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an  publication

vol.6, Issue 51 January 2021

TEAM EUROPE TAKES BACK CUP



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Billiards Buzz

Volume 6, Issue #51

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Courtesy Matchroom Multisport

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FROM THE Head Rail

MIKE HOWERTON

Well, that wasn't even close. By now, all of our loyal readers know that Team Europe beat Team USA 11-3 in the 2020 Mosconi Cup. There were any number of reasons why the event wasn't really close this year and I'm sure that the media and internet pundits will analyze those reasons for the next few months. (It's not like there are a number of pro events to debate right now anyways). For a change of pace this time, our final report on the event is written with the assistance of the people who were there. Check out our final report for quotes from the players, captains and referee from this year's event.

With the awarding of the Mosconi Cup, the pool world wraps up a year that very few people can look back on favorably. Early in the year, it was looking like it was going to be a huge year for the sport, with more big events and prize money than had been seen in quite some time. Along with the rest of the world though, pool took a hit from the health issues that we all faced. It doesn't look like it is getting back to normal right away, but here is to hoping that 2021 is everything we thought 2020 would be, and then some.

Until next time,
Mike



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MOSCONI CUP

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Team Europe Regains Mosconi Cup

Article by AzB Staff

Photos courtesy Matchroom Multisport



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5th Annual Royce Bunnell Memorial

Article by Skip Maloney - AzB Staff

Photos courtesy Event Staff

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WHAT TO LOOK AT

As I work with my students and give seminars and classes at the national level events that I have attended in the past, one of the commonly asked questions that I get from less experienced players is “What should I be looking at when I hit the cue ball - the ball that I’m trying to make, the cue ball or the pocket?”.



JERRY BRIESATH

What the eyes are doing during the aiming process and the pre-shot routine is an important part of being consistent with your accuracy. We will pick up the shot process at the point where the shooter has lowered himself into his shooting position behind the cue ball and has brought the cue tip to a stop about a quarter inch away from Whitey. When you watch pro players play, one may look slightly different than the other in how they do it, but they will all use a system that is similar to each others if you know what to look for. Once they’re in their shooting position, they split their time doing a few warmup strokes then stopping and aiming - a few more warmup strokes then stopping and aiming. Each time, after taking a few warmup strokes, they stop the tip right at the cue ball and check the aim. This means that when the cue tip stops at the cue ball, the eyes shift back and forth between the object ball and cue ball checking the aim. If the pro likes what he sees, he looks at the object ball and then starts his backswing and shoots the shot. If he stops to aim and does not like what he sees, he will make a minor correction and then take a few more warmup strokes and stop and check the aim again. Every pro goes through a similar system to this every time he or she shoots. Some pros shift

their eyes to the object ball during their backswing, while others look at the object ball before they start their backswing. Either way, their eyes are on the object ball as they strike the cue ball.

When you are in a stopped position at the ball checking the aim, your chin or head must not move as yours eyes go

back and forth from cue ball to object ball. You must keep your chin in a high enough position so that only the eyes move when you are aiming. Many people make the mistake of moving their head up and down as their eyes go from the cue ball to the object ball.

Good luck, good shooting and remember, Whitey never lies.



UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GOOD AND BAD STRESS

The Sports Doc - Dr. CHRISTOPHER STANKOVICH
www.drstankovich.com

When it comes to stress, it's often difficult to talk about since it isn't something you can put under a microscope, or see on an x-ray. In fact, rarely do two people experience stress in the exact same way, further compounding the challenge around understanding stress.

The reality is that "stress" is a term we all use in very different ways to describe very different life experiences, yet we all know what it feels like to deal with stress – and the negative consequences that follow if we don't cope with stress effectively.

Generally speaking, stress is based on our human perception of people, things, events, and expectations. When we perceive things as threatening, we respond accordingly with heightened anxiety. Take for an example your first thoughts when you look at a tournament bracket and see that you will be playing a strong player – do you feel the negative stress as-

sociated with worries around losing, or do you experience an excitement associated with a winning mindset eager to pull off an upset?

This decision regarding how you respond to potential stressors is the big point of today's column – there are both good and bad stress that humans experience, and how we interpret the world around us dictates what we will experience. Psychologists have identified good stress as "eustress," and examples include the stress associated with good things in your life – buying your first car, preparing for the holidays, or even going on vacation. In all of these examples we experience some stress, but the stress is associated with good life events.

On the other hand, "distress" is stress associated with negative life events, like fall-



ing on tough financial times, being ill, or losing a job. A few more thoughts on stress are below:

Interestingly, most of the stress pool players experience is eustress, or good stress. Playing pool is fun, and focusing on beating good players should be a positive stress.

By framing stress properly, it allows you to take control of situations with confidence, as opposed to feeling helpless to situations.

Good stress is healthy! When faced with good competition, try to think about how to overcome the challenge rather than running from the fear of failure.

Remember, stress is a part of life that cannot be avoided. The key to beating stress is to frame situations accurately, and then decide of healthy and effective means for coping. The better you manage life stress, the better pool you will play.



Dr. Christopher Stankovich is a nationally acclaimed expert in Sport & Performance Psychology and the Founder of Advanced Human Performance Systems. For more information on performance-enhancement products, including the popular "Mind of Steel for Pool Success" DVD please visit www.drstankovich.com

ALIGNMENT: THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF YOUR PRE-SHOT ROUTINE

ANTHONY BEELER

It's hard to say that any single pool fundamental is more important than another. All mechanics must be perfected, but if there's one that causes more missed shots than anything else, then alignment stands out.

Once you've learned the correct grip, bridge, stance, and stroke it's not that hard to execute them and during most shots they will fall into place. But alignment is one fundamental that has a tendency to waiver. This is precisely why you see the best players in the world reinforcing good alignment habits over and over again.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ALIGNMENT IN POOL

Without proper alignment, your body receives mixed signals from your brain, with regards to your body position and your intended target. If your eyes are looking towards the shot line but your body and cue stick are actually aligned slightly to the left or right, you'll need to make adjustments in your stroke, which affects how straight you shoot and can also put unwanted spin on the cue ball. This could result in any number of problems: If your body is aimed to the left of your intended target, then without intentionally doing so you'll stroke to the left of center resulting in unwanted deflection.

ONE DEGREE CAN MEAN A MISS

To put alignment in perspective, if the cue stick is even a degree off line it can cause a miss of a several inches or more!

ALIGNMENT REQUIRES PRACTICE JUST LIKE EVERYTHING ELSE

It's important to realize that good alignment takes practice; the same way you practice your stroke. If you get to go to a big tournament, you'll see most of the players emphasizing alignment to be sure they are spot on.

SO WHAT'S THE BEST WAY TO MAKE SURE YOU ARE ALIGNED?

It's important to mention here that your body: right shoulder, right hip, right elbow, bridge hand, grip hand, right hip and right foot, all need to be aligned to the shot line if you are right handed and vice versa if you are left handed.

THE PROCESS:

1. CHIN LOCK: Stand 4-5 feet away from the cue ball, directly behind it,

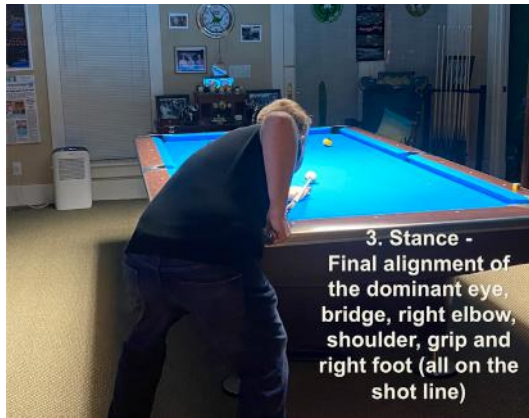


and trace an imaginary line from the cue ball to the contact point on the object ball. It's imperative that you stand behind the cue ball to see this line. Trying to find your line while in your stance will create an optical illusion and will almost always, result in poor alignment. I stand behind the cue ball and align my dominant eye and the outside edge of my right foot to the shot line (feet parallel in most instances) so that when I get into my stance the cue will automatically be in the correct position.

2. APPROACH: As I fall into my stance, I step towards the shot line and align my dominant eye (or vision center) with the shaft of my cue and aim it directly into the contact point on the



2. Approach - Alignment of the dominant eye, shaft, & right foot (the left foot is parallel)



3. Stance - Final alignment of the dominant eye, bridge, right elbow, shoulder, grip and right foot (all on the shot line)

Now work on this – make it a New Year’s resolution! Do it every time you practice! Get yourself **ALIGNMENT PERFECT** and make sure good alignment becomes a habit on every single shot you shoot. This will eliminate hundreds of missed shots throughout the upcoming year. When you are truly aligned the shot just has a way of working itself out.

cue ball. My right foot is on the shot line and my left foot is parallel.

3. STANCE: As I get into my stance my left foot remains parallel to the shot line but may be slightly forward of the right. At this point, your dominant eye (or vision center), bridge, shaft, right elbow and right foot should all be on the shot line. If at any time you feel

Anthony Beeler is the 2017 Pool Instructor of the Year and is a former BCAPL National 9-Ball Champion. He has numerous top 25 national finishes and is one of only 8 ACS Master Instructors in the world. He is the primary author of the *National Billiards Instructors Manual* and 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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Gospel Trick Shot Bonus 1

Friend that Sticks Close

History of the Trick Shot: The only person I have seen use this shot is my Gospel Trick Shot travel partner Tom “Dr. Cue” Rossman. We have been to a dozen countries together and this shot has always been one of his signature shots while sharing the love and joy of Jesus in his portion of the show.

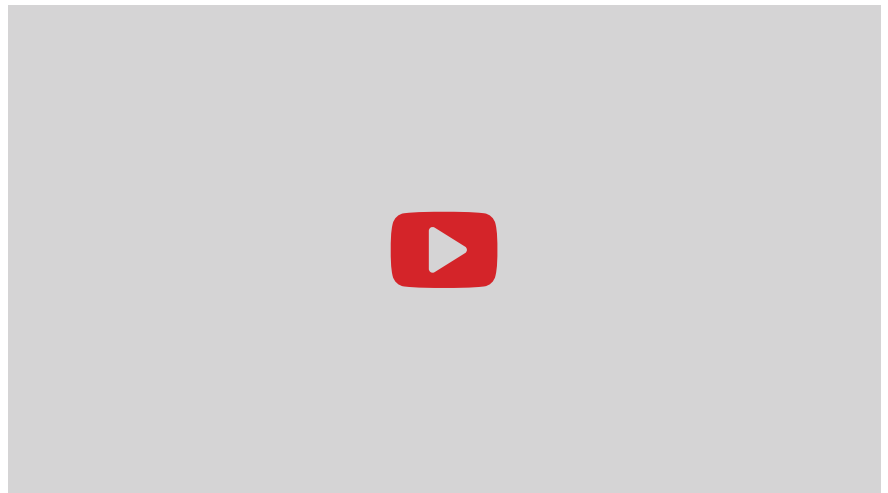
GTS Name and Why: When you see the outcome of this shot, the name and message become obvious. We joke around that I am deep (complicated) and he is shallow (simple). I have a math and physics explanation of Gospel Trick Shot #1 called “Obstacles” that covers about five chapters in my college physics textbook. After I am done, Tom breaks things down so even a child can understand.

Scripture References in NIV Translation: Proverbs 18:24 and John 15: 13.

Cue Ball Placement: The cue ball is placed as shown in the diagram.

Object Ball(s) Placement: Use only the special two prop balls that are bolted together which can be home-made or custom made to order. Make sure that the right ball is in line with the right side of pocket B.

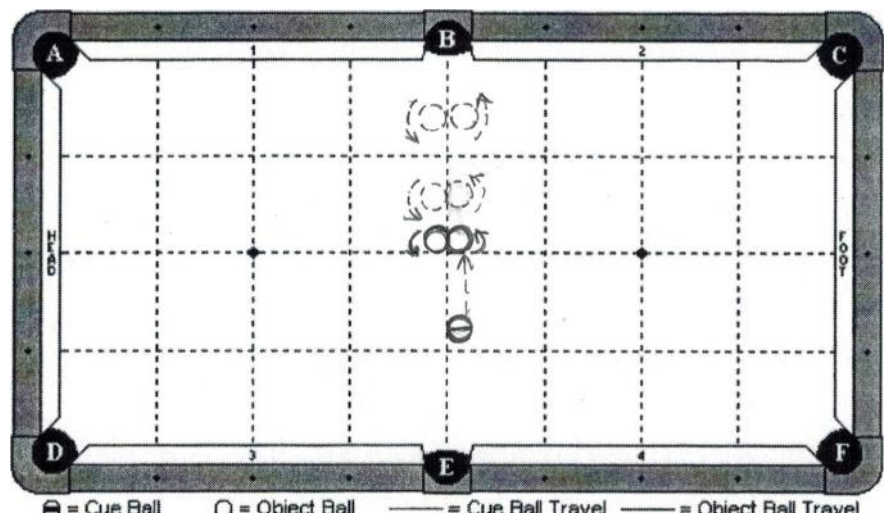
Objective: Hit the center of the cue ball firm. The cue ball will strike the center of the right object ball. Shoot the cue and right ball in a straight line to the right side of side pocket B. Both balls will go in pocket B together at the same time. You can comment after the balls go in that you can’t get any closer than that!



Special Notes: Make sure to hit this firm, as a softer hit will alter the direction of the twisting balls.

Crowd Reactions Through the Years: After you shoot the shot, ask if anyone has any questions. They will undoubtedly ask you how you did that. Take the two balls from the pocket made and show the answer for a great laugh, plus it can also be used

to show deception in life again as a message point. I usually follow Tom’s portion of the Gospel Trick Shot show as this shot is a good lead into what God wants me to say as Jesus is the one that sticks closer than a brother (Proverbs 18:24). This shot also helps to loosen up the crowd before I take the message a little deeper with the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.



● = Cue Ball ○ = Object Ball - - - = Cue Ball Travel — = Object Ball Travel



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Team Europe Dominates Mosconi Cup XXVII

The 2020 Mosconi Cup, like all Mosconi Cups, will be analyzed from every angle by fans and the media. For a change of pace this year, we decided to write our final report with the assistance of the players that were there in Ricoh Arena on December 1st - 4th, competing for the cup itself. We spoke to players from both teams, as well as both team captains and head referee John Leyman to get their thoughts on the event.

Even before the event got started, Team USA had to face adversity when Justin Bergman tested positive for Covid 19 and was replaced at the last minute by Corey Deuel. “It was a bit unexpected for sure. I didn’t expect anyone to end up getting Covid.” said Deuel. “I knew I could be possibly called though. I was playing a little in Vegas and I was on my way home and I got the call. ‘Hey, get your

covid test in and get on a flight’. The next day, I was on the plane heading over there.”

While Deuel came into the event with nine years of experience playing for the cup, it was still a loss for Team USA. US Team Captain Jeremy Jones commented on the swap. “There was some mental anguish before the trip started with losing Justin, but the

guys responded real well considering he was the first pick. We all know how great a player he is. We lost a top six or eight player in the world, bottom line. Top two or three in America for sure.”

Europe on the other hand, had no such bad luck with player health and were able to concentrate on preparation with their team roster. European Team Captain Alex Lely said he eas-



Team Europe

ily spent 80-90 hours on Zoom with his team, getting ready for the event. That didn't count phone calls and messaging with team members and his co-captain Karl Boyes. "Because of Covid, I had more time. We started maybe three months before. It's more than the practice. Most of all, it's being together. We started early and we put in a lot of time. In hindsight, it showed." Lely said.

Team Europe came out of the gate strong in the first match of the event, that pitted team against team with each player getting one game at the table. They took advantage of a couple early rolls for Europe's Joshua Fillier and were cruising with a 3-0 lead when the first punishing mistake of the event happened. After coming up short on position, Europe's Eklent Kaci was stretching over the table on a six ball and committed a shirt foul when his shirt touched another ball on the table. It was all downhill for Team Europe in the match after that foul. They would not win another game and ended up losing the match



5-3 to give the first point to Team USA. "We were convinced it wasn't a foul. From our side, you could see room between the shirt and the ball. That tells you how fragile composure can be though. We were playing well and being composed and then on that super speedy cloth, if you get a little bit of tension in your back arm or in your hand, then funny things can happen.

All of a sudden we were missing balls, not getting good breaks and it started to turn really hard." said Lely.

Team Europe didn't take the opening match loss to heart though. Jayson Shaw commented on the first match, "It's a bonus to win that, because everyone is only getting one game on the table. It starts really after that



match when everybody gets out there and you're there for your doubles and singles."

The first of those doubles matches was Fedor Gorst & Joshua Filler for Team Europe playing Shane Van Boening & Corey Deuel for Team USA. Neither team really played well, but Gorst & Filler played well enough for a sloppy 3-0 lead, and they held on for a 5-2 win to tie the overall score at 1-1.

Lely commented on the importance of that first doubles match, "I was very happy with Fedor and Filler winning that, because they were nervous. Especially Filler. He wasn't looking comfortable at all and suddenly it struck me that it was no guarantee that the Filler that won the US Open and shown in the Mosconi Cup before, could also feel like that. You don't get nervous because of the match itself. It gives you nervous energy. The nerves come when the cue ball isn't obeying. When you see your control over the cue ball goes, that's when you start to get real nervous. And I think they were there. "

In the first singles match of the event, Mosconi Cup rookie Chris Robinson



Fedor Gorst

took on former #1 ranked Eklent Kaci. If he was nervous in his first career Mosconi Cup match, Robinson didn't show it until the end. He took advantage of early Kaci mistakes and turned a 2-2 scoreline into a 4-2 lead. That lead wouldn't last as Kaci jumped and caromed his way back to a 4-4 tie with Robinson breaking. He took control of an open table and ran down to a tricky 8-ball. A bank on the 8-ball left an even trickier 9-ball that Robinson missed, gifting the match to Kaci for a

2-1 team Europe lead.

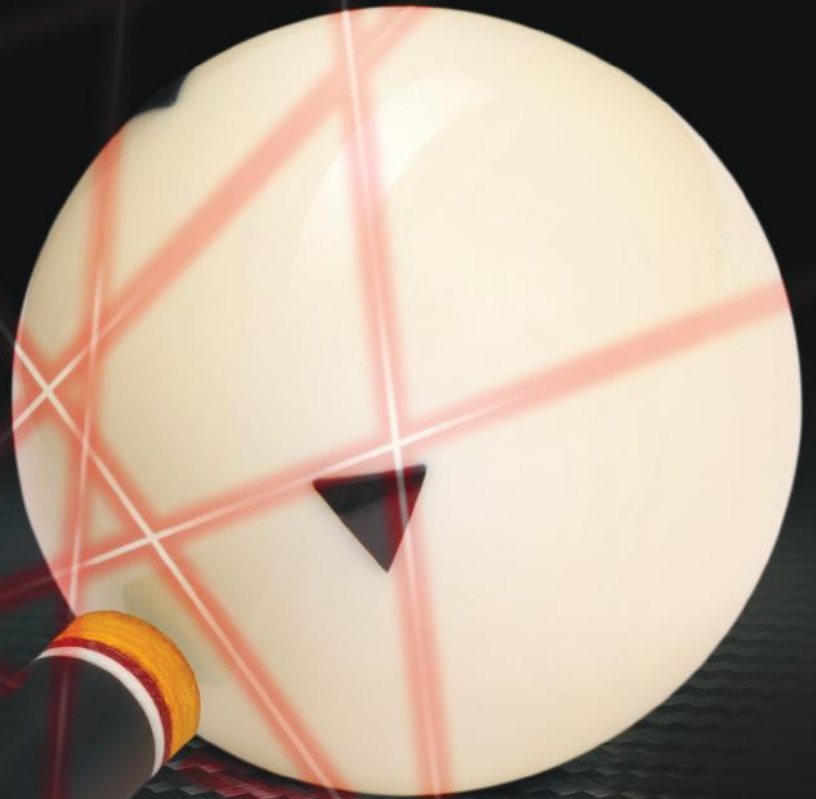
"Every point matters. If I had won that match against Kaci, it would have put our momentum in a whole different direction. I'm not blaming myself for losing the whole thing, because obviously they have to do their job too. I thought the 8-ball was a little lower, so I actually got where I wanted. It was a rookie mistake." Robinson recalled.

The fourth match of the day ended with a rare occurrence. Team Europe had control of the match at 4-2 when Skyler Woodward was faced with with no path to the one ball after a dry break from Team Europe. Woodward was so deep in discussion with his partner Billy Thorpe that he failed to verbalize that he was shooting the obvious push out.

Head referee John Leyman recalled his team meeting before things got underway this year. "I related that having worked the World Cup of Pool, which was all scotch doubles matches, one of the things that I noticed and I became fearful of was that teams were talking amongst themselves when they came to the table. They were deciding on whether to push or shoot and who was going to



Shane Van Boening



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Team Europe Captains Karl Boyes and Alex Lely

that was a very acceptable score after day one. “

Looking back, this year’s event was decided on Day Two, and Jayson Shaw had a lot to do with it. One of his bigger contributions might have happened before a ball was struck on the fateful day. With the short races to five, control of the table was very important, and Team Europe was able to control the day, winning the first four of five lags to hold the advantage late in each match. It was a suggestion from Shaw that helped his team with those lags.

American Corey Deuel, one of the game’s true experts on the break, stressed the importance of the lag. “Pool has its variables that are worth more than other things. I’ve always said the break is 80% of pool. If you break and all the balls are laying there, it’s pretty easy to win. The lag is even before that. If the break is worth that much and everyone is breaking good, then the lag is equally important. Maybe more.” Chris Robinson agreed with Deuel, “The lag has everything to do with it. There is no reason why we couldn’t have broke and ran at hill-hill. You can practice the lag in the practice room, but once you go

shoot and who was going to do the push and what they were going to do. They got involved in that conversation amongst themselves and they came very close to not calling the push. So I made sure to tell both teams. ‘Make sure that you tell me. Don’t discuss it and forget to tell me. Make sure you tell me what your intention is.’

There was no argument when Leyman called the foul. “He looked at me and smiled. He knew he didn’t call it. He didn’t contest it. He knew it as soon as he hit that he didn’t say anything. No one on the team said anything. His partner didn’t say anything. There was no disagreement on whether he didn’t say it. It was quite clear. “ said Leyman.

With ball in hand, Shaw and Albin Ouschan ran out to give their team a 3-1 lead, knowing they would hold the overall lead at the end of the day’s play.

The final match of the day was “Captain America” Shane Van Boening against Albin Ouschan and it didn’t start out as a match that either player was going to list on their resume. Missed balls and poor shape from both players led to Ouschan holding a 3-2

lead midway through the match. Both players seemed to find their games at the same time, and ran racks to knot the score at 4-4. The break actually turned out to be a detriment in the deciding rack with Ouschan breaking dry and Van Boening running out to bring his team back within one at 3-2 after one day of play.

Looking back on the day, Jones commented “I think there were some really good positives to start with. We were down 3-2 after day one the last two years. Johann and I both thought



Shane Van Boening

*Albin Ouschan*

out there, it's just different. Different conditions. We just couldn't come with it. That all it was. "

While there are definitely different conditions between the TV table and the practice tables, they might not have been as different for both teams. Euro captain Lely commented on their preparation, "We focused a lot on speed. It's all about the roll of the cue ball and they played with finesse. We cleaned the table every day. We kept it slick. We found heaters in the hotel. We put them under the tables. We looked on Amazon to buy a heater, but they couldn't be delivered in time, and then we found somewhere in the buffet area, we found heaters. We put them under the table, so our practice table was pretty quick. "

The heaters turned out to be Shaw's idea. "That was my idea. In my house, I put a heater under the table all the time and it makes it play real nice like a TV table. We found some food heaters and we had it going and it was good. Those heater things are great for the table. That's why my touch was so good on TV table. It was playing the same as the practice table." said Shaw.

Even with those successful lags, the players still had to pocket balls, and they relied on Shaw for that too. Lely admitted that he had originally planned on putting the focus on Joshua Filler on day two, but he switched things up and went with the confident Shaw after a suggestion from Boyes. "They all made a good contribution but the main role this year was for Jayson. Beforehand, we had Filler playing a bigger role on day two. Jayson was looking very good. Karl woke me up on game day and he mentioned it. Let's talk about Jayson and

Joshua. We ended up putting Jayson out there in more matches".

Shaw remembered the same thing. "When we went to sleep, we had it planned different. We knew what we were doing. We were thinking Joshua was going to get the fans pick. They were only playing me one match on the second day and saving me for the third day. I think Boyesie went to Alex and said we should have a look at what's going on. I think Jayson is playing the best. "

Shaw commented on the team dynamic with the late lineup change. "That's the way a team should be. We spoke about everything and we made sure everyone understands why we are doing it. I think Josh was disappointed. They took him aside and told him they were going to play him here and here. He said he was disappointed but he understood we are a team and I was playing the best. He was happy to put me up."

After a hill-hill win over Shane Van Boening in the fan's choice match on day two, Shaw came back and partnered with Filler to defeat Robinson and Woodward in another hill-hill match. Gorst pushed the Euro lead to 6-2 with a win over Corey Deuel and

*Joshua Filler and Jayson Shaw*



then it was another hill-hill win for Team Europe with Kaci and Ouschan defeated Van Boening and Thorpe. Shaw finished off the day with a 5-3 win over Billy Thorpe to give his squad a commanding 8-2 lead in the race to eleven.

Playing with a lead as large as the one enjoyed by Team Europe tends to loosen up that back arm, and it definitely did for Team Europe on day three. Ouschan and Filler looked great in their first ever doubles match together, and comfortably defeated Van Boening and Woodward in the first match of the day 5-2. Jones looked back on the importance of that first point of the day. "That first match on day three, it kinda felt like we needed to win that match to make that comeback. Some things didn't go very well in that match as far as shots after the break and what not. That was the one tendency. Opportunities after the break was the one thing that was kinda all three days for us. We will admit it. A few times we hit the break poorly, so that's our own fault. Those guys are human, but when you have an uphill battle. I think it would have been easier to make a comeback with fans in the seats. If you look at the Euros, they were sweating it even

with the big lead. There were a lot of close matches and they knew we were fighting. That first match on day three kind of knocked the wind out of Sky a little bit."

The next match exemplified that deflated Woodward as Filler showed the form that won him last year's US Open 9-Ball Championship with a 5-0 white-wash over Woodward to put his team on the hill at 10-2.

They say the toughest points to win are the first and the last, and that was

the case for Ouschan and Gorst in the third match of the day. The pressure of being the one to pocket the final 9-ball for their team proved to be too much for them both and neither player turned in a stellar performance. Their nervousness at the table helped Thorpe and Robinson score a 5-3 win, leading to a final match of the day between Shaw and Van Boening. Shaw remembered watching the doubles match from the practice room. "I was in the back, and I thought it would be nice to just win with as big a score as possible. I saw them missing and I thought 'What's going on here?'. Me and Karl were in the back and he said 'You are going to be up mate. I can just see it. It's written in the stars for you and Shane to play each other and for you to beat him in the final game'".

That final match was tied at 2-2 when Shaw broke and ran a rack and then took advantage of a dry break from Van Boening to run another rack and take the hill at 4-2. Shaw would have to wait one rack to pocket the final 9-ball, as he missed the 8-ball twice in the seventh rack. An open shot mid rack for Shaw was all he needed in the eighth rack as he pounced on the opportunity to win the Cup for his team.



To no one's surprise, Shaw was named MVP for the event after being involved in nearly half of the matches his squad won. When asked about his motivation for this year, it was the previous two years that he said propelled him. "I just had enough of listening to them talk about it for the last two years. It was non-stop. Yeah, you won. It was kind of annoying to lose those two years. They played good but we had chances. That was my whole plan to get the comeback. Even if I had to do it by myself. I was putting myself on the line." he said.

When asked to comment on where this event leaves their teams, Lely is understandably positive about the future. "It's a very good group. With the two victories by USA, it gives us an opportunity to write a new chapter. Appleton, Feijen, Souquet, they might all qualify still, but the core of this era is this young group of players. Albin and

Shaw are over 30, but the rest are 23 and younger. It's a group with a lot of potential and because of the quantity and quality of the work that we have done, it will be easier in coming years to integrate new players in this structure."

After his first year as the captain for Team USA, Jones doesn't assume anything is a given for next year. "Matchroom has done a great job with the things they do. It is a business and it's a professional sport. The bottom line score is the bottom line score though. I want to be the captain again and I want to do it here in the US. It was difficult to do some of the training we wanted to do. I think just we push harder and look to improve. I think all the guys know how to do that. Just a lot more harder work. If Joey and I are fortunate enough to be there again, we both want to be. We are both going to put in maximum effort and we will

have the facility and the time to put more work in."

DAY ONE:

Team Europe 3-5 Team USA
Filler/Gorst 5-2 Van Boening/Deuel
Eklent Kaci 5-4 Chris Robinson
Shaw/Ouschan 5-2 Woodward/Thorpe
Albin Ouschan 4-5 **Shane van Boening**

DAY TWO:

Jayson Shaw 5-4 Shane van Boening
Shaw/Filler 5-4 Woodward/Robinson
Fedor Gorst 5-2 Corey Deuel
Kaci/Ouschan 5-4 Van Boening/Thorpe
Jayson Shaw 5-3 Billy Thorpe

DAY THREE:

Ouschan/Filler 5-2 Van Boening/
 Woodward
Joshua Filler 5-0 Skyler Woodward
Ouschan/Gorst 3-5 **Thorpe/Robinson**
Jayson Shaw 5-3 Shane van Boening



Royce Bunnell Memorial

THE LEGACY, AS BIG AS TEXAS, LIVES ON

Texas players gathered for the 5th time to honor late OB Cues co-founder Royce Bunnell



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Memorial events, of all kinds, are reminders of just how fragile we, and indeed, life itself can be. They reflect generally on the passing of an individual, who, for whatever reason, had a discernible and laudable affect on an industry or group. The pool industry memorializes former players with tournaments in their name, and while in some cases, attendees at these memorials are unaware of the individual for whom a given tournament is named, that name has a way of outlasting the people who actually knew the person.

The Royce Bunnell Memorial Tournament was held recently for the fifth time; sixth, if you count an initial fund-raising tournament held in his name for the family, which occurred a month after Bunnell's death of a heart attack at the age of 49 in November, 2015. Two of the three main event winners at the 5th Annual Royce Bunnell Memorial Tournament, knew the man well enough that his memory was very much alive, while the third had met him once. Held on the long weekend of December 10-13, and hosted by The Billiard Den in Richardson, TX, the \$2,000-added (total) memorial crowned winners in a One Pocket event that drew 16 entrants, a Banks Ring game that drew 13, and an 8-Ball event that drew 32. The most heavily-attended event was the 9-ball tournament, which began on Saturday and drew 58 players. Overlap between the four events saw some players cash multiple times throughout the weekend.

All three of the main event winners went undefeated to claim their



Lance Schofield (2nd); Gerardo Perez (1st)

respective event title. The multiple-event opener, the One Pocket tournament, was won by Jeff Sullivan, who captured his first major tournament title in any of the varied pool disciplines. Jim Ryan took the 8-ball title, while Clint Freeman captured the entrant-heavy 9-ball tournament. Gerardo Perez was the winner in Friday night's Banks Ring game.

Ryan and Sullivan knew Royce Bunnell (the "B" in OB Cues) personally, while Freeman recalls having met him only the once. Most prominent among those who knew Bunnell well enough

to comment on the man's impact within the industry was David "Doc" Reyes, who has been the memorial's event director since its inception in 2015.

David "Doc" Reyes and the genesis of OB Cues

"Royce hired me," said Reyes, who was, at the time, already a huge fan of OB Cues. "He brought me on. I was in the shop to begin with and I was there for about two and a half years. As soon as a spot came up in the front of the shop, he figured that I was probably better suited to be up front with customers, doing customer service, sales and going to shows."

OB Cues, which recognizes the last-name initials of its founders, Don Owen and Royce Bunnell, was incorporated (as Owen-Bunnell, Inc, a Texas corporation) in 2005, approximate-

“WHEN THE IDEA OF 'LOW DEFLECTION' CUES WAS INTRODUCED, A LOT OF PEOPLE THOUGHT IT WAS BS, AND WERE LOOKING DOWN THEIR NOSES AT IT...

– "Doc" Reyes

“**IT'S JUST THAT HE WAS A REAL GOOD GUY. HE SEEMED TO BE A REAL GIVING PERSON.**
— Jeff Sullivan”

ly two years after the two had met while playing in a Dallas-area pool league. They just happened to join the same team and discovered a mutual interest in pool cue design and construction. Bunnell had been building cues and repairing them for years out of his garage; more as a hobby than a business. Owen had been dabbling in the cue-making field for many years and owned a South Bend lathe on which he'd built a couple of cues, mostly, as with Bunnell, as a hobby.

The rest, as they say, is history. The training instructor and factory representative for Subaru (Bunnell) and the man with a degree in Engineering Physics (Owen) parlayed their mutual interest in pool into a major cue manufacturer, OB Cues. They weren't the first to introduce the concept of a low-deflection cue stick and go on to manufacture one (Predator did that), but they followed through and manufactured their own (OB-1 and OB-2), along with numerous other well-researched innovations in the art/craft of cue making. Their Web site (obcues.com) tells the OB Cues story in greater detail for those with an interest.

“When the idea of ‘low deflection’ cues was introduced, a lot of people thought it was BS, and were looking down their noses at it,” said “Doc” Reyes. “OB Cues had come on board with their OB-1 and they were invited to go to the main event of the American CueMakers Association, which included a tournament just for cue makers.

“So, they (Don and Royce) show up with this supposed ‘gimmick’ shaft,” he added, “and Don won the tournament using the OB-1. And Royce won the tournament the following year.”

“Every time we came up with something, it was well thought out,” Reyes continued. “No smoke and mirrors. Like our jump cue, which, when we finally came out with it, was a good product. OB Cues were always kind of a no-BS thing. Performance driven.”

They continue to produce quality cues at their facility in Plano, TX, with Owen still at the head of the company, assisted by ownership partner and CEO, Mark Griffin and the Jones team of Jeremy and Amy Jones, who run Bad Boy Billiards Productions. Reyes, in the meantime, continues to play and run the annual pool tournament created to memorialize OB Cues' deceased co-founder.

“Royce was a player, too,” said Reyes. “That’s why a lot of (the league players) respected him. And these weren’t ‘slow speed’ players, either. This was among the main core of the (BCAPL) league players; higher tier players, working guys. They all knew him. It’s a good thing when you own a cue company and the owners can actually play.”

Noting that while he was well-respected at the tables, Reyes also noted that “Bunnell’s influence far outstripped his cash earnings at the table.” After an absence, following Bunnell’s death, Reyes returned and continues to work for OB Cues as a consultant.

Sullivan goes undefeated at the game he did not initially enjoy

“I’ve been playing One Pocket for around 10 years,” said Jeff Sullivan, who went undefeated through a field



Roman Bayda (2nd); Jeff Sullivan (1st)

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-Thomas Edison

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of 16 to win the One Pocket event. “I used to hate the stupid game. Crazy game. I used to play with a guy named Joey Barnes and I thought it was the stupidest game, ever. But the next day, I’d end up playing it again.”

This was the first year that the annual Royce Bunnell Memorial included a One Pocket event and it appears likely that it will not be the last. Sullivan, who’d won the Banks Ring game two years ago and was runner-up last year, couldn’t play in this year’s Ring game because he was busy with the new event entry, One Pocket. Sullivan was one of those present who knew Royce Bunnell.

“He used to do my cue tips and a lot of my cue repair,” said Sullivan. “He used to work out of a little shed at the back of his house, until a windstorm demolished that shed and he moved into his garage.”

“It’s just that he was a real good guy,” Sullivan added of specific Royce memories. “He seemed to be a real giving person.”

In all, Sullivan played 14 games of One Pocket in four matches to claim the title. He gave up only two racks in those 14 games. He opened with a 3-1 victory over Tom Barnett and then shut out Walt Anderson. He gave up the second rack to Corey Flud, who would, as the weekend progressed, cash in all three of the main events; tied for 3rd in the One Pocket, 5th in 8-Ball and 9th in 9-Ball. Sullivan shut Roman Bayda out in the final. Bayda was another multiple winner on the weekend, finishing as runner-up in the One Pocket and 3rd in 9-Ball.

According to our records, Sullivan’s win at this 5th Annual Royce Bunnell Memorial was his first major win, anywhere. It is likely, he says, not to be his last and One Pocket will certainly maintain a stable position on his pool-playing radar, because of his



Jim Ryan (1st); T.J. Davis (2nd)

belief that it improves one’s performance in other games.

“I like all games, always have, I’ll play whatever,” he said, “but I do think that it improves other games. It hurts you at first until you begin to differentiate (what needs to be done to win specific games).”

Ryan wins four double hill matches, honors Royce Bunnell, going undefeated in 8-Ball

Jim Ryan played a total of six, race-to-three matches of 8-Ball at this event

and won them all. Four of the six went double hill, and they happened to be the last four.

“I didn’t realize that,” said Ryan a few days later. “I felt as though I was a little bit of an underdog at the event, so if I won, I won. If I lost, I lost. You gotta go in with that kind of a mindset.”

Like Sullivan in One Pocket, Ryan did not come to the tables with a lot of history, at least history that was recorded and passed on to us here at AZBilliards. He was a member of the 2017 BCAPL team (Top Shelf) that won

“ **I FELT AS THOUGH I WAS A LITTLE BIT OF AN UNDERDOG AT THE EVENT, SO IF I WON, I WON. IF I LOST, I LOST. YOU GOTTA GO IN WITH THAT KIND OF A MINDSET.** ”

– Jim Ryan ”

the national championship that year and did win the third stop on the DFW 9-Ball Tour last August. He lost the opening set of that tour stop's double elimination final, but came back to win the second to claim his first major title. The undefeated 8-Ball run at the Royce Bunnell Memorial was his second major title.

By his own admission, he doesn't 'do' a lot of tournaments. His Mom used to own a bar when he was growing up, so he'd "throw (his) quarters up and play all the adults." Most of his experience, though, comes from league play, as his membership on the 2017 winning BCAPL team would suggest.

"Just thought I'd try tournaments," he said. "I play league once a week, so I'm typically not in stroke, but I played a couple of small tournaments before (the Memorial)."

He was cruising right along in the opening rounds, winning six of the first seven games he played; 3-1 over Tony Solis and was able to 'hold the Mayo' (Clinton Mayo) with a shutout. Those first two matches were as easy as things were going to get, because unbeknownst to him at the time, every match from that point on was decided by a 5th game. Moe Harbaji forced that fifth game in a winners' side quarterfinal, as did TJ Davis (who'd be back) in the winners' side semifinal. Ryan grabbed the hot seat from Daniel Herring, double hill and waited on what turned out to be the return of Davis.

On the race-to-two loss side, Davis shut out Garrett Hogue, gave up one rack to Jason McKenzie in the quarterfinals and another one to Daniel Herring in the semifinals. He and Ryan battled to a 5th game in the finals, eventually won by Ryan, as Davis recorded his first of two runner-up finishes at this event.

The memory of Royce Bunnell loomed large in Ryan's victory.

“ HE WAS A FRIENDLY, INTELLIGENT PERSON AND AN INNOVATOR IN CUE STICK MANUFACTURING. OB CUES ARE POPULAR EVERYWHERE, BUT THEY'RE EXTREMELY POPULAR IN THE DALLAS AREA.

– Jim Ryan ”

"He's why I play in this tournament," he said. "Honoring his legacy."

It is either the 2nd or 3rd time he has played in the event (he doesn't remember precisely). He knew Royce through the Dallas pool scene, more as a competitor than a cue maker.

"He played in our league," said Ryan. "Good person, good player, too. No slouch. I knew him as a player before he made pool cues."

"He was so intelligent," Ryan recalled. "I remember talking to him when he was creating OB Cues, and he had such interesting ideas about how to do stuff."

Ryan owns three or four OB Cues and according to him, Bunnell is known everywhere, while his work is a strong component of his legacy.

"He was a friendly, intelligent person and an innovator in cue stick manufacturing," said Ryan. "OB Cues are popular everywhere, but they're extremely popular in the Dallas area."

Though his work in the tunnel industry as an estimator and manager for the types of ground work necessary has a way of keeping him busy, he's hoping that this victory might spark some increased activity. Although he's never competed in either the Texas Open or the Houston Open, they are both events that he's thought about.

"I'd love to go," he said. "I would do it and actually surprised that I haven't yet."

"I'm realistic, though," he added. "I've had a few different periods when I

played pretty good pool. It's probably been since (about 2010) since I was playing well. I'm hoping I'm coming into a good period."

Freeman brings experience to the table and goes undefeated in 9-Ball

Of the three players who won the major events, Clint Freeman, who went undefeated to win the 9-Ball event, brought the most (recorded) experience at the tables, to the tables. We here at AZBilliards have cash-winning records on Freeman dating back 16 years (with some gaps) to attest to his prowess, which he brought to bear at the 5th Annual Royce Bunnell Memorial tournament's 58-entrant 9-ball event.

The victory here was his second 2020 win and his third cash payout for the year. He won the season opener of this year's DFW 9-Ball Tour in January and finished 9th at the Scotty Townsend Memorial Tournament in March. He'd been gearing up for this one with appearances at the Guy Cummings Memorial in Sulfur Spring, TX, the week before and a few weeks before that at a tournament, hosted by Sticks and Stones in Louisville, TX. He left after collecting his cash and trophy for a tournament at the Arrow Bar in Arkansas. His history harkens back to the days of 'road warriors.'

"I've played a lot of the fellas I played at this event a bunch of times," he said, adding that his participation has actually undergone a bit of an increase since the pandemic landed. "I got a little practice in (before coming

Royce Bunnell Memorial

here). I've been playing for about 30 years, and I've actually gotten a little better the last two or three years or so."

Roman Bayda made a bid for his appearance in a second final in this 9-ball event. He failed, however, to make it back from the semifinals and had to settle for 3rd place in 9-ball. The runner-up in the 8-ball tourney, T.J. Davis, did make a second appearance in a final. He had to win nine loss-side matches to get to the final before being relegated to his second runner-up finish by Freeman.

Freeman got by Mohammed Alrawi, Mark Lawson, Tony Top, and Shan Iyer to draw Clint Palaci in his winners' side semifinal. Bayda, in the meantime, who'd started his campaign off with a double hill win over Dario Gomez, went on to defeat Alberto Nieto, Travis Landsdowne, and Doug Winnett to draw Lance Schofield in his winners' side semifinal.

Bayda sent Schofield to the loss side 7-4. He was joined in the hot seat match by Freeman, who'd defeated Palaci 7-5.

"I had a tough time with Clint (Palaci)," said Freeman. "I was down 4-1 and then, 5-2, but I came back and got a few openings. He had a 4-1 lead on me on that DFW win I had back in January, too."

Freeman claimed the hot seat 7-3 over Bayda and waited for T.J. Davis to complete his nine-match, loss-side streak.

"He (Bayda) missed a couple of balls; the kind that he didn't seem to be



Roman Bayda (3rd); Clint Freeman (1st); T.J. Davis (2nd)

missing against some of the other players," said Freeman. "The score (of that hot seat match) doesn't reflect how close that match was."

Davis' loss-side streak was going well (six down, three to go) when Davis, following 7-4 wins over Crispian Ng and Doug Winnett, ran into Palaci. Schofield drew Shan Iyer, who'd recently survived a double hill fight over Steve Lenz and then eliminated the One Pocket winner, Jeff Sullivan, 7-4. Iyer survived a second double hill fight, over Schofield, and advanced to the quarterfinals. Davis joined him after downing Palaci 7-2. Davis used

back-to-back 7-3 wins over Iyer in the quarterfinals and Bayda in the semifinals for his second shot at a title.

"I kind of saw that coming, too," Freeman said of the potential two-set final versus Davis. "He's been a good player for years and years."

"We were sitting pretty close to each other during the tournament," Freeman added, "and I heard him tell his friends that he wasn't likely to be able to double dip me."

Which, of course, he did not. Freeman denied him with a 7-4 win in the finals that gave *him* the 9-ball title.

"Doc" Reyes thanked the ownership and staff at the Billiards Den for their hospitality, as well as sponsors Fort Worth Billiards Superstore, Doc's Billiards Office, JB Cases, Dallas 8-Ball, Outsville Accu-Rack, OB Cues, John Eagle Honda, and Action 903 for the live stream.

“ I’VE BEEN PLAYING FOR ABOUT 30 YEARS, AND I’VE ACTUALLY GOTTEN A LITTLE BETTER THE LAST TWO OR THREE YEARS OR SO.

– Clint Freeman



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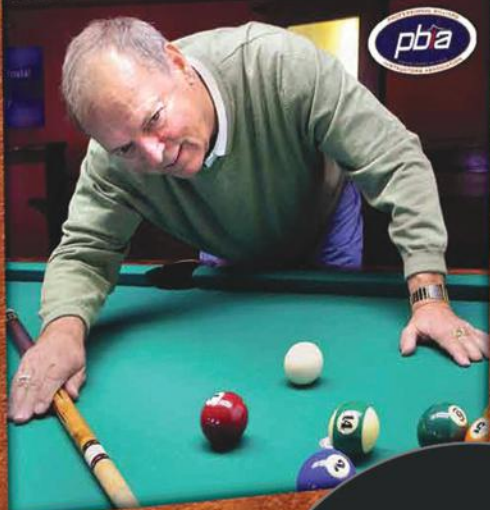
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Maryland Bar Table Championship

Brandon Shuff was runner-up to Grai Rasmehai, known as Pooky, in the 2019 MD State 10-Ball Bar Table Championships. Pooky had sent him to the loss side in a winners' side semifinal and Shuff had to win three on the loss side to get back to the finals. Shuff took the opening set of a true double elimination final, only to have Pooky come back and win the second set to claim the event title.

In the immortal words of Yogi Berra, this year's MD State 10-Ball Bar Table Championships were, to a point, as Yogi once said (of Mantle and Maris hitting back-to-back home runs in a game), "like déjà vu all over again." For the second year in a row, Shuff found himself at work on the loss side of the bracket in this annual event to earn a shot in the finals. This time, though, he got to the loss side earlier for a nine-game winning streak and eventually won both sets of a true double elimination final to claim the 2020 title. The event, held under the auspices of On the Hill Productions, drew 81 entrants to Brews & Cues on the Boulevard in Glen Burnie, MD.

Shuff was awarded an opening round bye before winning his first opening match against Louis Wehage 7-1. In his second round match, Shuff was sent to the loss side 7-5 by the opponent that he'd defeated in the quarterfinals last year, Dylan Spohr. Spohr followed Shuff over when he was defeated by Nathan Childress in the next round, 7-5. Childress, a former two-time BEF junior champion ('15 & '16; 14 & under), had (after a bye) chalked up an opening round shutout over Dylan Carr, before defeating, in order, Brett Stottlemeyer 7-4, Spohr, and Johnny



Loye Bolyard, BJ Ussery, Brandon Shuff and Rick Scarlato

Archer 7-5, to draw Rick Molineiro in one of the winners' side semifinals.

In the meantime, BJ Ussery, who's recently been popping up and winning all over the US landscape (most recently, Nov. 19-22, as runner-up to Jeffrey DeLuna in the 9-ball division of the 1st Annual Meucci Classic in Florida) was working his way to the hot seat. He'd opened with a shutout over Josh Harget and followed with victo-

ries over Jordee Palmieri 7-4, Joshua McCauley 7-2, Joseph Tomkowski 7-5 and Tom Zippler 7-5, to arrive at the other winners' side semifinal, versus Redgie Cutler.

Ussery got into the hot seat match with a 7-1 victory over Cutler. Molineiro joined him after sending Childress over 7-3. Ussery claimed the hot seat 7-2 and waited for the fateful return of Shuff.

Over on the loss side, Shuff was not being handed any sort of a free ticket back to the finals. Though he started with a 7-1 victory over Jimmy Bird and a 7-2 win over Stottlemeyer, Shuff's next few opponents started adding more and more beads to their side of the wire. He downed Joseph Tomkowski 7-3, Kevin West 7-5, Clint Clayton 7-5 and downed Mike Saleh 7-3 (Saleh had just eliminated Johnny Archer in a double hill battle). It was Cutler who picked him up, those six wins into his loss-side winning streak. Shaun Wilkie, who'd won three matches on the winners' side before Cutler had sent him to the loss side 7-2, got right back on the 'horse,' to down Shane Wolford (partner with Nathan Childress in winning the October MD State Scotch Doubles 9-Ball Championship) and Tony Long, both 7-5, to draw Childress.

Shuff chalked up loss-side win #7 against Cutler 7-4. Though there was

a high degree of anticipation in place for the Wilkie/Childress match, based primarily on the young man's winners' side victories in this event and recent success in other On the Hill Productions' tournaments, the hoped-for 'nail biter' didn't happen. Wilkie shut the young man out and advanced to face Shuff in the quarterfinals.

The quarterfinals, too, were a highly anticipated match between two of the mid-Atlantic's powerhouse players. And that match, to a certain extent, lived up to its billing. Shuff and Wilkie came within a game of double hill, but in the end, Shuff edged out in front to win it by two, 7-5.

Shuff took his final step toward a place in the finals with a similar 7-5 win over Molineiro in the semifinals.

It was getting late and there was little doubt that the two players in the finals – Shuff and BJ Ussery – were

already tired. Though true, it is assuredly not an excuse that any player uses to validate poor play, or losing a match. Ussery lost the opening set of the final 7-2, and though he put up a fight in the second set, Shuff won the double hill second set to claim the title.

“Brandon's a great player,” acknowledged Ussery. “I knew going in that he was the kind of player who maybe was only going to make one mistake, and not a big mistake at that.”

“He played absolutely perfectly,” he added. “He *kicked* the 10-ball in twice.”

On the Hill Productions, in the persons of Loye Bolyard and Rick Scarlato, Jr. thanked the ownership and staff at Brews & Cues on the Boulevard for their hospitality, as well as sponsors the Chesapeake Bay TAP League, Aramith Balls, and Simonis Cloth.

The advertisement features a green and black header with three yellow billiard balls containing the letters 'A', 'Z', and 'B'. To the right, the word 'MARKETPLACE' is written in large, bold, yellow letters, with 'The Official Billiard Supply For AZBers' in smaller white text below it. The main image shows three P3 REVO pool cues with dark wood barrels and black ferrules. The cues are arranged diagonally, with the top cue showing the 'P3' logo and the middle cue showing a white tiger logo. In the bottom right corner, there is a logo for 'Powered By SEYBERTS.COM SEYBERTS BILLIARD SUPPLY' featuring a pool ball with the number 8.

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Harry Peña

Wins Carom Cafe Master's Tournament

Thirty billiard players gathered, with masks on face and cues in hand, to compete in the 2020 Carom Café Masters Tournament from December 3 to 6, 2020. Harry Peña, who survived Covid-19 earlier in the year, ended up on top, besting a field that included four USBA National Three-Cushion Champions, including the reigning crown holder.

The tournament began on December 3rd with the drawing of the five groups. Play commenced and ran through late Sunday afternoon. John Park of Houston won Group A with a 5-0 record. Hugo Patiño, a multiple-time USBA national champion, finished second with a 3-2 record. Group B proved to be the surprise of the tournament, with Won Sik Kang finishing first, undefeated. Reigning USBA national champion Tae Kyu Lee finished second. Miguel Torres, a two-time USBA national champion, prevailed in Group C. Harry Peña finished second, losing to Torres 25-23. Carlos Mario Villegas proved the best in Group D with Tyler Ma, a young player from Houston, the runner up. Former national champion Sonny Cho won Group E with a 4-1 record, losing to Eric Kwon, 25-24, who finished second. The top two from each group advanced to the final round robin along with two third-place finishers George Karam from Group B and Sang Jin Lee from Group E.



Harry Peña

2020 USBA Carom Café Masters Finals

year, he had to be evacuated from Carom Café via ambulance after he felt ill. He was later diagnosed with Covid-19. His play is proof of his full recovery, and the billiards world looks forward to post-Covid-19 tournaments in 2021.

Group A

	Villegas	Kang	Cho	Lee	Peña	Karam	WIN/LOSS	TOTAL POINTS	TOTAL INNINGS	GRAND AVERAGE	HIGH RUN	BEST GAME	FINAL RANKING
Carlos Mario Villegas		30	30	26	6	30	3/3	122			7		4
Won Sik Kang	10		24	26	14	28	0/2	102					6
Sonny Cho	28	30		27	30	30	3/2	145					2
Tae Kyu Lee	30	30	30		27	30	4/1	147					1
Hugo Peña	30	30	20	30		25	3/2	135		17			3
George Karam	7	30	16	19	30		2/3	102					5
TOURNAMENT AVERAGE:													

The twelve players were then placed in two groups of six. Tae Kyu Lee found his championship form, winning Finals Group A with a 4-1 record. Sonny Cho finished second. Eventual champion Peña had a perfect 5-0 record in Finals Group B. Sang Jin Lee placed second. The first and second place winners from the finals group advanced to the four man knock-out round.

Peña continued his dominance in the semi-final round, crushing Sonny Cho by the score of 40 to 15. In the other semi-final Tae Kyu Lee outlasted Sang Jin Lee, 40 to 31. In the finals, Peña, the charismatic Colombian dazzled. He rushed to a 9-1 lead, playing fast and with confidence. He added a run of 10 and raced to the finish, doubling up Lee, 40 to 20, in 25 innings to capture the crown and the \$2500 first-place prize. Sang Jin Lee took third, defeating Sonny Cho 40 to 17.

In a touching tribute before the start of play, Michael Kang, the owner of Carom Café, and the other players held a moment of silence for Jim Watson, who died suddenly in September. Watson, seen below (2nd from right) in a picture from days gone by, was a local player of both pocket and carom games and is remembered by all as a gentleman and sportsman.

With his victory, Harry Pena's 2020 ended on a happy note. Earlier in the

Ira Lee, Harry Peña, Tae Kyu Lee and Carom Cafe Owner Michael Kang



2020 USBA Carom Café Masters Finals

Group B

	Torres	Park	Peña	Kwon	Ma	Lee	WIN/LOSS	TOTAL POINTS	TOTAL INNINGS	GRAND AVERAGE	HIGH RUN	BEST GAME	FINAL RANKING
Miguel Torres		30	18	30	30	19	3/2	127					3
John Park	22		20	26	30	30	2/3	128		8			4
Harry Peña	30	30		30	30	30	5/0	150		11			1
Eric Kwon	10	30	12		15	26	1/4	93					6
Tyler Ma	23	5	23	30		17	1/4	98					5
Sang Jin Lee	30	18	25	30	30		3/2	133					2
TOURNAMENT AVERAGE:													

Florian “Venom” Kohler strikes, joins Team Cuetec

Hasbrouck Heights, NJ – Cuetec and Imperial are proud to announce that famed entertainer and trick-shot artist Florian “Venom” Kohler has joined the Cuetec Team of Professional Players and Brand Ambassadors.

“If there was one word that resonated with me the most after my initial conversation with Cuetec it was evolution. Cuetec’s history and experience was of obvious importance, but where the company could go, and how I could be a part of that – that was paramount in recognizing Cuetec was the best fit for

me. So far, we are already off to a flying start and I can’t wait to show-off some of the new gear I’ve been using and the upcoming AVID technology in development. My very first cue was a Cuetec, and I’m already in love with what is my first signature Cuetec AVID cue,” said Florian Kohler when asked about making the move to Cuetec.

Florian’s first FK edition models of the all-new Cuetec AVID series will be arriving in February of 2021, with additional FK edition AVID utility cues arriving later in 2021.

“Florian has the ability to connect with a very broad audience, beyond guys like me who are already in love



“ FLORIAN HAS THE ABILITY TO CONNECT WITH A VERY BROAD AUDIENCE, BEYOND GUYS LIKE ME WHO ARE ALREADY IN LOVE WITH THIS GAME.

Kyle Nolan, Cuetec Brand Manager



with this game. He has charted his own course in many ways, and as Cuetec works on the next big leap, Florian’s vision for expanding people’s exposure to game is a perfect match. He has already been part of the development process for our new AVID platform, which will bring high-end performance and capability to the sub three-hundred dollar cue market,” said Kyle Nolan, Cuetec Brand Manager.

Check out Florian’s latest videos here at:
<https://venomtrickshots.com/videos/>

ABOUT CUETEC

Cuetec burst onto the billiard scene in 1989, developing the composite cue. Today, Cuetec prides itself on offering the most technologically advanced wood and composite constructed cues and shafts, providing players with high-performance playing equipment at affordable prices. For more information, please visit www.cuetec.com. Follow us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CuetecUSA>

ABOUT IMPERIAL

Imperial is the exclusive distributor for Cuetec in the United States. Imperial and Cuetec work together to maintain that professional quality players and cherish. Imperial is the premier distributor of billiards equipment and licensed products from the NFL, MLB, NHL and several high-profile colleges and universities. With over 60 years of experience, Imperial has made a name in the industry with some of the most well-crafted pool tables and accessories on the market with price ranges to fit any budget. Add a huge assortment of licensed product and there is no other company that you will need to look to for your game room, dorm room and man cave needs. For more information, visit <http://www.imperialusa.com>. Follow Imperial on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram @imperial_gameroom.



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Ralph Greenleaf

Ralph Greenleaf has established himself as the greatest pool player the world had ever known before turning 25 years old. He won the world championship year after year. He gave sold out exhibitions across the country. The press gushed that he was unbeatable.

And, for the next decade, he would continue to win world championships. But slowly cracks were beginning to emerge, which would grow to eventually engulf Ralph.

The first rumblings of trouble came from Ralph's first wife, Beatrice, in late 1924. These rumblings came in the form of Beatrice smashing Ralph's face with his prized Rambow cue. Beatrice claimed she acted in self-defense to stop an attack by a drunken Ralph. Ralph claimed he was the victim and that it was Beatrice who beat him. The court agreed with Ralph, as was the custom in those days, and granted him a divorce. Beatrice was left penniless and reportedly joined a convent.

Ralph lost more than his first wife in 1924. October 1924 saw the death of Ed Greenleaf, Ralph's father. Ed had been a constant companion and mentor for Ralph since Ed opened his billiard hall in Monmouth, Illinois when Ralph was nine. Ed mentored Ralph and traveled the country with him for never-ending exhibitions, was present

for Ralph's many tournament victories, and even moved across the country to Delaware to be closer to action for Ralph. Ralph's mother died in 1919, leaving Ralph in late 1924 with no family but his two sisters.

Within a couple weeks of his father's death, and his tabloid-ready divorce from Beatrice, Ralph secretly married Amelia Ruth Parker, a vaudeville singer who performed under the stage name "Princess Nai Tai." Her signature performance was the song "Japanese Sandman." The former Ms. Parker was not Japanese, nor a princess, but she was the daughter of an English father and Chinese mother. "Our love will live on forever, and until the stars fall into ruins," Amelia (correctly) predicted while Ralph awkwardly rubbed his chin and stood silent. Ralph would join Amelia in vaudeville productions over the next several years, serving as master of ceremonies and performing trick shot exhibitions.

It's no surprise that this turmoil quickly took a toll on Ralph's game. In March 1925, Ralph abruptly quit the national championship tournament due to a nervous breakdown. One of Ralph's anonymous competitors speculated that Ralph would rather stage easy exhibitions than engage in



stressful tournament play. The Brunswick Balke Collander company, who held monopolistic control over all aspects of pool and billiards including the national championship tournament, gave Ralph time to rest in the hopes that pool's prized star would return to play. Ralph did physically return to the tournament, but his skill did not, and he lost the championship to his old nemesis Frank "the Snail" Taberski.

***He Made Caroms
On Table, She Off
His Head, So Cue
King Is Divorced***

Over the ensuing decade, Ralph would periodically achieve full championship form and held the national championship in 1926, 1928, 1929, 1931, and 1932. Like any celebrity, Ralph was closely monitored by the press who followed billiards in detail in daily columns about the sport. It didn't take long to be able to quickly predict when Ralph would win or lose tournaments. If he was drinking days on end with his "Broadway" friends, he would lose. But if he was sober and in "condition," he was truly unbeatable. He repeatedly held, and then broke, the high-run record for straight pool and defeated the world's top players in exhibitions even when spotting them points. Ralph made more than \$60,000 in these good years, as much as any professional athlete in the world.

When Ralph was "out of condition," his behavior would generate stories of misfortune that would become

his legend. In 1928, he mysteriously walked out of a challenge match not to return. He would disappear for hours during matches. Sometimes he wouldn't show up for exhibitions at all or arrive in town days late. He would curse at opposing players and spectators during matches. Alcohol was the source of all these ills.

In looking back at his career, Sports Illustrated would describe Ralph as a "tempestuous man who would not play sober because he was too nervous and could not play drunk because he was too mean." In one loss in 1928, again to the Snail, the press blamed Ralph's substandard play on "his nerves being too tightly drawn." In a high-profile tournament loss in 1933, Time Magazine openly criticized Ralph's pitiful and drunken behavior. He showed up openly and extremely drunk to an afternoon match with Jimmy Caras, promptly got into a fight with the referee, and was disqualified from the tournament.

Ralph's drunken tirade in 1933 also made headlines as his second marriage, to Amelia, ended in divorce. The night before Ralph's disqualification from the championship tournament, Ralph and Amelia fought. Amelia smashed an ashtray into Ralph's head, which left Ralph with a noticeable bump and missing tooth. In a repeat of Ralph's first marriage, Amelia claimed she acted in self-defense and that Ralph was an abusive drunk. Ralph claimed he was the victim. And again, the court agreed with Ralph—it was still the 1930s after all—and granted Ralph a divorce. At least Amelia was not left empty handed. She was awarded Ralph's New York City pool hall.

Ralph failed to show for the 1935 championship tournament "due to illness" and stopped playing competitively. He rarely appeared in public and performed only at occasional exhibitions—including a brief tour with



a young Willie Mosconi. Amelia and Ralph partially reconciled but faced financial disaster during the Great Depression. Ralph's home in Maryland was lost to foreclosure and Amelia couldn't make rent on the pool hall. Ralph went on the road to earn money but suddenly stopped writing home. After not hearing from Ralph for over nine months, Amelia went to the police in August 1936 and filed a missing person's report. A nationwide search was launched. Papers across the country asked, "Where was Ralph?"

Titles Depend On Condition Of Greenleaf

There Is No Question of His Ability—Rated the Best of Moderns

By ARTHUR F. JONES Jr.

Ralph Greenleaf, in condition, is the greatest pocket billiard player of modern times—possibly of all time. Unfortunately for Ralph, he has not always been in "condition," during the past few years. Unlike such a player as Willie Hoppe, who does not even smoke, Greenleaf is careless in his care of himself.

Sam Korte

Sam is a lawyer, mediocre pool player, and occasional historian. You can find him on the Azbilliards history forum.



Barry Hearn Awarded OBE

Barry Hearn, Chairman of the World Snooker Tour, has been awarded an OBE in the New Year's Honours for his services to sport.

The award comes as recognition of Hearn's achievements in sports promotion over more than 40 years.

The 72-year-old Londoner has been involved in snooker since the 1970s, initially as manager of Steve Davis who went on to dominate the sport throughout the 1980s. Hearn formed the Matchroom stable of players, which also included stars Jimmy White, Dennis Taylor, Willie Thorne, Cliff Thorburn, Neal Foulds, Tony Meo and Terry Griffiths.

In 2010, Hearn was elected Chairman of the World Professional Billiards and Snooker Association – the sport's governing body – and subsequently of its commercial arm the World Snooker Tour.

At the time, snooker was at its lowest ebb for 40 years, with just six ranking events on the calendar and total prize money of £3.5 million.

Over the decade that followed, Hearn led a global revolution of the sport. The number of tournaments grew to over 25, with total prize money increasing to £15 million. Events have been staged in over 20 countries worldwide, while snooker's global television audience has grown to a massive 500 million fans. The professional tour now has 128 players from 21 different countries and regions.

Despite the challenges posed by the coronavirus pandemic, this year there have been 20 tournaments, providing earning opportunities for the players and high quality live sport for viewers around the world. In July, snooker's World Championship was the first UK indoor sporting event to safely welcome a crowd, following the national lockdown.

Hearn was inducted into the Snooker Hall of Fame in 2018.

He has enjoyed similar success with the Professional Darts Corporation, Matchroom Boxing and a wide range of other sports. Hearn was Chairman of Leyton Orient Football Club from 1995 to 2014, and is still President of the club.

He is Chairman of Matchroom Sport, one of the world's leading sports promotion companies. In 2019, Matchroom staged a total of over 650 event days globally.

For 38 years, Matchroom Sport has donated millions of pounds to a wide-range of charities, including sports and community charities, and hospices for both children and adults.

In 2016 the Matchroom Sport Charitable Foundation was established and oversees funding to a number of charities, foundations and hospices across the UK.

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Eliminate opponents.*



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NBL pushes through pandemic shutdowns to KICK OFF THE INAUGURAL 2021 SEASON NEXT MONTH as scheduled, Jan 9th & 10th!

EDISON, New Jersey, December 17, 2020 – (NBL) National Billiards League headquarters announces several stage 1 amateur qualifiers WILL PROCEED AS ORIGINALLY SCHEDULED!



Despite numerous NBL sanctioned locations around the nation being subject to local and statewide shutdowns due to the coronavirus pandemic and even facing financial ruin, both venues and pool players simply can't wait to get back to normal competition.

While the majority of the 32 NBL host locations across the United States are still dealing with their local executive orders to be closed for business to limit the spread of COVID-19, a handful of venues in jurisdictions that ARE permitted to host the indoor 32 player amateur tryouts for the all new American PRO TOUR will do so on the originally scheduled dates of Janu-

ary 9th and 10th respectively at venues equipped to do so in one day on Sunday the 10th or over the two days if necessary. The main event for the first quarter of 2021, originally set for March, must be rescheduled to a later date (TBD) after all states have been opened back up and able to host the 2 stage-1 amateur qualifiers to crown the 64 players advancing to stage-2, the National Main Event and to collect the self-generated \$200,000.00 prize fund for such.

In the meantime, players can once again enjoy NORMAL head-to-head competition at Big Tyme Billiards – Spring, TEXAS, The Wolf's Den – Roanoke, VIRGINIA, Sandcastle Billiards

– Edison, NEW JERSEY, Zingale's Billiards – Tallahassee, FLORIDA, The Rack – Fresno, CALIFORNIA, abiding by current local orders.

Felt Billiards – Englewood, COLORADO, The Brass Ring – Madison, WISCONSIN, East Ridge Billiards – Rochester, NEW YORK and other venues have been sold out with full fields of 32 players for several months and are simply awaiting restrictions to be lifted to hit the ground running!

To find other sanctioned locations not mentioned and the latest status, visit the NBL website map and news pages at NBLUSA.com and reach out to your local tour director.



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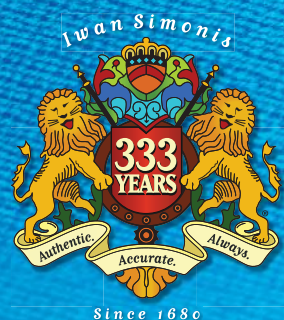
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Rio All-Suite Hotel & Casino to Undergo Multi Hundred Million Dollar Renovation

We have some exciting news about the future of the Rio All-Suite Hotel & Casino, host venue for the CueSports International Expo, which currently includes the BCA Pool League World Championships, USA Pool League National Championships, Diamond Las Vegas Open and Predator World 10-Ball Championship.

There have been many rumors about the future of the Rio over the last few years. Many of our members have contacted us to say they heard Caesars closed the Rio and our events were moving, or the Rio is being demolished and a Major League Baseball stadium will be built in its place, or the COVID-19 pandemic has closed the Rio for good, and many others.

The truth is that the Rio had been for sale for several years. In December of 2019, Dreamscape Companies purchased the Rio from Caesars. Under the terms of the sale, Caesars will continue to operate the property until 2022, at which time Dreamscape will take over all operations. According to Dreamscape's Director of Group Sales

for the Rio, after its takeover, *"the Rio will commence a top to bottom multi hundred million dollar renovation and will return to its founding philosophy of a fun and energetic vibe. The renovated hotel suites will be luxurious yet approachable."*

"The Rio will commence a top to bottom multi hundred million dollar renovation and will return to its founding philosophy of a fun and energetic vibe. The renovated suites will be luxurious yet approachable."

- Dreamscape Companies

The property will continue to operate during the renovations with minimal disruption to our events. The CueSports International Expo is contracted with the Rio through 2025 and

likely beyond. We are thrilled that its home will become one of the most updated properties in Las Vegas.

CueSports International (CSI) is an international pool league and event leader and is currently comprised of three divisions: CSI Leagues, CSI Events and CSI Media. CSI Leagues manages the BCA Pool League and USA Pool League, CSI Events produces numerous amateur and professional events around the globe and CSI Media creates live streaming and digital content. Through its vision and strategic alliances, CSI is "shaping the future of pool." For more information about CSI or any of its divisions, visit www.playcspool.com or find CueSports International on Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and Twitter.



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PREDATOR

WORLD 10-BALL CHAMPIONSHIP Rescheduled to September 6-10, 2021

The 2021 edition of the Predator World 10-Ball Championship, previously scheduled for March 8-12, is now moved to September 6-10, 2021.

This change will allow more time for players to make travel arrangements following the recent approval by White House coronavirus task-force members, public health, and other federal agencies to lift the current travel bans that were put in place in March 2020. While no time frame has been announced, it is very likely that international travel will be possible by spring 2021.

“The 2019 Predator World 10-Ball Championship had an amazing field of world-class Champions and this move to September will allow us to replicate it,” said Karim Belhaj, CEO of Predator Group, “We look forward to this date and the return of global events for our fans, players and partners.”

Since 2019, the event has been a part of the CueSports International Expo - the most prestigious pool event in the world - where amateurs, pros and industry leaders meet every year. This event will now start on Wednesday, September 1, 2021, and end on Saturday, September 11, 2021, one day after the Predator World 10-Ball Championship concludes.



PREDATOR
WORLD 10-BALL CHAMPIONSHIP

“Although we are disappointed that the event had to be postponed, we are excited about the prospect of producing a full-scale Predator World 10-Ball Championship in September with players from around the globe and thousands of spectators. It will be a great way to say ‘goodbye’ to the misery of the COVID-19 pandemic,” Ozzy Reynolds, CueSports International CEO said.

The only WPA-sanctioned World Championship to take place in America is being hosted in Las Vegas by the Rio All-Suites Hotel and Casi-

no and broadcast live on YouTube by CSI Media, a division of CueSports International. 2019 winner, Taiwan’s Ping-Chung Ko, will look to defend his title in September 2021.

“The WPA welcomes the news that Predator and CSI have moved the dates of the 2021 men’s 10-Ball World Championship to September. While it is expected that international travel will resume in early 2021, this changing of dates will eliminate any anxiety from players who may be presently wondering if the event would take place in March or not. Now they can prepare their schedules with an air of confidence,” said WPA President Ian Anderson.

The 64-player field will be based on previous invites and WPA rankings. As all events of the CueSports International Expo, admission will be free for the five-day competition and the event will be streamed live for no charge on YouTube. 2019’s event was the first WPA World Championship rotation pool event held in the United States since 1997, when the WPA World 9-Ball Championship took place in Arlington Heights, Illinois.

The Predator World 10-ball Championship is presented by CueSports International and sponsored by Predator Group, the world's premier cue maker and billiards accessory manufacturer.

The Title sponsor is **Predator Cues:**
www.predatorcues.com

Diamond billiard are the official tables: www.diamondbilliards.com

Predator Arcos II Balls are the official balls: www.predatorcues.com/int/products/billiard-accessories/pool-billiard-balls.html

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Predator Arena Billiard Lights are the official lights: https://www.

“ **WHILE IT IS EXPECTED THAT INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL WILL RESUME IN EARLY 2021, THIS CHANGING OF DATES WILL ELIMINATE ANY ANXIETY FROM PLAYERS WHO MAY BE PRESENTLY WONDERING IF THE EVENT WOULD TAKE PLACE IN MARCH OR NOT.**

Ian Anderson, WPA President ”

predatorcues.com/int/products/billiard-accessories/arena-pool-and-billiard-table-lights.html


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Caesars:
https://www.caesars.com/

The Predator World 10-ball Championship is part of the CueSports International EXPO a global pool spectacle that consists of the BCA Pool League World Championships, USA Pool League National Championships, Diamond Las Vegas Open, Predator World 10-Ball Championship, industry exhibitors, meetings, seminars, and more. The entire Rio Hotel and Casino Convention Center, which includes more than 160,000 square feet of floor space, is taken over by the event.



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SCAN ME

2021 CueSports International Expo Rescheduled to Sept 1-11

The 2021 CueSports International Expo, previously scheduled for March 3-13 is being rescheduled to September 1-11.

The event is a global pool spectacle that consists of the BCA Pool League World Championships, USA Pool League National Championships, Diamond Las Vegas Open, Predator World 10-Ball Championship, industry exhibitors, meetings, seminars and more. The entire Rio Convention Center, which includes more than 160,000 square feet of floor space, is taken over by the event.

The safety of our members and staff remains our top priority. The rise of COVID-19 cases and tighter restrictions being implemented around the world has created the need to reschedule the event. The new dates of September 1-11 will help ensure everyone's safety.

BCA Pool League World Championships (Sept 1-11)

The new dates also provide the added benefit of allowing everyone the opportunity to become eligible.

No requirements have been changed for 2020 members. 2020 BCA Pool League members who play at least four (4) weeks in a single division session during the 2020 calendar year are eligible.

In addition, 2021 BCA Pool League members who play at least four (4) weeks in a single division session between January 1 and the registration deadline of August 2, 2021 will also be eligible. In fact, 2021 members can become eligible for the 2021 & 2022 BCA Pool League World Championships simultaneously!

Go to <https://www.playcsipool.com/2021-bcapl-world-championships.html> for all event info.

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Sept 1-11

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USA Pool League National Championships (Sept 1-11)

No requirements have been changed for 2020 members. USA Pool League members who play at least four (4) weeks in a single division session during the 2020 calendar year are eligible.

In addition, USA Pool League members who play at least four (4) weeks in a single division session between January 1 and the registration deadline of August 2, 2021 will also be eligible. In fact, USA Pool League members can become eligible for the 2021 & 2022 USA Pool League National Championships simultaneously!

Go to <https://www.playcspool.com/2021-usapl-national-championships.html> for all event info.

Diamond Las Vegas Open (Sept 1-4)

This event is played on 9-foot Diamond tables and is limited to the first 128 players with \$25,000 added money. More information on this event is coming soon.

Predator World 10-Ball Championship (Sept 6-10)

This is the only true World Championship event on U.S. soil. It is limited to 64 of the top players in the world and invitations are based on WPA rankings. More information on this event is coming soon.

Tournament Registrations

For those of you who have already registered, your tournament registration is still in place and no action is required.

Hotel Reservations

If you have already reserved your room at the Rio All-Suite Hotel & Casino based on the March dates, you must contact the hotel to cancel that reservation. You will then need to re-book your room based on the new dates by Aug 18 using the link on the official event webpages. Using the link ensures that you receive the special group discount.

We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause. However, this is a necessary change to ensure the safety of all members and staff.

We look forward to seeing everyone in beautiful Las Vegas in September!

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Tourney Results

Dec 01 - Dec 04

Mosconi Cup XXVII

Ricoh Arena

Coventry

- 1 Albin Ouschan \$30,000
- 1 Eklent Kaci \$30,000
- 1 Fedor Gorst \$30,000
- 1 Jayson Shaw \$30,000
- 1 Joshua Filler \$30,000
- 2 Billy Thorpe \$15,000
- 2 Chris Robinson \$15,000
- 2 Corey Deuel \$15,000
- 2 Shane Van Boening \$15,000
- 2 Skyler Woodward \$15,000

Dec 05 - Dec 05

Q City 9-Ball Tour Stop

Randolph's Billiards

Hickory, NC

- 1 Scott Howard \$500
- 2 Hank Powell \$300
- 3 Clint Clark \$120
- 4 Gary South \$50

Dec 05 - Dec 06

3rd Annual Big Dawg Scotch Doubles

Stroker's Billiards

Palm Harbor, FL

- 1 Alec Saputo \$550
- 1 Donny Mills \$550
- 2 Kyle Bova \$400
- 2 Raymond Linares \$400
- 3 Jesus Atencio \$310
- 3 Ronald Machado \$310
- 4 Thomas White \$200
- 4 Trenton White \$200
- 5 Bobby Garza \$110
- 5 Joey Herron \$110
- 5 John Gore \$110
- 5 Obbie Cirilo \$110

Dec 07 - Dec 16

Predator One Pool 10 X 4

Virtual Event

- 1 Carlo Biado \$3,000
- 2 Fedor Gorst \$2,000

- 3 Aloysius Yapp \$1,400
- 3 Joshua Filler \$1,400
- 5 Jalal Al Saresi \$900
- 5 Jayson Nuguid \$900
- 5 Mario He \$900
- 5 Roman Hybler \$900
- 9 Chris Alexander \$600
- 9 Danny Hewitt \$600
- 9 Hayato Hijikata \$600
- 9 Kelly Fisher \$600
- 9 Konrad Juszcyszyn \$600
- 9 Hayato Hijikata \$600
- 9 Stefano Delinno \$600
- 9 Tyler Styer \$600

Dec 10 - Dec 13

5th Annual Royce Bunnell Memorial Tournament 9-Ball Division

The Billiard Den

Richardson, TX

- 1 Clint Freeman \$1,350
- 2 TJ Davis \$900
- 3 Roman Bayda \$710
- 4 Shane Iyer \$370
- 5 Clint Palaci \$250
- 5 Lance Schofield \$250
- 7 Doug Winnett \$175
- 7 Jeff Sullivan \$175
- 9 Corey Flud \$125
- 9 Crispian Ng \$125
- 9 Ryan Robinson \$125
- 9 Steve Lenz \$125
- 13 Jason Gladden \$75
- 13 Kevin Guimond \$75
- 13 Robbie Smith \$75
- 13 Tony Top \$75

Dec 10 - Dec 13

5th Annual Royce Bunnell Memorial Tournament 8-Ball Division

The Billiard Den

Richardson, TX

- 1 Jim Ryan \$480
- 2 TJ Davis \$300
- 3 Daniel Herring \$180
- 4 Jason McKenzie \$100
- 5 Corey Flud \$60
- 5 Garrett Hogue \$60

7 JD Wordlaw \$40

7 Steve Lenz \$40

Dec 10 - Dec 13

5th Annual Royce Bunnell Memorial Tournament One Pocket Division

The Billiard Den

Richardson, TX

- 1 Jeff Sullivan \$1,210
- 2 Roman Bayda \$750
- 3 Corey Flud \$350
- 3 Gerardo Perez \$350

Dec 10 - Dec 13

5th Annual Royce Bunnell Memorial Tournament Banks Ring Game

The Billiard Den

Richardson, TX

- 1 Gerardo Perez \$450
- 2 Lance Schofield \$300
- 3 Jonathan Rosenbaugh \$100

Dec 12 - Dec 13

Q City 9-Ball Tour Stop

OverTime Bar & Grill

Columbia, SC

- 1 BJ Ussery \$775
- 2 Hunter Zayas \$500
- 3 Justin Cromer \$375
- 4 Benny Walters \$250
- 5 Corey Morphew \$100
- 5 Marty Free \$100
- 7 Donnie Stewart \$50
- 7 Larry David \$50

Dec 19 - Dec 20

Q City 9-Ball Tour Stop

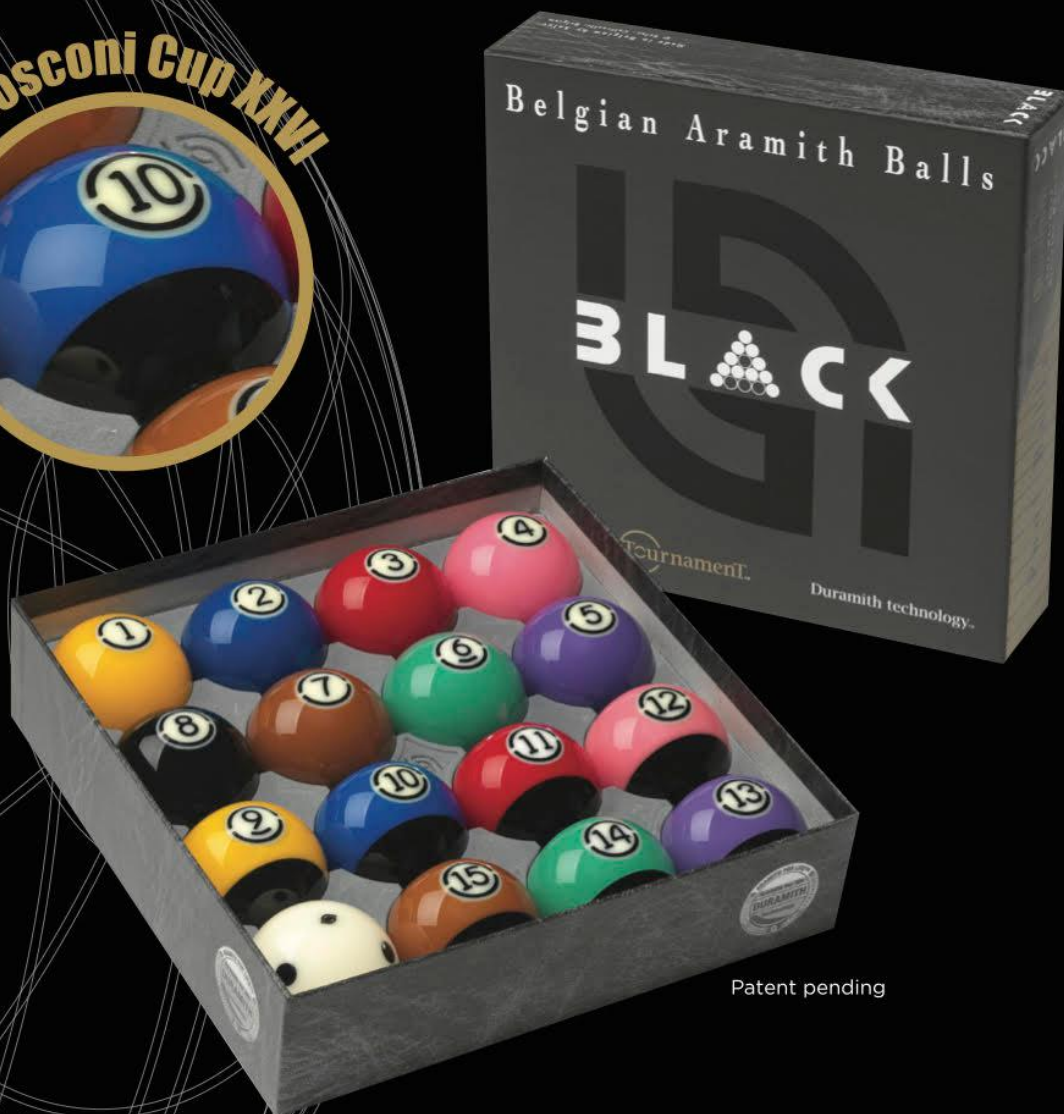
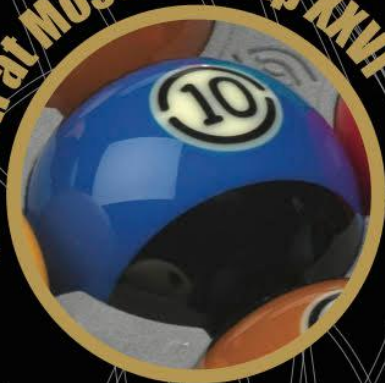
Peyton's Place

Knoxville, TN

- 1 Mike Willard \$750
- 2 Cole Lewis \$525
- 3 Jody Musselman \$380
- 4 Reid Vance \$250
- 5 Jason Zampich \$150
- 5 Rick Chitwood \$150
- 7 Bobby Jack Connor \$85
- 7 David Givens \$85

aramith® Tournament

As seen at Mosconi Cup XXVII



Patent pending

Aramith has created the new Tournament BLACK set to combine the very best of pool ball quality with an innovative, trendy and groundbreaking "black" design. Anticipating the need to better discern the balls on TV but also on small screen devices, we have teamed up with Matchroom Multisport to develop new colors.

...THAT'S HOW I ROLL
aramith
The True Belgian Billiard Balls
www.aramith.com

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