

Billiards Buzz

an  publication

vol.10, Issue May 2026



SUPER STAR

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FROM THE Head Rail

MIKE HOWERTON

I was pleasantly surprised to see the announcement this month that Johan Ruijsink was returning to captain Team USA at the Mosconi Cup.

As expected, half of the online pool community is all worked up about a “European” person captaining the American team. Kinda the same complaints that took place back in 17. The volume level of these complaints is roughly the same level as the complaints every December that Team USA needs to change things up in order to be competitive again.

With Johan’s history as a coach and team captain, he could be the best thing that has happened for Team USA in many years. He is serious about his job and the players respect him.

I was especially pleased to see the comment from Matchroom that Johan was chosen to “rebuild, reset and restore a winning culture” on Team USA. The biggest word I saw there was “rebuild”.

While he is a great captain, he can’t just flip a switch and have a competitive team. But I believe if he is given the time to rebuild Team USA, they will be a lot more than just competitive. Give him three years and let’s see how Team USA does.

Until next time.





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Article by Skip Maloney - AzB Staff / Photos courtesy Erwin Dionisio



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CAPELLE'S TARGET BALL EXERCISES

May 12 of this year marks the twentieth anniversary of the publication of Capelle's *Practicing Pool*. In chapter 5 the book is loaded with 48 pages of exercises on all facets of position play. Included are several exercises that use what I call a Target Ball.

The object of these exercises is to play a wide variety position routes of your own choosing. The donuts (hole reinforcements for lined paper) are used to mark where you want to place the cue ball, object ball, and a third ball. This third ball is what I call the Target Ball. It is positioned at or close to the bull's eye of the position zone that you are seeking to send the cue ball to. When performing Target Ball exercises the objectives are to make the ball and to send the cue ball into very light contact with the Target Ball.

In this feature I will present several examples of various position routes to familiarize you with the idea. After playing each route you can shoot it again, or modify it for a second attempt. One of the big ideas is to make each shot different from the previous one because this makes your brain work a little harder. This is sharp contrast to how your brain functions when you are doing drills of the same shot, over and over again. Playing a different shot on each rep forces you to go through the whole process of evaluating a new Shot Picture, planning, playing, and learning something each shot, which is exactly what is required when playing in a match where you are faced with an endless variety of shots and position plays.

You are reading part 1 of this feature, in which I will provide you will several examples of executing the Target Ball exercise. Next month in part 2 I will present more examples and some ideas for practice sessions using a Target Ball.

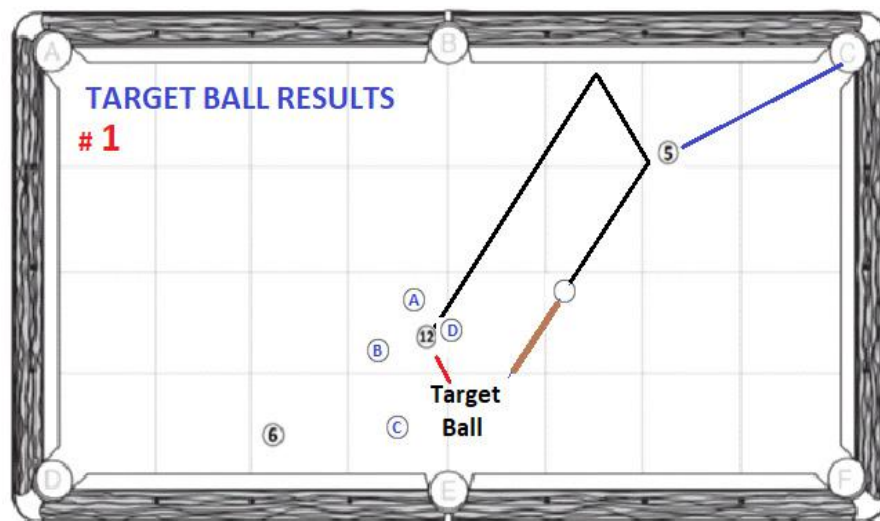
AN EXAMPLE OF A TARGET BALL EXERCISE

One of the big benefits of doing Target Ball exercises is that you will get a strong reality check on just how skilled you are at playing position routes that regularly appear in a game. So, as you take each shot, pay close attention to where the cue ball stops.

There are many possible ending locations for the cue ball as shown in **Diagram #1**.

On this shot the goal is to make the 5-ball and send the cue ball into very light contact with the 12-ball. Position A shows that the distance control was superb, but the direction was off, producing a thinner cut on the 6-ball than was desired.

The cue ball at Position B is a little off line, and past the position play bull's eye, but still a very acceptable result. Meanwhile, Position C shows that the shot was struck with poor speed as the cue ball ran well past the Target Ball, leaving the player with a straight



in on the 6 when an angle was needed. Finally, the cue ball at Position D resulted from near perfect speed and direction, producing a very light hit on the Target Ball. I give this an A.

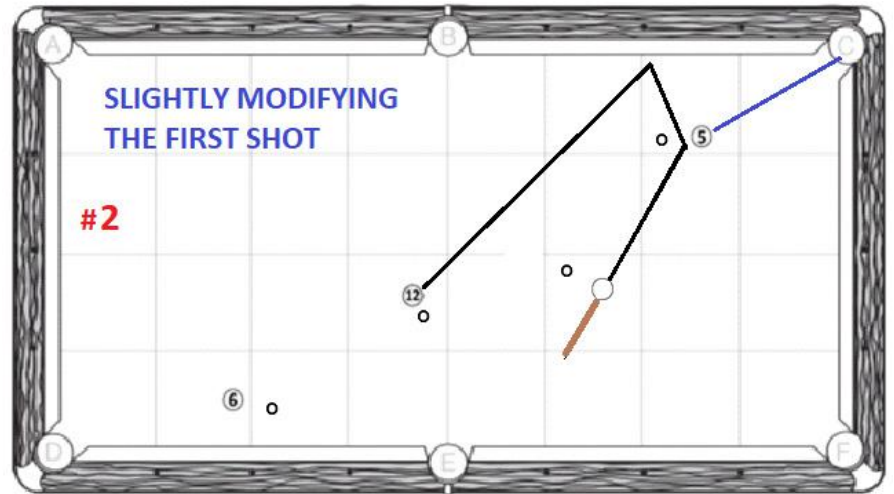
If you achieved an outcome as good, or close to as good as the one shown by Position D – near perfect speed and near perfect direction – you should move on to the next shot. If you missed the mark by an unacceptable amount, set up the shot and try it again. If you do much better, shoot it one more time and see if you can repeat your success. But hit or miss, it is now time to move on to the next shot as we don't want turn this into a drill.

MODIFYING THE FIRST POSITION PLAY

Now let's consider the impact of making some slight modifications to the shot in **Diagram #1**, keeping in mind, as always, that variety is the spice of life, which includes your pool game. For example, the shot in **Diagram #2** is sort of a repeat of the position in **Diagram #1**, only with some modifications that turn the shot into a unique challenge.

You can use the donuts to mark the first shot and as reference points. On a successive shot position the cue ball, object ball, and Target Ball up to a ball's width or two from their original locations, or keep one or two in the original locations! The main idea is to get used to seeing a variety of positions, and to be able to conjure up a successful shot on the fly, just as you would be expected to do in a game.

In **Diagram #2** the donuts are the small black circles that show the original locations of the balls from **Diagram #1**. Notice that the cue ball and 5 are slightly to the right of their original locations, and that the Target Ball (the 12) is a little above and



to the left of its previous position. While these differences look small, in pool they are distinctions with a difference! Or, as Dr. Google informed me, *“Distinctions with a difference” describes a scenario where two things appear similar but have meaningful, substantive differences.* That perfectly describes pool, where small changes in a ball's location can exert a meaningful change in how a shot is played.

I suggest that you set up version one of the shot, play it, and evaluate your results. Then try the second version. What did you discover? What were the changes did you have to make with your cueing, speed, and your chosen route?

WHAT GOES INTO EACH SHOT

When doing Target Ball exercises, most shots are going to be quite different from the ones you've just played, especially if you want to more closely simulate game conditions.

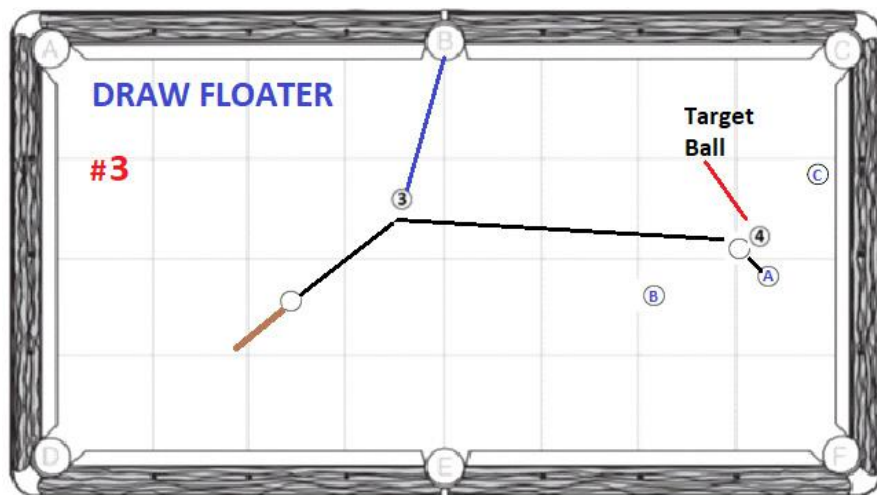
On most shots you will be familiar with the Shot Picture, which I talk about at length in chapter 4 on Shotmaking and Aiming in *Practicing Pool*. So, your first job it to check out the Shot Picture, which includes the pocket,

object ball, and cue ball. Then choose you route to the Target Ball. Evaluate what are the primary challenges of the shot – it is Speed, Direction, or Pocketing? On super tough shots the difficulty could be a combination of these three elements. Make sure to make a solid plan, commit to it, and then complete the Execution Cycle.

THE DRAW FLOATER

The shot in **Diagram #3** shows a draw floater. If the shot was played with more speed and centerball, the cue ball would follow the stun line and go right at the cue ball in Position B. If the shot was played with a soft follow stroke, it's path would be above the cue ball in Position C. In order to split this gap and send the cue ball at the 4-ball, which is the Target Ball, the cue ball needs to be struck with a soft draw stroke. Soft and draw do not often go together, which is why this specialty position play takes a very deft touch!

As a result, it is not uncommon for the cue ball to follow the path to Position B, which comes about from using draw and too much speed. The use of follow could send the cue ball to Position C or above as noted previously. If you are able to hit the Target Ball



lightly as shown, you deserve a gold star and great shape on the next ball.

CAPELLE IS RIGHT ON TARGET

A friend of mine was filming some instructional shorts of me at Amsterdam Billiards some years ago during which I was demonstrating a series of practice shots. One of them is the Target Ball exercise shown in **Diagram #4**. The diagram illustrates a 36 degree cut shot where my goal was to sink the 9-ball and come across the table and make contact with the 1-ball, and the fuller the better. The shot required a dose of inside english, which always complicates matters.

I settled into my stance and performed a series of five slow and unhurried warm up strokes. While engaged in this process, I was fine tuning my line-of-aim, and I was also dialing in a feel for the speed of stroke that would produce a light hit on the 1-ball. Getting the right direction was a major challenge because inside english was being used.

When that little pool player's voice gave me the Go Signal, I took my final stroke, pocketed the 9, and sent the cue ball across the table and into

near perfect contact (99%?) with the 1-ball. If my speed was 100% perfect, the 1-ball would have barely budged. Though it rolled about four inches, that's close to a perfect result.

A post mortem on my fundamentals showed that my hold (not grip) was nice and relaxed, I stayed down until well after contact, my cue was level well after hitting the cue ball, and my elbow began to drop a split second *after* contact. And yes, I did this on the very first take, just like in game conditions where you only get one try before moving on to the next shot.

One of the reasons why I included this shot is to show an execution routine

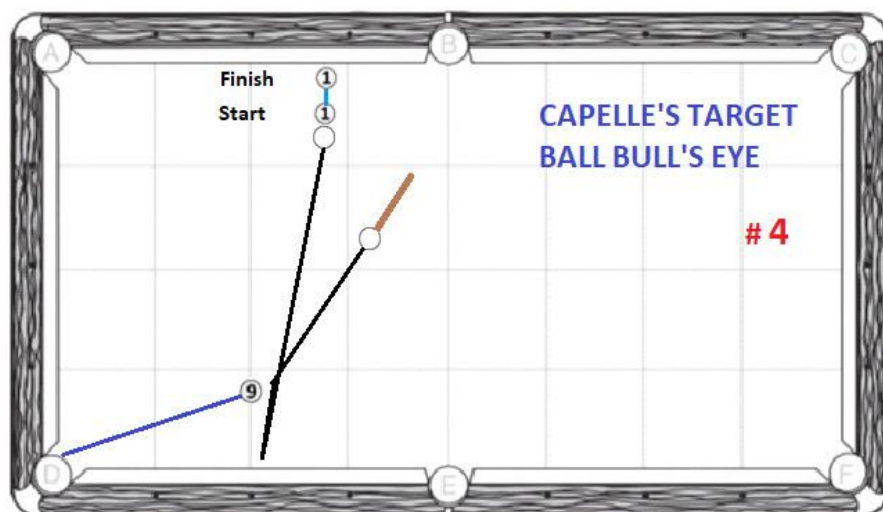
that can produce shots with results similar to this, and to show what a very well-played shot looks like when doing the Target Ball exercise. (Special thanks to Angel Levine for recording this video of me demonstrating the shot.)

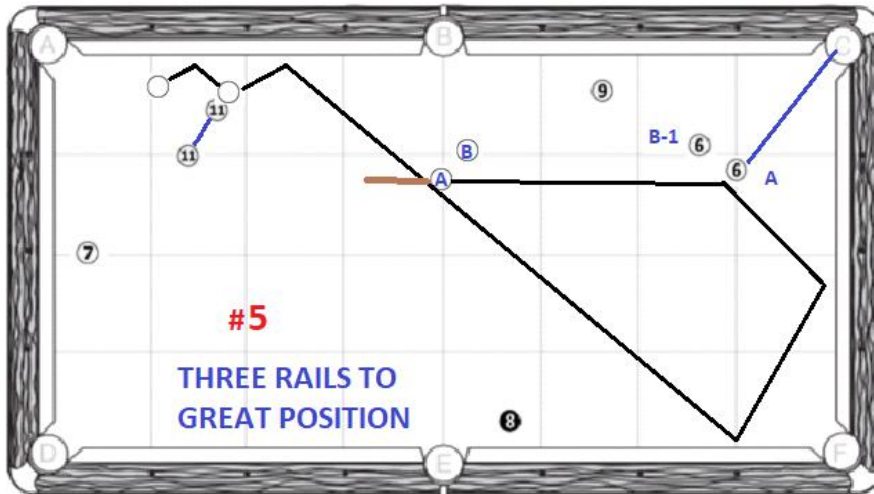
TWO OR THREE RAILS TO THE TARGET BALL

The goal for the Target Ball shot in **Diagram #5** is to send the cue ball three rails into contact with the 11-ball. The result shown is very acceptable as the speed was very good and contact was excellent, especially considering the distance the cue ball traveled.

The shot could have been played using only two rails, but this is much more difficult than the route in the diagram. You could adjust the Target Ball to anywhere on the cue ball's path from the second to the third rail to set up additional commonly occurring position routes.

Another version of this shot, among the many, is to place the cue ball at Position B and the 6-ball at Position B-1. The cut is far less, which will require a boost in your speed of stroke. If you shoot Shot A first, then Shot B (or vice versa) you will gain an appre-





come up in a game. This is a stark contrast to shooting drills where you tend to shoot the same shot over and over which, of course, eliminates the thinking process that goes along with every shot when in competition.

This concludes part 1 of this two part series on practicing using the Target Ball exercise. Next month I will introduce additional concepts that can up the difficulty of these exercises, I will talk about how to create a practice session using them, and about how to improve your game with some friendly competition.

ciation for how small differences in the ball's positions can have a significant impact on how you cue the shot, the route you choose, and your speed of stroke.

The whole point of the Target Ball exercise is to increase your skill at playing a variety of routes as they might

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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THE STORY YOUR STROKE TELLS

ANTHONY BEELER

Once had a student walk into the room convinced he'd forgotten how to play. He'd been a solid league player for years, but suddenly nothing worked—missed easy balls, couldn't control the cue ball, confidence shot.

We didn't change his aim. We didn't talk about patterns. I simply had him shoot one stop shot while I stood to the side and watched his finish.

The tip never even got close to the cloth.

I asked him one question: "Where's your tip?"

He looked down, paused, and said, "I have no idea."

That was the moment everything changed.

WHY YOUR STROKE MATTERS

The ability to deliver a straight, smooth stroke on demand is the foundation of great pool. Without it, precision and accuracy disappear—no

matter how good your knowledge or aiming system is.

A great stroke works like a **perfect pendulum**:

- As the grip hand rises, the tip travels down
- At impact, the forearm is near **90–95 degrees**
- The cue is at its most level point when it matters most

If you strike the cue ball when your grip hand is less than 90 degrees, your tip is already dropping—and you've lost control before contact even happens.

Let's break down the four most common flaws that destroy that pendulum motion.

1. NOT FINISHING YOUR STROKE

This is the silent killer.

If your tip never reaches the cloth, chances are you're pushing the cue rather than lifting the butt.



There's a famous story about Mike Sigel. After winning a tournament in the 1980s, someone noticed a bruise on his chest. When asked about it, Sigel said it came from finishing his stroke—on every shot.

That's commitment.

Now, I'm not suggesting you bruise your chest—but I *am* saying this: If you're not finishing your stroke, you're guessing at contact.

2. ELBOW DROP

When your elbow drops too early, your stroke loses its pendulum motion.

What happens next?

- The tip finishes level... or even upward
- You lose consistency
- You introduce timing errors

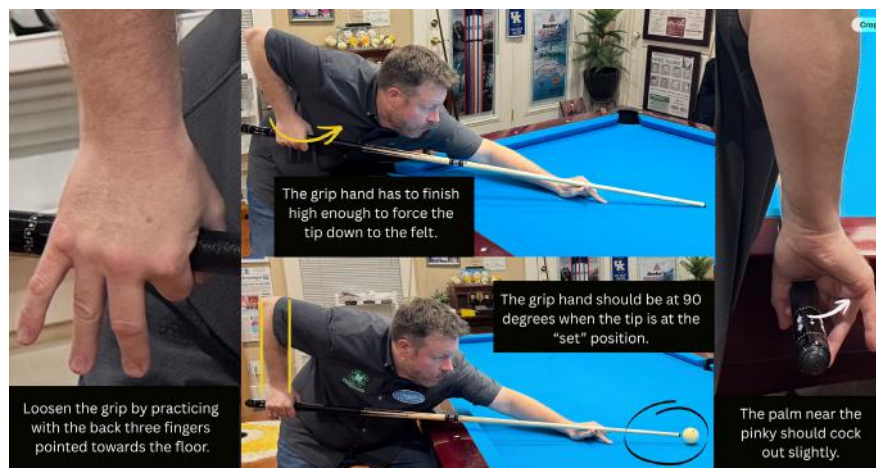
Yes, some top-level players incorporate elbow drop—but that's controlled, intentional, and highly refined, finishing with the palm out of the way.

For most players, the goal is simple: **Maintain a clean pendulum and let the tip finish down on the cloth.**

3. THE "DEATH GRIP"

Tension is the enemy of accuracy.

Squeezing the cue too tightly:



- Restricts natural movement
- Causes steering
- Prevents the tip from finishing properly

A simple fix:

- Practice with just your **thumb and index finger** for a few weeks
- Then add fingers back gradually
- Leave the pinky off until you've developed a clean motion

That pinky finger? It's often the hidden cause of a crooked stroke.

4. PALM INTERFERENCE

This one surprises a lot of players.

If the palm (near your pinky) touches the cue during the finish—especially with elbow drop—it can:

- Hold the butt down
- Force the tip upward

The fix is subtle but powerful:

- Slightly **cock the back of your grip hand outward**

- Keep the palm from interfering with the cue

This frees the cue to move naturally—and allows the tip to finish where it should: **down on the felt.**

BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

Back to that student.

After we worked through these flaws, I had him shoot the same stop shot again. This time, his tip brushed the cloth. The sound was different. The result was different.

He looked up and smiled: "That felt like I used to."

That's the power of a proper stroke.

FINAL THOUGHT

Every time you shoot, ask yourself one simple question:

"Where's my tip?"

If it's not finishing down—or at least heading downward—there's a reason. And chances are, it's one of these four flaws.

Fix those... and everything else in your game starts to fall into place.

Because in the end, your stroke tells a story.

Make sure it's the right one.

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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CHALKIN' UP THE MEMORIES...



The following morning, pumped up and chirping like songbirds, we hit the road and headed for Nashville. We made a couple stops along the way, won a few dollars and were told to go to Snookers – just don't play the red-headed guy with the beard. He was a good player - I'd need the seven from him.

We finally pulled up in front of Snookers. I handed Kelly the keys and asked her to bring in my cue – I had to use the restroom.

When I came out of the ladies room, Kelly already had my stick out of the case and said, "We're in action!"

I laughed and said, "OK, who am I playing and what am I doing?"

Pointing at the bar box with the big cue ball, she replied, "Races to four for four hundred. You're playing the guy standing at the bar."

He turned around and I saw his red beard – the guy everybody told us to stay away from!

I turned back to Kelly and said, "What the hell? And the big cue ball? I haven't played with it in years!"

She just laughed and said we'd fire a couple barrels at him with the money we'd won in Richmond.

To say I was steaming was an understatement...

Well, I've been known to play my best pool when I was furious. I won the flip and ran four racks. And did it again!

Now, Red couldn't quit since he'd never hit a ball. He won the flip for the third set and the match began from there. Kelly's handling all the side bets and as time went on, he couldn't overcome that two set head start and

although he won a few sets he just couldn't put two together to chip away at me. Plus, I'd caught a gear that was hard to overcome.

After I was ahead five sets and had pretty much emptied everyone out, he pulled up. I walked over to the bar to settle our tab. Red's stakehorse, the owner of the place, was behind the bar – I handed him a handful of twenties and asked him to use it to buy drinks for the place.

Impressed, he asked if we were hungry. I hadn't thought about it but now that he'd mentioned it, I sure was! He pulled a card out of his pocket, scribbled on the back of it and told us that he owned a barbecue joint a couple exits down the interstate. We thanked him and left.

Well, this barbecue "joint" turned out to be a pretty large place. We walked in the door and were welcomed by the hostess. The owner had called ahead and was told to expect us with everything on the house.

We ordered up and devoured a mountain of food. We were just relaxing a bit after we ate and then suddenly Kelly said, "I'd swear I just saw Minnesota Fats!"

I turned to where she was pointing but just saw an empty doorway. We left a couple twenties on the table for the waitress and made our way over there.

Turned out that through that doorway was a large dance floor, the band was setting up and there stood Minnesota Fats!

Frank & Geri Titcomb - 1985 US Open 9 Ball Championships - Norfolk, VA - Photo courtesy of the Wade Crane Collection



We walked over to him and said hello. He turned toward us and exclaimed, "Jersey Slim! Whatcha doin' here?"

We told him about the score we made earlier and how the owner of the place sent us here to eat.

I then asked him, "What are YOU doing here?"

Turned out that Fats was hired to be the "house pro" there and he rotated between the dance hall and the several other pool rooms owned by the same man. He also provided Fats with a suite at the Hermitage Hotel in downtown Nashville. He had it made!

He walked us over to a large circular table where apparently Fats held court. As he settled into what was obviously his very comfortable chair, we talked and laughed as people streamed through the doors and some stopped by to say hello to Fats.

The band began to play and Fats stood up, held out his hand and said, "Slim, wanna dance?"

He was obviously remembering when he danced me around the tournament room at the 1979 World Nine Ball ProAm at the Tropicana in Las Vegas.

He led me out to the empty dance floor and we started dancing. In less than a minute, the band leader intro-

duced him to the crowd as the "legendary Minnesota Fats."

As the crowd cheered, Fats reached up for the mic, grabbed it and said, "And THIS is the best lady nine ball player on the planet! Who wants to play her some? I'll stake her! Minimum five bucks a game!"

There were a couple of bar tables on the other side of the dance floor and a bunch of guys ran over to put their quarters up!

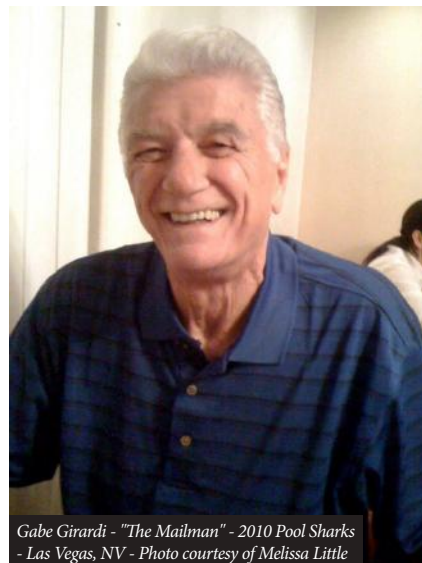
While Fats had the security guards move his table and his comfortable chair to the other side of the room, Kelly ran out to the car to get my cue.

Within minutes, I was in action as Fats asked each of my opponents what we'd be playing for and Kelly handled the money.

We shut the place down. I had won almost all the challenges and we had a pile of money on the table. Fats was in fine form as he laughed and talked while he counted the money. It came to almost a thousand and he pushed it all towards me. I counted out half and pushed it back to him.

Grinning, he pushed it back saying, "Keep it all, Slim! I haven't had this much fun in a long time!"

And so we did - we said our goodbyes, got back on the road and soon found us a room for the night.



Gabe Girardi - "The Mailman" - 2010 Pool Sharks - Las Vegas, NV - Photo courtesy of Melissa Little

I was exhausted but what a day!

The next morning, we headed down to check out Franklin, TN. Kelly decided it was not as close to Nashville as she liked and the auto plant was not scheduled to open for another four to five years.

We hopped back onto the interstate and after looking at the atlas we decided to head up to Cincinnati to check out Geri and Frank Titcomb's room and see if she wanted to play.

When we were about an hour away, we called the pool room to get directions. We asked for Geri or Frank and were told they were out of town.

So much for that...

We were by the airport and since it had been a very profitable trip, we decided to pay the extra money to leave the rental car there and fly back to LA from Cincinnati.

We arrived back in LA and stepped out of the airport into glorious weather. We'd gotten tired of the cold damp weather back east - it was great to be home.

Over the course of the last couple years, Freddie and I had made quite a few trips to Las Vegas. He knew a high roller so each time we go to Vegas, I'd pick out a different hotel and



Kelly (Simpson) Oyama - "Big Mama Oyama" - 1985 Last Call For 9 Ball - Atlantic City, NJ - Photo courtesy of Jack Willard & Jack Woosley



we'd stay there – the room, food and beverage was all comped. If I wanted to go to a show, Freddie would call his friend and ask him to make the arrangements.

I'd always been a night owl and I loved Vegas – it was a 24 hour town. We started talking about moving there and Freddie told me if we did, I'd have to get a job. I don't think he expected me to agree but I did.

So, after the Super Bowl was over, we headed for Vegas. As usual, first stop was the Stardust to see Freddie's friend from back east, Gabe Girardi. Gabe was known in the pool world as "The Mailman."

We swung by the poker room where Gabe was a top-notch dealer. While on his break, we told him we were moving to Vegas. We asked him where we should look for an apartment and I told him I wanted to work in one of the casinos.

He told us he was having marital problems and asked what we thought about him sharing an apartment with us - we had no problem with that. He also told me that he thought that I'd love dealing poker but told me to go around to the different casinos and look at all the job possibilities before making a decision.

That sounded good to me so we found a furnished apartment and went back to LA to pack.

Once back in Vegas and all moved in, I showed up back at the Stardust, waited for Gabe to get his break and handed him a key. I also told him that, yeah, I wanted to deal poker too and asked him if he could recommend one of the dealing schools.

He laughed. "Dealing school! I could teach you in a week!"

Well, that was what he thought until he discovered that the only thing I knew about poker was that if you had three of a kind, it was better than two! He thought he was just going to have to teach me how to shuffle and pitch the cards! He didn't know he was going to have to teach me EVERYTHING!!!

Gabe was off the next day so we drove over to the Crystal Palace pool room and the owner, Henry Nogiec, gave us an old piece of cloth. On the way back to the apartment, we swung by the Stardust. Gabe ran in to get a set of casino playing cards and a hundred dollars worth of chips.

We took it all home and Gabe spread the cloth over the kitchen table. He shoved the table up against the wall, went into my bedroom and came out with the mirror from my dresser. He propped the mirror up against the wall and that became my classroom. He sat next to me – we each had a deck of cards. He showed me how to

shuffle and box the cards like the casinos required. Looking in the mirror, I watched him go through the various steps slowly as I simultaneously tried to imitate him.

After about a half hour, he stood up and told me that when I saw myself in the mirror shuffling like a Vegas dealer, we'd be ready for the next lesson!

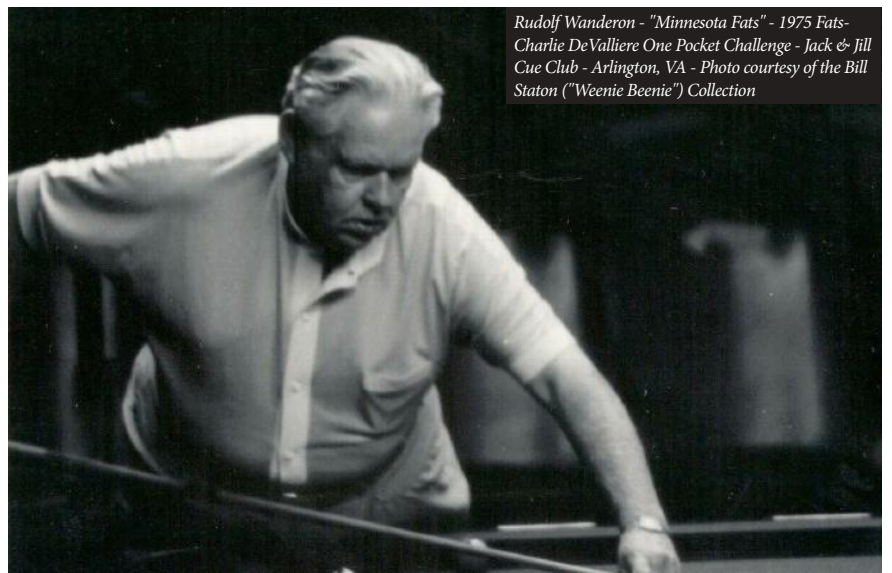
It took me a few days – I'm talking hours on end - to get to that point. I don't know what ached more – my butt or my hands! All I did was shuffle, eat and sleep!

Over the course of the next many days, Gabe showed me everything – how to hold the deck, how to deal the cards for hold 'em, how to pitch them in the air for stud, how to cut the chips, how to figure the rake.

Since I knew absolutely nothing about poker, Gabe patiently explained what all the different hands were and I memorized which hands beat the others. He taught me the rules of the game, the mechanics, the vocabulary – everything. He had me deal out six hands at a time and flip them over as I learned how to read the cards – finding the best hand. Quickly.

Of course, I did it in increments - one new skill at a time until the mirror told me I had it down. It was poker boot camp! I'd report for inspection and Gabe would teach me the next thing...

One night, as I was practicing, Gabe walked in with a few of the guys from



Rudolf Wanderon - "Minnesota Fats" - 1975 Fats-Charlie DeValliere One Pocket Challenge - Jack & Jill Cue Club - Arlington, VA - Photo courtesy of the Bill Staton ("Weenie Beenie") Collection

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then turned to Gabe and said, “Only for you...”

Walking away, Kenny barked over his shoulder, “Show up 2 am tonight in black and whites – tell the shift boss I sent you.”

I high-fived Gabe! Woohoo!!! Vegas World was a dump but hey – I had a shot!

The first two nights were a disaster. The crusty old shift boss and shills in the games had no use for a newbie and let me know it.

On the third night, I showed up to see a different shift boss. I introduced myself to him and told him I was just breaking in.

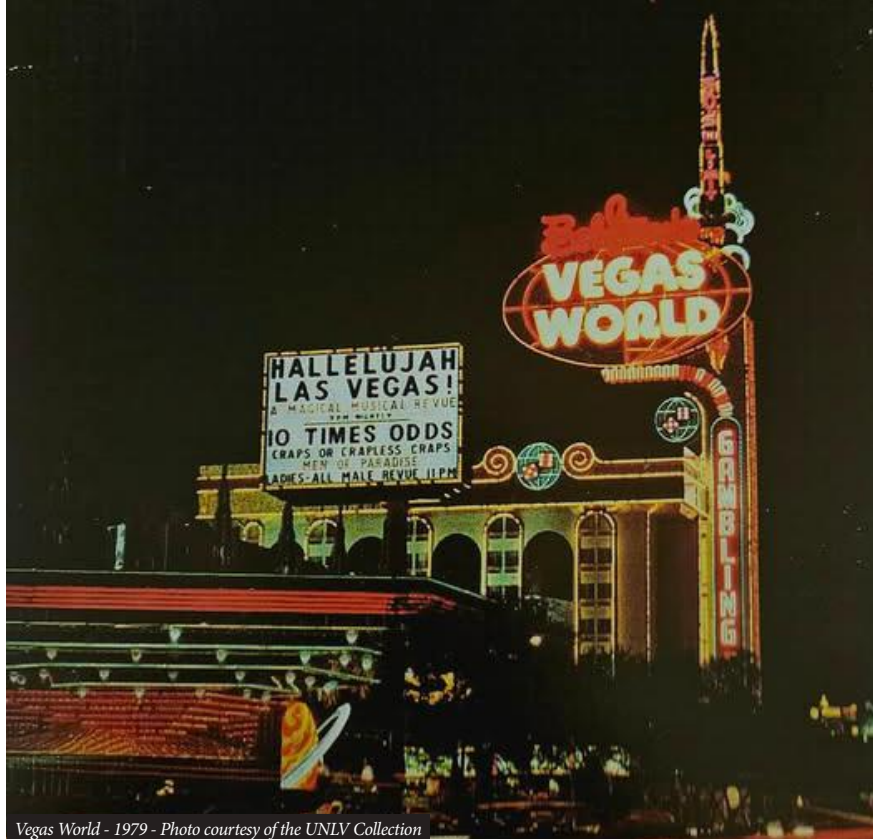
It turned out that the shift boss had been a great dealer himself and knew Gabe well - they had come up together in the poker business. A friend of Gabe’s was a friend of Mike’s and he put the finishing touches on the job Gabe started – teaching me to become a topnotch poker dealer.

Not bragging, but within about two months or so, I was the best they had. I walked in one night and Mike took me aside. He told me I’d be dealing hold ‘em to the owner, Bob Stupak, and all his high roller friends like Pug-gy Pearson, Jack “Treetop” Strauss, actor Gabe Kaplan, Bobby Baldwin, Chip Reese, Sarge...

I told Mike I didn’t think I was ready to deal such a high stakes game. He told me to relax – it was the same structure, just higher bets – different color chips.

Oh, boy...

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.



Vegas World - 1979 - Photo courtesy of the UNLV Collection

the pool room, a case of beer and a few racks of chips. Surprised to see them, I watched as Gabe took the mirror back to my bedroom, pulled the table out from the wall and the guys took their places at the table.

Turning to me, Gabe grinned and said, “Ready?!!!”

OMG!!! He wanted me to deal to these guys!

Talk about being nervous! I have to tell you – it was nothing like I’d ever felt playing pool! I was shaking like a leaf - I dropped the deck, cards squirted out of my hand, chips flew all over the table, I was brain dead on the rake, I couldn’t read the hands - but only for the first fifteen minutes or so. Then, gradually, I smoothed out, everything fell into place and I fell into a rhythm. I was dealing my first live game – even if it was just to the pool room guys!

As the night wore on, I gained more confidence and actually started having fun! When the guys finally left, Gabe told me that he didn’t think I could get any better without being in a real game. It had been almost three

weeks of nothing but practicing, eating and sleeping! He was proud of how far I’d come and admitted to me that when I told him I was a complete poker newbie, he’d thought about bailing and sending me to a school! He also told me that now would come the hard part – getting my foot in the door of a casino...

He told me to meet him at the pool room the next day - he had an idea. I walked in and saw him talking to a man that I had beaten out of a thousand on one of our trips to Vegas. Gabe waved me over and asked me if I knew him. Before I could answer, Kenny growled, “Yeah, we know each other.”

Apparently, Kenny was still a little warm from the ass-whuppin’ I’d put on him. It turned out that Kenny was the poker room manager at the old Vegas World casino. Gabe had explained to him that he had taught me how to deal and now was asking him for a favor - to give me an audition.

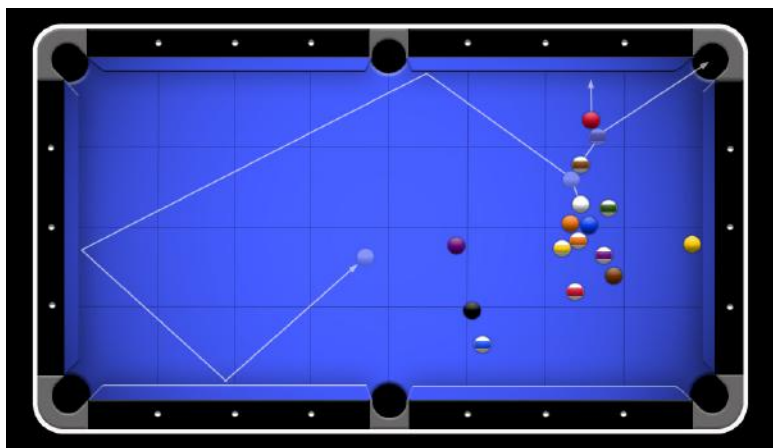
Kenny stood there glaring at me for what seemed like an eternity and



LIGHTYEARS AHEAD OF THE COMPETITION. WE'VE GOT NEXT. | CUETEC.COM

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Accu-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.

This month, we have another shot from Mika Immonen for you. This was a shot he left himself after a break shot, playing Thorsten Hohmann at the 2010 Predator World 14.1 Championship.

He studied the shot for well over a minute, but eventually went with the shot that Danny DiLiberto saw from the commentary chair.

Mika caromed the 15-ball of the 3-ball to remain at the table and keep his run going.





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equipment?



The 32nd Annual SBE maintains its premier reputation as a Super-Sized Billiards Exhibition

Zielinski is 2026 Pro Players Champion, Haas claims 1,024-entrant Open Amateur title.

Story by Skip Maloney - AzB Staff / Photos courtesy Erwin Dionisio, Thomas Haas, Stephen Holem and Allen Hopkins

Zielinski/Lopotko secure 'win, show' finish at SBE Diamond Open Players Championship

It wasn't easy," said Poland's Wiktor Zielenski, minutes after he'd completed an undefeated run through the field of 176 entrants to win the 2026 Diamond Open NineBall Players Championship at this year's Super Billiards Expo in Oaks, PA over this past weekend (April 9-12).

The numbers, however, suggest 'easy,' even though from a personal perspective, Zielenski's trip to this place, this time, was fraught with issues not related to the task at hand; getting through eight opponents, undefeated to claim the title. In races to 10, Zielenski's opponents averaged only

4.1 racks against him. Seven of his eight opponents came to the tables with FargoRates lower than his (827). That said, the single opponent with a higher FargoRate than his, Aloysius Yapp (839), was one of four competitors, who managed only four racks against him. The last of those four was



Greece's Hubert Lopotko (780), who battled him in the final match.

Zielinski showed up on our AZBilliards radar just over a decade ago, as a teenager; finishing up in 17th and 9th place at the Eurotour's Austrian and Dutch Opens, respectively (2015). Year by year, he kept climbing the AZBilliards Money Leaderboard from the #356 spot, where he began, to #6 in 2022, which is still his best recorded earnings year with us. His overall fortunes from their 2022 height kept slipping downward, from #6 to #40 last year. This year, this most recent win will almost put his earnings above last year's, and I move him up a few slots ahead of the #9 spot on the Leaderboard where he was when the weekend began.

And he knew it, too. Even without knowing the facts about his 2026 earnings, or anything about the AZ-Billiards Money Leaderboard, for that matter, he knew that he'd gone through a turning point and was on his way to bigger and better things. Any thoughts he had about what was next were set aside, as he relished the win and set his sights on some rest before he headed for England to compete in the UK Open in late May.



"I'm over the moon," he told those gathered around him after the win, adding, "I'm real exhausted. I just want to go home and wait for the UK Open."

With a bye in the opening round of the Stage 1, double-elimination bracket, Zielinski had to face and defeat only two opponents in order to advance to the Final 64 in a Stage 2, single-elimination race to the winners' circle. He certainly started out on the right foot by shutting out the first of those two;

Wayne Parker. Casper Matikainen was the next victim. Defeating *him* 10-4, Zielinski moved on to Stage 2.

Hubert Lopotko, bound for the event final in a couple of days, had the same Stage 1 road to travel. A bye gave him the opportunity to advance to Stage 2 after only two matches. He lost his opening-round match to Mark Malayan 10-6. A note here, to add a little context to Lopotko's tale; it wasn't only his first appearance at the SBE, it was his first time in the United States, and he was reflecting on that fact, when he mentioned casually to a few random people taking the air just outside the Pro arena after he'd defeated one of the top-FargoRated competitors in the event, Naoyuki Oi.

"It's different for us (European competitors)," he explained to the small group listening. "It costs a lot of money to get here; the travel and lodgings."

Though strong in his own right, he didn't have the 'clout' of other, more recognizable Europeans with a lot of cash from winnings all over the globe. In fact, as became generally known, only later, Lopotko paid the upfront costs of the SBE (registration, travel



Super Billiards Expo

and lodgings) with a GoFundMe campaign that eventually raised the money he needed to register and compete. That fact probably put a damper on his first day as he lost his opening match to Matikainen. But it didn't stop him. One might argue that it inspired him to greater heights.

Lopotko moved to the loss side for a three-match trip to Stage 2. All three of his opponents had lower Fargo-Rates. Overall, through 10 opponents, the higher versus lower FargoRate numbers against Lopotko were exactly half for each. He downed Eric Winthrow and Walter Laitke, both 10-5 and qualified for advancement to Stage 2 with a 10-4 win over Lukas Fracasso-Verner.

On to Stage 2 . . .

Zielinski would face only one opponent rated higher than his 827 (we'll be getting to that) and opened with 10-6 victories over Szymon Kural and Jesus Atencio. Next up on his dance card was Aloysius Yapp, whose 839 FargoRate put the match in almost



Rachel Walters with Allen Hopkins

even-odds range. He gave up just four to Yapp and stepped out of that frying pan into the fire of John Morra in one of the winners' side quarterfinals. It was a match he remembered at the end, noting that while, overall, he thought he'd played "quite well," he only "managed to pull through" against Morra and face Domimik Jastrzab in one of the semifinals.

Lopotko, in the meantime, was battling through some tough matches. He opened his Stage 2 run against Rodney Morris, who managed to chalk up the most racks against him, to that point. Lopotko prevailed to win 10-8 and moved on to Austria's Mario He, who also chalked up eight against him. The load lightened a little

through a 10-7 win over Emil-Andre Gangflot, and got those racks-against even a step lower in that aforementioned battle against Naoyuki Oi (10-7), which advanced Lopotko to a semifinal against Michael Feliciano.

The Lopotko/Feliciano semifinal was the only double-hill match that either Zielenski or Lopotko faced in Stage 2 (of 10 that had occurred overall). Lopotko won it and advanced to the final. Zielenski defeated Jastrzab 10-5 to join him, although chronologically, it finished ahead of the double-hill match.

Through the first eight games of the 14-game final, things went according to a back-and-forth plan; a win, tie, win, tie formula that demonstrated, early on, that there were going to be a few notable and tricky 'safety' maneuvers, which continued, right up to



Domimik Jastrzab



Michael Feliciano

the end. There would only be three 'break-and-run's in the entire match (two for Zielinski) and they were history at the end of rack #7. There were seven breaks that saw two balls drop (five for Zeilinski), and six with a single ball finding a hole (four for Lopotko). Lopotko was the only one who recorded a single, dry break, late in the match.

Zielinski took the lead at 5-4 and from that point, didn't give up a game until he closed it out, six games later. By that time, most of the 16 tables in the Pro Arena had been removed. Within minutes of dropping the last 9-ball, the SBE crew moved in to begin dismantling the rest of the place, following in the footsteps of the crew(s) that had been packing up the Exhibitor Hall throughout the final. The 32nd Annual Super Billiards Expo was headed into the 'books.'

Five Amateur events take home the SBE's Top Attendance Prize

Anybody who's ever thought that the SBE's Amateur events are something of a sideshow to the Diamond Open NineBall Players Championships might want to consider thinking again. It bears a similarity to the movie *Jaws*. The three men went looking for a shark that they'd never seen before (like people coming to the SBE for the first or more times) and it was Chief Brody who seeing the 'big guy' for the first time, had to tell them that they were going to need a bigger boat.

The 16-table Pro Players arena at the Greater Philadelphia Expo Center looks like a trout compared to the overall 240,000 square feet of the 'shark' occupied by the Amateur events and the pool industry exhibitors. The 176 entrants to this year's Pro Championship is less than 10% of the competitors who signed up for the five Amateur events, although, in all fairness, the Pro Championships didn't have players who showed up more than once in the player list. And that doesn't include the TAP League's annual Championships, which adds its members to the attendance mix and is administered somewhat separately from the rest.

We don't tend to report on the Amateur events with the same measure of exhausting detail that we apply to the Pro Championships because an attempt to do so would create a report closer in size to a large novel, like the 882-page *David Copperfield* by Charles Dickens. The Amateur events don't come in a neat, digital package that can be examined the way we're able to look at a lot of the mid- to smaller-entrant tournaments that we report on every week.

So, taking the opportunity afforded us to employ a larger-format report here in the monthly *Billiard Buzz*, we can move in for a modified close-up with a measure of detail somewhere between a very-detailed narrative that traces an entire bracket from start to finish, we *can* work at highlighting the competitors who won the five Amateur events.

And, taking a large breath, we can start with the 1,024-entrant Open Amateur Players Championship, which was won by Thomas Haas of Lancaster, PA, who had finished in the semifinal of the SBE's 2024 SBE Open Amateur event. Coming off his



Thomas Haas

best recorded year with us ('25), Haas adds his SBE Open Amateur win to his 3rd place finish at the 2026 Music City Classic in Madison, TN this past January, his appearance in the Derby City Classic less than a month later (finishing 60th) and a 13th place finish at the 8th Annual Texas Open 10-Ball Championships in February. Haas defeated Brent Worth in the final of the Open Amateur event, both of them (separately) downing Ryan McCreesh and Yu Gu in the semifinals.

Maine's Dave Hall, who won the 384-entrant Seniors Amateur Player Championships for the 60+ crowd, placed 3rd in the same event, two years ago. He started his year off with a victory up in Waterville, ME where he went undefeated at the end of January in the Maine State 9-Ball Championships. We've been cataloging Hall's exploits at the tables since 1999, when he joined our database with a 5th place finish on the Joss NE 9-Ball Tour. Hall defeated Ron Frank in the finals of the

Senior event. They'd defeated David Ricci and Scott Haas (father of the Open Amateur winner) in the event semifinals.

And then, there were the 164, 65+ Super Seniors who came out to play. The event was won by New York's John Reed, who joined our database in 2016 with three cash finishes (3rd once and 4th twice) on the Western New York Pool Tour and then, appeared to retire from the tables. He'd not recorded a cash payout with us since that time and appeared to have retired from the tables. Apparently not, however, because in this year's Super Senior event, Reed defeated long-time Joss NE 9-Ball Tour veteran Bob Madenjian in the Super Senior Finals. Semifinalists in the event were Lyn Wechsler and Charles Bailey.

A former SBE Women's Amateur Championship returned this year to claim her title. Rachel Walters joined our AZBilliards database back in 2022 and has been competing throughout the Northeast in Maryland, Delaware, New York and Pennsylvania ever since. She's competed in varied state championships, been a regular on the J. Pechauer Northeast Women's tour and more recently (mid-March) competed in the WPBA's Raxx Olhausen CPBA Invitational out on Long Island (17th). Later in the month, she won the Albany Ladies 9-Ball Open. She won the SBE's Women's Amateur event in 2024 and returned this year to join a field of 183 entrants to win it a second time. She downed Tatum Cutting in the final. Julie Ha and Nicole Brown finished as semifinalists.

Alberta's Stephen Holem, who won this year's 64-entrant Pro-Am Barbox Players Championship has been recording his career at the tables with us for a

decade now and he's travelled all over the world to do it. Though centered in the Pacific Northwest, his career has included stops in England and Dohar, Qatar to compete in world championships. As February rolled into March earlier this year, he spent a week or so in Las Vegas, finishing 5th at the US Open 10-Ball Championships and 9th at the US Open 8-Ball Championships. He finished 1st in this year's SBE Pro-Am Bar Box competition and downed 1992's US Open 9-Ball Champion Tommy Kennedy to do it. Raphael DaBreo and Nathan Childress were the event's semifinalists. Among those who finished in the eight-way tie for 9th place in the event, was World Champion and BCA Hall of Famer, England's Darren Appleton.

Frank Maialetti and his Billiards Sports Network handled streaming services for the Pro Players Championship this year and as usual, live, updated, digitalpool.com brackets were employed. Tournament director Doug Ennis was at the helm of the Diamond Open Pro Players Championship with Cecilia (C.C.) Strain, same title, taking the reins of the five Amateur events. Ennis made note and thanked the individuals who "had a hand in pulling off the ambitious feat" of 176 players on 16 tables in four days of the Diamond Open Pro Players Championships."

"256 matches were played in the first two days," he said, "(and the effort put into that) allowed the maximum number of players in the field without adding more days to the event, thus keeping their travel expenses to the minimum."

Allen Hopkins, who makes this event possible every year, acknowledged the ownership and staff at The Greater Philadelphia Expo Center for their part in making it all happen, along with all of the players who came out to play and sponsors Diamond Billiard Products and Simonis Cloth.



Stephen Holem



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CHIEH-YU CHOU GOES UNDEFEATED TO WIN FIRST WPBA US OPEN IN OVER A DECADE

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

It came as a surprise to no one that Taiwan's World Champion competitor, Chieh-Yu Chou went undefeated to claim the \$60,000-added WPBA US Open at the Island Resort & Casino in Harris, MI this past weekend (April 16-19).

It came as a bit of a surprise to more than just a few that 16-year-old Savannah Easton from Las Vegas, who battled her in the final, did not.

It's not that in the end she was just the last US competitor left and the US fan base (to include competitors at the event) was pinning any unrealistic hopes on her defeating someone of Chou's caliber. When Easton arrived

to compete in the final, she did so as the #5-ranked WPBA competitor over the last 10 events and she had earned the right to be there. She'd lost a double-hill battle against Canada's Brittany Bryant in the third round, which, in effect, had put her 'out of sight, out of mind' for a while. And then, the teen-



Chieh Yu Chou

ager went to work on the loss side to win seven in a row, in the only way that works in any competitive sport; one shot, one game, one match at a time. She's always been a sharply-focused competitor, almost from the start when she burst onto the scene in the early 20s, showing up in our database for the first time, five years ago. Always composed, very business-like and with obvious skills.

With that said, 'credit where credit's due' moves us onto the main track of the story, Chou and her performance in becoming the first woman since Allison Fisher in 2012 to win a WPBA US Open and doing so in the midst of WPBA's 50th anniversary. In races to 8, Chou was giving up, on average, between three and four racks per match, never fought a double-hill battle and came close (8-6) only twice. She got by Han Yu (4), Ashley Rice (1), Tzu-Chien Wei (6), Margaret Fefilova-Styer (3) and drew Meng-Hsia Hung in one of the winners' side semifinals.

From the other end of the bracket, Indonesia's Silviana Lu set out for the hot seat match. She downed Lonnie Fox-Raymond (1) and Wan-Ling Wang (3), before Taipan's Chia-Hua Chen tossed her a double-hill challenge. She survived it to draw the WPBA's current, top-ranked competitor, Kristina Tkach, who almost gave her a second, double-hill challenge, but fell short by a game (8-6). Lu advanced to a winners' side semifinal versus Brittany Bryant, who had just survived her own double-hill challenge and sent Savannah Easton to the loss side.

Lu defeated Bryant, double hill, and moved into the hot seat match. Chou joined her after sending Meng-Hsia Hung to the loss side 8-6. In what was the last winners' side match on Saturday night, Chou claimed the hot seat over Lu 8-2.

As Chou was claiming the hot seat, Savannah Easton was working on her



Savannah Easton

fourth, loss-side match. She'd begun her Saturday at about 2 p.m., with an 8-3 victory over Ashley Rice, which she followed with a victory over Teruko MacKlin 8-1 and the elimination of one of the "Killer Fillers" (the female one, Pia) 8-4. "Roadrunner" closed out her Saturday with an 8-4 win over Taiwan's Chia-Hua Chen. Easton knew, as she drifted off to sleep, that first thing, Sunday morning, she'd be facing the woman who'd sent her to the loss side (double hill), Brittany Bryant.

Also preparing to call it a day by playing the last of Saturday's loss-side matches were two, long-time friends; Kelly Fisher and Tzu-Chien Wei (known, affectionately, among many of her pool community acquaintances as "Wei-Wei"), who used to play 'ghost' matches with each other via the Internet during the COVID days. "Wei Wei" arrived, having just eliminated Rubilen Amit 8-3 and Kristina Tkach, double hill. Fisher showed up on the heels of eliminating the event's other teenager, Sofia Mast 8-2, and Jasmin Ouschan, double hill. Tzu-Chien defeated Fisher 8-4 and knew as she headed for some Saturday night sleep that she'd be facing Meng-Hsia Hung at 10 a.m. in the morning.

The ladies of the loss side got rolling on Sunday morning with, one pre-

sumes, Chieh-Yu Chou either watching or practicing or both, nearby. There was a great deal of interest in the match between Savannah and Brittany, it being a re-match, first of all, and one that had followed Easton's elimination of Pia Filler and Chia-Hua Chen. The youngster was playing well and people were paying attention.

She opened against Bryant with three in a row that really started ratcheting the attention up. Bryant answered with two and Easton got 'em right back to regain a three-rack lead at 5-2. Brittany answered and drew within one again (5-4). They began a flurry of break-and-runs, three of them, that began and ended with Savannah up by two, and on the hill. And in the way of a lot of things-pool, Bryant's opportunity to draw within one again was foiled when she rattled the 9-ball in the hole in what proved to be the last game.

Easton dropped the 9-ball, advanced to the quarterfinals and had to wait for an hour before 'Wei Wei' and 'Bean' Hung completed their double-hill match. It was Tzu-Chien who advanced to meet her. A win for Easton would guarantee that she'd finish no worse than her previous WPBA best finish. And win it she did, in commanding fashion. 8-3.

At this point, Easton had been the last US competitor since Kelly Fisher had eliminated Joann Mason Parker in the 9th/12th battles. Parker, who would end up commentating with Lonnie Fox-Raymond in the broadcast booth for the final had won the event in 1990 to become the youngest women to win the Women's US Open title at 22. That record, Parker would note, as she was commenting in the final, would "shatter the (youngest age) record" she had set 36 years ago.

Not so fast, though. Silviana Lu proved to be a substantial obstacle to Easton's (and everybody else's) hope for an historic win. She battled the "Roadrunner" to double-hill and had a relatively easy-look at the last three balls of the 15th rack. Lu put just a little too much draw on the cue ball, shooting at the 7-ball, and it put her shot at the 8-ball a little further off-line than she would have preferred. When she made that 8-ball shot, the cue ball knocked the 9-ball up onto a short rail, as the cue traveled off to the right and down below the side pocket. A sharp cut was possible, but Lu went for the bank and missed it, leaving Easton with a rail shot into a corner pocket, which, with a little smile, she executed flawlessly.

For the "Roadrunner," it was 10 matches (nine opponents), one loss and one to go. At which point, thoughts turned to the nature of pressure and the effects of adrenaline. Shooting in her first WPBA final, both had to have been formidable. That said, she was no stranger to either. She'd been living under the influence of both, with the possibility of elimination, for seven matches in a row. She'd presumably gotten a good night's rest before she stepped up to the tables at 10 a.m. in the morning and vanquished some seriously formidable opponents.

The lag was real close, but before any adjudication was necessary, Easton tapped her ball and let Chou (known in the WPBA family as "Rita") break the first rack. Chou dropped a single ball, but couldn't see the 2-ball. A push and a pair of safety shots put Savannah in a position to jump-drop that 2-ball. She jumped successfully, but didn't make the ball and scratched, leaving Chou to run the table and open the scoring. Savannah responded with the event's first break and run to tie the score.

Off Chou's break, Savannah won rack #3. And then, off her own, she won rack #4 to take a two-rack lead at 3-1. And the crowd, as they say, went wild.

"She (Easton) might be sending a good message to Rita (Chou) here," said JoAnn Mason Parker in the broadcast booth, "I might only be 16, but I'm fearless."

A brilliantly set up 5-9 combination for "Rita" in rack #5 allowed her to pull within one. In rack #6, Easton made a thoroughly unusual unforced error, rattling the 3-ball into a hole and "Rita" took advantage to tie things up at 3-3.

It's mere speculation, but something about missing that 3-ball seemed to have an adverse effect on Easton. Chou won game #7 to take the lead and the match, for all intents and purposes, was over. Chou ended up winning eight in a row to claim the 2026 WPBA US Open.

Once again, "credit where credit is due" creates a situation where congratulations go out to Chieh-Yu Chou for her undefeated run, as well as all the competitors who made it such a memorable and long overdue return of the WPBA US Open. At the same time, we note that Savannah Easton has now moved one step closer to winning her first WPBA title. She can no longer get closer to that first win than she was this weekend. It's 'win or bust' from this point on and based on the path she took and the opponents that she faced and defeated, that first win is not far off at all.

WPBA representatives thanked the ownership and staff at the Island Resort and Casino, along with sponsors Diamond Billiard Products, Aramith Balls, Simonis Cloth, Dr. Pool Promotions, Zia Billiard Supply, Greg Shultz, Mike Messer and Perimeter Lights.

The next event on the WPBA calendar, scheduled for the weekend of June 4-7, will return the ladies to Michigan for the annual Soaring Eagle Masters at the Soaring Eagle Casino & Resort in Mt. Pleasant, MI.



Sylviana Lu

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ST. LOUIS DELIVERS WORLD-CLASS ACTION

Fedor Gorst added another title to his impressive resume by securing victory in the Bank Pool Master Showdown, adding yet another achievement to his growing list of achievements.

Showing exceptional shot-making ability and unwavering focus throughout the event, Gorst navigated a highly competitive field with confidence. In the final, he maintained his composure in key moments, executing with accuracy and control under intense pressure to overcome Jayson Shaw. His performance not only highlighted his technical mastery but also set a strong benchmark for the level of play seen throughout the opening days of the tournament.

In the women's field, Austria's Jasmin Ouschan takes her first PBS title, claiming victory at the Seybert's Women's Open over Xiaofang Fu with a series of commanding performances. Demonstrating control, experience, and relentless consistency, Ouschan delivered a string of dominant performances against a highly



competitive field. Match after match, she showcased her ability to dictate play, combining precise shot execution with strong tactical awareness. Her composed approach and ability to rise in crucial moments ultimately carried her through the event, culminating in a well-earned victory that marks a defining moment in her Pro Billiard Series journey.

The Poison Mixed Doubles Open concluded with an impressive performance from an international duo, as Wiktor Zielinski and Seo Seoa joined forces to capture the title against hometown favourite Justin Bergman and his partner, China's Xiaofang Fu. Blending their individual strengths seamlessly, the pair demonstrated

outstanding coordination, sharp decision-making, and a natural rhythm at the table throughout the event. Their ability to complement each other in both offensive execution and tactical play proved decisive, allowing them to navigate a challenging field of competitors. With confident shot-making and strong communication in key moments, Zielinski and Seo delivered a polished and well-balanced performance that ultimately carried them to victory.

Singapore's Aloysius Yapp achieved a defining moment in his professional journey, capturing the 2026 Yalin WPA Men's 8-Ball World Championship presented by Poison in a victory over previous 2022 8-Ball World Champion, Spain's Francisco Sanchez Ruiz. Rising above a highly competitive global field, Yapp delivered a composed and confident performance across the tournament, demonstrating both precision and maturity beyond his years. His ability to maintain control in high-pressure situations, particularly against world-class opposition, underscored his growth as a player.



Jasmin Ouschan

“ AUSTRIA'S ALBIN OUSCHAN AND INDIVIDUAL ATHLETE WIKTOR ZIELINSKI COMPLETED THE PODIUM WITH STRONG SEMIFINAL FINISHES, SHARING THIRD PLACE AFTER IMPRESSIVE RUNS OF THEIR OWN. ”



Seo Seoa and Wiktor Zielinski

Austria's Albin Ouschan and Individual Athlete Wiktor Zielinski completed the podium with strong semifinal finishes, sharing third place after impressive runs of their own.

The event also featured a standout local storyline, as St. Louis native Justin Bergman teamed up with China's Xiaofang Fu for an inspiring run in the mixed doubles open. The duo's performances energized the home crowd, with fans turning out in force to support their hometown favourite, creating one of the most memorable atmospheres of the week.

With packed stands, world-class competition, and unforgettable moments, the St. Louis stop of the Pro Billiard Series once again proved to be a highlight on the international billiards calendar.

GOMEZ & ATENCIO

STORM RALEIGH

By **Mary Kenniston** - File photos courtesy **Erwin Dionisio**

Owners Rich Kuntz and Tammy Frampton of the legendary Brass Tap & Billiards in Raleigh, NC welcomed players and fans to the \$22,500 added Beasley Open the last few days (April 15-th-19th).

The event was presented and sponsored by Doug Beasley of Beasley Custom Cues, Brass Tap & Billiards, PoolActionTV.com and attorney Joseph J. Long.

Opening the event was the latest stop on the Making It In America One Pocket Tour. Featuring \$10,000 in added money, the entry fee was \$300 and the format was double elimination with races to 3/3 with one extended race to four in the finals.

A star-studded field of 34 players included BCA and One Pocket Hall of Famer Francisco Bustamante, reign-

ing International Open One Pocket and 2024 Buffalo's Pro One Pocket champ Roberto Gomez, last year's winner of the Kennesaw, GA stop on the Making It In America One Pocket Tour Josh Roberts, current Derby City Classic Bank Ring Game winner Mike DeLawder and 2024's Bayou State Classic One Pocket champ Billy Thorpe.

International flavor was added by Ukraine's Vitaliy Patsura, Albania's Eduard Brego, Britain's Elliott Sanderson, Finland's Arseni Sevastyanov, Germany's Felix Vogel, Greece's Neilos Bazianos, India's Yash Ajmera and

Norway's Emil Andre Gangflot. Johnathon Pinegar ("Hennessee"), rising star Lukas Fracasso-Verner, Sergio Rivas, BJ Ussery, Brandon Shuff and local favorite Shane Wolford also joined the fray.

Shaking off the rust was Adam Smith and three time winner of the Buffalo Pro Classic, Tony Chohan, with a supply of his new one pocket book, "Game Tight Analysis."

After the players auction, meeting and draw, play began.

Charging toward the final four on the winner's side was Shane Wolford, Adam Smith, Roberto Gomez and Billy Thorpe. Moving into the hot seat seat was Smith after defeating Wolford and Thorpe after a win over Gomez – both matches 3-1.

Thorpe then defeated Smith and locked up his seat in the finals – again 3-1.

The one loss side was a tangle of well-known names fighting for their chance against Smith. Bustamante edged out Hennessee 3-2 but was then smoked by Roberts 3-0. Roberts went on to eliminate Vogel 3-0, Wolford 3-1 until he went down to Gomez 3-1.

Rivas had a tough slog through Brego (3-1), DeLawder (3-2), Savastyanov (3-1), Gangflot (3-1) until he was eliminated by Gomez (3-0).



Roberto Gomez

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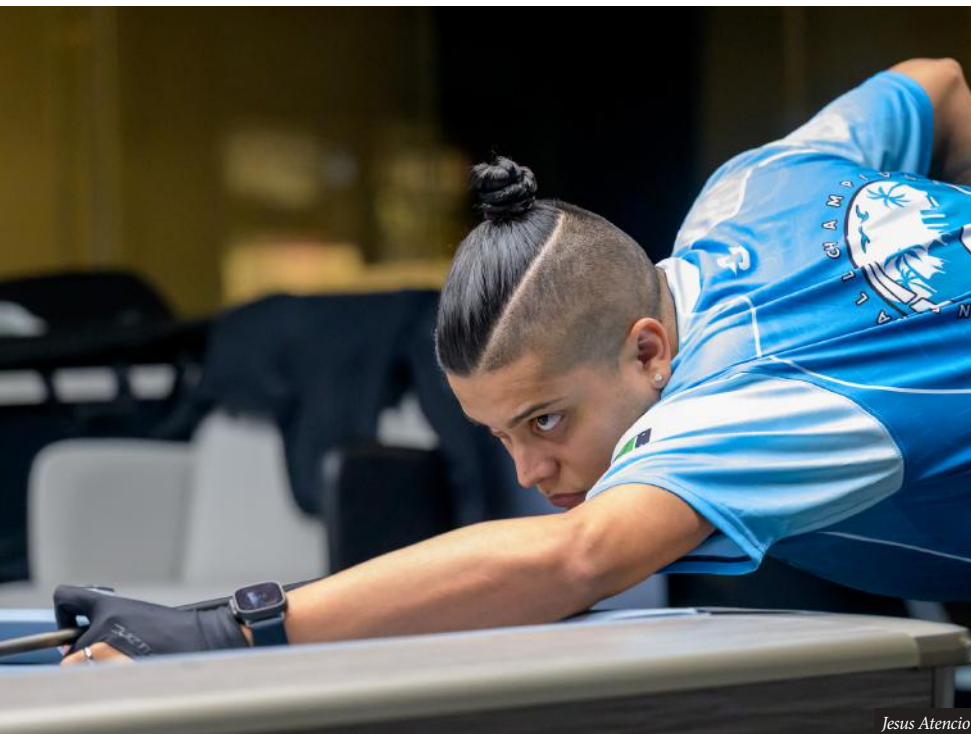
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Jesus Atencio

This was one of the toughest fields we've seen in an American event in several years. Nearly every match was a great one as players battled to reach the final sixteen phase of the tournament.

Play began on Friday evening and by Saturday night, the field was whittled down to the final sixteen.

Undefeated players advancing were Max Eberle, Elliott Sanderson, Jesus Atencio, Oliver Szolnoki, Nathan Childress, Sergio Rivas, BJ Ussery and Roberto Gomez.

They were joined in the single elimination portion of the event by one loss players Eric Roberts, Robb Saez, Boris Ivanovski, Johnathan ("Hennessee") Pinegar, Felix Vogel, Georgi Georgiev, Arseni Sevastyanov and Lukas Fracasso-Verner.

The undefeated players were staggered throughout the bracket and the one loss players were drawn into the empty slots.

Play began on Sunday with all eight matches starting at 9 AM. By late Sunday afternoon, Felix Vogel and Jesus Atencio as well as Hennessee and Lukas Fracasso-Verner were matched up and playing to reach the finals.

Both matches were hard fought and went to the wire as young guns Atencio and Fracasso-Verner headed to the finals with identical scores of 9-8. Vogel and Hennessee finished in a tie for third place.

Jesus rocketed out to a 6-1 lead but then let Lukas back into the match as he claimed the next two games. However, Jesus pulled away and won the next two making it 8-3.

Lukas won the next game but scratched. Jesus took advantage of it and won the next three games to take the match and title 11-4.

Gomez then fought his way back to the finals with wins over Roberts and Smith – both by a 3-1 score. Roberts finished in fourth place and Smith in third.

As mentioned previously, the finals were one extended race to four and it went right down to the wire!

And what a dogfight it was! Thorpe took the first game and Gomez the next. Billy won the third game and Roberto took the next two to reach the hill first. Thorpe then tied it up a three apiece – one game for it all!

Neither player took any chances until Gomez got an opening and pocketed a ball. Back and forth they went until a mistake by Thorpe left a shot. Roberto pocketed another five to lead the match 6-0. Billy clawed his way back to 5-4 and fouled. Gomez made an impressive two railer to make it 6-3.

Not giving up, Thorpe sliced one in but scratched on the next leaving Roberto playing for two. Roberto closed out the match 8-3 and took the title!

Following this, a full field of 64 players vied for the title and World Nine-ball Tour (WNT) ranking points in this \$12,500 added event.

The entry fee for this nine ball event was also \$300 and the format was double elimination until down to the final sixteen – races were 8/8. Once in the final stage of the event, it was single elimination with races to nine and one extended race to eleven in the finals.

In addition to the aforementioned players in the one pocket event, notables included Germany's Boris Ivanovski, Hungary's Oliver Szolnoki, Venezuela's Luis Orellana, the Netherlands' Yannick Pongers, Bulgaria's Georgi Georgiev and Sean Mark Malayan of the Philippines.

Venezuelan transplant Jesus Atencio, Robb Saez, Max Eberle, Raymond Linares, Eric Roberts and Gregorio Sanchez rounded out the field.

After the players auction, meeting and draw, the action began.

CYNERGY



Shane Van Boening
GENERATION II

AS HIS LEGEND GROWS, THE LEGACY CONTINUES | 4.7.2026 | CUETEC.COM

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CAPTAIN JOHAN RUIJSINK

RETURNS TO LEAD TEAM USA AT MOSCONI CUP, 27–30 NOVEMBER

The World Nineball Tour is delighted to confirm the return of Johan Ruijsink as captain of Team USA for the 2026 Mosconi Cup, as the Americans look to reclaim victory on home soil at the Caribe Royale Resort in Orlando, Florida from 27–30 November.

Ruijsink's return marks a significant moment for Team USA, with the Dutchman having masterminded the nation's last two victories in 2018 and 2019. His leadership during that period helped re-establish belief, structure, and a winning mentality within the American side — something he now aims to reignite.

Since that back-to-back success, Team USA has suffered six consecutive defeats, and Ruijsink now returns with a clear mission to rebuild, reset, and restore a winning culture — drawing on his renowned tactical discipline and ability to unite teams as the USA looks to turn the tide on home soil.

Johan Ruijsink, Team USA Captain, said: "Coming back to lead Team USA again means a great deal to me.

The Mosconi Cup has always been in my heart. Because it is about more than just raw talent; It is about heart, teamwork and handling the biggest moments in the most intense environment.

We need to be 100% committed, prepared and ready to show that we have some of the best players and upcoming talents in the world to choose from. It is an honour to be part of that effort and with the help of our incredible fan base, it is time to set the record straight."

Emily Frazer, CEO of Matchroom Multi Sport, added: "We're delighted to welcome Johan back as captain of Team USA. His impact on the team during the 2018 and 2019 victories was undeniable — he brought structure, belief,

and a winning culture that delivered results.

"We want to bring that real competitive edge back to the Mosconi Cup, and we trust Johan to do exactly that. He knows what it takes to win this event, and with the competition returning to American soil, it's incredibly exciting to see if he can inspire this team to rise again and end their losing streak."

With a passionate home crowd expected in Orlando, the stage is set for a blockbuster showdown as Team USA looks to reclaim the Mosconi Cup in front of their fans.

Further details on the 2026 Mosconi Cup, including ranking structure and qualification cut-offs for both Team USA and Team Europe, will be announced soon.



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WOJCIECH SZEWCZYK

NAMED WORLD GAMES ATHLETE OF THE MONTH

Polish pool star Wojciech Szewczyk has been named Athlete of the Month for April 2026 following a breakthrough victory that marks a defining moment in his career.

Szewczyk captured his first Euro-tour gold medal at the Turkish Open, delivering a composed and consistent performance across the weekend to finally secure a title that had long been within reach.

For years, Szewczyk has been knocking on the door of Eurotour success, often coming close but falling just short. This time, however, everything aligned. Competing in his favoured discipline of 8-ball, the Polish cueist maintained high-level consistency throughout the tournament—some-

thing he himself credits as the decisive factor.

“Winning a Euro Tour stop has been on my list of goals for quite some time,” Szewczyk said.

“I have always known it’s within reach... in sports you need patience and believe that everything has its time.”

“I was consistent throughout the tournament and this time it brought the desired result,” he added. “Once you lift that trophy it is very rewarding—

sometimes even more if you had to go through a few upsets along the way.”

Performance at The World Games 2025

His triumph in Turkey is made even more significant when viewed against the backdrop of recent near-misses. At The World Games 2025 in Chengdu, Szewczyk finished fourth, narrowly missing out on a medal after two heartbreaking 8–9 defeats. The podium was ultimately claimed by Oliver Szolnoki, Gerson Martinez, and Joshua Filler.

Rather than allowing those losses to derail his progress, Szewczyk used the experience to strengthen his mental resilience. Reflecting on Chengdu, he emphasized the importance of acceptance and emotional control.

“Once you lose a match it is done... but your reaction can shape you for what’s to come,” he explained. “If you



Wojciech Szewczyk

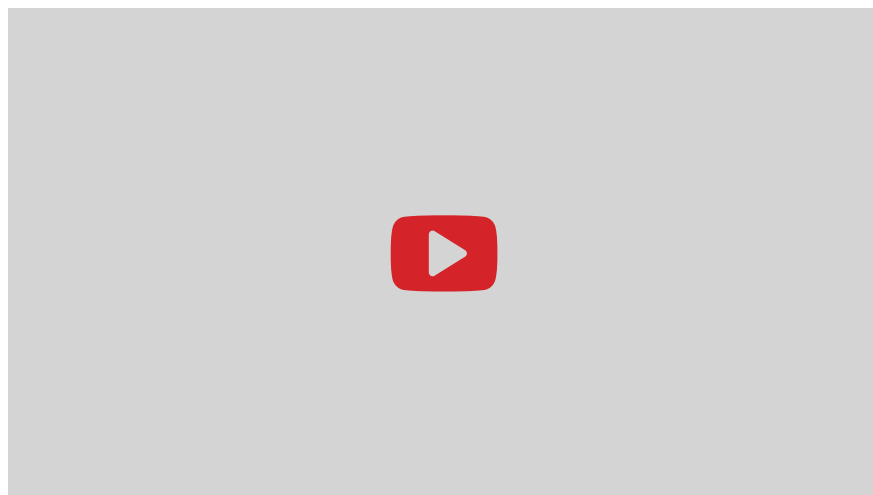
don't overreact to losing then there is less pressure."

He also recalled a pivotal moment from the semi-final that proved decisive:

"I had that dreadful feeling when I scratched on my break at 8:8... very often it means a rack lost straight away," he said. "Then Oliver played a great shot and runout to win the match—it was really impressive."

That mindset appears to have paid off almost immediately. Just weeks after The World Games, Szewczyk returned to winning ways with a World Cup victory at the China Open, carrying that momentum into a strong 2026 season that has now been crowned with Euro-tour success.

Despite competing against some of the world's best, Szewczyk remains grounded and focused on continuous improvement. He spoke of the inspi-



ration drawn from sharing the stage with elite athletes and the importance of adaptability in high-pressure environments.

Looking ahead, Szewczyk has set ambitious yet measured goals. He aims to secure a World Ranking event title, perform strongly across all three

World Championships this season, and finish the year among the top-ranked players globally. Beyond results, he also stresses the importance of balance.

"My goal is to keep on improving... not being too hard on myself and enjoying the journey," he said.

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FOURTH ANNUAL KIDZ KLINIK

BRINGS YOUNG PLAYERS TOGETHER ACROSS THE REGION

On Saturday, April 11th, Felt Billiards in Englewood, Colorado hosted another incredible junior pool clinic, welcoming over 25 young players and their families for a dynamic day of fun, coaching and connection.

Led by Felt's house pro, Samm Diep, this annual community event brought together participants ages 6 to 18, traveling from as far as Colorado Springs, Cheyenne,

Wyoming and even Atlanta, Georgia. This special day was created to give young players who have never been exposed to pool an opportunity to receive formal instruction and to con-

nect them with local junior league operators who can support their continued growth in the sport.

Young players rotated through seven learning stations, earning plastic eggs



filled with tickets. At the end of the clinic, they traded their tickets for a wide range of donated prizes, valued from 1 to 250 tickets. Among the most popular items were baby cues signed by "The Black Widow," Jeanette Lee, and Dynasphere cue balls signed by "Venom Trickshots," Florian Kohler, both valued at 250 tickets.

If you are interested in donating prizes for next year's Kidz Klinik, or if you would like guidance on hosting a similar event in your area, reach out to Samm. Her devotion to helping create more opportunities for young players everywhere is unparalleled.

This clinic would not have been possible without the support of Felt Billiards and its amazing staff, along with the incredible team of volunteers and supporters. A huge thank-you to everyone who attended, managed stations, and helped spread the word:

PBIA Instructors: Jeremiah Gage (2x volunteer), Ron Cox (2x volunteer), Sandy Kermoade (2x volunteer), Adam Burke, Neal Morgan

Top Players: Chris McDaniel (4x volunteer), Matt Winfield, Danny & Leannetta Malone

Junior League Volunteers: D'von and Logan

Special Guest: Roger Magic (Roger-Magic.com) Photographer: Graham Tipton(Event Photos here:

<https://gallery.grahamtiptonphotography.com/kidsclinic-1/>

As we wrap up another successful Kidz Klinik, it's inspiring to imagine where these young players will go next. Their passion for the game is only just beginning, and we can't wait to watch their journeys unfold. We look forward to seeing everyone again next year!

Samm is a Master-certified instructor through the PBIA (Professional Billiard Instructors Association) and ACS (American Cue Sports). As the National Juniors Team USA coach and the 2024 PBIA Instructor of the Year, she brings two decades of experience working with players of all ages and skill levels. She offers both individual and group instruction, available in-person and remotely.

Felt Billiards is Colorado's premier billiards destination, offering a top-tier playing experience for players of all skill levels. Located in Englewood, CO, Felt combines a welcoming atmosphere with professional-grade tables, exceptional service, and a vibrant community of players. Whether you're here to compete, learn, or simply enjoy a night out, Felt delivers a best-in-class billiards and bar experience with great drinks, delicious food, and an unmatched passion for the game.



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TRADITION MEETS TRANSFORMATION – THE GAME WILL NEVER BE SAME

For nearly a century, the Billiard Congress of America (BCA) has promoted, protected, and advanced cue sports across the United States. Today, we take one of the most consequential steps in our association's history with the formal announcement and formation of USA Cue Sports.



USA Cue Sports has been established to serve as the unified player federation for professional cue sport athletes in the United States and North America. As outlined in its newly adopted Constitution, USA Cue Sports shall “encourage, promote, develop, advance, and be the recognized unifying body of all cue sports in North America” while operating in collaboration with the BCA and in coordination with the World Pool-Billiard Association (WPA) and the World Confederation of Billiards Sports (WCBS).

This is not merely a structural realignment between organizations. It is a cultural shift for our sport and our industry.

For decades, cue sports in America have wrestled with perception and way too often it is viewed as a pastime played in a smoke-filled bar rather than a disciplined athletic pursuit governed by rules, ethics, training standards, and defined competitive pathways. That narrative changes now. USA Cue Sports formally adopts sports policy consistent with the Olympic Charter, recognizes the WADA Anti-Doping Code, and aligns with internationally accepted standards of governance and integrity.

This alignment is deliberate. The ultimate mission of USA Cue Sports is rec-

ognition by the United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee (USOPC). Such recognition would validate cue sports as an Olympic-level discipline in governance, athlete protection, and competitive structure. More importantly, it would position American players within a globally recognized sporting framework. One that creates a clear, credible pathway to develop tomorrow's World Champions.

Yet this transformation extends well beyond elite competition. It strengthens the entire ecosystem of our industry.

The USA Cue Sports Board of Directors reflects the full diversity of our sport. Representation includes North American federations, a professional women's athlete representative, a men's professional athlete representative, snooker and carom delegates, a para-athlete representative, a youth representative through the Billiard Education Foundation, a national amateur league representative, and a pool room proprietor representative. For now, every voting member must be in good standing with the BCA, ensuring that sport governance and industry leadership remain strategically aligned.

Article IV of the Constitution makes the federation's intent clear: USA Cue Sports will conduct national cham-

pionships across all disciplines that nominate athletes to international competitions. We will continue to maintain comprehensive ranking lists and develop training programs for officials and coaches. In short, it establishes a proper sporting code foundation our industry has long needed: one built on structure, accountability, and opportunity.

“USA Cue Sports represents unity,” shares BCA Chairman Jacklyn Ady. “It ensures that our athletes, leagues, rooms, and industry partners stand together under one credible, internationally respected structure. This is how we elevate the sport throughout the United States and North America.”

USA Cue Sports President Ed Liddawi underscores the athlete-first mission: “For the first time, American cue sport athletes have a defined, protected, and internationally aligned federation advocating on their behalf. This creates opportunity, accountability, and legitimacy at every level.”

And from my perspective, this is a turning point for our industry. This is bigger than governance. This is the moment cue sports in America stops asking for recognition and starts defining its place on the world stage. We are building the infrastructure that transforms players into athletes, tournaments into championships, and passion into Olympic possibility.



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WORLD BILLIARDS LEGEND ALLISON FISHER

HONORED WITH NORTH CAROLINA'S PRESTIGIOUS LONG LEAF PINE AWARD

Internationally acclaimed billiards champion Allison Fisher, widely regarded as one of the greatest players in the history of the sport, has been awarded The Order of the Long Leaf Pine, one of North Carolina's highest civilian honors.

Born and raised in the United Kingdom, Fisher has proudly called the United States—and specifically Charlotte, North Carolina—her home for the past 30 years. During her extraordinary career, she has amassed more than 80 titles, numerous world championship victories, and earned induction into the Billiard Congress of America Hall of Fame, cementing her legacy as a dominant force in cue sports.

The Long Leaf Pine Award recognizes individuals who have made exception-

al contributions to the state and its communities. Past recipients include distinguished figures such as Michael Jordan and Maya Angelou, underscoring the significance of this honor.

In a private ceremony on March 30, Walter Bowers, director of Governor Josh Stein's Charlotte office, presented Fisher with the award.

"We are so thankful to Allison Fisher for her service and everything she provides to the state," said Bowers in his remarks.

Fisher expressed deep appreciation for the recognition, saying, "This award means so much to me. It is a tremendous honor to receive the Long Leaf Pine Award."

Fisher attended the ceremony alongside her mother, Christine, her nominator Lisa Carver, and producer of two television programs featuring the billiards icon, Monty Hobbs (Just Do GOOD Entertainment, and the Dirty Laundry Picture Company).



Allison Fisher and Walter Bowers

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J. Pechauer Custom Cues proudly announces the release of the Sofia Mast Champion Collection, a new addition to its premium Champion Collection lineup.

Inspired by Sofia Mast's rising presence on the world stage and her unmistakable “Pink Dagger” identity, this exclusive series embodies a refined balance of elegance, edge, and individuality.

Designed in collaboration with Sofia, each cue in the collection reflects her personal style and vision—where clean lines meet bold accents, and subtle pink elements are elevated with sharp, dagger-inspired details. From carefully selected materials to intricate inlays and signature finishes, every cue is crafted to capture the essence of the Pink Dagger: confident, precise, and quietly powerful.

“At Pechauer, we take great pride in working alongside players to bring their story to life through design,” said Joe Pechauer, President of J. Pechauer Custom Cues. “Sofia’s collection is a perfect reflection of who she is—not only as a competitor, but as a person. The Pink Dagger theme brings a fresh, modern energy to the Champion Collection while maintaining the craftsmanship and quality we’ve built our name on for over 60 years.”

The Sofia Mast Champion Collection joins an elite group of signature series within the Champion Collection, alongside designs from world-class players David Alcaide and April Larson. With this latest release, Pechauer continues its tradition of blending heritage craftsmanship with the evolving identity of today’s game.

Each cue in the collection is proudly American-made in Green Bay, Wisconsin, where the Pechauer family has been handcrafting high-performance cues for more than six decades. The Sofia Mast series represents a unique opportunity for players and collectors alike to own a piece of a rising star’s journey.

The Sofia Mast Champion Collection is now available through authorized Pechauer dealers and online at www.pechauer.com.

For more information, please contact:
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Website: www.pechauer.com

About J. Pechauer Custom Cues

Family-owned and American-made since 1963, J. Pechauer Custom Cues has built a legacy of precision craftsmanship, performance, and innovation. Based in Green Bay, Wisconsin, the company continues to handcraft each cue with the same dedication to quality that has defined the Pechauer name for over 60 years.

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JUST DO GOOD ENTERTAINMENT EXPANDS ITS SLATE OF IMPACT-DRIVEN PROGRAMMING WITH NEW EPISODES, DOCUMENTARY, AND HIGHPROFILE COLLABORATIONS

Just Do GOOD Entertainment (JDG), the North Carolina–based production company dedicated to spotlighting uplifting stories and acts of generosity, is celebrating a series of new milestones as it continues to grow its national footprint.

The company has completed filming a new two-part episode of its signature series, Finding Kindness, this time in Phoenix, Arizona. Building on the success of the debut Queens, NY episode, the Phoenix installment centers on entrepreneur Peggy Mallen, CEO of the legendary Balabushka Cue Company. Joining JDG founders and series hosts Monty Hobbs and Valerie Smaldone is featured celebrity guest host, world-renowned billiards champion Allison

Fisher, known to fans as “The Duchess of Doom.”

The upcoming episodes highlight Mallen, who leads with generosity, compassion, and resilience; core values at the heart of the program. Viewers will also get a deeper look at the history of the Balabushka Cue Company, along with insights into Fisher’s career during this transitional moment after her recent retirement announcement.

The two-part episode will premiere this summer on UP Faith & Family.

New Documentary Explores Balabushka’s Cinematic Legacy

While in Arizona, the JDG team also began principal photography on a new documentary exploring the cultural prominence of the Balabushka brand as featured in the 1986 Academy Award-winning film *The Color of Money*, starring Paul Newman and Tom Cruise.



Monty Hobbs, Valerie Smaldone Allison Fisher and Peggy Mallen

The documentary will include appearances by legendary pool players and individuals who worked closely with master craftsman George Balabushka. The film is slated for release later this year.

Allison Fisher Expands Post-Retirement Career with New Hosting Role

Fresh from announcing her retirement from competitive play, Allison Fisher continues to remain active on screen and within the billiards community. In addition to her guest-hosting role on Finding Kindness, Fisher recently wrapped production as host of Grace the Table, produced by DLPC, a Wilmington-based production company, formed by JDG's Monty Hobbs. Hobbs will continue creating new content with both DLPC and Just Do GOOD Entertainment with partner Valerie Smaldone.

Fisher's contributions to the sport and her continued advocacy will be recog-



Peggy Mallen and Allison Fisher

nized on March 30, when she receives the prestigious Order of the Long Leaf Pine Award from North Carolina Governor Josh Stein.

About Just Do GOOD Entertainment

Just Do GOOD Entertainment founded by Monty Hobbs and Valerie

Smaldone is dedicated to producing content that inspires, uplifts, and celebrates the everyday heroes who make a difference in their communities. Through scripted and unscripted projects, JDG aims to shine a light on kindness, compassion, and the power of positive storytelling.

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Apr 01 - Apr 08

2026 Poison Mixed Doubles Open St Louis

Hyatt Regency St. Louis

St Louis, MO

- 1 Seo Seoa \$20,000
- 1 Wiktor Zielinski \$20,000
- 2 Justin Bergman \$10,000
- 2 Xiao-Fang Fu \$10,000
- 3 Chezka Centeno \$5,000
- 3 Fedor Gorst \$5,000
- 3 Jayson Shaw \$5,000
- 3 Meng-Hsia Hung \$5,000
- 5 Albin Ouschan \$2,500
- 5 Aloysius Yapp \$2,500
- 5 Carlo Biado \$2,500
- 5 Jasmin Ouschan \$2,500
- 5 Rubilen Amit \$2,500
- 5 Silviana Lu \$2,500
- 5 Wojciech Szewczyk \$2,500
- 5 Yuki Hiraguchi \$2,500

Apr 01 - Apr 02

Bank Pool Master Showdown

Hyatt Regency St. Louis

St Louis, MO

- 1 Fedor Gorst \$15,000
- 2 Jayson Shaw \$9,000
- 3 Justin Bergman \$4,500
- 3 Roberto Gomez \$4,500
- 5 Albin Ouschan \$2,500
- 5 Joshua Filler \$2,500
- 5 Justin Hall \$2,500
- 5 Shane Van Boening \$2,500
- 9 Billy Thorpe \$875
- 9 Carlo Biado \$875
- 9 Jeffrey De Luna \$875
- 9 Skyler Woodward \$875

Apr 01 - Apr 08

2026 WPA Men's World 8-Ball Championship

Hyatt Regency St. Louis

St Louis, MO

- 1 Aloysius Yapp \$90,000

- 2 Francisco Sanchez-Ruiz \$42,000
- 3 Albin Ouschan \$21,000
- 3 Wiktor Zielinski \$21,000
- 5 Carlo Biado \$10,500
- 5 Daniel Maciol \$10,500
- 5 Jayson Shaw \$10,500
- 5 Kun Lin Wu \$10,500
- 9 Dimitris Loukatos \$5,250
- 9 Fedor Gorst \$5,250
- 9 Kledio Kaci \$5,250
- 9 Marco Teutscher \$5,250
- 9 Mario He \$5,250
- 9 Mieszko Fortunski \$5,250
- 9 Skyler Woodward \$5,250
- 9 Stefan Kasper \$5,250
- 17 Casper Matikainen \$2,625
- 17 Chia-Chen Hsieh \$2,625
- 17 David Alcaide \$2,625
- 17 Eklent Kaci \$2,625
- 17 Gerson Martinez \$2,625
- 17 Hubert Lopotko \$2,625
- 17 John Morra \$2,625
- 17 Jonas Souto Comino \$2,625
- 17 Justin Bergman \$2,625
- 17 Maximilian Lechner \$2,625
- 17 Naoyuki Oi \$2,625
- 17 Oliver Szolnoki \$2,625
- 17 Radoslaw Babica \$2,625
- 17 Robbie Capito \$2,625
- 17 Szymon Kural \$2,625
- 17 Tyler Styer \$2,625

Apr 01 - Apr 08

2026 Seyberts Women's St Louis Open

Hyatt Regency St. Louis

St Louis, MO

- 1 Jasmin Ouschan \$27,000
- 2 Xiao-Fang Fu \$15,750
- 3 Brittany Bryant \$7,875
- 3 Kristina Zlateva \$7,875
- 5 Chihiro Kawahara \$3,938
- 5 Kelly Fisher \$3,938
- 5 Pia Filler \$3,938
- 5 Seo Seoa \$3,938
- 9 Chezka Centeno \$1,969

- 9 Chieh-Yu Chou \$1,969
- 9 Jordan Helfrey \$1,969
- 9 Kristina Tkach \$1,969
- 9 Meng-Hsia Hung \$1,969
- 9 Mu Yan Zhang \$1,969
- 9 Rubilen Amit \$1,969
- 9 Sofia Mast \$1,969

Apr 04 - Apr 04

B & L Billiards Quad Bracket

South Jersey Billiards

Somedale, NJ

- 1 Florian Ancho \$1,500
- 2 Justin Pelech \$800
- 3 Ruben Soto \$440
- 3 Steve Lilly \$440
- 5 Josh Brothers \$260
- 5 Maksym Lavrynenko \$260
- 5 Mark Miller \$260
- 5 Thaddeus Patrice \$260
- 9 Alex Booth \$120
- 9 Dave Bunting \$120
- 9 Ed Wooley \$120
- 9 Isabel Perez \$120
- 9 Ken Hahnen \$120
- 9 Matt Krah \$120
- 9 Mike Saleh \$120
- 9 Scott Lander \$120

Apr 04 - Apr 04

Pool Series Point Event #5

The Smokin Cue

Charlotte, NC

- 1 BJ Ussery \$800
- 2 Randy Flakes \$500
- 3 Jeff Peele \$250
- 3 Mike Davis \$250

Apr 04 - Apr 05

SE Open 9-Ball Tour Stop

Rack and Grill II

Augusta, Georgia

- 1 Josh Roberts \$795
- 2 Lukas Fracasso-Verner \$500

3 Landon Hollingsworth \$400
4 Johnny Archer \$300
5 Mento Long \$200
5 Paul Song \$200
7 Jason Stemen \$100
7 Tommy Kennedy \$100

Apr 09 - Apr 12

2026 Super Billiards Expo Open NineBall Pro Players Championship

Greater Philadelphia Expo Center at Oaks

Oaks, PA

1 Wiktor Zielinski \$16,000
2 Hubert Lopotko \$10,000
3 Dominik Jastrzab \$7,000
3 Michael Feliciano \$7,000
5 Elliott Sanderson \$5,000
5 John Morra \$5,000
5 Naoyuki Oi \$5,000
5 Sanjin Pehlivanovic \$5,000
9 Aloysius Yapp \$3,000
9 Amil Andre Gangflot \$3,000
9 Fedor Gorst \$3,000
9 Francisco Sanchez-Ruiz \$3,000
9 Fraser Patrick \$3,000
9 Pijus Labutis \$3,000
9 Thorsten Hohmann \$3,000
9 Tyler Styer \$3,000
17 Albin Ouschan \$1,000
17 Alex Bausch \$1,000
17 Billy Thorpe \$1,000
17 Denis Grabe \$1,000
17 Dimitris Loukatos \$1,000
17 Eklent Kaci \$1,000
17 Jayson Shaw \$1,000
17 Jeremy Seaman \$1,000
17 Jesus Atencio \$1,000
17 Mario He \$1,000
17 Maximilian Lechner \$1,000
17 Moritz Neuhausen \$1,000
17 Niels Feijen \$1,000
17 Oscar Dominguez \$1,000
17 Paul Song \$1,000
17 Vitaliy Patsura \$1,000

Apr 09 - Apr 12

2026 Super Billiards Expo Open Amateur Players Championship

Greater Philadelphia Expo Center at Oaks

Oaks, PA
1st Thomas Haas \$5,000
2nd Brent Worth \$3,000
3rd Ryan McCreesh \$2,500
Yu Gu
5th Derek Schwager \$2,000
Kirill Rutman
Tanner McKinney
Samuel Gilmer
9th Robert Hontz \$1,500
Shawn Bogutskie
Flecha Alexander
Josh Wood
Jose Martinez
Stuart MacTaggart
Yesid Garibelle
Brett Ross
17th Scott Roberts \$1,100
Joe Healy
Donald Robideau
Patrick Calvares
Tarek Elmalia
Kenji Beppu
Mikael Hinton
Patrick Langley
Jeff Lotzi
Chris Rhoades
Rob Krull
Jake Jackson
John Newton
Doug Moor
Michael Mathieu
Yanell Zakaev
33rd Jordan Scanlan \$1,000
Tom Midena
Nicholas Coppola
Greg Taylor
Jose Vicente
Randall Lindon
Peter Copland
Joshua Padron
Alberto Sanchez
Curtis Smith
Marquez Avila
Colston Harrelson
Gregory Leflar
Jay Norris
Paul Spaanstra
Peter Vanderau
James Garrett
Tyler Schultz
Rajesh Vannala
Daren Beliveau

Mark Nanashee
David Hall
Matthew Jarrell
Charles Vergara
Max Watanabe
Jonathan Ailstock
Horelbin Ramas
Corey Sykes
Thomas Zippler
Jesse Dutscher
Jake Miosi
Billie McCollum

Apr 09 - Apr 12

2026 Super Billiards Expo Senior Amateur Players Championship

Greater Philadelphia Expo Center at Oaks

Oaks, PA

1st Dave Hall \$4,000
2nd Ron Frank \$2,500
3rd David Ricci \$1,300
Scott Haas
5th Toru Hayakawa \$1,000
Reginald Jackson
Ireneo Villanueva
Joe Dupuis
9th Michael Cantrell \$750
Curtis Smith
Robert Madenjian
Shawn Bogutskie
Eric Young
James Young
Robert Marsh
Daren Belliveau
17th Bobby Conner \$600
Troy Sanders
Eric Torres
David Hunt
David Marquez
Michael Pistelli
Jamie Doelinger
Shane Hardie
Gregory Lamb
Joseph Healy
Eddie Hairfield
Leo Vig
Duc Lam
Geoffrey Montgomery
Michael Couvrette
Paul Cogle

Apr 09 - Apr 12

2026 Super Billiards Expo Super Senior Amateur Players Championship

Greater Philadelphia Expo Center at Oaks

Oaks, PA
1st John Reed \$2,000
2nd Robert Madenjian \$1,400
3rd Lyn Wechsler \$900
Charles Bailey
5th Jerry Fitchett \$600
Donald Killino
Everard Belliveau
Frank Fatteri
9th Dinko Busanich \$300
Dave Racki
William Keenan
Regan Robinault
Daniel Shoemaker
Ace Aughtry
Roy Whetzel
James Edwards

Apr 09 - Apr 12

2026 Super Billiards Expo Women's Amateur Players Championship

Greater Philadelphia Expo Center at Oaks

Oaks, PA
1st Rachel Walters \$2,000
2nd Tatum Cutting \$1,400
3rd Julie Ha
Nicole Brown
5th Gwen Townsend \$750
Kelly Wyatt
Rachel Lang
Skylar Hess
9th Jia Li \$500
Amy Theriault
Wendy Snow
Suzanna Wong
Tam Trinh
Arianna Houston
Kindra Prestegard
Julie Skripac

Apr 09 - Apr 12

2026 Super Billiards Expo Pro/Am Barbox Players Championship

Greater Philadelphia Expo Center at Oaks

Oaks, PA
1st Stephen Holem \$5,000
2nd Tommy Kennedy \$3,000
3rd Raphael DaBreo \$1,500
Nathan Childress
5th Robb Saez \$1,000
Steve Fleming
Kirk Totten
Jose Vicente
9th Christopher Tevez \$500
Edward King
James Davis
James Adam
Matt Harrell
Jacob Kohl
Darren Appleton
Chris Montalvo

Apr 11 - Apr 11

Q City 9-Ball Tour Stop

Dot's Cue Club

Rocky Mount, NC
1 Jason Rogers \$600
2 Graham Swinson \$400
3 Wilson Dorsey \$200
4 Tracy Hardie \$100

Apr 11 - Apr 12

NWPA Tour 2026 Stop 1

Golden Fleece

Everett, Washington
1 Kim Jones \$765
2 Iris Wang \$515
3 Kathie MacDonald \$330
4 Melyssa Chasteen \$220
5 Melissa Rushton \$155
5 Shaundra Radford \$155
7 Caylie Parker \$115
7 Miranda Smyser \$115
9 Andy Camping \$80
9 Annie Almanzor \$80
9 Evelyn Hazlett \$80
9 Jeanne Christiansen \$80
13 Jennifer Davieau \$55
13 Lela Andrews \$55
13 Nicole Donisi \$55

Apr 14 - Apr 19

2026 Beasley Open One Pocket

Brass Tap Billiards

Raleigh, NC
1 Roberto Gomez \$7,500
2 Billy Thorpe \$3,700
3 Adam Smith \$2,300
4 Josh Roberts \$1,500
5 Sergio Rivas \$1,000
5 Shane Wolford \$1,000
7 Amil Andre Gangflot \$750
7 Felix Vogel \$750

Apr 14 - Apr 19

2026 Beasley Open 9-Ball

Brass Tap Billiards

Raleigh, NC
1 Jesus Atencio \$7,500
2 Lukas Fracasso-Verner \$5,000
3 Felix Vogel \$3,200
3 Jonathan Pinegar \$3,200
5 Arseny Sevastyanov \$1,800
5 Georgi Georgiev \$1,800
5 Nathan Childress \$1,800
5 Oliver Szolnoki \$1,800
9 BJ Ussery \$700
9 Boris Ivanovski \$700
9 Elliott Sanderson \$700
9 Eric Roberts \$700
9 Max Eberle \$700
9 Robb Saez \$700
9 Roberto Gomez \$700
9 Sergio Rivas \$700

Apr 16 - Apr 19

WPBA US Open

Island Resort & Casino

Harris, MI
1 Chieh-Yu Chou \$17,000
2 Savannah Easton \$12,000
3 Silviana Lu \$7,500
4 Tzu-Chien Wei \$5,500
5 Brittany Bryant \$4,200
5 Meng-Hsia Hung \$4,200
7 Chia Hua Chen \$3,300
7 Kelly Fisher \$3,300
9 JoAnn Mason Parker \$2,500
9 Kristina Tkach \$2,500
9 Marharyta Fefilava \$2,500
9 Pia Filler \$2,500
13 Jasmin Ouschan \$1,800

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25 Olga Konkina \$625
25 Shanna Lewis \$625
25 Wan-Ling Wang \$625

Apr 18 - Apr 19

Joss Tour 2025-2026 Stop 16

Yale Billiards

Wallingford, Connecticut

1 Alex Bausch \$1,050
2 Jeremy Sossei \$750
3 Frankie Hernandez \$600
4 Brett Ross \$450
5 Dan Sharlow \$300
5 Pete Genovese \$300
7 Bredan Ince \$200
7 Ron Ricard \$200
9 Bob Mendenjian \$100
9 Kevin Guimond \$100
9 Rick Matarazzo \$100
9 Ryan Cullen \$100

Apr 18 - Apr 19

Joss Tour 2026-2027 Stop 16 Second Chance

Yale Billiards

Wallingford, Connecticut

1 James Stevens \$300
2 Ryan Cullen \$200
3 Chris Crawford \$140
4 Dennis Brewer \$80

Apr 18 - Apr 18

Sullivan Pool Tour Stop

Shooters Family Billiards

Wayne, New Jersey

1 Ramon Canela Alvarado \$1,100
2 Christoph Neumayer \$710
3 Brian Vu \$400
4 Patrick Gutierrez \$200
5 Kenny Rutman \$100
5 Murtaza Afzal \$100

Apr 18 - Apr 18

2026 Rack Race Stop #9

The Rack & Grill III

Aiken, SC

1 John Maikke \$1,020
2 Jason Stemen \$520
3 Johnny Archer \$320
4 Mike Wise \$220
5 Jim Jennings \$130
5 Trenton White \$130
7 Calvin Le \$80
7 Graham Swinson \$80

Apr 18 - Apr 18

Ernie and Roots 8-Ball Open Classic

The League Room

Parkersburg, West Virginia

1 Clay Davis \$5,000
2 Kevin Jackson \$2,400
3 Archie Hinton III \$1,700
4 Dee Adkins \$1,230
5 Gary Huggins \$620
5 Shawn Miller \$620
7 Don Willett \$340
7 Mike Cumberledge \$340
9 Brandon Doty \$130
9 Jamie Stover \$130
9 Riley Adkins \$130
9 Zack Carroll \$130

Apr 23 - Apr 26

2026 USBA National Championship

Bergen Billiards

Palisades Park, NJ

1 Carlos M. Villegas \$4,000
2 Pedro Piedrabuena \$3,000
3 John Park \$2,000
3 Tae Kyu Lee \$2,000
5 Hugo Patino \$1,000
5 Ricardo Carranco \$1,000
5 Sonny Cho \$1,000
5 Won Sik Kang \$1,000

9 David Ramirez \$300
9 Edward Gomez \$300
9 Erick Valerio \$300
9 Ertan Tarshan \$300
9 Kang Lee \$300
9 Raymon Groot \$300
9 Sang Jin Lee \$300
9 Young Kyu Lee \$300

Apr 24 - Apr 26

2026 Bob Stocks Memorial 9-Ball

On Cue Sports Bar & Grill

Front Royal, Virginia

1 Oliver Szolnoki \$9,000
2 Fraser Patrick \$5,000
3 Georgi Georgiev \$3,500
3 Hunter Lombardo \$3,500
5 Eric Roberts \$1,500
5 Lukas Fracasso-Verner \$1,500
5 Marco Teutscher \$1,500
5 Max Eberle \$1,500
9 BJ Ussery \$1,000
9 Boris Ivanovski \$1,000
9 Brandon Shuff \$1,000
9 Felix Vogel \$1,000
9 Gregorio Sanchez \$1,000
9 Matt Clatterbuck \$1,000
9 Nathan Childress \$1,000
9 Payne McBride \$1,000

Apr 24 - Apr 26

Jersey Girl Billiards' Let's Rock Nashville Natural Born Women's Event

JOB Billiards

Nashville, TN

1 Rebeka Green \$300
2 Hannah Watson \$220
3 Amanda Huff \$140

Apr 24 - Apr 26

Jersey Girl Billiards' Let's Rock Nashville

JOB Billiards

Nashville, TN

1 John Maikke \$3,000
2 Michael Barbour \$1,600
3 Jonathan Pinegar \$900
4 Amanda Huff \$700
5 Gabe Booth \$350
5 Jamie Yates \$350

Monthly Results

7 Charlie Bryant \$200
7 Mike Barnick \$200
9 Brad Sullivan \$150
9 Christian Walters \$150
9 Rich Denham \$150
9 Scooter Goodwin \$150
13 Brady Brazell \$120
13 Ricky Boyce \$120
13 Scott Pankey \$120
13 Wayne Smithson \$120
17 Alexandria Smith \$100
17 Cole Taylor \$100
17 Dwight Connie \$100
17 Eric Everstine \$100
17 Izaiaz Gonzalez \$100
17 Montezuma Hernandez \$100
17 Robb Saez \$100
17 Ross Bowman \$100

Apr 25 - Apr 26

Joss Tour 2025-2026 Stop 17

Utica Billiards On The Boulevard

Utica, New York
1 Damon Sobers \$1,100

2 Ron Casanzio \$750
3 Brandon Inges \$600
4 Bucky Souvanthong \$450
5 Nate Marshall \$300
5 Roger Lakotko \$300
7 Brad Guthrie \$200
7 Nick Coppola \$200
9 Angelo Innes \$100
9 Bob Mendenjian \$100
9 George Lashoff \$100
9 Kevin Chapin \$100

Apr 25 - Apr 26

Joss Tour 2026-2027 Stop 17 Second Chance

Utica Billiards On The Boulevard

Utica, New York
1 Mark Deal \$330
2 Brandon Fletcher \$200
3 Sulee Darunsonthaya \$150
4 Mike Keith \$100
5 Bill Goodman \$50
5 George Lashoff \$50

Apr 25 - Apr 26

Carolina Billiards Circuit 9-Ball Open

Breaktime Billiards & Sports Bar

Clemmons, NC
1 Joshua Shultz \$1,200
2 Bruce Bullard \$900
3 Brett Stottlemeyer \$700
4 Shane Hardie \$500
5 Chris Rhoades \$300
5 Wilson Dorsey \$300
7 Mike Davis \$200
7 Wendell Thompkins \$200
9 Barry Mashburn \$130
9 BJ Hucks \$130
9 Luke O'Connell \$130
9 Will Foster \$130
13 Adam Davis \$60
13 Corey Hodges \$60
13 Ketan Patel \$60
13 Mike Soyka \$60

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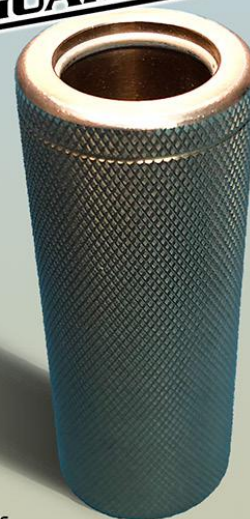
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Upcoming Tournaments

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.

MAY/JUNE

Joss Tour 2025-2026 Stop 18

May 16 - May 17

Raxx Pool Room, Sports Bar & Grill
West Hempstead, NY

2026 US Snooker Association Tour Stop 1

May 16 - May 17

Nashville Snooker Academy
Nashville, TN

2026 Arizona Junior 10-Ball State Championship

May 23 - May 23

Dozer's Grill
Mesa, Arizona

NWPA Tour 2026 Stop 2

May 23 - May 24

The Pocket
Boise, Idaho

2026 UK Open

May 26 - May 31

Brentwood, Essex

16th N.E. Pool & Billiard Hall of Fame 9-Ball Open

May 30 - May 31

Snookers - Sports Billiards, Bar & Grill
Providence, RI

Mezz Hill-Hill Estonian Open 2026

Jun 05 - Jun 07

Hill-Hill Billiard Cafe
Talinn, Pohja

NWPA Tour 2026 Stop 3

Jun 20 - Jun 21

Silver Star Saloon
Vancouver, Washington

2026 Universal Open

Jun 25 - Jun 28

Jakarta Indonesia

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	Joshua Filler	 GER	99.675,00 US\$	↓
	Shane Van Boening	 USA	83.900,00 US\$	↓
	Francisco Sanchez-Ruiz	 ESP	70.125,00 US\$	↑
	Wiktor Zielinski	 POL	63.974,00 US\$	↑
	Chezka Centeno	 PHI	63.719,00 US\$	↓
	Carlo Biado	 PHI	57.700,00 US\$	↓
	John Morra	 CAN	50.975,00 US\$	↓
	Moritz Neuhausen	 GER	49.750,00 US\$	↓

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OPEN 9-BALL

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PLAY BEGINS 9/4 (FRI) 10:00AM
3 POINT BREAKS

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

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ADDED**

MON 8/31 - THURS 9/3

ONE POCKET

\$1,000 ENTRY \$25 GREEN FEE
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