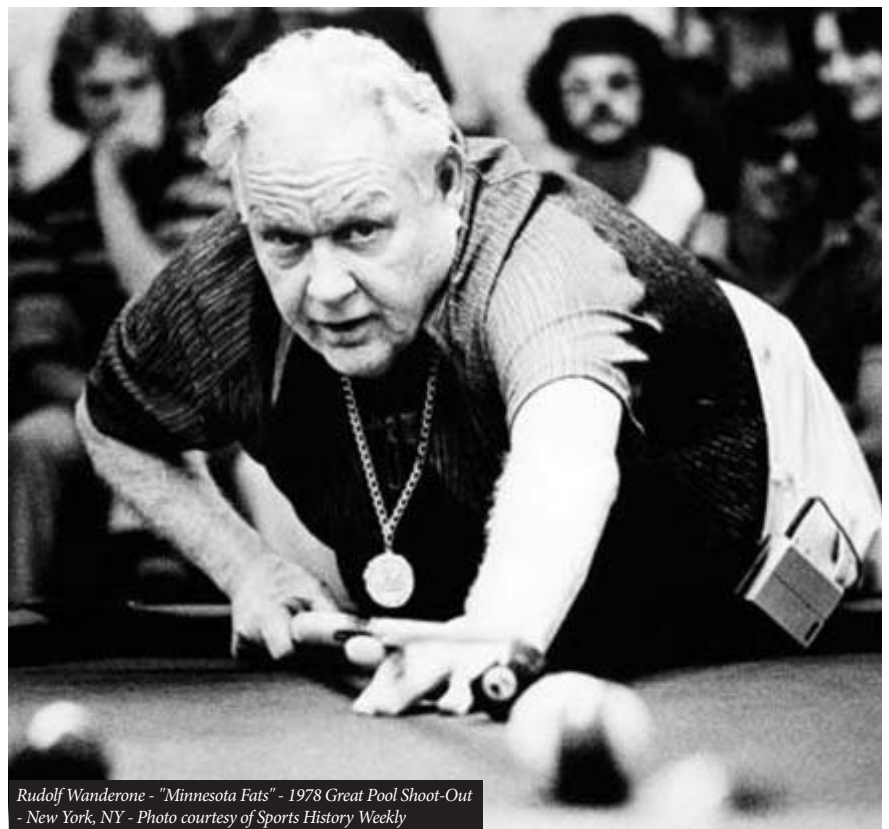
Meanwhile, every time Red and I saw each other after that, he'd apologize profusely and I'd grin while crossing my arms in a big X in front of my face to keep him away!

Over the course of the rest of the year, Kelly and I went to Austin, TX for the River City Open, to Lake Tahoe, NV for the Caesars Tahoe Billiard Classic, to Norfolk, VA for the US Open 9 Ball Championships, to Sacramento, CA for the WPBA Jointed Cue Champion-

ship and to the Pines Resort Hotel in South Fallsburg, NY for the WPBA National 9 Ball Championship.

Our first trip in 1985 was Red's in Houston. I hadn't been back to Houston since I'd left a few years before. It was exciting to see all my old friends and it was non-stop action right from the beginning. Soon, the room buzzed with the news that a Filipino named Caesar Morales was giving weight to some of the best players of the day – and winning! He also tore through the chart in the nine ball tournament to reach the finals! I asked my good friend, Buddy Hall, when he was going to play this guy and he told me they'd play when the tournament was over.

His opponent in the finals had been introduced to me by Buddy Hall a year prior and we had become good friends. Buddy told me that the Billy Johnson of the '60s and early '70s was what Earl Strickland was in the



*Rudolf Wanderone - "Minnesota Fats" - 1978 Great Pool Shoot-Out - New York, NY - Photo courtesy of Sports History Weekly*



Jim McDermott - 1984 Red's - Houston, TX  
- Photo courtesy of Bill Porter & Mike Haines

'80s. He had apparently returned to his form of old and he'd arrived at the finals after defeating Earl.

Buddy and I climbed to the top of the bleachers to pull our friend in. The finals were an extended race to thirteen and Morales jumped out to a 6-0 lead. At this point, Buddy leaned over towards me and whispered, "Watch this man every chance you get. He might be the best player you'll ever see in your life!"

My head snapped around. Here was my idol telling me to watch someone else!

Billy rallied to make it 7-5 but that was all she wrote as Morales maintained at least a three game lead for the rest of the match winning 13-9.

The room had been buzzing all day about the impending Buddy Hall-Caesar Morales match. They ended up agreeing to play ten ball - eight

ahead. The match was rumored to be for \$10,000 although before the coin was flipped, there was no telling what they ended up playing for. I've heard varying amounts - all the way to \$100,000. All I knew was that I sent in almost my entire bankroll on Buddy - I bet \$1,000.

Morales won the first game and Buddy won nine in a row to take the cash. He was the only player to beat Morales all week.

And as I'm sure most of you know by now, Caesar Morales turned out to be Efrén Reyes.

Known in the pool world as "Nightmare," Mary is a former world & national champion, a WPBA Hall of Famer & owned Cue-Topia in Las Vegas, NV. She has thousands of billiard-related photos in her Facebook Wall of Fame.



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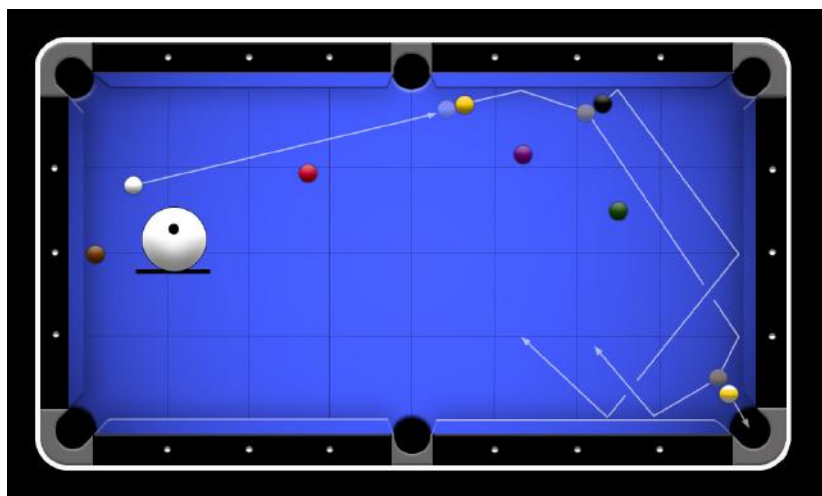
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Action Photography ©mediumpool

F R O M



**A**ccu-Stats Video Productions has been bringing us World Class Pool on video for the last 30 years. With this column, we hope to bring you some examples of the best shots that come up between the greatest players who play this game.

Shane Van Boening is the shooter for this month's shot

In this shot, Shane takes a position that looks like it can only be a safety, and he turns it into what I guess we have to call a bank/carom/combination.

No matter what you call it, Shane's opponent, Alex Pagulayan, did not look amused after the shot.



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# DUONG CROWNED PREMIER LEAGUE POOL CHAMPION

## *In Historic Win*

Article by **Jack Mitchell - Matchroom Multi Sport** / Photos courtesy **Matchroom Multi Sport**

**Duong Quoc Hoang etched his name into the history books after defeating Francisco Sanchez Ruiz 7-4 to be crowned the 2026 Premier League Pool champion, securing his first Matchroom Major title in sensational fashion.**

**T**he Vietnamese star not only lifted his maiden major trophy, but became the first Vietnamese player ever to win a Matchroom major — a landmark moment for both his career and his country.

Duong said: “Right now, I feel extremely happy and deeply grateful. This was a very tough tournament with so many strong players, and I had to fight for every single rack. There were difficult moments, but I kept believing in myself and stayed focused until the end.”

This victory is not only for me — it is for Vietnam, for Vietnamese billiards, and for everyone back home who has supported me. To stand here and represent my country on the international stage is one of the greatest honours of my career.”

### **FINAL**

**Duong Quoc Hoang 7-4 Francisco Sanchez Ruiz**

Duong controlled the early stages of the final, building momentum against



Duong Quoc Hoang

the former World Champion and maintaining composure under pressure. However, with the title within touching distance, nerves began to show. A missed 9-ball in the penultimate rack handed Ruiz a lifeline and briefly shifted the tension inside the arena.

But in the following rack, after a composed safety exchange, Duong seized his opportunity. When the chance came, he delivered — sealing a historic victory that resonated far beyond Florida.

Earlier in the evening, Duong had battled past 17-year-old Indonesian sensation Albert Januarta in a dramatic hill-hill semi-final, having entered Finals Day as the front-runner following four days of relentless round-robin action.

For Duong, the triumph marked the culmination of years of persistence, having come close on multiple occasions without breaking through. This time, he finished the job — delivering a defining moment for himself and for Vietnamese pool.

Duong added: “I hope this win inspires young players in Vietnam to dream bigger and work harder. We have a strong fighting spirit and great passion for this game. Today I’m proud to show the world what Vietnamese players are capable of.”

The 2026 Premier League Pool took place from 18–22 February at Classic Billiards in Miami, Florida, where 16 of the world’s best players went head-to-head for the prestigious title.

The event will return next year from 16–21 February, when Duong Quoc Hoang will look to defend his crown against another elite 16-player field.



Francisco Sanchez Ruiz

### NEXT WNT RANKING EVENT

The World Nineball Tour continues with the inaugural Pattaya Open, taking place in Pattaya, Thailand, from 2-6 March, featuring 128 players competing for a \$50,000 prize fund.

### NEXT MATCHROOM MAJOR

Following Thailand, European Open Pool Championship returns to Hotel Hills in Sarajevo, Bosnia & Herzegovina, from 10-15 March, where 256 players of the world’s elite will battle it out for \$225,000.

For all the latest updates, follow Matchroom Pool on Facebook, Instagram, X, TikTok, and YouTube.

# Premier League Pool Gallery



AJ Manas



Duong Quoc Hoang



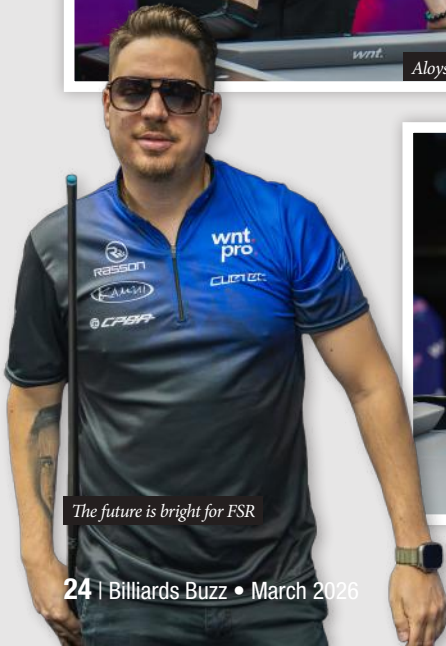
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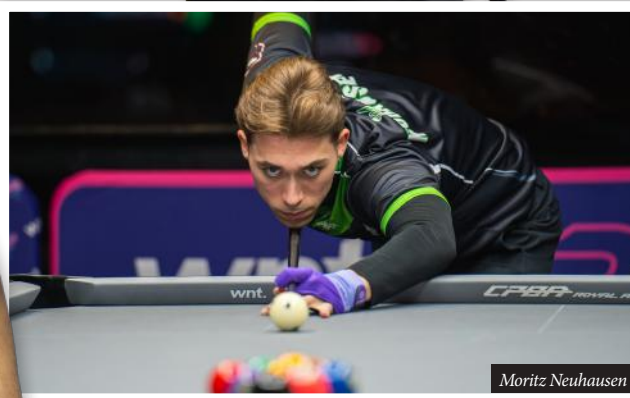
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A triumphant Duong Quoc Hoang



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The celebration gets underway



Justin Bergman

# CHOU WINS NINE ON THE LOSS SIDE, DOWNS CENTENO IN FINAL TO WIN WPBA PLAYERS CHAMPIONSHIP

By Skip Maloney - AzB Staff / File photos courtesy Erwin Dionisio

The Philippines' Chezka Centeno went undefeated to the hot seat of the \$50,000-added, WPBA Classic's Players Championship this past weekend (Feb. 12-15), like a proverbial hot knife through room-temperature butter.

She wasn't taking her first six opponents down with shutouts or single racks-against because, on average, they chalked up four racks against her. Back-to-back, Jasmin Ouschan and Briana Miller fought her to double hill.

It was the speed with which she approached and with what could only be described as supreme confidence, took her shots. The time between the drop of one ball and the next (without actually timing them) was between about five and 10 seconds, with the longer ones occurring when the cue ball ended up at the other end of the

table. One got the feeling that she needed to get a match over with so that she'd be on time for an appointment, or had a plane to catch. She ran a rack against Japan's Yu Han in the battle for the hot seat in about 13 seconds. That's about as much time as a lot of players will take just looking at a shot. Not for nothing is Centeno known as "The Flash."

The 'buzz' was on, early. Stream commentators (Lonnie Fox-Raymond, for one) and YouTube chat folk were talking about Centeno and her speed about midway through the six, winners' side rounds. She was the one wearing the 'most likely to succeed' button, the one to beat.



Chieh-Yu Chou

Taiwan's Chieh-Yu Chou, on the other hand, though certainly not dismissed, even after she'd been defeated by Kaylee McIntosh-Driskell in the second round, was put on a nine-match, 'long ways to go' back shelf for a while. She had been, however, last year's WPBA Olhausen Raxx Mezz Invitational champion. In 2024, she won the Asian Confederation of Billiards Sport's (ACBS) 9-Ball Women's Championship and the WPBA Soaring Eagle Masters. There'd been quite a few other notches on her professional pool belt, including being the Women's World 9-Ball champion in 2023 (her best recorded earning year with us) and its 10-Ball champion in 2022. All commencing with her entry into the AZBilliards' database in 2007. So, not someone that her one-after-the-other, loss-side opponents were taking lightly.

Chou completed her nine-match, loss-side run with an 8-1 victory over China's Yu Han in the semifinal and showed Centeno a thing or two in the final. She won it 10-3. The event drew 32 entrants to Classics Billiards in Lauderdale, FL.

At the start of a loss-side match between Kelly Fisher and Kristina Lateva, in the battles for 7th/8th place, The Black Widow, Jeanette Lee stepped into the streaming booth, joining Lonnie-Fox Raymond, and in between insightful commentary on the match, the two of them chatted about Lee's return to professional competition with the WPBA. We'll offer some of the commentary in the midst of moving along with the tournament narrative, not always aligned with a particular point in time.

"So," Lonnie Fox-Raymond began, "how have you been enjoying your trip back to the WPBA?"

"Oh, I am so glad I came!" said Lee, as she began to explain how it happened. She was approached about

attending, while in attendance (not competing) to support Pat Fleming's International Open last November and initially, was not on board. "I had two major surgeries last year, and like now, I have no sciatic pain, which had been killing me for the last four years. It had stopped me completely. I'd not been playing much anyway, because of all the other problems, but that cold-stopped me. (It was to the point where) I didn't want to be upright, standing, sitting, anything."

Lee was cajoled by WPBA event organizers to "come see all the girls" and help the WPBA celebrate its 50th anniversary. She eventually agreed to come and compete.

As noted in an earlier report, a few of the top-ranked, WPBA competitors found themselves on the loss side at the end of the first round of play; Kristina Tkach (#1) lost a double-hill battle to Taiwan's Shui Ching Chiang, Jasmin Ouschan (#23) fell prey to the speedy Chezka Centeno (8-2) and (Bean) Meng Hsia-Hung (#11) was de-

feated by Japan's Sakura Muramatsu (8-5).

Centeno advanced from her victory over Ouschan to defeat Brittany Bryant (6), Wei Tzu-Chien (5), Kristina Zlateva (5) and in a winners' side semifinal, Taiwan's Wang Wan-Ling (4). She was into the hot seat match. Her opponent in that battle for the hot seat, China's Yu Han, had opened with a shutout over Lonnie Fox-Raymond and then, ran into junior competitor Savannah Easton, who put up a double-hill fight. Han survived that and sent Sakura Muramatsu (4), Briana Miller (1), and in the other winners' side semifinal, the WPBA's #2-ranked competitor, Pia Filler (4) to the loss side.

The hot seat match got off to a typical 'Centeno' start. Yu broke dry and Centeno ran to the 4-ball. She used it in combination with the 9-ball to win the opening game. She followed that with the (more or less) 13-second run mentioned earlier. Han broke and ran the third rack, ahead of a five-rack run



Chezka Centeno

by Centeno that put her on the hill. Han broke and after some safety play, eventually won the ninth rack. Centeno broke and eventually won the last rack to claim the hot seat.

“You had a tough draw,” said Raymond of the Black Widow’s opening match, noting, too, how well Lee had actually played.

“Yeah, I did,” she said of that opening-round draw and her 8-2 loss, “I got Kelly Fisher, and she played fantastic.”

At that point in time, Lee moved to the loss side, where she defeated Susan Williams 8-5. She advanced and suffered her second loss at the hands of Chia Hua (“Amber”) Chen 8-6.

“I had a lot more opportunities against Amber than I did against Kelly,” said Lee. “I found myself. . . I thought I would choke more. I thought I’d be taking heat, because when you don’t compete, you’re like . . .

“Not tournament tough,” suggested Raymond.

“Exactly. That’s exactly the word I’d use. I hadn’t been competing a lot and

it was interesting (because) I haven’t been competing a lot and this time, I missed balls. I found myself distracted, different thoughts entered my head. I’d always had ADHD and (before,) when I got down on the table, everything got quiet for me. This time, I’m thinking all kinds of random things when I’m shooting. I was happy not to just. . . fall all over myself. I made errors, but from my perspective, they were not choking from the pressure, but more like mental mistakes.”

On the loss side of the Players Championship bracket, as it advanced toward the semifinal, there were a lot of women, ready, willing and more than capable of challenging Centeno in the finals. By about 9:30 p.m. on Saturday night, there were eight left on the loss side, which would go down to four by 11:30, and stay at four, when Wang Wan-Ling and Pia Filler came over from their loss in the winners’ side semifinals.

Wan-Ling picked up Chieh-Yu Chou, who was six matches into her loss-side winning streak, having most recently eliminated Jasmin Ouschan, Briana Miller (both double hill) and

Chia Hua Chen 8-6. The female Killer Filler drew Bulgaria’s Kristina Zlateva, who’d followed her loss to Centeno with victories over Russia’s Aleksandra Guleikova 8-2 and Kelly Fisher 8-4 in the match from which the Lee/Raymond conversation has been extracted.

Chou downed Wan-Ling 8-3 and advanced to the quarterfinals. Filler and Zlateva took a little longer, as they battled to almost-double-hill (8-6), with Filler winning to join Chou. The Quarterfinal and Hot Seat match happened simultaneously. Chou eliminated Filler 8-2.

Since her back-to-back, double-hill wins over Ouschan and Miller, Chou had given up, in order, 6, 3, and 2 racks. She kept that trend going, as she faced Yu Han in the semifinal. She allowed her only a single rack and moved on to the final against Centeno.

“You’ve always been such a fierce competitor,” said Fox-Raymond. “I think it’s great to see you come back. You looked like you were having fun out there and that’s what’s so important, right?”

“It is. It is,” Lee told her.

“It isn’t the same for you as it was back in the day,” Fox-Raymond went on to say, “but it was beautiful to see you enjoying the game and having so much fun with it. We’re happy that you played and I know that the fans were really excited.”

“Thank you. You know, right after my match with Kelly, she came over to me (and with a touch of sadness in her voice), she said ‘I’ve missed you, Jeanette.’

“(She got to talking to me about the time after) she’d won three in a row, and when I won the first game, I was like ‘Yeah!! I’m on the board. Let’s go!!’ She said to me, ‘I knew (when you won



Han Yu

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up, off her own break, by pulling within two at 5-3.

It was, to all intents and purposes, over. Throughout the next five games, Centeno's shot-making speed rarely failed to drop a ball, although at various and critical times, that same speed led to miscalculations about where the cue ball was going to stop, that cost her. Chou remained steady and seemed in some ways to be adopting some of Centeno's rapid approach and shot execution, though she rarely left herself out of position for the next shot, or failed, when playing a safety, to leave Centeno in a difficult position that might have given her a chance to fight back.

Chou won rack #13 and claimed the WPBA Classic's Players Championship.

Representatives of the WPBA extended their "deepest gratitude to Classic Billiards and its outstanding owners, Dave and Leah Bartosiak."

"Their hospitality, professionalism and commitment to excellence created a championship atmosphere that elevated every match," they wrote in a post on the WPBA's FB page following the event. "The conditions were first-class, the energy was electric, and the venue once again proved to be one of the premier destinations in professional billiards."

They also noted that the \$50,000-added by the venue became "the largest, single added-money (amount) in the 50 years of the WPBA."

They also sincerely thanked all of their WPBA tour sponsors for the "continued support (that) fuels the growth of women's professional pool and provides players with the platform they deserve.

"Because of you," they wrote, "moments like this are possible."

that first game) that you were going to say something, knew you were going to do something.'

"And I said to her, 'Well, yeah, why not? It was exciting. I'd won a game!'"

"And she said, 'It's missing now. Everyone is so professional, or whatever, but there's no emotion now, or personality. And what's incredible is that they all have tremendous personalities, (but) on the table, they're just very, very serious and reserved.'"

"For me," Lee went on to explain to Fox-Raymond, "I've always been someone with my emotions on my sleeve and it's just hard to hide. At one point, back at the beginning, I really tried to keep it emotionless and I felt like I was in a straight jacket and couldn't play my real game. As long as I'm not disrespecting my opponent. If I get excited, I get excited. If I get mad, I get mad. As long as by the time I shoot the next ball, I'm cooled down and ready to go, that's what's important."

Some of that "very, very serious and reserved" demeanor was on display

when Centeno and Chou stepped up to the play the event's final match. The hot seat match had finished at about 12:45 that afternoon. The semi-final had come to a conclusion at about 3:15, and the final got underway almost immediately, so Centeno had been idle for about two and half hours.

Chou got things started in the final race to 10, with a Break and Run. Centeno's rapid pace was slowed down a bit, as she kept finding herself in positions from which she couldn't see the ball that she needed to drop. Varying safety battles played out in Chou's favor, through another Chou break and two of Centeno's, as Chou took a 4-0 lead. In rack #5, Chou scratched, allowing Centeno to get on the board. Off her own break of rack #6, Centeno had no shot at the 1-ball and when she turned the table over, Chou chalked up her 5th rack.

Off Chou's dry break of rack #7, Centeno scratched trying to drop the 1-ball. Chou, however, missed her shot at the 4-ball and Centeno finished the rack to chalk up her second and followed

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# JOSHUA FILLER

## WINS THE 2026 LAS VEGAS MEN'S OPEN AND COMPLETES A HISTORIC DOUBLE IN LAS VEGAS

Article and photo by Predator Pro Billiard Series

An unforgettable week in professional pool reached its climax as Joshua Filler captured the title at the 2026 Las Vegas Men's Open, defeating Fedor Gorst in the final to claim \$45,000 from a total prize fund of \$150,000.

Showcasing power, precision, and relentless competitiveness, Filler delivered a championship performance on the sport's biggest stage, reaffirming his status as one of the game's elite forces.

### Road to the Title

Filler's run to the championship included a commanding semifinal victory over Carlo Biado, where he prevailed in straight sets, setting the stage for a high-stakes final against Gorst.

In the championship match, Filler maintained control from

the outset, closing out the title with authority and composure under pressure.

### A Historic Las Vegas Double

Adding to an already remarkable achievement, Joshua Filler completed an extraordinary Las Vegas double, following up his Men's Open triumph with victory in the 2026 Las Vegas Mixed Doubles Turbo, teaming up with his wife Pia Filler.

Together, the Fillers claimed the Mixed Doubles Turbo title earlier in the week, making Joshua Filler the only player to win both a major singles title and a mixed doubles championship at the 2026 Las Vegas events.

### A Statement Week

Winning two premier titles in different formats singles and mixed doubles within the same week underscores Filler's versatility, endurance, and championship mentality.

Witness History in the Making.



Ozzy Reynolds, Joshua Filler and Vincent Rochefort

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# TZU CHIEN WEI

## WINS THE 2026 LAS VEGAS WOMEN'S OPEN IN LANDMARK MOMENT FOR WOMEN'S POOL

Article and photo by Predator Pro Billiard Series

Just days after the announcement of the Women's Pro Billiard Series, Tzu Chien Wei delivered a defining statement on the table, capturing the title at the 2026 Las Vegas Women's Open.

In a commanding final, Wei defeated Chezka Centeno in straight sets, claiming \$27,000 from a total prize fund of \$90,000, and cementing her place at the top of the women's game.

### A Championship Performance

Wei's performance throughout the event was defined by composure, precision, and relentless consistency. In the final, she controlled the tempo from the opening rack, closing out the match decisively to secure one of the most prestigious women's titles of the season.

The victory represents not only a personal milestone, but a powerful symbol of where women's professional pool is headed.

### A Win That Resonates Beyond the Table

This championship arrives at a

pivotal moment for the sport, following the announcement of the Women's Pro Billiard Series a bold new chapter dedicated to elevating women's pool to unprecedented heights.

As the largest investor and promoter in professional billiards, Predator Group continues to lead from the front championing all genders, all disciplines, and all games.

In 2026, Predator is lighting the fuse on something truly special.

### More Than a Tour, A Movement

The Women's Pro Billiard Series is more than a competition schedule. It is a movement.

Women in pool deserve:

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Amy Kane, Tzu Chien Wei and Vincent Rochefort

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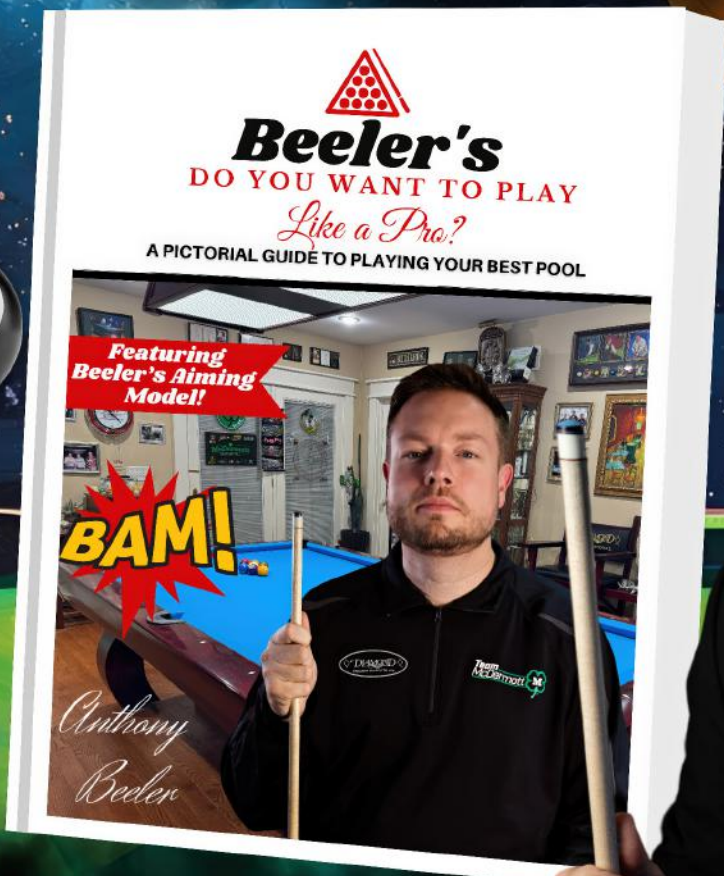
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# PIA FILLER & JOSHUA FILLER

## CROWNED CHAMPIONS OF THE 2026 LAS VEGAS MIXED DOUBLES TURBO

Article and photo by Predator Pro Billiard Series

A new chapter in professional pool was written in Las Vegas as Pia Filler and Joshua Filler, “The Killer Fillers”, were crowned champions of the 2026 Las Vegas Mixed Doubles Turbo, an exciting new format introduced by the Predator Pro Billiard Series.

**B**uilt to grow the sport and bring pool to new audiences, the Predator Pro Billiard Series continues to push the game forward by creating fresh, high-intensity formats, accelerating the pace of play, and delivering more must-watch moments without compromising world-class competition.

In a high speed, pressure packed final, the Fillers defeated Naoyuki Oi and

Wei Tzu Chien to secure the title, earning \$15,000 as the winning team from a total prize fund of \$40,000 shared among the eight elite teams.

### A Revolutionary Format Built for Intensity

Designed to push players to their limits and captivate modern audiences, the Mixed Doubles Turbo format de-

livered relentless action from start to finish:

- 20-Second Shot Clock
- One 20-Second Extension per game
- 40 Seconds after the Break
- Single elimination
- Random draw
- Best of 3 sets, races to 4
- Shootout if tied 3-3 in the deciding set



Pia and Joshua Filler with Vincent Rochefort

With no margin for error, every shot carried weight and every rack could change the match.

### A Championship Performance

Throughout the event, Pia and Joshua Filler demonstrated exceptional chemistry, tactical clarity, and shot-making under pressure. Their championship run culminated in a decisive final, capping off one of the most dynamic and entertaining tournaments of the week.

Strong performances were also delivered by teams including Jeffrey De Luna / Mayte Ropero, Naoyuki Oi / Wei Tzu Chien, and Shane Van Boening / Savannah Easton, highlighting the depth and global reach of the field.

### World-Class Mixed Doubles Field

The tournament featured 8 international mixed doubles teams, pairing



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- Joshua Filler / Pia Filler
- Skyler Woodward / Chou Chieh-Yu
- Shane Van Boening / Savannah Easton
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# OI PUTS ON CLINIC TO END INDONESIAN DREAM AND WIN CARABAO INTERNATIONAL OPEN

By Ben Hudd - [www.absolute-pool.com](http://www.absolute-pool.com)

**Naoyuki Oi displayed a spectacular performance to complete an 11-3 rout of Indonesian surprise package Irsal Nasution and become the Carabao International Open champion in Jakarta.**

**F**ormer Helsinki Open champion Oi doubled his World Nineball Tour ranking title tally in the Indonesian capital, clinching the \$20,000 top prize and regaining his spot inside the world's top 20 on the nineball rankings.

Japan's Oi compiled eight break and runs and a title-winning golden break in an empathic victory over former Indonesian World Cup of Pool regular Nasution, who received limited opportunities against a formidable opponent somewhere near the peak of his powers.

European Open runner-up Oi dropped a mere five racks in routine victories over Saudi Arabia's Khalid Alghamdi and Meynard Tippard of the Philippines to qualify for the last 64, where he whitewashed Genesis Ouano 10-0.

He needed comebacks from 8-6 and 7-5 behind to beat Indonesia's Ismail Kadir and Chinese Taipei Open runner-up Ronel Nalaunan, defying five break and runs from the latter, while his campaign also involved more commanding wins over Paolo Gallito and Marvin Asis.

Nasution, meanwhile, endured defeat during the double elimination phase at the hands of World Championship semi-finalist Bernie Regalaro, although he

exacted revenge on that loss in the semi-finals after notable hill-hill wins over Sean Malayan and Oliver Szolnoki.

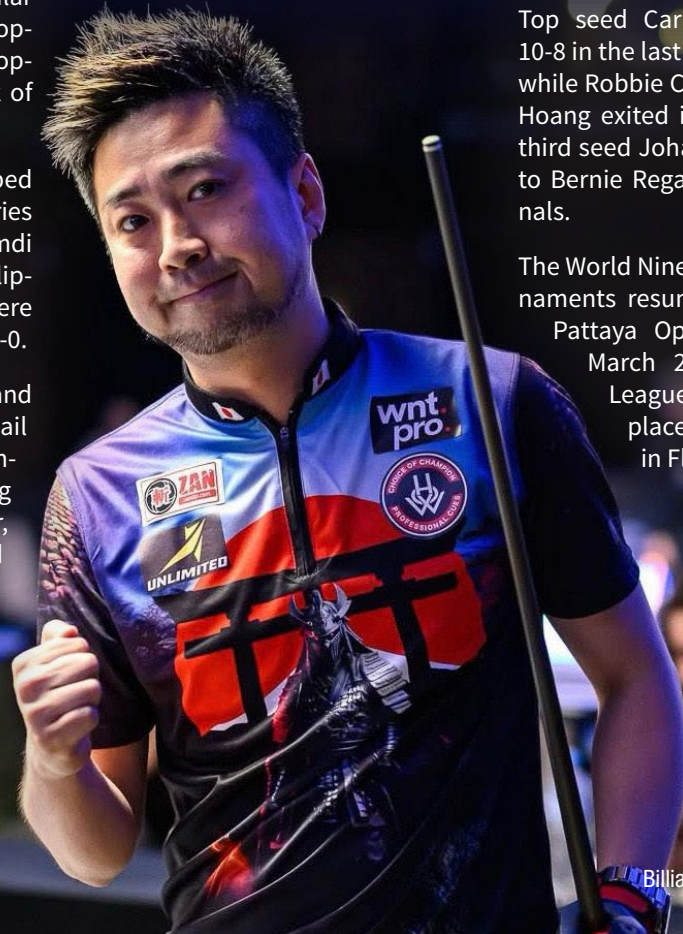
Once an Indonesian World Cup of Pool regular and on the team that defeated Germany's Ralf Souquet and Thorsten Hohmann in 2015, Nasution followed in Albert Januarta's footsteps and be-

came the second Indonesian to reach a WNT ranking final.

Elsewhere, US Open champion Aloysius Yapp was amongst the early round casualties following defeats to Pakistan's Mubashir Raza and Indonesia's Ismail Kadir, while Indonesian number one Januarta also departed following an 8-7 defeat to Luong Duc Thien.

Top seed Carlo Biado was beaten 10-8 in the last 64 by Ronel Nalaunan, while Robbie Capito and Duong Quoc Hoang exited in the last 32, prior to third seed Johann Chua's 10-3 defeat to Bernie Regalaro in the quarter-finals.

The World Nineball Tour ranking tournaments resume with the inaugural Pattaya Open in Thailand from March 2-6 following Premier League Pool, which takes place from February 19-22 in Florida.



Naoyuki Oi

# GORST CLAIMS \$10,000-ADDED TEXAS OPEN ONE POCKET TITLE WITH SECOND-SET FINAL WIN OVER CHOCHAN

By Skip Maloney - AzB Staff / File photos courtesy Erwin Dionisio

**Fedor Gorst was cruisin' along in his bid to become champion of the 8th Annual Predator Texas Open's One Pocket event earlier this week (Tues. Feb. 10-13), when he encountered a couple of speed bumps on the road.**

**H**e ran into a small one, early and then, towards the end, he ran into three more serious ones that threatened his chances. He survived to claim that title after winning the second-set of a true, double-elimination final against Tony

Chohan. The \$10,000-added event drew 32 entrants to Skinny Bob's Billiards in Round Rock, TX.

Gorst, fresh off his 2026 Derby City Classic win in the Bigfoot Challenge a few weeks ago (Jan. 23-26), was com-

ing off a year in which he'd won two One Pocket titles; the 2025 Derby City Classic (he also won the overall Master of the Table award) and the Battle of the Bull One Pocket title at Wolf's Den in Roanoke, VA. He has a tendency to win the One Pocket titles that he



Fedor Gorst

competes in. He's won four out of the six in which he's participated (cashed) over the last two years+. He ran into a couple of back-to-back 'speed bumps' at this year's Derby City Classic One Pocket, which left him finishing in the tie for 21st place.

Undaunted, he stepped up to the tables at Skinny Bob's in Texas and established a strong position coming out of the gate, chalking up two straight shutouts over Raed Shabib and Ruben Silva, Jr. His first 'speed bump' came in his third-round match against Sergio Rivas who won two of the six racks. Gorst went back to a shutout with Roberto Gomez in one of the winners' side semifinals and advanced to the hot seat match.

Shane Van Boening, also headed for the hot seat match, did more or less

the same thing in three out of his first four matches; started with a 4-1 win over Rudy Sanchez and then, shut out Marc Hosler. Van Boening hit his first 'bump' in a winners' side quarterfinal against Canada's John Morra, who battled him to double hill. Van Boening survived, as he is wont to do and shutout Adam Smith in the other winners' side semifinal.

They both hit their next 'bump' together; a double-hill, hot seat match. Gorst won it, knowing, at the time, that he'd either face Van Boening a second time, or, dependent on the outcome of the semifinal, 'T Rex,' otherwise known as Tony Chohan.

Chohan, who'd won a 4-1, opening-round match versus Josh Roberts, and a double-hill match against Sky Woodward on the winners' side, got

knocked to the loss side by Roberto Gomez 4-1. He headed out on a five-match, loss-side winning streak that put him into the final against Gorst. After shutting out Tommy Tokoph, 'T Rex' drew a rematch against Roberts and shut him out, as well. In a battle for advancement to the quarterfinal, he eliminated Adam Smith 4-1. He fought two double-hill matches to get to Gorst, defeating Gomez in the quarterfinal and Van Boening in the semi.

The 'pool god' known as momentum carried 'T Rex' into the opening set of the true, double-elimination final, which he won 4-2, forcing a second set. Not so fortunate in the second set, however. In the reduced, race-to-3, they battled back and forth to double hill, before Gorst dropped the last ball needed in the 5th rack to claim the Texas Open's One Pocket title.

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# 'THE GHOST'

## COMPLETES LONE STAR STATE SWEEP WITH PREDATOR TEXAS OPEN 10-BALL WIN

By Skip Maloney - AzB Staff / File photos courtesy Erwin Dionisio

Aside from its similarity to his own last name, Fedor Gorst earned his nickname – The Ghost – with a combination of his almost-silent presence and demeanor at the tables, combined with a playing style in which a lot of what goes on in his head, strategically, is invisible.

He's more of a 'Casper, the Friendly Ghost' type than any manifestation of evil; more easy-going smiles than the ominous sneers and implied threats of a ghost

like Banquo, who haunts the pages of Macbeth.

Ghosts, though, tend to lurk in the shadows and this one gave that up

a long time ago. Born at the turn of the century and a junior competitor in Russia from the age of 12, Gorst showed up on our AZBilliards' radar when he cashed in two separate



events on the EuroTour (the Austrian and Dutch Open) in 2015. Two years later, he was the WPA's Junior World 9-Ball Champion (Kristina Tkach was that year's Girls Champion) and a year after that, he recorded his first major professional title, winning the EuroTour's 2018 Treviso Open in Europe. Two years later, he was on Europe's Mosconi Cup team and two years after that ('24), he accomplished a 'Grand Slam' of events, winning the World Pool Masters, the WPA World 9-Ball Championship (for a second time) and the US Open 9-Ball Championship in the same year. So much for the kind of shadow-existence associated with your average ghost.

He came to the \$22,750-added (total), Predator 8th Texas Open at Skinny Bob's Billiards in Round Rock, TX last Tuesday (Feb. 10) and won its \$10,000-added, One Pocket event, downing Tony 'T Rex' Chohan in the final (see previous report for further details). This past weekend, commencing on Saturday (Feb. 14), he joined a roster of 128 entrants at the Texas Open's \$10,000-added, 10-Ball Championships and won two of his last three matches against the event's 2022 champion, Peru's Gerson Martinez, to claim that title.

Gorst and Martinez met three times in the 10-ball event; the hot seat match and two sets of a double-elimination final. As the FargoRates of Gorst's opponents in his six-match run to the hot seat match grew higher (all lower than his 847), so did the racks against

him. In races to 7, Gorst opened with a shutout over Dylan Turner (536), downed Jonathan Demet (676) and Andy Jethwa (696), both 7-2, and sent junior competitor Gavin Mathew (619) 7-3 and Devin Poteet (755) 7-5 to the loss side. In a winners' side semifinal, he defeated Ukraine's Vitaliy Patsura (792) 7-4 and moved on to the hot seat match.

Four of Gerson Martinez' opponents in his trip to the hot seat match came to the table with FargoRates lower than his 798. He downed the first one, Joshua Keller (620) 7-1 and shut out the second, James Sargent (497). He downed the first two opponents with higher Fargo Rates than his, in distinctly different ways. He gave up just a single rack to Shane Van Boening (846) and survived a double-hill bout versus Roland Garcia (807). More or less statistically even, he downed Cristopher Tevez (791) 7-4 and in the other winners' side semifinal, Mark Estiola (780) 7-3.

In 100 matches, FargoRate odds suggested that Martinez would win just a little over 25% of them (26.7%). The Texas Open 10-Ball's hot seat match turned out not to be the one out of every four that Martinez would be expected to win, although he did win 58% of the 12 games played. Gorst claimed the hot seat 7-5.

On the loss side, the most likely, though far from only candidate with the (assumed) potential to defeat Gorst in the finals, Shane Van Boening, had been eliminated by the Philip-

pin's Miguel Salvilla in a double-hill bout in the battles for 13th/16th place. Still left, when Patsura and Estiola arrived, following their winners' side semifinal loss, were Tevez, who'd followed his loss to Martinez with victories over Tommy Tokoph 7-3 and Salvilla 7-2 and Marco Teutscher, who'd followed his loss to Patsura with two, hard-fought 7-5 wins over Roland Garcia and Japan's Naoyuki Oi. Tevez drew Patsura, Teutscher picked up Estiola.

Patsura advanced to the quarterfinal 7-2 over Tevez. Estiola joined him after eliminating Teutscher 7-3. Patsura took the quarterfinal match over Estiola 7-3 and had his short, loss-side visit stopped by Martinez in the semifinals 7-5. According to the digitalpool time stamp, the semifinal ended just after midnight on Monday, about four hours after Gorst had claimed the hot seat.

That fact may, or may not have had anything to do with the outcome of the first set in the double-elimination final. The 'momentum' vs. 'idle time' debate over who has the advantage in the first set of a double-elimination final isn't backed with any reliable data. Although in this case, belief in the 'momentum' theory picked up another validating example, when Martinez took that opening set 7-3. Everybody in the place knew that at 1:38 a.m., it wasn't over. Gorst took the second set 7-4 to claim his second Predator Texas Open title of the weekend.

Representatives at Skinny Bob Billiards thanked sponsor Predator Cues and their staff – bartenders, servers, cooks, bussers and everyone behind the scenes, for their six-day, "absolute rockstars" support. They also thanked the tour directors for keeping the weekend's multiple events running smoothly, and their streaming crew that worked marathon hours to bring the event to fans who couldn't be there.

**“ BORN AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY AND A JUNIOR COMPETITOR IN RUSSIA FROM THE AGE OF 12, GORST SHOWED UP ON OUR AZBILLIARDS' RADAR WHEN HE CASHED IN TWO SEPARATE EVENTS ON THE EUROTOUR (THE AUSTRIAN AND DUTCH OPEN) IN 2015.**

”

# THORPE & SALIM TAKE INDIANAPOLIS

By **Mary Kenniston** - Photos courtesy **Pool Action TV**

**This past Wednesday (February 4th), players and fans alike showed up at John Wayne's Pub & Eatery in Indianapolis, IN for their \$10,000 added John Wayne's Pro Open.**

**W**elcomed by owner Chuck and Sam Thomas and presented by Meucci Cues and PoolActionTV.com, the Open featured four events – a one pocket mini, a banks ring game, a 10 ball Midnight Madness mini and the main event, the nine ball open.

Meucci's own Billy Thorpe – last year's Bayou State Classic 9-Ball and Bank Pool Showdown champ as well as Johnathan Pinegar ("Hennessee") were there. Ultimate Pool USA Hall of Famer Dave Matlock, Germany's Can Salim and Peru's Gerson Martinez roamed the room. Shane Winters, who won the inaugural Making It In American One Pocket Championship tour stop at Billiard Breakdown in Greece, NY, current USA National Men's 9 Ball Pool champ Lukas Fracasso-Verner and Joe Prince, the Ultimate Pool USA Arizona Open winner were there as well.

Also spotted were Shane McMinn, Danny Smith, Sergio Rivas, Louis DeMarco, Jeremy Seaman, Manny Perez, Gary Lutman, Jeff Beckley, Chase Stumfoll and Taylor Hansen.

Play kicked off with the eight player \$500 entry One Pocket Mini. The format was race to three – single elimination.

First round action saw Shane Winters over Hennessee, Billy Thorpe over Lu-

kas Fracasso-Verner and Danny Smith over Brett Cruse – all 3-0. Sergio Rivas sneaked past Can Salim – score 3-2.

Next round saw Thorpe skunk Winters 3-0 and Rivas defeat Smith 3-1.

The final match pitted Thorpe against Rivas with Thorpe winning the title 3-1.

Featuring sixteen players, Friday evening saw the \$200 entry Banks Ring Game. When the smoke cleared, the last two standing were Hennessee and Thorpe. After a lengthy battle, Thorpe took this down too!

Saturday opened with a player auction, meeting and draw for the main event – the Nine Ball Pro Open. Featuring 54 players who paid a \$150 entry fee and played on seven foot Diamonds, the format was double elimination, alternate breaks and races to seven on both sides. Ladies received two games on the wire.

Shooting out of the starting gate and slicing through the bracket to the final eight saw Manny Perez eking out a win over Shane McMinn 7-6, Jeremy Seaman

defeating Danny Smith 7-4, Billy Thorpe beating Lukas Fracasso-Verner 7-5



*Billy Thorpe*

and Indianapolis favorite Jeff Beckley fell to Tom McCluskey 7-4.

As play in the main event ended for the night, the Midnight Madness 10 Ball Mini began. Thirteen players jumped in to play in this \$200 entry single elimination event. Also played on seven foot Diamonds, races were to seven.

Battling down to the last two players, Can Salim defeated Jordan Davis 7-2 to grab the cash.

Returning on Sunday and vying to get into the hot seat match were Perez vs. Seaman and Thorpe vs. McCluskey. Thorpe beat McCluskey 7-4 and Perez survived a close one over Seaman 7-6.

Moving into the hot seat match, it was Thorpe who locked up his seat in the finals after thumping Perez 7-2.

Meanwhile, tearing through the one loss side after a second round defeat

was Hennessee. He beat Nate Williams 7-1, Emilio Alfaro 7-0, Shane Winters 7-4, Ronie Solgot 7-5, Fracasso-Verner 7-0, Sergio Rivas 7-3, Jeremy Seaman 7-5 and Danny Smith 7-2.

Waiting for him was Perez – he went down also 7-3. Manny finished in third place and Hennessee moved into the finals.

Since this was true double elimination, Hennessee would have to defeat Thorpe twice to take the crown. However, it was not to be as Thorpe was not to be denied. He won the match 7-2 leaving Hennessee in a well deserved second place and Billy claimed the title.

Congratulations to Can Salim and Billy Thorpe for winning three events at this year's John Wayne Pro Open!



Can Salim

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# DARREN APPLETON WINS THE STRAIGHT POOL FACE-OFF AT THE WESTGATE LAS VEGAS

Article and photo by Predator Pro Billiard Series

A true clash of cue sports legends unfolded last night on TV Table 1 at the CSI Expo, Westgate Las Vegas Resort & Casino, as Darren Appleton defeated Corey Deuel in a Straight Pool Face-Off exhibition match.

As part of the Predator Pro Billiard Series' mission to spotlight and elevate the sport, this special showcase highlighted straight pool — one of the game's most historic and demanding disciplines — front and center.

In a single-match showdown, a race to 150, Appleton showcased precision, patience, and championship composure to secure the victory.

Straight Pool at Its Purest With no brackets and no second chances, the Face-Off delivered a pure test of endurance and execution:

Every inning demanded flawless pattern play and total concentration, with momentum swings keeping fans locked in from the opening break to the final rack.

Honoring the Game's Legacy Straight pool remains one of the most demanding and cerebral disciplines in cue sports. This Face-Off honored the tradition of the game while presenting it on a modern professional stage — where patience, intelligence, and execution define greatness.

Witness History in the Making.



Darren Appleton

STRAIGHT  
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FACE OFF

# CABAL GOES UNDEFEATED TO WIN 30TH ANNUAL JAY SWANSON (“SWANEE”) MEMORIAL IN VEGAS

Article by **Skip Maloney - AzB Staff** / Photo courtesy **Griff's**

**Spring Valley, CA's James Cabal, coming off a breakout year in 2025 (his best recorded earnings year with us here at AZBilliards), has started the new year with something of a breakout performance.**

**H**is undefeated run at the \$2,500-added, 30th Annual “Swanee” Memorial, which drew 68 entrants to Griff's in Las Vegas over the past few days (Feb. 16-18), marks his first win in four presumed tries at the “Swanee.” He may have tried more times than the four we know about – this year (1st), '21 (9th) '20 (9th) and '17 (25th) – but he didn't ‘cash’ in any of the other 26, as far as we know.

Cabal's somewhat modest resumé, that makes it seem as though he doesn't get to the tables that often, is contradicted by the fact that he came to this year's “Swanee” Memorial sporting a 710 FargoRate. Normally, one doesn't get to 710 on the basis of just a dozen cash payouts recorded over the past decade or so. Last year's surge in Cabal's reported earnings brought him to the highest level he'd ever achieved on our AZBilliards' Money Leaderboard (389) and was associated with five cash finishes on the LA 9-Ball series (two wins) and a 7th place finish at the 2nd Savannah Easton Invitational

in Buena Park, CA. All of which leads us to believe that we don't have all of his cash-payout history, and that the undefeated run was achieved by a skilled competitor who is very much at home competing in the 700 range of FargoRates.

Among his six opponents, Cabal faced one with a matching 710 Fargo Rate, two with higher (H) rates, including runner-up Nicholas DeLeon (741), and three with lower (L) rates. He opened

with an 8-3 win over David Antley (L), and followed with wins over Ernie Rivas, Jr. (L, 8-4), Kelli Chuberko (Even, 8-6), and in a winners' side quarter-final, Jordan Nile Homan (L, 8-6). In one of the winners' side semifinals, Cabal drew Savannah Easton (L), who, by the way, was in Lauderhill, FL on Friday, Feb. 13, competing in the WPBA's Classic's Players Championships. Sometime after 5:30 p.m., when she'd lost her second match, she headed home to Las Vegas and was at a ta-



Nicholas De Leon, Griff's GM Brandon Burch and James Cabal

ble, competing in her first “Swanee” match at 2:15 p.m. on Monday.

Nicholas DeLeon, in the meantime, headed for the hot seat match and played only one opponent with a higher FargoRate. He got by Krish Ian DiliDili 8-3, Rodlin John Bautista 8-2 and Francisco Garcia 8-5. He moved on to a winners’ side quarterfinal match against his only (to that point) higher-rated opponent, Rubelin Amit (769). DeLeon did better against him than any of his lower-rated previous opponents, sending Amit to the loss side 8-1 and drawing Payne McBride in the other winners’ side semifinal.

Cabal and the feisty teen known as The Roadrunner, Savannah Easton, battled to double hill, before Cabal prevailed, advancing to the hot seat match. DeLeon joined him after sending McBride to the loss-side’s 5th/6th matches 8-4. The battle for the hot seat was a fairly even FargoRate

matchup; DeLeon with the 741-710 advantage in that department. Didn’t help. Cabal claimed the seat 8-2.

Following his loss to DeLeon, Amit came west and won two straight 7-3 matches against David Nichols and Eric Charlton to draw the Roadrunner. Payne McBride joined the loss side and picked up Jeremy Long, who’d lost a winners’ side quarterfinal to the Roadrunner, ahead of winning a double-hill match versus Adrian Prasad and eliminating Mauricio Garcia 7-3.

Savannah Easton fought and lost her second-straight, double-hill battle, to Amit, while McBride sent Long to the proverbial showers 7-5. McBride then eliminated Amit 7-1 in the quarterfinals.

DeLeon punched his ticket to the final with a 7-1 victory over McBride in the semifinals. Cabral was able to win

three more racks than he’d been able to chalk up in the hot seat match. DeLeon added one to his hot-seat-match total. Cabal won the 30th Annual Jay Swanson “Swanee” Memorial 11-3.

Tour director Brandon Burch thanked the Griff’s Billiards staff, the streaming crew at Griff’s TV, as well as Outsville for the racks used.

Commencing on Feb. 28 and continuing on through March 13, Griff’s will be hosting the four-event series of the US Open competition. The \$10k-added, US Open 10-Ball Championship will literally get the balls rolling on Feb. 28-March 4. The \$15k-added, US Open 8-Ball Championship will begin on March 4 and run through March 7. On March 7, the \$10k-added, US Open Bank Pool Championship will get underway and will end on the day (March 10), that the \$10k-added, US Open One Pocket Championship starts.

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**THE PRO BILLIARD SERIES IGNITES A NEW ERA:**

# INTRODUCING THE WOMEN PRO BILLIARD SERIES

Article and photo by **Predator Pro Billiard Series**

**The Pro Billiard Series (PBS) proudly announces the official launch of the Women Pro Billiard Series — a bold new chapter dedicated to elevating women’s pool to unprecedented heights.**

**A**s the largest investor and promoter in professional billiards, Predator Group continues to lead from the front — championing all genders, all disciplines, and all games. In 2026, we are lighting the fuse on something truly special.

The Women Pro Billiard Series is more than a tour. It is a movement.

Women in pool deserve their own identity. Their own spotlight. Their own stage. The Women Pro Billiard Series delivers a dedicated platform

and powerful branding designed to showcase the world’s greatest female athletes with the professionalism, visibility, and respect they deserve.

Because the future of pool depends on it.



**RECORD-BREAKING PRIZE MONEY**

To match ambition with action, PBS is dramatically increasing prize funds across women’s events in 2026 — highlighted by an extraordinary \$200,000 prize fund for each of the two Women’s World Championships.

This historic investment sends a clear message: women’s pool is not an addition to the sport — it is a driving force behind its growth.

**BUILDING THE FUTURE TOGETHER**

The Women Pro Billiard Series will stand strong on its own while continuing to expand opportunities through mixed doubles and team events — creating crossover moments, shared stages, and unforgettable rivalries.

Our commitment is long-term. Our vision is international. Our mission is



**THE WOMEN PRO BILLIARD SERIES DELIVERS A DEDICATED PLATFORM AND POWERFUL BRANDING DESIGNED TO SHOWCASE THE WORLD’S GREATEST FEMALE ATHLETES WITH THE PROFESSIONALISM, VISIBILITY, AND RESPECT THEY DESERVE.**



simple: grow the game — and women pool is a huge part of it.

2026 is not just another season. It is the start of something special. It is the beginning of a new legacy.

Quote from Vincent Rochefort  
Sport Marketing and Product Innovation Director

“There is no growth of pool without women’s pool. Women deserve their

own branding and platform to showcase their talent. With an increase price money for 2026 and the launch of the Women Pro Billiard Series, 2026 will be a great year — and just the beginning.”

The Pro Billiard Series continues to push boundaries, elevate athletes, and inspire the next generation. From grassroots to world championships, from legends to rising stars — we are building the future of billiards.

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# FLORIDA OPEN

## MAKES BLOCKBUSTER RETURN TO ORLANDO 4-9 AUGUST

TICKETS ON SALE 18 MARCH

The Florida Open Pool Championship will return to the Caribe Royale Resort, Orlando, Florida from 4-9 August 2026, as the World Nineball Tour heads back to the Sunshine State for the second edition of the rapidly growing American showpiece.

Fans are encouraged to sign up for ticket alerts now ahead of tickets going on sale on 18 March, with demand expected to be high following last year's incredible turnout.

After a spectacular inaugural event in 2025, which saw a sold out venue for the finals, the Florida Open will once again feature a 256-player field, including 128 World Nineball Tour professionals, competing across six days in one of the sport's most exciting destinations.

Reigning champion Aloysius Yapp returns to defend his title after producing a statement performance in last year, defeating five-time US Open champion Shane Van Boening to lift the inaugural Florida Open crown. The three-time Major Champion star is set to headline a star-studded international field as the world's elite battle it out in Orlando once again.

Yapp said: "Winning the inaugural Florida Open was a special moment in my career, especially against a champion of Shane's calibre in the final. To come through a field that strong and lift the first title meant a great deal to me. The atmosphere all week was incredible, and the energy in the arena for the final



is something I'll never forget. I'm excited to return to Orlando to defend the title and test myself again against the best players in the world once again."

Amaury Piedra, Vice President of Operations & Managing Director at Caribe Royale Resort, said: "We're proud to partner with Matchroom to bring the 2026 Florida Open back to Orlando and to Caribe Royale Orlando resort. Hosting this premier event as part of the World Nineball Tour reflects our continued commitment to delivering world-class sports and entertainment experiences in Central Florida. Matchroom is the global leader in professional billiards, and we're thrilled to welcome the competitors and fans they attract to our city. Our entire resort team looks forward to delivering an exceptional experience for everyone participating in this exciting event."

Emily Frazer, CEO of Matchroom Multi Sport, said: "The Florida Open made an immediate impact in its first year. The crowd support across the week was outstanding and showed just how strong the appetite for world-class pool is, not just in Orlando but across America. Caribe Royale Resort proved to be a fantastic partner and host venue, helping us deliver an event experience that players and fans won't forget. We're delighted to be returning for 2026, and with tickets expected to move quickly, we strongly encourage fans to be ready when they go on sale next month."

With tickets set to go on sale from 18 March, fans are urged to register their interest early to secure the best seats as the Florida Open returns for another landmark edition this summer.

For fans unable to attend in person, the Florida Open will be broadcast live on WNT TV, with further international broadcasters to be announced in the coming weeks.

For all the latest updates, follow Matchroom Pool on Facebook, Instagram, X, TikTok, and YouTube

“

***AFTER A SPECTACULAR INAUGURAL EVENT IN 2025, WHICH SAW A SOLD OUT VENUE FOR THE FINALS, THE FLORIDA OPEN WILL ONCE AGAIN FEATURE A 256-PLAYER FIELD, INCLUDING 128 WORLD NINEBALL TOUR PROFESSIONALS...***

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# WNT EXPANDS IN THE USA

## WITH INAUGURAL ARIZONA OPEN POOL CHAMPIONSHIP

13-16 AUGUST 2026

WHERE THE HEAT MEETS THE ELITE

The World Nineball Tour is proud to announce the Arizona Open Pool Championship, the newest major event on the WNT calendar, set to take place from 13-16 August 2026 at the impressive Quechan Casino Resort in Yuma, Arizona.

Fans around the world will be able to watch the action in Arizona on WNT TV, with further international broadcast partners to be announced soon.

The Arizona Open Pool Championship will feature a 128-player single elimination field, mirroring the thrilling format of last year's Philippines Open Pool Championship. The top 64 ranked World Nineball Tour professionals will automatically qualify, joined by a further 64 competitors to complete the field — all vying for a \$125,000 prize fund.

With its high-stakes, win-or-go-home format, the Arizona Open promises four days of relentless, elite-level competition as the sport's biggest names battle alongside emerging talents in pursuit of the newest major WNT title.

Five-time US Open champion Shane Van Boening shared his excitement about competing in the inaugural event on home soil: "Anytime you get the chance to compete in a major on home soil, it means something special. The Arizona Open is a huge addition to the calendar and another big moment for pool in the United States. The fans here are incredibly passionate, and I'll be doing everything I can to lift another major title in front of them. Events like this show how strong and competitive the World Nineball Tour has become, and I can't wait to be part of it."

As the Tour continues its global expansion and answers growing demand from fans across the United States, the Arizona Open represents another landmark step in delivering world-class nineball to passionate American audiences.

CEO of Matchroom Multi Sport, Emily Frazer, stated: "The launch of the Arizona Open Pool Championship is another significant milestone in the continued growth of the World Nineball Tour. The appetite for elite

nineball across the United States is stronger than ever, and we are committed to delivering premium events in outstanding venues that elevate the sport. With a highly competitive 128-player single elimination format and a \$125,000 prize fund, the Arizona Open will be a standout moment in our 2026 season — and a crucial opportunity to discover and showcase the next great USA pool star. It will be a fantastic platform for emerging American talent to make their mark on the global stage, as well as a superb event for our established players and fans alike."

Staged at the Quechan Casino Resort, the Arizona Open will combine top-tier sporting action with a premier hospitality experience, providing an exciting destination event in the heart of Arizona.

CFO of Quechan Casino Resort and Paradise Resort, Paul Feltman commented: "Hosting the inaugural Arizona Open is an exciting milestone for Quechan Casino Resort. We are proud to partner with the World Nineball Tour to bring elite-level competition to Yuma and to welcome players and fans from across the country and around the world. Events of this calibre reflect our commitment to delivering first-class experiences and positioning our resort as a destination for premier sporting entertainment."

The Arizona Open Pool Championship further strengthens the World Nineball Tour's presence in the United States and underlines its mission to deliver world-class tournaments on a truly global stage.

Don't miss your chance to witness history at the inaugural Arizona Open. Sign up for priority ticket alerts and be part of the action this August.



# Tourney Results

## Feb 04 - Feb 08

### Carabao International Open

#### Jakarta

- Jakarta,  
 1 Naoyuki Oi \$20,000  
 2 Irsal Nasution \$10,000  
 3 Bernie Regaliaria \$5,000  
 3 Marvin Asis \$5,000  
 5 Johann Chua \$3,000  
 5 Oliver Szolnoki \$3,000  
 5 Raymund Faraon \$3,000  
 5 Ronel Nasution \$3,000  
 9 Chia-Chen Hsieh \$2,000  
 9 Jeffrey Ignacio \$2,000  
 9 Jesson Marabi \$2,000  
 9 John Albert Refulie \$2,000  
 9 Jundel Mazon \$2,000  
 9 Luong Duc Thien \$2,000  
 9 Paolo Gallito \$2,000  
 9 Sun Yi Hsuan \$2,000  
 17 Alvien Dwiki \$1,000  
 17 Edi Wirawan \$1,000  
 17 Edward Ikhwan \$1,000  
 17 Erwin Kurniawan \$1,000  
 17 Erwin Win \$1,000  
 17 Ismail Kadir \$1,000  
 17 John Drahcir \$1,000  
 17 Meynard Tipawan \$1,000  
 17 Mohammed Baabad \$1,000  
 17 Punguan Hasiholan Sihombing \$1,000  
 17 Quoc Hoang Duong \$1,000  
 17 Raymart Carnomot \$1,000  
 17 Robbie Capito \$1,000  
 17 Rommel Santos \$1,000  
 17 Sean Mark Malayan \$1,000  
 17 Sullivan Clark \$1,000

## Feb 04 - Feb 08

### John Wayne's Pro Open

#### John Wayne's Pub

- Indianapolis, Indiana  
 1 Billy Thorpe \$5,000  
 2 Jonathan Pinegar \$2,800  
 3 Manny Perez \$1,750  
 4 Danny Smith \$1,300  
 5 Jeremy Seaman \$850

- 5 Tom McCluskey \$850  
 7 Joe Prince \$600  
 7 Sergio Rivas \$600  
 9 Can Salim \$400  
 9 Jeff Beckley \$400  
 9 Lukas Fracasso-Verner \$400  
 9 Shane McMinn \$400  
 13 Brandon Thomas \$300  
 13 Brett Cruser \$300  
 13 Ronald Solgot \$300  
 13 Taylor Hansen \$300

## Feb 06 - Feb 08

### Jersey Girl Billiards' 3rd Music City Split Bracket

#### JOB Billiards

- Madison, TN  
 1 Roland Garcia \$3,600  
 2 Dale Lannom \$2,400  
 3 Braxton Westmoreland \$1,200  
 4 Dale Froling \$1,000  
 5 Justin Pelech \$400  
 5 Mike Barnick \$400  
 7 Gabe Booth \$250  
 7 Wing Woolridge \$250  
 9 Paul Krimes \$180  
 9 Rich Denham \$180  
 9 Stephen Domingue \$180  
 9 Trenton White \$180  
 13 Austin Poling \$140  
 13 Brad Sullivan \$140  
 13 Brenda Anderson \$140  
 13 Matthew Moore \$140

## Feb 06 - Feb 08

### Jersey Girl Billiards' 3rd Music City Women's

#### JOB Billiards

- Madison, TN  
 1 Kim Pierce \$350  
 2 Amanda Wilder \$280  
 3 Alexandria Smith \$150

## Feb 10 - Feb 13

### 8th Texas Open 10-Ball Championship One Pocket Division

## Skinny Bob's Billiards

- Round Rock, Texas  
 1 Fedor Gorst \$6,500  
 2 Tony Chohan \$4,500  
 3 Shane Van Boening \$3,000  
 4 Roberto Gomez \$2,000  
 5 Adam Smith \$1,200  
 5 John Morra \$1,200  
 7 Josh Roberts \$600  
 7 Skyler Woodward \$600

## Feb 10 - Feb 13

### 8th Texas Open 10-Ball Championship

#### Skinny Bob's Billiards

- Round Rock, Texas  
 1 Fedor Gorst \$9,000  
 2 Gerson Martinez \$6,000  
 3 Vitaliy Patsura \$3,600  
 4 Mark Estiola \$2,200  
 5 Christopher Tevez \$1,300  
 5 Marco Teutscher \$1,300  
 7 Miguel Salvilla \$700  
 7 Naoyuki Oi \$700  
 9 Devin Poteet \$500  
 9 Mayur Sanghvi \$500  
 9 Roland Garcia \$500  
 9 Tommy Tokoph \$500  
 13 Lazaro Martinez III \$400  
 13 Raed Shabib \$400  
 13 Shane Van Boening \$400  
 13 Thomas Haas \$400  
 17 Daniel Sardonicillo \$300  
 17 Eric Aicinena \$300  
 17 Gavin Mathew \$300  
 17 John Eagle III \$300  
 17 John Gabriel \$300  
 17 Marc Hoster \$300  
 17 Peter Bowman \$300  
 17 Roberto Gomez \$300  
 25 Andy Jethwa \$200  
 25 Ernesto Bayaua \$200  
 25 Isaiah Arellano \$200  
 25 James Nico Ariola \$200  
 25 Jeffry Quiroz \$200  
 25 John Morra \$200

25 Josh Roberts \$200  
25 Shane Petrick \$200

## Feb 10 - Feb 13

### 8th Texas Open 10-Ball Championship Ladies Division

#### Skinny Bob's Billiards

Round Rock, Texas  
1 Kristina Grim \$1,750  
2 Chris Fields \$1,025  
3 April Larson \$750  
4 Tara Williams \$325  
5 Jennifer Kraber \$200  
5 Ming Ng \$200  
7 Kathy Sanders \$125  
7 Mille Almaraz \$125

## Feb 12 - Feb 15

### WPBA Classic Billiards Players Championship

#### Classic Billiards

Lauderhill, Florida  
1 Chieh-Yu Chou \$17,000  
2 Chezka Centeno \$11,000  
3 Han Yu \$7,000  
4 Pia Filler \$5,000  
5 Kristina Zlateva \$4,000  
5 Wan-Ling Wang \$4,000  
7 Chia Hua Chen \$3,000  
7 Kelly Fisher \$3,000  
9 Aleksandra Guleikova \$2,300  
9 Briana Miller \$2,300  
9 Marharyta Fefilava \$2,300  
9 Sofia Mast \$2,300  
13 Jasmin Ouschan \$1,700  
13 Kaylee McIntosh \$1,700  
13 Kristina Tkach \$1,700  
13 Sakura Miramatsu \$1,700  
17 Ashley Benoit \$1,100  
17 Brittany Bryant \$1,100  
17 JoAnn Mason Parker \$1,100  
17 Meng-Hsia Hung \$1,100  
17 Pamela Kelly \$1,100  
17 Shui Ching Chiang \$1,100  
17 Silviana Lu \$1,100  
17 Tzu-Chien Wei \$1,100

## Feb 16 - Feb 17

### Jay Swanson "Swanee" Memorial 9-Ball Tournament 2026

#### Griff's

Las Vegas, Nevada

1 James Cabal \$2,400  
2 Nick De Leon \$1,400  
3 Payne McBride \$920  
4 Rubilen Amit \$700  
5 Jeremy Long \$420  
5 Savannah Easton \$420  
7 Eric Charlton \$240  
7 Mauricio Garcia \$240  
9 Adrian Prasad \$160  
9 David Nichols \$160  
9 Jordan Holman \$160  
9 Victor Cuccuza \$160  
13 Braxton Powers \$140  
13 Francisco Garcia \$140  
13 Frankie Hernandez \$140  
13 Kelly Chuberko \$140

## Feb 18 - Feb 22

### Premier League Pool 2026

#### Classic Billiards

Lauderhill, Florida  
1 Quoc Hoang Duong \$25,000  
2 Francisco Sanchez-Ruiz \$12,250  
3 Albert Januarta \$10,000  
3 Eklent Kaci \$10,000  
5 Chris Melling \$8,000  
6 Robbie Capito \$7,000  
7 Jonas Souto Comino \$6,000  
8 Aloysius Yapp \$5,000  
9 Pijus Labutis \$4,000  
10 Jesus Atencio \$3,000  
11 Justin Bergman \$2,250  
12 AJ Manas \$2,000  
13 Moritz Neuhausen \$1,750  
14 John Morra \$1,500  
15 Thorsten Hohmann \$1,250  
16 Kledio Kaci \$1,000

## Feb 18 - Feb 23

### 2026 Las Vegas Open

#### Westgate Las Vegas Resort & Casino

Las Vegas, Nevada  
1 Joshua Filler \$45,000  
2 Fedor Gorst \$21,000  
3 Maximilian Lechner \$10,500  
3 Wojciech Szewczyk \$10,500  
5 Albin Ouschan \$5,250  
5 Daniel Maciol \$5,250  
5 Shane Van Boening \$5,250  
5 Yannick Pongers \$5,250  
9 Arseny Sevastyanov \$2,625  
9 Ben Francis \$2,625  
9 Carlo Biado \$2,625

9 Christopher Tevez \$2,625  
9 Mario He \$2,625  
9 Naoyuki Oi \$2,625  
9 Ralf Souquet \$2,625  
9 Ruslan Chinakhov \$2,625  
17 Chris Reinhold \$1,313  
17 David Alcaide \$1,313  
17 Denis Grabe \$1,313  
17 Hayato Hijikata \$1,313  
17 Hoan Fu \$1,313  
17 Hojun Kwon \$1,313  
17 Jayson Shaw \$1,313  
17 Jeffrey De Luna \$1,313  
17 Jeffrey Consigna Roda \$1,313  
17 Marco Teutscher \$1,313  
17 Miguel Salvilla \$1,313  
17 Roland Garcia \$1,313  
17 Skyler Woodward \$1,313  
17 Stefan Kasper \$1,313  
17 Tyler Styer \$1,313  
17 Wiktor Zielinski \$1,313

## Feb 19 - Feb 23

### Women's Las Vegas Open 2026

#### Westgate Las Vegas Resort & Casino

Las Vegas, Nevada  
1 Tzu-Chien Wei \$27,000  
2 Chezka Centeno \$15,750  
3 Kristina Tkach \$7,875  
3 Kristina Zlateva \$7,875  
5 Chieh-Yu Chou \$3,938  
5 Han Yu \$3,938  
5 Jasmin Ouschan \$3,938  
5 Sofia Mast \$3,938  
9 Chihiro Kawahara \$1,969  
9 Kennedy Meyman \$1,969  
9 Marharyta Fefilava \$1,969  
9 Meng-Hsia Hung \$1,969  
9 Pia Filler \$1,969  
9 Savannah Easton \$1,969  
9 Soledad Ayala \$1,969  
9 Wan-Ling Wang \$1,969

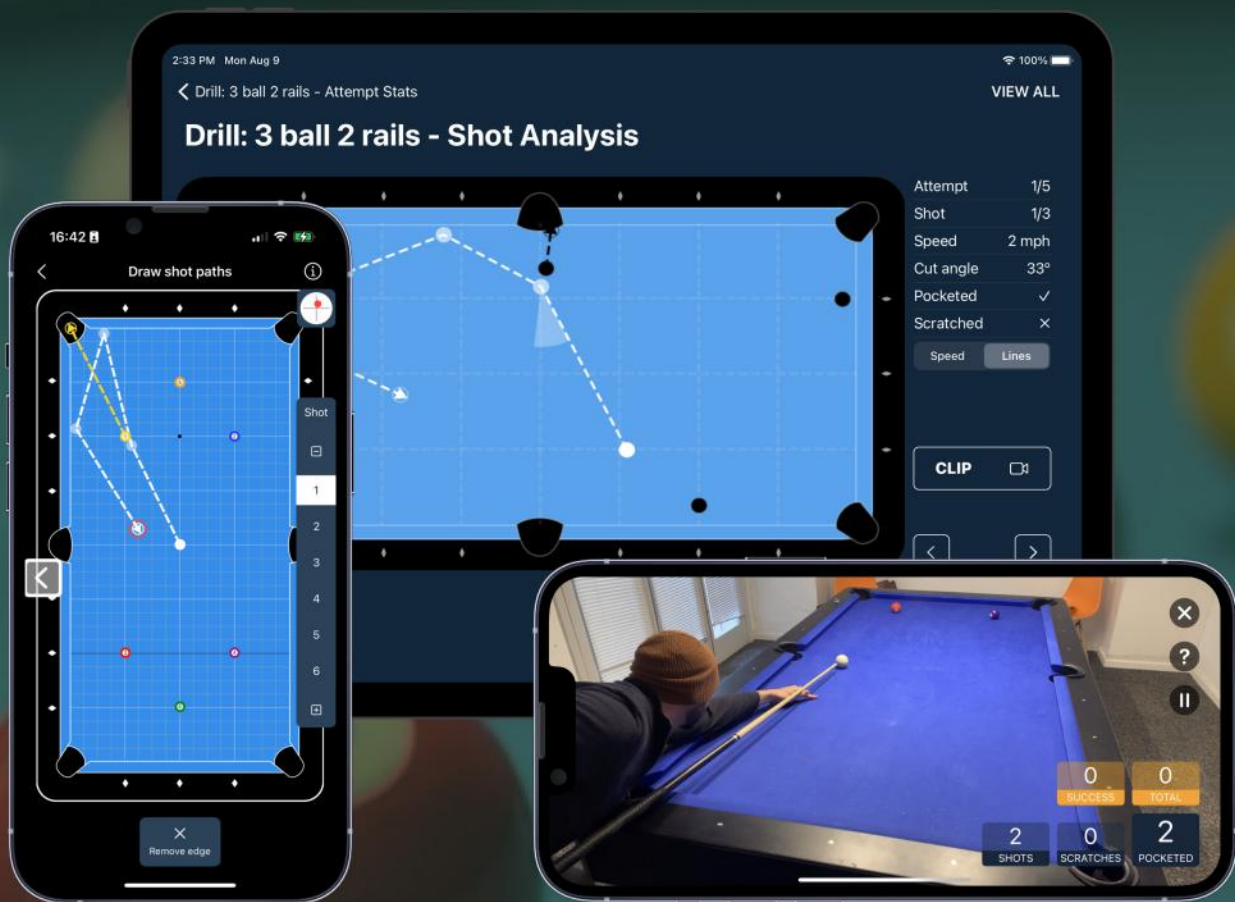
## Feb 21 - Feb 22

### Joss Tour 2025-2026 Stop 12

#### Trick Shot Billiards

Clifton Park, NY  
1 Denys Zbikowski \$1,100  
2 Bob Mendenjian \$800  
3 Lukas Fracasso-Verner \$650  
4 Tim Cachat \$550  
5 Jim Herbert \$350  
5 Omar Ashiq \$350

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9 Dave Lebrun \$100  
9 Jody Amundson \$100  
9 Rick Bentley \$100

## Feb 21 - Feb 22

### Joss Tour 2025-2026 Stop 12 Second Chance

#### Trick Shot Billiards

Clifton Park, NY  
1 Frank Sorriento \$330  
2 Dave Mills \$220  
3 Robert Whalen \$150  
4 Jordan Turner \$100  
5 Bob Randesi \$50  
5 Kevin Gray \$50

## Feb 21 - Mar 22

### Carolina Billiards Circuit 9-Ball Open

#### Brass Tap Billiards

Raleigh, NC  
1 Rodney Morris \$1,400  
2 BJ Ussery \$1,000  
3 Joshua Shultz \$700  
4 Steven Page \$550  
5 Adam Bryan \$435  
5 Cole Lewis \$435  
7 Barry Mashburn \$300  
7 Chris Petoletti \$300  
9 Christy Norris \$160  
9 Greg Taylor \$160  
9 Jason Figueroa \$160  
9 Michael Robertson \$160  
13 Michael Yingling \$80  
13 Mike Davis \$80  
13 Scott Roberts \$80  
13 Solomon Pope \$80

## Feb 21 - Feb 22

### 2026 Rack Race Stop #4

#### The Rack & Grill III

Aiken, SC  
1 Ioan Ladanyi \$1,140  
2 Johnny Archer \$600  
3 Florean Constantin \$360  
4 Steven Ellis \$240  
5 Kim Davenport \$160  
5 Tommy Kennedy \$160  
7 Clayton Branham \$120  
7 Onyx Stinson \$120

9 Chris Coleman \$80  
9 Jim Jennings \$80  
9 Mike Wise \$80  
9 Tracy Prescott \$80  
13 Billy Brooks \$60  
13 Ed Wachs \$60  
13 Keaton Crouch \$60  
13 Mento Long \$60

## Feb 21 - Feb 21

### Q City 9-Ball Tour Stop

#### Gate City Billiards Club

Greensboro, NC  
1 Dalton Messer \$500  
2 Grant Shatley \$300  
3 Bear Mullins \$200  
4 David Worley \$100

## Feb 22 - Feb 22

### 2026 Las Vegas Mixed Doubles Turbo

#### Westgate Las Vegas Resort & Casino

Las Vegas, Nevada  
1 Joshua Filler \$7,500  
1 Pia Filler \$7,500  
2 Naoyuki Oi \$4,500  
2 Tzu-Chien Wei \$4,500  
3 Jeffrey De Luna \$2,000  
3 Maria Teresa Ropero Garcia \$2,000  
3 Savannah Easton \$2,000  
3 Shane Van Boening \$2,000  
5 Alexandros Kazakis \$1,000  
5 Carlo Biado \$1,000  
5 Chieh-Yu Chou \$1,000  
5 Denis Grabe \$1,000  
5 Han Yu \$1,000  
5 Kelly Fisher \$1,000  
5 Kristina Tkach \$1,000  
5 Skyler Woodward \$1,000

## Feb 25 - Mar 01

### Making It In America One Pocket Tour Stop

#### The Rack Billiards

Fresno, California  
1 Tony Chohan \$5,000  
2 Josh Roberts \$2,500  
3 Ivo Lemon \$1,250  
4 Danny Smith \$800  
5 Basheer Taj \$600  
5 Issa Eadeh \$600

7 Dee Adkins \$490  
7 Rick Schroeder \$490

## Feb 28 - Mar 04

### US Open 10-Ball Championship 2026

#### Griff's

Las Vegas, Nevada  
1 John Morra \$10,500  
2 Shane Van Boening \$6,400  
3 Fedor Gorst \$3,000  
3 Lee Vann Corteza \$3,000  
5 Jeffrey De Luna \$1,000  
5 Jonathan Pinegar \$1,000  
5 Mark Estiola \$1,000  
5 Stephen Holem \$1,000  
9 Billy Thorpe \$500  
9 Jeffrey Consigna Roda \$500  
9 Jordan Holman \$500  
9 Monaim Neffati \$500  
9 Oliver Ruuger \$500  
9 Roberto Gomez \$500  
9 Roland Garcia \$500  
9 Ruslan Chinakhov \$500

## Feb 28 - Mar 01

### Joss Tour 2025-2026 Stop 13

#### Snookers - Sports Billiards, Bar & Grill

Providence, RI  
1 Lukas Fracasso-Verner \$1,000  
2 Suad Kantaravic \$750  
3 Bob Mendenjian \$600  
4 Ryan Lineham \$450  
5 TJ Perrino \$300  
5 Todd Martin \$300  
7 Frank Wolak \$200  
7 Jimmy Nou \$200  
9 Curtis Wright \$100  
9 Dave Morganelli \$100  
9 Keith Platt \$100  
9 Sam Traygis \$100

## Feb 28 - Feb 28

### TOP Tour Stop

#### Dot's Cue Club

Rocky Mount, NC  
1 Phil Stalls \$700  
2 Delton Howard \$500  
3 Robbie West \$300  
4 Tommy Prater \$100  
5 Jonathan Brockman \$55  
5 Wayne Hill \$55

# Upcoming Tournaments

Each month *Billiards Buzz* looks ahead at the events on our calendar to give both players and fans the information they may use to plan their activities.

## MARCH/APRIL

### Pattaya Open Pool Championship

**Mar 02 - Mar 06**

S1 Pool Hall & Sports Bar,  
Pattaya

### US Open 8-Ball Championship 2026

**Mar 04 - Mar 07**

Griff's  
Las Vegas, Nevada

### Bank Shot Bar & Grill B&L Super Quad

**Mar 07 - Mar 08**

Bank Shot Bar & Grill  
Laurel, MD

### 2026 US Open Bank Pool Championship

**Mar 07 - Mar 10**

Griff's  
Las Vegas, Nevada

### 2026 US Open One Pocket Championship

**Mar 10 - Mar 13**

Griff's  
Las Vegas, Nevada

### European Open 2026

**Mar 10 - Mar 15**

Hotel Hills Sarajevo  
Llidza, Sarajevo

### UPUSA 2026 Iowa Open

**Mar 12 - Mar 15**

The Rack Billiard Club  
Clive, IA

### 2026 California Junior 10-Ball State Championship

**Mar 21 - Mar 21**

Corner Pocket Sports Cafe  
Bakersfield, California

### 2026 Nevada Junior 10-Ball State Championship

**Apr 25 - Apr 25**

Walter's Billiards  
Las Vegas, Nevada

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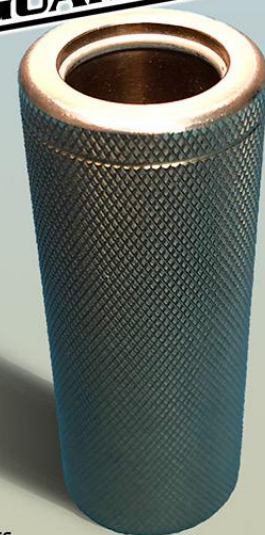
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# AZBILLIARDS MONEY LIST

	NAME	COUNTRY	\$ AMOUNT
	Joshua Filler	 GER	82.175,00 US\$
	Fedor Gorst	 USA	64.700,00 US\$
	Shane Van Boening	 USA	59.550,00 US\$
	Wei Tzu Chien	 TPE	32.600,00 US\$
	Naoyuki Oi	 JAP	30.825,00 US\$
	Ko Pin Yi	 TPE	30.000,00 US\$
	Chezka Centeno	 PHI	26.750,00 US\$
	Duong Quoc Hoang	 VNM	26.000,00 US\$
	Roland Garcia	 PHI	24.413,00 US\$
	John Morra	 CAN	22.850,00 US\$

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AUGUST 31 *thru*  
SEPTEMBER 7  
2026



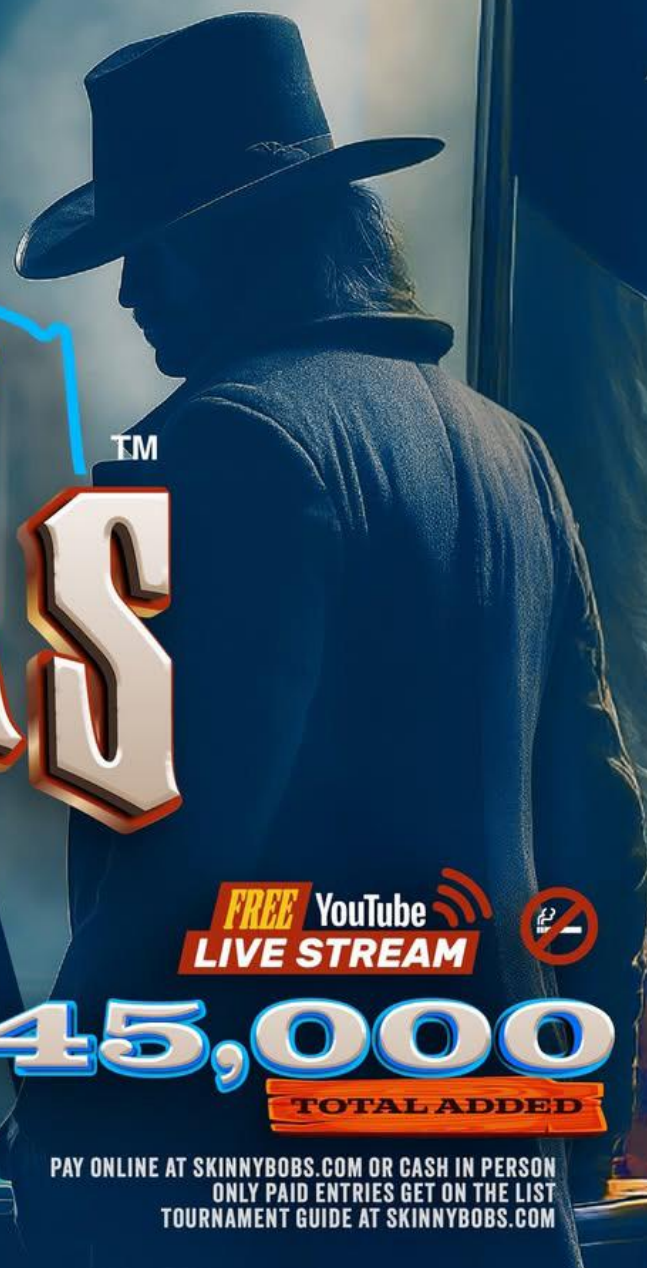
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THURS 9/3 - MON 9/7

### OPEN 9-BALL

**\$300 ENTRY \$25 GREEN FEE**  
RACES 9/9 MAX 160 PLAYERS  
PLAYER AUCTION 9/3 (THURS) 6:00PM  
PLAY BEGINS 9/4 (FRI) 10:00AM  
3 POINT BREAKS

**\$20,000  
ADDED**

MON 8/31 - THURS 9/3

### ONE POCKET

**\$1,000 ENTRY \$25 GREEN FEE**  
RACES 4/3 MAX 48 PLAYERS  
PLAYER AUCTION 8/31 (MON) 6:00PM  
PLAY BEGINS IMMEDIATELY AFTER AUCTION

**\$3,000 ADDED  
LADIES 9-BALL**

**\$200 ENTRY \$25 GF**  
RACES 7/7 MAX 32 PLAYERS  
PLAYER AUCTION 9/5 (SAT) 8:00PM  
PLAY BEGINS 9/6 (SUN) 9:00AM

**\$1,000 ADDED  
BANKS RING GAME**

**\$100 ENTRY \$10 GREEN FEE**  
MAX 64 PLAYERS 9/2 (WED) 6:00PM

**\$1,000 ADDED  
9-BALL MINI**

**\$50 ENTRY \$5 GREEN FEE**  
PLAY BEGINS 9/3 (THURS) 11:00AM  
RACES TO 3 MAX 64 PLAYERS  
SINGLE ELIMINATION

WINNER BREAK - MAGIC RACK - RACK YOUR OWN - 1 ON THE SPOT - 2 IN THE BACK

EVENT PAYOUTS TO BE ANNOUNCED  
PLAYER AUCTIONS ARE 100% PAYOUT  
MUST BE PRESENT FOR ALL PLAYER AUCTIONS



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