

# Billiard Buzz

an  publication

vol.5, Issue April 2020



# CASE Closed

The world finds itself matched-up  
against a ruthless opponent in the  
COVID 19 virus.

Our opponent will not allow us  
to play “our game,” but this is a match  
we cannot lose.

We may be down, we may be feeling the  
pressure, but we are not out,  
we still have a chance.

We must adapt, we must change,  
because make no mistake, we must win.  
Defeating the COVID 19 virus means far  
more than winning money or fame,  
it means getting “our game” back.

If you love “our game,” play safe  
and play smart, because you aren’t just  
playing for yourself, you are in fact  
playing for the entire world.

STOP THE SPREAD

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# FROM THE Head Rail

MIKE HOWERTON

**A**s Jung-Lin Chang was closing his case on another tournament title last month in Vegas, the vast majority of us were closing our cases on the game for the foreseeable future. As more and more events were cancelled, and rooms were closed due to the Covid-19 virus last month, the worldwide pool scene has started looking awfully bleak. All it seems that we can do right now though, is to hunker down, wait this thing out, and look forward to getting back out there and supporting our local rooms and tournaments as soon as we can.

With the lack of tournaments to report on this month, you will notice a few more “Human Interest” stories than usual in the magazine. With that though, I think readers will enjoy the (very) candid interview with Mark Wilson, Skip’s profile of the Spain family, the interviews with European superstars Mario He & Imran Majid, and all of the other content in the magazine.

Stay safe out there.



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you really have to ask yourself

would you rather play against your

opponent...



**BCA Expo**

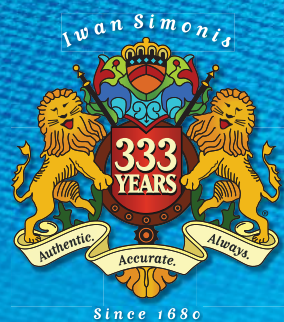
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The Winning Combination



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# **NEVER STOP WORKING ON YOUR STROKE**



JERRY BRIESATH



**First, let me define what a good stroke is and what it looks like. A good stroke is a beautiful throwing motion under the elbow.**

**T**he reason I say “under the elbow” is because if the elbow moves during the stroke, that movement changes where the tip will strike the cue ball, resulting in a missed shot or spin that you did not want on the cue ball.

Here is a little fact you can think about. Most of the shots you miss are not because your aim was bad, but rather the cue stick did not go perfectly straight through the cue ball.

Think about a pendulum motion, which means the backswing is slow and at the end of the backswing, the arms slows to a stop and then accelerates forward through the cue ball four to six inches.

The mistake that most amateurs make is having too fast of a backswing and not letting the arm slow to a stop at the end of the backswing, as in a pendulum motion.

Timing is the transition from the backswing to the front swing and a smooth lazy backswing is what makes the best players look so good at the table. Never stop working on that beautiful throwing motion in your swing. And remember, the better your swing looks, the better you can play.

Good luck — Jerry



# APPROACH EVERY SHOT WITH THE SAME IMPORTANCE

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

**Quick – what’s the most important shot in pool? The answer to this question might not be what you expect, as many players answer by saying the final ball to win a game.**

In fact, the most important shot on the table is the next shot, for if you don’t execute what is right in front of you it won’t matter that you are setting up a run for later in the game.

## Staying in the moment

While it might sound easy, focusing on what is important at any given moment can be a tricky proposition. For pool players it’s real easy to get caught up thinking about the past – especially true after missing an easy bunny. Similarly, pool players are also prone to getting excited and looking too far ahead to a potential run, leaving them vulnerable to miss a shot they otherwise wouldn’t. When I work with players I remind them of these things, and suggest they train their minds to sharpen their focus to each upcoming shot, similar to how they chalk the cue before each shot. Sounds basic, yes, but it is often these seemingly simple, basic ideas that separate good players from average, and great players from good.

## Confidence development

Confidence is king when it comes to pool success, and confidence develops fastest when you make balls and win games. One way to ensure this is to bear down and focus on every shot – even the easy ones. Often when players struggle with confidence it’s because they either can’t let go of bad shots, or too regularly look several

shots ahead and miss the shot right in front of them. Does this happen to you?

## Tips to help

In order to stay in the moment and direct your entire focus on the next shot consider the following ideas:

- **Keep a steady, controlled pace.** Try not to change gears and instead keep a healthy flow to your game.
- **Follow your pre-shot routine for every shot.** Not only will this



help with pace, but it also will prevent unwanted thoughts to enter your mind.

- **Develop a bounce-back.** What this means is to try and come up with a mechanism that allows you to quickly let go of negative thoughts. Ideas include changing out your cue or chalk, or snapping a rubber band on your wrist to symbolize “snapping out” of negative thinking.



*Dr. Chris Stankovich, known as “The Sports Doc,” is a national expert in the field of sport & performance psychology and has been featured on ESPN for his work with elite athletes. His #1 best selling pool video “Mind of Steel: Mental Toughness for Pool Success” has been used by thousands of players to improve focus, increase confidence, and eliminate anxiety. You can learn more about Dr. Stankovich and Mind of Steel by visiting [drstankovich.com](http://drstankovich.com)*

# NO AIM, NO GAME!

ANTHONY **BEELER**

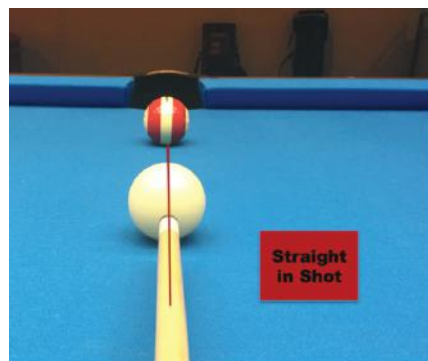
**As a Master Instructor, I work with numerous students each year. One of the most popular topics in pool of late has been the discussion of how professional players aim. Many pros use the old ghost ball system, or aim through the aid of their memory from of thousands of shots they have struck during their careers. However, the majority of professionals prefer to use some type of concrete aiming system.**

**A**iming systems range from the very simple to the complex (Center to Edge). Personally, I find that most students really don't want to learn an aiming system that is overly complicated, and I also find that the simplest systems (like ghost ball) just aren't all that effective.

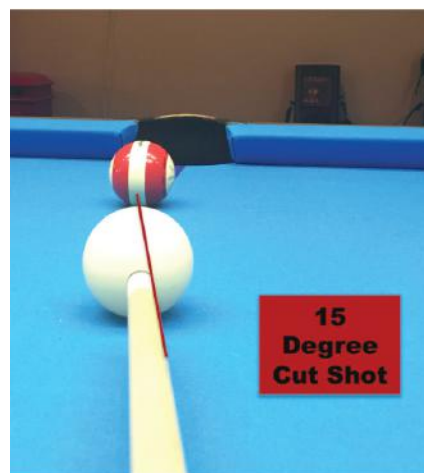
I have found that the best aiming system for most players is one that is both simple and effective. The system that I use is both easy to learn and accurate.

I like to call this system, "Point and Aim." This system is very similar to the one previously taught by Bert Kinister and Shane Van Boening. Parts of the technique I am referring to were previously referred to as "The Edge of the Shaft" system.

As you can see here, the first shot is straight in. For this shot you would

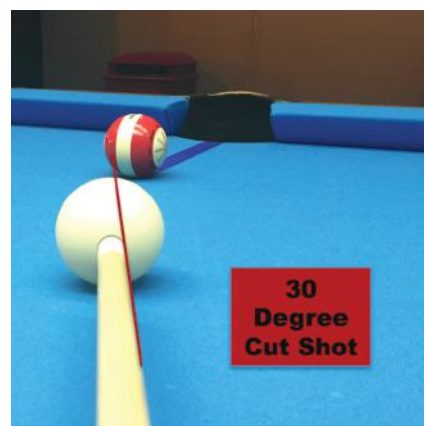


use the center of your shaft through the center of the cue ball and draw an imaginary line into the base of the object ball. You can also use the center of your shaft to calculate slight variances up to around 14 degrees. Simply point the center of your cue into the point on the object ball that is on the line into the pocket.



Once you reach 15 degrees, the system changes slightly. For a 15 degree cut to your right, you should aim the right edge of your shaft into the imaginary line on the ball that points into the center of the pocket (center of the white line as shown).

For a 30-degree cut to your right, you should aim the right edge of your shaft into approximately 25 percent of



the left side of the object ball. To find the 25 percent (for the right edge of your shaft), you can aim the left edge of your shaft at the edge of the ball.

For a 45-degree cut to your right, you should aim the right edge of



your shaft into the left edge of the object ball.

In essence, the idea is to use the right edge of your shaft if you are cutting a ball to the right and use the left edge of the shaft when you are cutting balls to your left.

The problem with the system is that once you go beyond 45 degrees

there is nowhere on the object ball that you can point your shaft to.

Anything beyond a 45-degree cut requires a player to use a slightly different strategy. In other words, for really thin cut shots to the right, you should aim using the right edge of the cue ball into the left edge of the object ball and vice versa for thin cuts to your left.

I believe this collection of aiming strategies will come in handy for you during match play. The strategies will serve as a solid founda-

tion for aiming and will create a direct connection between your cue stick, the cue ball, and the object ball. With some practice, the "Point and Aim" system above will give you a solid framework that will help you pocket balls more consistently.

Remember, practice makes perfect. In the words of Annie Oakley, "Aim at the high mark and you will hit it. Not the first time, not the second, and maybe not the third. But keep on aiming and keep on shooting. Finally you'll hit!"



Anthony Beeler is the 2017 Pool Instructor of the Year and is a former BCAPL National 9-Ball Champion. He has numerous top 25 national finishes and is one of only 8 ACS Master Instructors in the world. He is the primary author of the *National Billiards Instructors Manual* and has also authored the book *Unstoppable! Positive Thinking for Pool Players*. Anthony currently has the highest established Fargo Rating of any Master Instructor. He has won over 300 tournaments and has defeated numerous professional players in tournament competition.

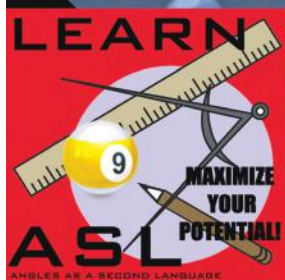
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# Mark Wilson

## An Asset to Our Sport

I have been interested for years to interview Mark Wilson, and you will soon read why. He's well-respected, extremely knowledgeable, and an ambassador of pool.

He is also brutally honest at times and then funny, too! Adding to his list of attributes, I have been interviewing people for *Billiard Buzz* every month for the past 3 1/2 years. Almost half of the people interviewed have mentioned Mark Wilson at some point in their own interview.

Mark Wilson has been a professional pool player his entire adult life and along the way he has played all around the world in pro tournaments, owned two pool rooms, been the house pro in quite a few, has a line of cues, gave instruction and clinics, wrote a book, appeared on billiards broadcasts, promoted the sport, and in addition to everything else, he is the Head Coach of a Collegiate Billiards Program for the last eight years.



There's a lot to ask him about!

Before we get started, I asked Freddie Agnir to provide a few thoughts about Mark. This is what he said: *"Mark Wilson has had an incredibly positive impact on the American Pool community at every level from player, instructor, youth & collegiate coach, Accu-stats color commentator, and Mosconi Cup Captain. He is the definition of professional excellence in our sport."*

**Q:** Mark, where did you grow up?

I grew up on the banks of the Mississippi River in Moline, Illinois. I graduated from Moline High School in 1973 on my first attempt, which still remains as an enormous sense of pride for my family.

Moline is the John Deere farm implement manufacturing world headquarters. International Harvester and J.I. Case, also have major factories there for building construction and farm equipment. Despite the fact that all of my high school friends immediately took great paying factory jobs after high school, I knew that I could never be that conforming and working all my life on an assembly line - that would be prison for me.

The area is a blue collar, hard drinking and gambling place and pool games flourished which caught my attention during my first year of college.

**Q:** Where did you attend college and what were you studying?

After High School I was home schooled, just kidding. I went to Black Hawk College. I was on my way to earning a law degree when pool interfered with that direction. Naturally, my parents were mortified and truly could not understand my decision and I remember overhearing my mother exasperatedly telling someone that, "Marky was such a good boy." She thought that smoking, gambling, hus-



Don "Doc" Wardell, Brandon Shuff, Justin Bergman, Corey Deuel, John Schmidt, Mark Wilson, Jeremy Sossei, Oscar Dominguez, and Justin Hall

ting, drugs, etc. was my destiny. This really bothered me because my family and friends could never see the beauty and artistry that I recognized and appreciated.

**Q:** And you also played baseball in college? Tell us about how you transitioned from a baseball player going for a law degree, to a pool player.

When I was in college, baseball was my primary sport, but pool began taking over, filling in the previous high school football and basketball time. After seriously pursuing a professional baseball career, I learned that despite my best efforts playing baseball, I was just not talented enough. Thereafter, I was so captivated by pool that it consumed my life...I knew that I loved pool and I still do.

**Q:** So, that's when you started your pool journey?

Yes. Preparing for the second year of college, I had taken a summer job on a construction crew that was based out of Madison, Wisconsin. While I was there, I wandered into Cue-Nique Billiards owned by Jerry Briesath. I

naively thought that it would be highly unlikely that anyone could beat me in pool because I had read Willie Mosconi's book *three* times and practiced every day for three months...I was shocked and way wrong when it became apparent that I could beat nobody!

I purchased a lesson from Jerry and began training with a better approach from that day forward. Ultimately taking many, many, and more lessons, even 6 months ago after 46 years of pool playing. I still think that I can play better.

**Q:** That's a great perspective. What did you do to elevate your game?

The key to success in something as difficult as pool is to possess both ignorance and enthusiasm...luckily God gave me plenty of both. I was truly a horrible player, but began investigating anything pool related, reading every book or magazine that I could buy or check out of the library. I would arrive at the pool room just prior to opening and stay until near closing...sometimes later, much later. Then I would try to go to sleep and consider

shots and mistakes from that day and determine a training course of action for the next day. The volume of questions that I had was nearly unending, watching great players, seeking any opportunity to find a shred of improvement. And finally, the pursuit of playing excellent came at a high cost in money, but even more in terms of willful effort.

**Q:** What insights can you share about just how tough it is to improve in pool?

High performance pool is the biggest challenge that you will likely ever encounter. The volume of setbacks and times that you must start completely over, or play, and despite considerable hours of training appear like you have never played before, is going to be a real challenge to face. A never-quit-attitude is essential, but if I have to tell you that, then you have no chance at all to become a pro... everyone gets bruised, battered, and humbled along the way.

**Q:** You are one of the best coaches/instructors around. I have been in awe of your teaching style for all these years, starting with reading your advice on the AZB Forums over 20 years ago. You have an effective, talented way of explaining things. Why do you think you are good at that?

When I began at Mosely's pool room in Moline, Illinois I was the worst pool

player to ever try and play. Prior to trying pool, I had been a decent high school athlete that was competitive in basketball, football, track, and my favorite...baseball. However, my attempts at pool playing were sub-horrible and displayed zero aptitude or natural ability. This was very confusing because in all other sports it seemed like I had at least a little natural ability.

I would try to purchase instruction or just ask questions from those who I had considered 'skilled', but they could not explain the how's and why's at all, and their guidance often dissolved into, "feel it", in addition to some trite and generally incorrect instruction without any scientific support. They truly believed in what they stated but the information was non-factual and required suspending physics. I, too, did not know and attempted to follow the direction which led to learning how *not to do it*.

Jerry Briesath was my first instructor that was gifted at teaching. He was motivating and provided understandable direction. I admired his methods after struggling with bad instructors for months and that led me to wish to help others like myself. I had been willing to follow and work at whatever information was dispensed, but my well-intentioned bad instructors did not have what it took. I promised myself to do better at giving proper instruction.

**Q:** And we are thankful for that tenacity! You played in two Mosconi Cups, in 1994 and 1995. Tell us about that.

The first Mosconi Cup came out of the blue and the BCA contacted me to say that I had been selected for a team of 8 players to represent the U.S. against Europe. The explanation of what and how was very vague and included that it was similar to a big tournament. I played in all of our big tournaments, and felt comfortable that I kind of understood.

Once again, I was very wrong and this was way beyond playing in a big tournament: four nights of Live Television on SKY Sports, one table, proper officiating, great talents, intense audience, interviews, and we were treated like sports stars! Upon my return home, a random guy told me that he had been in Beijing China last week and he randomly watched me playing pool; that was really how big that the coverage was and very cool.

**Q:** Share with us the impact of the people you met by playing on the Mosconi Cup.

Getting to meet and compete against players that I long had admired such as Steve Davis, Jimmy White, Allison Fisher, Alex Higgins, in addition to players that I had played, like Ralph Souquet and Oliver Ortmann was a treat.





*Dallas West, Mark Wilson and Sailor (Frank Stellman)*

On the USA team, I shared time with HOF players Lou Butera, Dallas West, and Jeanette Lee, plus Mike Massey, Bobby Hunter, Mike Gulyassy, and Vivian Villarreal made things extra special.

Meeting and frequently interacting with Matchroom owner Barry Hearn, Luke Riches, Sharon Tokely, and Jim Wych, was awesome and we all became great friends from that time forward. We have subsequently participated together as a group multiple times from England to Hong Kong and in the U.S. I was truly blessed, honored, and privileged to have participated in these career defining moments that have created a lifetime of special memories and began what is the biggest event in our sport.

**Q:** How did it feel almost 20 years later to be the COACH of the Mosconi Cup USA Team?

The direct answer was that it felt terrific. I had never even considered it as even possible. Several times prior, I had requested Matchroom to allow me to become part of the broadcast team as a past player returning to the commentary booth. I was denied several years and gave up hope. Naturally, I assumed that coaching the U.S. Team was really preposterous if they

would not even allow me to broadcast the match, how could I dream to coach the team.

However, fate is so strange and within 30 days after the 2013 catastrophe commonly referred to by Matchroom insiders as “The Grand Canyon Mosconi Cup,” I was notified that I had been appointed Captain.

**Q:** What was your goal?

Team USA was fractured and sloppy from the complacency of the first twelve years that we had dominated, while Europe had turned things around becoming far more professional and working much harder than we had been.

My singular mandate was that we have to win, no matter how I go about it, because the circumstances had become such that we were not even competitive or relevant anymore and we (Matchroom included) were all at risk to lose this as an event.

**Q:** I imagine the USA boys not winning was tough on you, as well.

Yes, it was more emotionally devastating than you would initially consider. I had been considered as a potential guy that could change the dynamics

of Team USA by Matchroom and I am very proud of our American Pool heritage. I really do not want to fail the confidence from Barry Hearn that we can do much better and simultaneously I deeply desired to improve the sport domestically while increasing the Mosconi Cup fan base.

**Q:** How did you prepare to be the captain?

This was my all-consuming mission and it began in January of 2014 by me immediately going back over every individual match in the previous 10 years of Mosconi Cup history to perform an in-depth analysis of why we had failed in that time frame after being so dominate prior. Upon inspection, I recognized that the opportunity to turn this around would require total commitment and I pledged to myself that I would invest daily my time and personal resources to find success. The idea that upon reflection that I could have tried harder was unacceptable to me and today I am pleased and satisfied with that investment.

Don Wardell was appointed by me as my Vice-Captain because he has great intellect, insights, and vision, along with positivity and discipline.

We formed and submitted a very detailed plan that recognized team training needed to begin much prior to a few days or weeks before the Mosconi Cup, as it had been in the past. The plan sent to Matchroom expressed that we needed to both train and compete as a team throughout the year if we were to change the course of events.

**Q:** Interesting. How did Matchroom respond?

Well, they had never operated this way nor were they prepared to fund such an idea. In April we were finally approved for a \$10,000 budget for

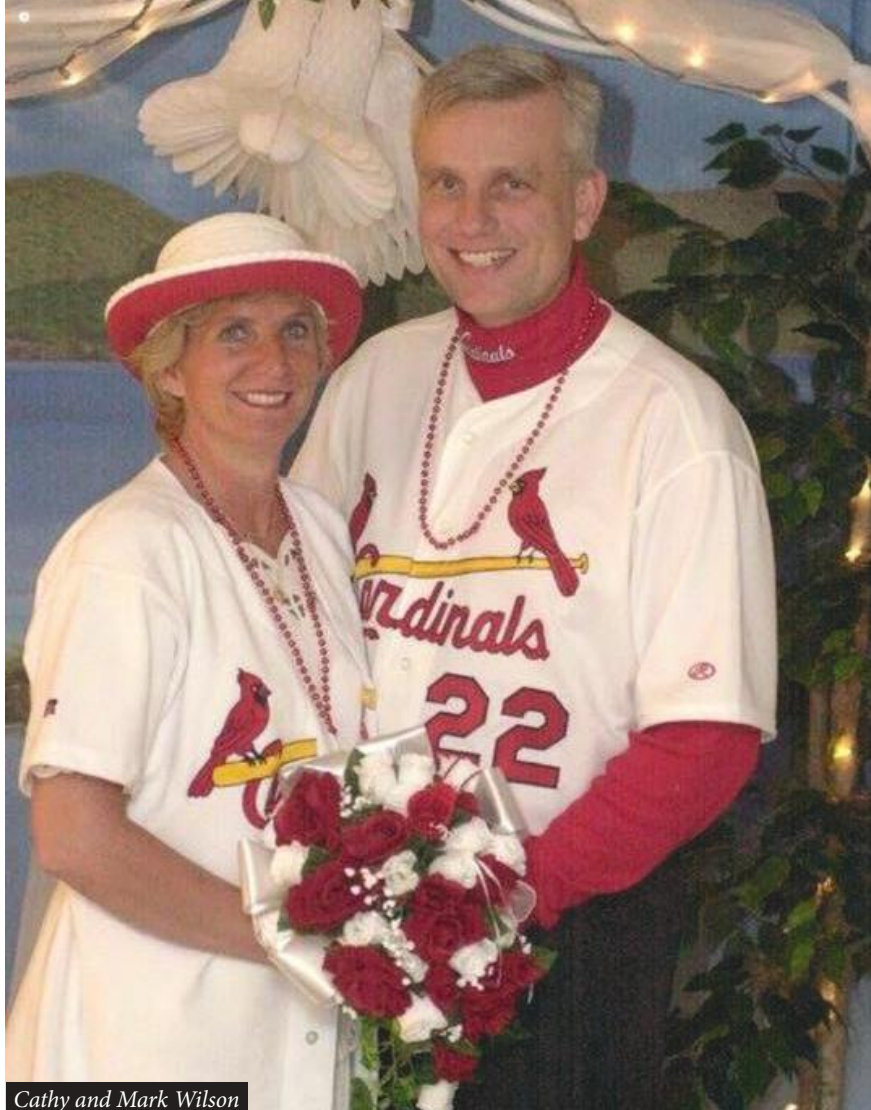
training and we worked hard and raised an additional \$10,000 to operate a training cycle. Despite extreme frugality, this only allowed for a couple of team training/competition get togethers and we were often just encouraging our players through our private Facebook page. The following year we were not approved for any budget and had to fundraise the little budget that we had which made things even tougher. We were also forced to have three players earn selection through qualifying points. The lack of budget and mandated player selection further hindered progress.

**Q:** What did you discover?

Ultimately in the final analysis, I was fully invested, however the changes required, took more time than I was given. Unlike what you might expect, and we thought, which is that Mark knows stroke mechanics and training strategies for developing skills along with the mental aspects of performing under duress, but this was not where our players were at. Rather than coaching pool, my task revolved around becoming a father, mother, travel agent, banker, and psychologist, as my primary duties and then attempt to mold a band of rebels into a team with only modest support.

The players were all truly great people, but lacked structure, discipline, and focus. They are just kids that have always operated independently and a quick change of attitude was completely unavailable. This point summarizes my primary error in understanding. This is a long-term project that is still currently very fragile despite recent success. I am proud of what Johan Ruijsink was able to accomplish amidst very tough circumstances because I know what he faced.

**Q:** You are a coach for the Lindenwood University Billiards Team



*Cathy and Mark Wilson*

in Missouri. How did that job come about, how long have you been doing that, and what sets that team apart from others?

I was contacted in January of 2012 by Lindenwood University who had already completed a feasibility study for inclusion of a first-rate Billiards Program and had approval to begin in the Fall Semester. We met and discussed what they had in mind and asked me if they provided scholarships to my billiard athletes and build us a proper facility, would I consider leading the program. I truly met with them to just say that I was busy already and really do not even know any high school pool players to recruit nor did I need yet another low paying job. However, the idea of pool scholarships and a

proper facility where I could create a lasting imprint on the development of our sport was something that was too compelling for me to not consider.

**Q:** That's fantastic! What was your vision for the program?

Well, they wanted to know my thoughts and I explained that when I went to college and began pool playing, my parents and friends detested the sport due to their preconceived notions of the image. Lindenwood confirmed that even their Board of Directors shared sincere concerns over what they were considering bringing on campus. I told them that if I accepted this role that the culture that would be created would be beyond any reproach, irrespective of winning

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*Don Wardell and Mark at Abbey Road*

on the table. We were going to rebuild the image to supersede that of any area of life.

I began studying what actually makes you a team and some legendary coaches of other sports. The legendary coaches stated that to have a long-term winning program it comes down to the character of your athlete. I had not considered that and thought those guys were a win at all costs types. The other component of actually becoming a team rather than individual is that everyone must share a common set of beliefs and values to bond as a group. Honor, Integrity, Respect, Unity, Work Ethic, Positivity, and Accountability, are ours and these are not just words, but must be exemplified at all times beginning from the top with the Coach.

**Q:** You're a hard-ass!

I prefer to look at it like this: I insist upon sacrifice and contribution from myself, I demand it from those who wish to be a team member, and I expect it from Lindenwood. We also do not allow any "second chances" for those who fail or bring discredit to our

sport in any way. When this occurs, it means that you are an individual and not onboard as a team member because our values are not of primary importance to you. I do not hate you, but you are forever dismissed from our team. I am serious about the team rules above, however, and we have had a few players test me to learn and set the example for what is imposed upon violation. Beyond that example, we work hard on academics, pool playing, and developing personal character while having tremendous fun.

**Q:** But the program is ending at Lindenwood?

This is our 8th year and sadly our school has failed and no longer contributes with any sacrifice our contribution to our program. This has occurred due to grotesque bureaucratic negligence and failed leadership. They have even sacrificed their integrity. The program succeeded and graduated many great people in our time while benefitting the sport and local charities. The Billiards Team is first in grades on campus, runs under budget and profitably for all 8 years

averaging 27 team members. We have tremendous personal character and are the 6 consecutive time National Champions. Unfortunately, poor decisions elsewhere have undermined the tremendous accomplishments of our team members. Nevertheless, it has been a great success and learning experience for everyone. Today I am assured that we could truly resurrect our sport if schools would support building teams in this fashion.

**Q:** What a fantastic example of a successful pool program! You are involved in many aspects of the pool realm for all these years. Many of us are envious that you can make a living with our shared passion. I presume it wasn't all roses the entire time, but was it worth it?

Success for me was at the expense of "making a deal with the devil." I understood at age 18 that money was going to forever be difficult and that driving a new car and a retirement plan would be completely unavailable. The unfairness of low money and constant travel for me having kids, a wife, and home, was something that I traded for my life in pool because I would not inflict that lifestyle on others.

The great aspects have been the ability to pursue pool playing and to have traveled everywhere on earth when I was young. Every day has been truly remarkable and filled with challenge and adventure despite tough economic circumstances. I know people that have substantial money, but they are not happy people and have forgotten to live. They are miserable and somehow, I end up buying their lunch, but gladly. Who is wealthier?

John Schmidt has some great wisdom on many topics and here was how he explains it to guys who try to think less of him because he does not have the significant income and savings they do. John says, "think back on the very best day of your life, where

you had fun and just set worries aside and enjoyed a terrific day...I have had 1,500 of those days at least."

When understanding the above information prior to choosing a path in life, a person is not unhappy or bitter, nor do the little struggles over acquiring money to get by become a hardship, just a fact of your chosen direction. These are then viewed positively as challenges and not your curse. Those who survive are not negative people and if they are, they should choose to do something else and be happy. Life is great.

The fastest pistolero in Tombstone was Johnny Ringo who killed many men. The topic came up about deals with the devil and when they asked Johnny what he would do, he calmly stated, "I already made my deal." Your question to me, "was the trade to have a pool career worth it?" I have had the greatest life ever and enjoyed every moment and experience fully... been there, done that, and going back for more. I love pool.

My lifetime goal was a little of the "live hard, die young, and leave a pretty corpse" type approach. However, my ultimate goal and measure of success was to live a life so full of true past stories that when I become institutionalized with old people, that I have the best real stories of anyone.

**Q:** OMGosh that's astonishing. Wow! And most people I interview have overcome something. Is there anything you'd like to share that we all can learn from? Or a difficulty you overcame?

Life nor pool is fair. Adversity is coming your way and success is built from combating that fact by instilling everyday a concept called Relentless Positivity. Under all circumstances and everyday, this must be reinforced prior to inevitable difficulties. *Relentless Positivity*. Mental toughness is

built on this foundation. A display of negativity is just weakness and often caused by "ego defense." Players will say, "I can't make a ball" or offer an excuse rather than be truly honest and this stifles genuine progress. If you emphatically build genuine mental positivity daily, then when tough times hit you can ultimately get past it. However, if you are prone to be negative, things become much tougher and can be insurmountable.

I will share a circumstance that might be found helpful by someone. I was fortunate and blessed to have great parents. They both invested in their children from the day that we were born, and taught us work ethic, discipline, organization, respect, honesty, humility, and integrity. The absolute importance of positivity for everyone's life, which will inevitably be tested many times with adversity, is a universal truth.

When I was 30 years old my life was filled with pool and I had been progressing and successful when the worst day of my life struck out of nowhere. I discovered my mother had committed suicide, the absolute shock and horror of such an unexpected act completely broke me. I could not sleep or eat for days, I had no pool interest after never missing a day for years, as I had fallen into the deepest depression that I would ever face.

Complete despair without remedy or recourse, no matter how I tried to understand what took place, consumed me. Flowing tears and frustration from a broken heart and the pain was overwhelming to the extent that more than thirty years passed before I could even mention what happened.

**Q:** That is heartbreaking and tough.

Yes, and I thought there will never be resolution or healing and as the days mounted, I progressively became more dark and sullen beyond any



Mark at the Hong Kong Color of Money match

place that I had ever encountered before. My spirit was crushed and I had no strength, willingness, resolve, or capacity to mount a comeback in life. The anguish had become too great for me. I no longer wished to exist. I was not strong enough to kill myself, but I did not care at all what would happen to me and while I had never been so negative nor previously abused drugs or alcohol, I became resigned to completely giving up.

During the following days and weeks, I discovered that because I no longer cared about anything, I had no fear. What are you going to do, kill me? I wish that I could do it myself. Are you going to take all my money and possessions? They mean nothing to me and it will not hurt.

As the days turned into weeks, my attitude was bad and I just had no interest or zest for anything, no joy, no fun, nothing. However, as I recognized that no one can ever hurt me again because I had already absorbed maxi-



Wisconsin State Professional Straight Pool Championship 1979

mum pain and lost everything to me, I found a molecule of strength.

Each day I became tougher and slowly began to find a speck of positivity. This was slow, but once I realized that nothing can hurt me now and I am not afraid of anything, it was very freeing and that was a pivotal moment for me, not giving up and throwing my life away.

The next part of my improvement came when I recognized that I was so very fortunate to have remarkable parents who taught me great values and shared true love that many people did not get. Then I started feeling like I owe it to my parents, who were my biggest blessing, and pick up the pieces of my life, because that would truly honor those who gave to me since birth.

I arrived at the following place: “nothing will hurt me again ever and I am going to honor my great parents by being the most positive and happy

person you have ever met.” Today, life is great and every day begins with relentless positivity because that is your preparation for when adversity inevitably strikes someone. If I had not been very positive going into what happened and been a bit negative as a person, I would have never recovered. Going into the trauma that I suffered with a very positive attitude, it still got me to the very brink of becoming self-destructive and I had even resolved to devote myself to going the wrong way. Not even sure how I found my way back, but I did, and since those darkest days everything has been terrific.

Ever since absorbing the ultimate crushing blow and recognizing just how fragile a person truly is no matter how strong they think that they are, I have made it a point to instill positivity and describe the absolute importance of developing positivity to those around me. This has proven itself a valuable asset on more than one debilitating episode in my life and for those in my midst.

**Q:** Thank you for sharing with us all that you went through, experienced, and learned; you will for sure help others with your transparency and openness. Speaking of learning, why did you decide to write the book, *Play Great Pool*?

There are two parts to this answer. Part One: During my childhood, I had always dreamed that one day I would write a book on *something*. I suppose that as I had read books it seemed that an author could live beyond his lifespan with his works while on earth and I subliminally thought that would be a nice way to remain for much longer than we survive.

I did not have a topic nor did I know when I would actually write a book, but just always wanted to accomplish this goal. Recognizing the time commitment, I had decided that if I ever

found myself on a deserted island or in prison, that I would fill the time writing my book. Now I don't know what you plan to do while incarcerated, but I am going to be busy as hell.

**Q:** hahaha. So, what about Part Two?

Part Two: When beginning my pool life, I bought Willie Mosconi's book because I was just trying to learn the skills as a beginner. I was so excited and motivated to discover exactly how to do. I read the book and raced to the nearby poolroom, but did not find much immediate impact. I considered why and determined that I had glossed over some critical points due to my excitement.

Previously, I had always been a careful reader, but my logic was that on this occasion I wanted progress so much that I must have been in too much of a hurry. I carefully read the entire book again and headed to the poolroom, zero progress or results. I was disappointed and uncertain to the extent that I began to wonder if I am just too dumb to follow what I had read and decided to reread the book yet again!

After getting proper instruction from Jerry Briesath, I recognized that the Mosconi book was simply too vague to really give you the actual details required for true improvement.

**Q:** The irony of a disappointing experience leading you on the road to write your book. When did you start working on the book?

I was about 40 years old and decided to write a book that would allow an individual with motivation to teach themselves how to really learn high performance pool playing, rather than a small guide to some basics. I naively began with paper and pen and over a few months wrote the entire book inclusive of diagrams. Literally hundreds of pages of hand-written in-

struction. All of my heart was put into this effort and every page was rewritten and improved over four years of intermittent work.

Then I hired a book editor who worked with me over the next two years. I was still not happy with the way it came together, so I persisted until hiring another editor two years later. She worked with me for two more years. When she felt that it was complete, I was still unsure and once again persisted on my own.

Then, my best friend, Don Wardell, was at my home and as we played pool he asked about it and wanted to look at it. The book was now printed and consumed more than a ream of paper (single-sided) without any pictures or diagrams...5lbs. of pool.

He read the entire book and had sincere interest in seeing the book become what I had dreamed of, as a first-class legacy to the sport. Here was the deal that was offered, "I love the direction, detail, and creativity, and I would love to help you write the book in order to flow and be more readable and concise - in return for pool lessons." He added that if we worked really hard, we could make the book much better and likely complete the entire project in six weeks.

**Q:** Six weeks, that's great! Tell us a little bit about Don really quick:

Don "Doc" Wardell is a Medical Doctor that had been published in Medical Journals. Additionally, he has read every pool book available and he knows text books. Doc is also the most intelligent person that I know and graduated number one in his Medical School class. That degree of success in one of the toughest fields of study is a rare commodity.

The trade of some editing work seemed fair, and we both naively embarked on finishing the book. Near-



ly seven years later, and after conquering a multitude of challenges, the book was completed. The trade turned out to not be fair for Doc, who was made as the co-author to recognize his enormous contribution for the pool world and the fact that I could never repay him for the extraordinarily significant efforts.

**Q:** How did the process go for the partnered book?

We worked side by side for one hard week per month, rewriting and revising beyond anything previously imagined. We both wanted the book to be great, which meant both finely detailed yet motivating and inspiring. These are rare commodities found together within an instructional text and would require serious crafting. Every word, phrase, sentence, paragraph, and chapter, were completely rewritten multiple times except for one paragraph in nearly 600 pages that Doc had discovered that I had written really well during the ten years of work prior to his assistance.

We both agreed that we wanted it to be the finest, but neither one of us had any idea what that would require, as six weeks turned into more than six years. During year three and with no end in sight, I became fearful that it was possible that completion was

so remote that I might not live long enough. This was upsetting due to the time investment that had already taken place. I mentioned a new idea that I wanted to install to Doc, and that was a 'death pact:' if one of us expired prior to completion, the other one promises to finish this book. I just could not peacefully go to my grave fearful that this project was shelved and forever lost. We both felt the same way and shook hands.

As the weeks and years mounted sitting next to each other, working and discussing a multitude of considerations that were included on many various lists to keep us moving towards completion, I would have new concepts to be included also. These were created when we were apart and I was working on an aspect of the book. Sometimes these were created from a thought in the middle of a night's sleep which I would fully wake up and jot down. Our work increased from my many follies and Doc often went along with my concepts despite the immense work that each iteration added.

One time I remember we had been working so hard over such a lengthy period of years and I said to Doc, "this has been the toughest thing that I have ever done." His response was shocking to me, he said, "Mark, this

has been the toughest thing that I have ever done.”

**Q:** Tell us about submitting it.

Ah yes. Nevertheless, we did finally conclude the writing, pictures, and diagrams of making the book come to life. That week, I had driven to Doc's residence in Indianapolis for our entire week of writing and on a Thursday night about 10:30 p.m. we submitted the entire body of work to the publisher for preparation to print the book.

I will never forget that highly anticipated moment that took so much more and longer than I ever imagined, 17 years of efforts to complete. Doc allowed me to hit the “send” button and then it was completely out of our hands. I was actually nervous as that moment arrived and I had always imagined that it was time to bust out the Champagne and celebrate. Oddly though, it was not the joyful moment that I had imagined. It had been a super long week working many hours and long days again as we had for years. The sending of the manuscript was not so momentous, but more anticlimactic and a little somber... it was finally over. The sensation that I felt as I left to drive 4 hours home that night was strange as we said goodbye. Driving alone in the dark and thinking about the fact that this part of my life had been fulfilled to the very best of our ability, and no more trips for either one of us to work each month were going to be required. Yes, I was tired, but I had always thought that I would have a surge of adrenaline from completing a major goal of my life's work. Instead, I was a little sad as it somehow felt like a loss. The years of genuine considerations, frustrations, driving time, notes, questions, technical aspects, laughter, pool playing, disagreements, frequent phone calls, and dinners was now over and the feeling was almost like your cherished child had grown up and left home.



Looking back now, this odd feeling was caused by a mixture of both loss and pride simultaneously.

We had long agreed on a publishing party at a terrific restaurant once we actually had a book in hand months later. This party took place with twelve of our close friends and everyone was gifted a book with a personal inscription to conclude the evening. The inscription in Doc's reads-

Doc,  
If I would have known,  
I never would have asked.  
If you would have known,  
you never would have accepted.  
Thank God for the pool world that  
we did not know.  
Mark

Today two copies reside in the Library of Congress...great job Doc.

**Q:** What an accomplishment! Related, I really love that you visited the US Navy SEALs to help prepare to write the book. Share the purpose of that trip.

I do not feel that I love to study, as I more prefer to be actually doing something active, and playing pool is the best. However, if a topic is fascinating, I can readily study it deeply. During a research phase for writing the book, I came to the conclusion that high-level pool playing is really just discipline and not natural ability. The discipline must be fueled by personal passion, however high-level pool is an art form akin to playing a musical instrument at world class level. Years of training must be willfully undertaken and not imposed.

This led to the study of a voluntary program for becoming the greatest

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military warriors in history, U.S. Navy SEALs. The approach used to create elite warriors would also generate absolute success in any endeavor in life, because mediocrity is weeded out and never tolerated, only the complete pursuit of excellence, through sacrifice and contribution, survives the training.

If you applied their approach, you would become the greatest surgeon, astronaut, or garbage man, that ever lived, because they insist on excellence in every detail. Self-motivation, intelligence, world class fitness and athleticism, high focus, and mental toughness are required and further developed. The candidates that are in training, and those who ultimately succeed, possess the most inspiring and motivating spirit of complete positivity, respect, honor, and work ethic that surpasses anything that I have ever witnessed. The tremendous good fortune for me to witness training days and see what is not open or available to the general public, has been truly life changing for me. I had not imagined that America still had

this type of great team guys and everyone would be so proud to call any one of the trainees their actual son.

Just earning and being selected for a much-coveted slot in the training is an amazing feat and requires years of preparation and still more than 80% fail. During my study, it was fascinating, and the more I read and watched videos, the more inspired I became. This type of structured devotion and level of commitment can only be fulfilled by a select few.

When in the future I get to put together my professional pool team that trains together every day year round, you had better believe that the training will weed out those who say they want to be great from those who will be great. Then, in only a couple of years, the Americans will once again reign supreme over the world in our sport. Once we organize even modest funding, nobody else will have a training program like ours.

**Q:** Was your goal achieved by meeting with them?

This was typical of my mistakes in life which are always generated by my absolute love and devotion for the sport. I always fail to consider that other people, even good players, are not solely devoted to the pursuit of excellence. I just assume that we all feel the same way...why would you not devote your whole life to pursuing pool and becoming the very best?

Unbeknownst to me, my background was far different than the vast majority of pool players. I came from high school sports, football, basketball, track, and my favorite, baseball. These were my entire life until college where I was now only good enough for the baseball team.

The concept of 'sacrifice for team' and adding skills was ingrained in me, weight training and running were daily efforts that had become habits. I approached pool playing in the only way that I had ever experienced, to later learn that almost nobody else does this, because they largely had not come from an athletics background, nor was self-discipline truly valued or understood.

Many American pool players have arrived in this sport from a disadvantaged background and consequently, one day witnessing how to become outstanding, Navy SEAL style, is acknowledged as terrific but not something that is stimulating enough to incorporate into their individual approach due to the difficulty of fully applying yourself to anything to earn success. Dedication, responsibility, and accountability are not quick and easy to ingrain within lifestyles that never included these things prior...I tried, but saw almost no appreciation whatsoever. This could be accomplished, but not with just one serious dose.

**Q:** You are a great commentator, as well. What are some of your favorite events to commentate?

I do not think I am a great commentator, but I truly care and appreciate great pool. I try and keep the focus on the sport and provide analysis that is forward thinking, educational, and fun. I suppose that I do not have a favorite event, but love world class pool wherever that is played. Naturally, the Derby and International Open have been on my “dance card” for years, and the opportunity to broadcast the Hong Kong, Reyes vs. Strickland match race to 120 was unbelievable and forever memorable. I have always desired to be a member of the Mosconi Cup broadcast team, too (still).

**Q:** You became a professional pool player in the mid 1970s. With no pool tour around, you went on the road gambling?

Yes. However, I barely got by going on the road gambling after investing tons of hours daily to build my pool game for a couple of years. I was a scared kid trying to get better and having no idea how I proposed to make a living. I just knew that I loved pool enough to sacrifice anything except my integrity and respect for the sport to figure a way to become excellent.

**Q:** How did you build your pool game before going on the road?

I quit my job after saving \$2,000 to begin my quest of pursuing pool full time. I would have been the approximate skill level of a terrible league player today, entry level, or just above entry level. The money that I had saved was used extremely frugally as pool time cost \$1.80 per hour and I restricted myself to \$20 per day (11 hours) of playing. If someone would play me for who paid the table time and I won, that was excellent because I could play more. I was so consumed and enthusiastic for pool that when I went to the poolroom I went right to the table to practice and could not wait to get started, often arriving min-

utes before opening and being asked to leave at closing.

Soon, I was not good, but rather “less bad”, and many guys would play me for \$1 which was really fun, and a true challenge that I began including every day. Losing and learning or winning and keeping my pool life thriving, I did this for years.

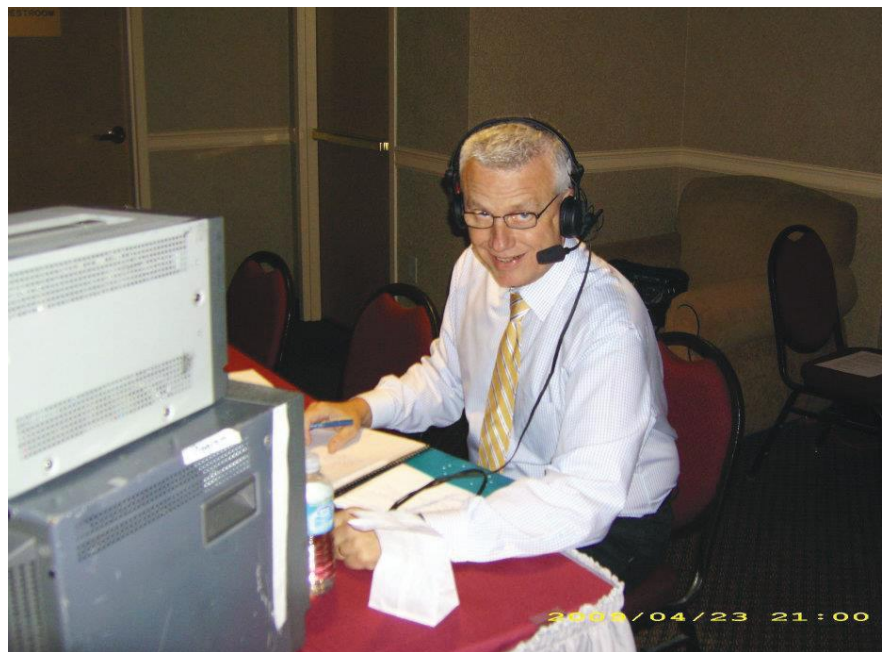
This led to real progress, but not without many losses playing against the better players for modest but increasingly serious amounts. The lessons obtained along with some toughness really helped.

Every four to six weeks I would commit to test myself by playing against Dallas West in Straight Pool and 9-Ball for \$2-\$5 per game. He was a World Champion and I had never won even a small tournament of amateurs. The skill differential was such that winning for me was not possible, yet we played frequently and I would lose \$40, but win first-hand immense knowledge. I really fought hard to win games in an effort to get more time on the table playing Dallas prior to my ultimate fate. Sometimes I won a little money from other bad players in Mad-

ison, Wisconsin where I lived and the very next day I would go again to try and beat Dallas West.

This was tuition money for becoming a pro and I could not wait. I would always play him as best as I could to try and get the absolute most out of my investments. He would always talk with me after our match days and I would go home and straight to the poolroom to continue efforts on what had failed me that day. After several years, I had a day where I superseded all of my limited ability and got ahead of Dallas and after four hours he was frustrated and no longer felt like playing. He would still for certain beat me, but he just no longer wanted to play that day and I drove home with \$40 more than I came with. The surge of confidence and adrenaline that came from that moment was much more than any amount of money to me.

Thereafter he still defeated me, but the matches began taking far longer to liberate my \$40 and the growth rate increased for me. Once upon a time, of the two of us, only he could run 100 balls, now I could occasionally do so too.





*Mark and a set of models class up a black tie affair*

**Q:** Your determination is deep and those are undeniable lessons you can't get anywhere else, wow. You have been entrenched in the pool scene your entire life and know all the current top players. But, because you traveled around the country gambling when you started out, you know all the great players from the mid to late 80s. Who were some of your most memorable players?

The top players were my heroes, all of them, and guys like Buddy Hall, Mike Sigel, Jim Rempe, Steve Mizerak, Nick Varner, and Dallas West, comprised the most elite. Another great player and motivator was 'Sailor of Racine' (Frank Stellman) and he belongs in the BCA Billiards Hall of Fame, but they did not have the media coverage then.

Louie Roberts was so much fun and really talented. Jeff Carter was my running mate for years and a tremendous all-around player, up near the very top all around players, along with Varner and Hopkins. George Brunt was a much greater player than people ever knew. Willie Munson was another great that was so down to earth and humble. Bob Vanover was as good as any, but a bit under the radar. Keith McCready had so much tal-

ent and charisma that you have to be a fan if you love pool. Earl Strickland was just a kid, but clearly destined for greatness. Danny Diliberto was super tough at every game. Larry Hubbart was top speed and tough for anyone... top tier. Swanee Jay Swanson was a real player, great in tournaments and better for the cash.

During these times my game had improved significantly and I never had a tremendous amount of cash, but I got to challenge everyone listed for a couple of hundred dollars and was able to enter every pro tournament, as I was winning money pretty regular from lesser players and I was beginning to become pretty competitive. I genuinely feel blessed and am honored to have been around everyone from that era, pool was just much more fun then.

**Q:** Any great stories you want to share?

[ Mark answered this question with a fantastic story about Jimmy "Pretty Boy Floyd" Mataya and this is a MUST read! Mark also includes what Jimmy did after retiring from playing pool, that is also very interesting. Check out the end of interview to read about Pretty Boy Floyd – you will enjoy it! ]

**Q:** How did you get your nickname?

When I moved to St. Louis I was still very active on the Camel Pro Tour and regional tournaments and I suppose it was that I was a pool shooter from St. Louis that morphed into the "St. Louis Shooter." I have never really embraced that... but, it kind of stuck.

**Q:** You have traveled all around the world for pool. What was your most favorite place, unique place, and memorable place you visited?

I just returned from Italy and had a magnificent time because after three years of studying Latin, the places I visited had been in the forefront of my mind but I could never imagine the dimensions or proximities. That was a really fun experience, and also seeing how advanced and modern the Roman civilization was. Manila and the Philippines in general have been both very educational and exciting for advancing my pool skills. Iceland for two weeks of pool instruction was dramatic and interesting, pool is enormous due to 20 hours of darkness in the severe winter.

Hong Kong and England are the best. Hong Kong is the financial hub of Asia and I was there with Bob Moore who was a bigger than life character that amassed millions of U.S. dollars betting on horse racing. Bob loved pool and wanted to see big things happen for it. We became close friends and shared a lifetime of unbelievable experiences over a few years. I owe Bob a forever debt of gratitude for sharing a side of life that I would never have the opportunity to experience and he is credited in my book as a way for him to be remembered the best way that I know how.

England and their history have always been awesome. I love snooker and British humor, although I wish they would try a little harder on their food. Pool is big, the players are highly

skilled, and The Beatles history is fun for me to explore...Charles Dickens images, Shakespeare, London Tower, Jimmy White, Allison Fisher, and Steve Davis, what is not to love? Great times in jolly old England.

**Q:** How did you and your wife meet?

Shortly after moving to St. Louis, I met my wife Cathy. She went to the tanning parlor next to the poolroom that I worked at. The actual story of our first meeting was when she came over to the poolroom and I bought her a drink and we played a little pool. I had set up some pool shots of moderate difficulty and as it turns out she superseded anything that I have ever seen from her since. I thought that she could learn to be a good player, but alas my teaching skills have not been sufficient. She had two boys who were really cool and they instantly loved pool and I instantly loved them.

I have now been married for 30 years, counting both wives...err, how do you do it? Just count the last one? I do both, and my current wife Cathy now has the all-time record of 19 years, a very proud achievement by her. I do not see anyone beating her record.

A young boy of 10 years old named Justin Bergman, who is now a professional player, is responsible for us getting married. Every Monday night at the poolroom I had a private tournament with \$2 entry fee and it was handicapped. I put up everyone's entry fee, for Cathy, her two boys Dylan and Derrick, myself, Justin Bergman, and Lars Vardaman.

Cathy had always encouraged me to marry her, but I had informed her that I could never marry anyone unless they had won at least one major title in their pool career. Somehow, just one week later, the final match of the Monday Night Invitational 9-Ball tournament came down to her and Justin. He would normally beat her, but that

night she slipped past him and then claimed this title as a major. I have often wondered if Justin was mad at me that night. Nevertheless, we married and have had great fun together with her and with both boys, the very best thing to happen for me, ever.

**Q:** That is a great love story (even though your 'criteria' was pretty tough, lol). Luckily Cathy had Justin was her wing-man! What has been your most coveted title or accomplishment?

When my dad learned of my pursuit of pool he was not onboard and feared that my life was destined for utter failure. However, as time went on he saw my approach and came to many of my tournaments and he became very proud of my accomplishments. Certainly, my biggest accomplishment for my father was when asked about my pool playing career he replied with his thought about complete success..."well, he never asks me for money." If I could make it work where he did not have to fund it, good enough.

Naturally winning the very first Mosconi Cup was a terrific title. I had a one inning game in the Semi-Finals of the Wisconsin Professional Straight

Pool Championship and went on to claim that title. I was instrumental in getting Nick Varner elected to the Billiards Hall of Fame, as he had many victories over me in our tournament years and I still get a little upset that he did not even mention me in his Hall of Fame acceptance speech. In my career I have lost to anyone that you ever heard of, but I have also won against them too, Efren Reyes, Buddy Hall, Mike Sigel, even Nick. The Hong Kong Open came down to Steve Davis and myself for a prize that could not even pay his taxes, but winning against him would be epic for me because I admired him so much. I won 11-8 and the biggest cash prize of my career \$40,000. However, the win meant far more than the money.

**Q:** What is your most memorable match?

Sometimes these questions are so absolute when that is not how a pool life goes! Many matches were valuable for different reasons. Pocketing the final 9-Ball in the first Mosconi Cup was pretty great.

**Q:** Who has been a big influence in your pool game?



Jerry Briesath gave me the tools, Sailor of Racine gave me tremendous inspiration, Jeff Carter taught me toughness, and Efren Reyes was a tremendous influence on me for developing and polishing the difference making strokes and thoughts at the professional level.

**Q:** Who has been a big influence in your life?

Bob Moore from Hong Kong because of his immense success, but also tremendous compassion and philanthropy. He was a great example of a hard worker that blazes his own trail in life, fails and then succeeds, and recognizes how fortunate and blessed that he has been also.

Lt. Commander Amir Pishdad U.S. Navy SEAL has also shared some tremendous life experiences with me and taught me a great deal. Pish has always been there for me and became a brother. If you go to my website listed below you can read about my first experience meeting Amir and gaining access to Basic Underwater Demolitions/SEAL training.

Don Wardell M.D. has been another role model that has made me a better person, plus he has great humor.

Number one though, is my wife Cathy. She aggravates me, but has made me a better person and taught me sincere unconditional love and generosity, plus she is unintentionally hilarious.

**Q:** How can people reach you?

Website: [www.playgreatpool.com](http://www.playgreatpool.com)  
Email: [stlshooter@hotmail.com](mailto:stlshooter@hotmail.com)  
Phone: 618-540-2182

**Q:** Thank you, Mark, for taking time for this interview! It's been a joy and an insurmountable learning experience interviewing you. Now, for those ready for the 1980 Jimmy Mataya story, here you go!

## JIMMY "Pretty Boy Floyd" MATAYA

**Richie Florence was a great nine ball champion and gambler in the '60s. Later on in his life, he produced several major tournaments.**

**P**layers of that era always dressed the part of success and Richie was no exception. He always dawned an expensive shirt, nice slacks, and shiny fancy shoes. This helped to generate confidence and inspire other people to do things bigger and for larger amounts. In addition, Richie had a great personality and was a smooth talker who only operated first class. His energy was such that he made you like and admire him. In fact, many people loved him, as he always exuded positivity.

By 1980, he was well into the downside of his playing career and decided to promote a pool tournament. However, a Richie Florence Production had to be the biggest and the best. He worked hard and sold his concept to the best casino in the world at that time - the beautiful Caesars Tahoe in Lake Tahoe, Nevada.

Entry fees for the Caesars Tahoe Billiard Classic were \$3,000 the first year and \$2,500 the following year. That didn't stop the best players in the world from entering his event. Enormous prize funds were created - \$30,000 plus a new car for the winner - as well as many more cash payouts. He even lined up a fledgling sports network - ESPN - to cover the last matches of the event. This event would be the first time 9-Ball was shown on television.

Richie's events always attracted many big stakehorses and backers to watch and participate in the event. Pool players of all skill levels flocked there too, as spectators and

players - this was going to be a great party.

Naturally, he also had the largest Calcutta ever in pool. A Calcutta is an auction of each entrant that allows everyone - especially non-players - to become monetarily involved. It consists of open bidding on each individual player and all of the money generated goes into a separate prize fund for the owners/purchasers of the top finishers. Calcuttas always generate significant fun and interest among the spectators while giving them serious excitement - the sums of money were significant.

Forty two players entered the most expensive tournament ever and I was probably number 40 in skill. The field consisted of the sport's premier players - Buddy Hall, Mike Sigel, Steve Mizerak, Jim Rempe, Nick Varner, Earl Strickland, Jimmy Mataya, Allen Hopkins, Louie Roberts, Larry Hubbard, Kim Davenport, Jimmy Reid - pure killers only due to a very expensive entry fee. This was a true professional sporting event.

The Calcutta had many super high rollers in the audience and the top players went in the mid \$2000's. Even I went for \$700 - one of the lowest prices. Sigel was tops at \$2,600, Buddy \$2,400, Miz at \$2,100 - finally getting to Jimmy Mataya. Jimmy is a star player that played in an era of mostly gambling. He would often have many thousands of dollars from gambling or he might be broke - back and forth.

The auctioneer said, "OK, guys! Here's a player that won the Star-



*The real Jimmy Mataya*

The bidding began and went back and forth until stopping at \$900.

The auctioneer admonishes the audience saying, "You guys are really making a mistake here. He's playing great. Letting Jimmy go this cheap is criminal when you could own him. This guy can absolutely win this event and will definitely finish in the money."

Still, nobody bids, despite a couple more sales pitches.

The auctioneer says, "OK, everybody. We're going to sell him at \$900. Going once, going twice..."

Jimmy raises his hand and loudly drawing attention to himself, bids \$1,000.

The auctioneer stops and says, "Alright, look guys, Jimmy recognizes a steal when he sees one and he's playing his best. Who'll give me \$1,100 for the great Jimmy Mataya?"

Complete silence despite a little more urging from the auctioneer. Finally, he said, "OK, Jimmy has himself for \$1,000. This is ridiculously low but, going once, going twice, going..."

Jimmy yells, "\$1,100!"

Everybody started laughing because at the last second he raised the price despite already owning himself. The auctioneer - laughing with the audience - reopened the bidding and now was telling everyone that this guy really believes in himself and they'd better not let a steal slip by but nobody bites...

"Going once, going twice..."

Jimmy hollers, "\$1,200! I play better than this."

He then went on to make last second \$100 bids until he was at \$2,000 - putting him among the elite players. Jimmy was always bigger than life and memorable.

Years later, Jimmy left pool, went to Detroit, and began booking sports bets for high stakes. He amassed substantial money and purchased a custom-built palace for himself complete with a circular drive around an enormous fountain. Inside the entry foyer to the home, he had built an inset in the wall that held an enormous sculptured bust of his own image - similar to something Julius Caesar might have had created. Only Jimmy - always full of bravado and charisma - would also have such love for himself to create something so grandiose.

Even today, I laugh out loud thinking of Jimmy creating a bust of himself for his home, because I love that brash self confidence. He even refers to himself in the third person of his alter-ego saying things like, "the Floydster wants to get a bet down on this match."

Nobody has had more fun going through life than Pretty Boy Floyd and he is forever my friend.



*The Jimmy Mataya Bust*

dust Open and has to be one of the absolute favorites in any field. Who will kick this off for \$500?"

Melinda "aka-trigger" Bailey has been in the pool scene as a player and ambassador for pool for over 25 years.

Additionally, she was a Tournament Director for two large tours in Texas for over 15 years. She is a loyal blogger (<http://pooljourney.blogspot.com/>) and holds numerous BCA/ACS Texas State and National titles (singles, doubles, and teams).

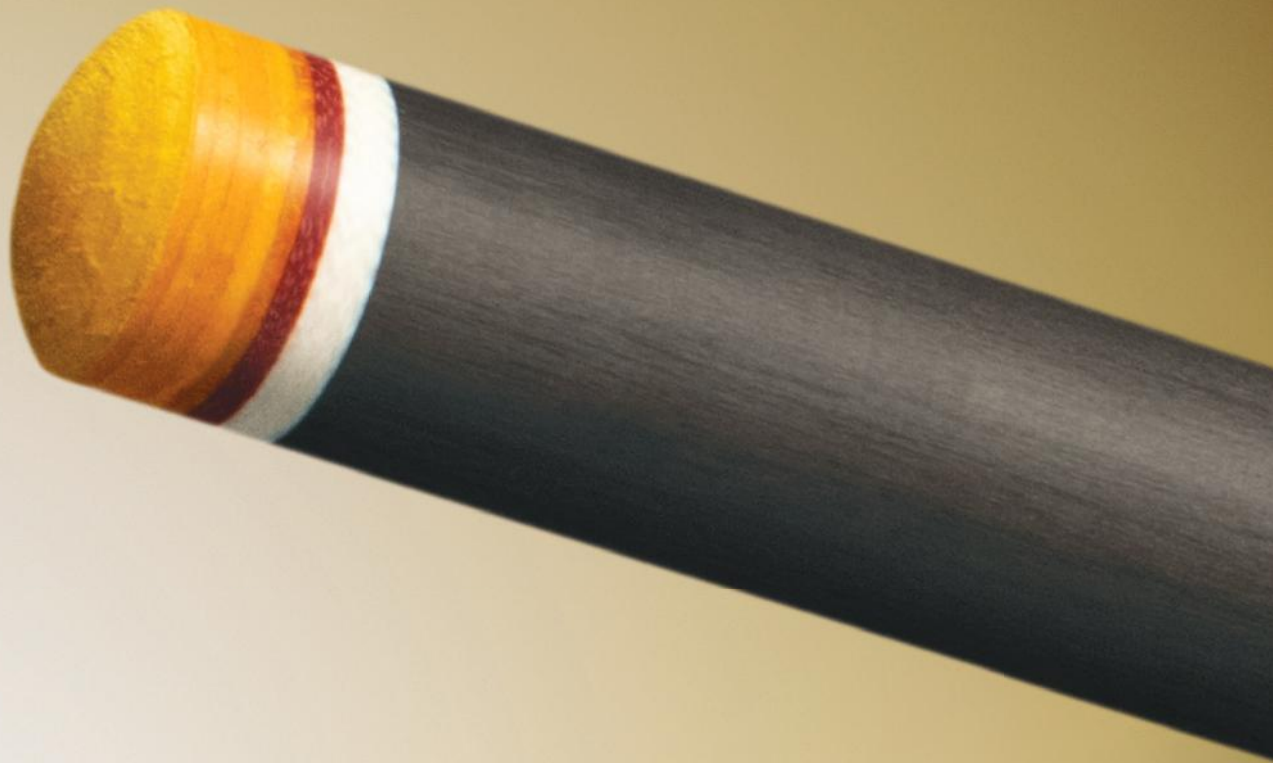




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# Gospel Trick Shot #6

## Be Still

**History of the Trick Shot:** The first time I saw this shot was probably in a trick shot show by the great

Hall of Fame pool player Irving Crane from Rochester, NY. I had the privilege of playing in the 1977

World 14.1 Straight Pool Championship with him where he took 4<sup>th</sup> in his mid-sixties and I took 9<sup>th</sup> as a

26-year-old. This classic shot was used by many of the game's greatest players in their trick shot shows.

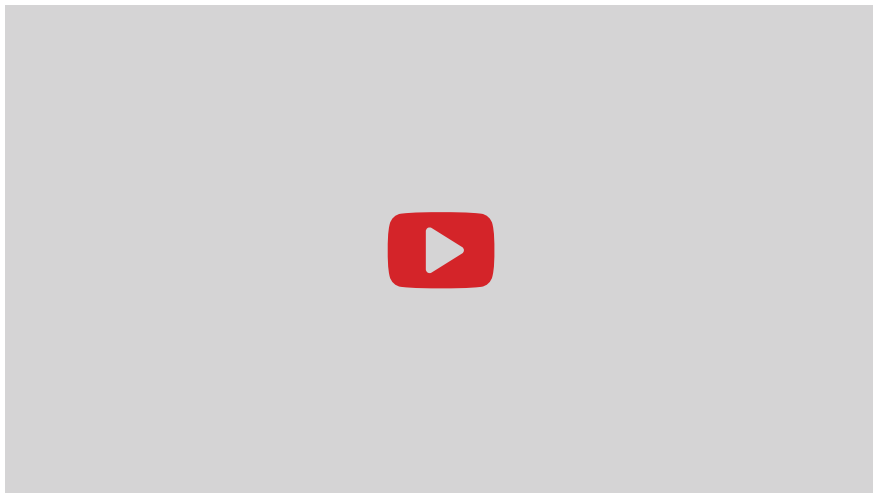
**GTS Name and Why:** When I observed that the cue ball in the center of the shot does not move, I thought about how God wants us to be still and reflect on Him. My nickname is "Leapin" and I did not get that name by being still. This shot always reminds me to spend time being still as I seek the Lord.

**Scripture References in NIV Translation:** Psalm 46:10 says to "Be still and know that I am God;" and also Proverbs 8:34 and Psalm 131:2 say more on the subject.

**Cue Ball Placement:** Place cue ball in between the two object balls as shown. Use another object ball to replace the cue ball as the ball you strike to set the shot in motion.

**Object Ball(s) Placement:** As shown in the diagram below.

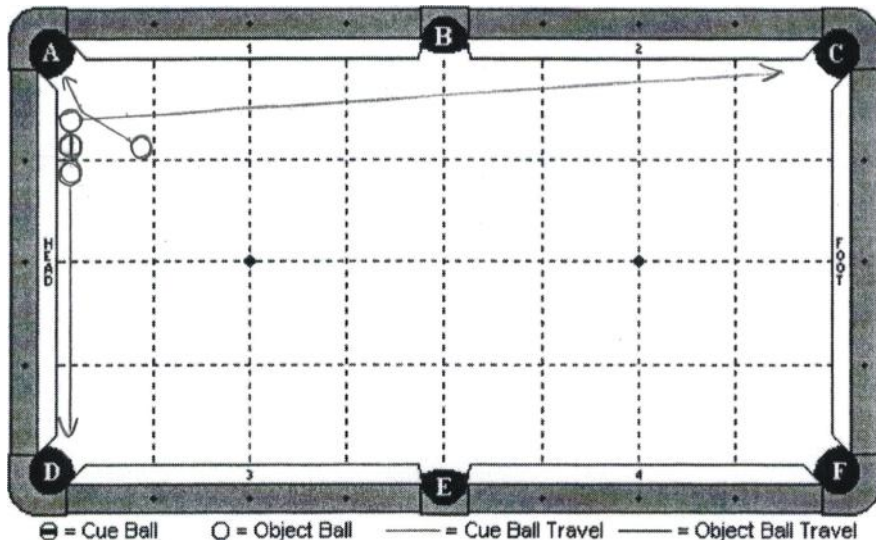
**Objective:** Hit center ball on the third object ball to the outer edge (1/4 ball) of the object ball closest to pocket A. If hit at just the right angle the balls will go in as shown with the cue ball remaining still.



**Special Notes:** Some cushions play shorter or longer so you can move the three balls left or right on the head rail to make an adjustment. They must always be frozen to the bottom rail and to each other to be successful. A variation to this shot is to place a dime 1/4 inch on the cushion in front of the object ball closest to pocket A. Place a coffee cup 2 inches behind the dime and standing upright on the rail.

Shoot the "Be Still" shot in the same way and watch the dime pop up into the cup for added affect.

**Crowd Reactions Through the Years:** This shot is simple but yet profound. People see the shot and immediately can relate to the principle. When the dime and cup are added it becomes a crowd favorite!



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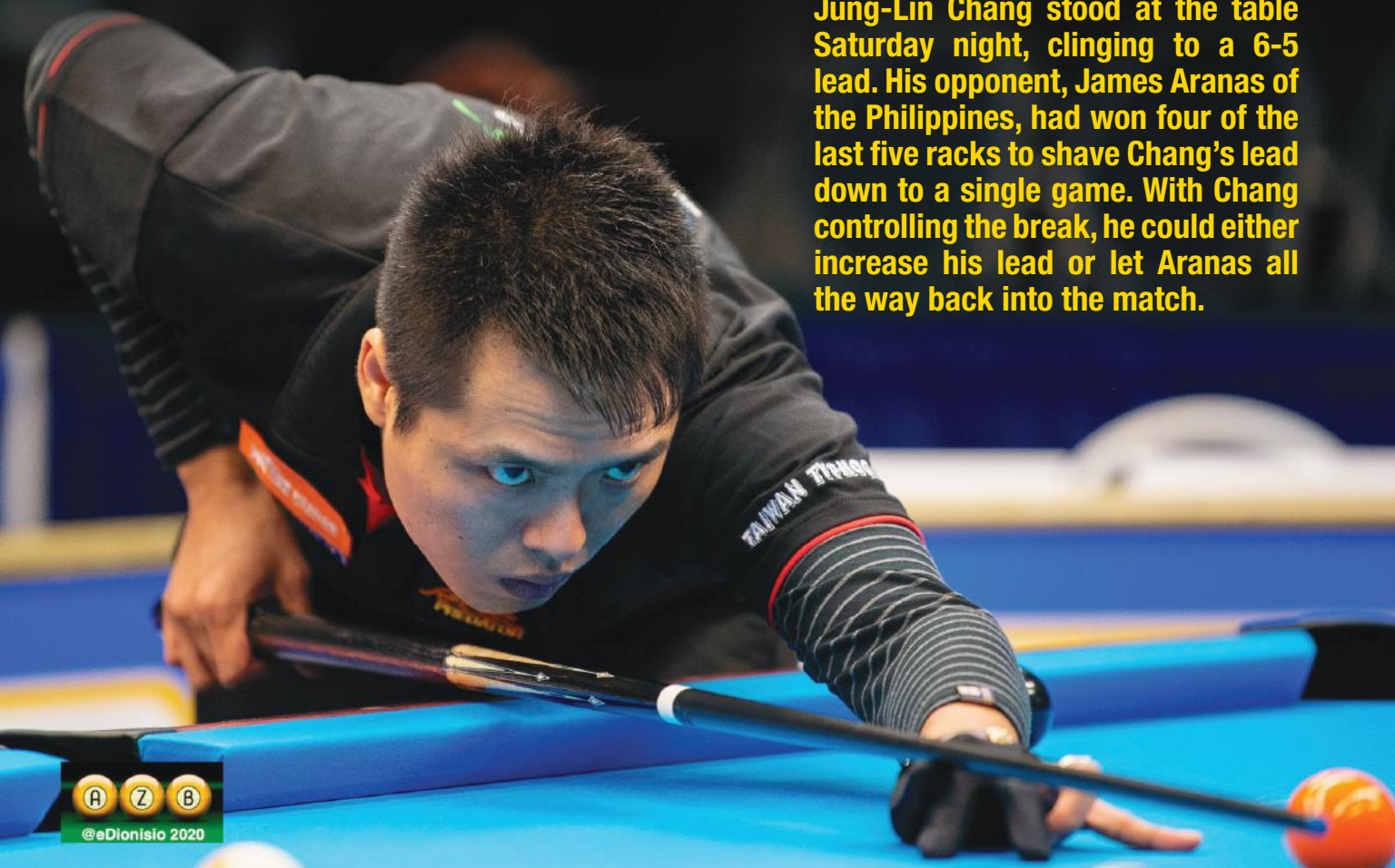
  
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Learn more at [mcdermottcue.com/defy](http://mcdermottcue.com/defy)

# **Chang Takes Advantage of Aranas Mistakes to Win Diamond Las Vegas Open**

By KEITH PARADISE  
CSI Media Staff Writer

Jung-Lin Chang stood at the table Saturday night, clinging to a 6-5 lead. His opponent, James Aranas of the Philippines, had won four of the last five racks to shave Chang's lead down to a single game. With Chang controlling the break, he could either increase his lead or let Aranas all the way back into the match.



“I didn’t think too much because it was my break,” Chang said. “After that, I had a chance to run out.”

Chang took full advantage of the opportunity, as the powerful player from Chinese Taipei ran out and then used a handful of unforced errors by Aranas down the stretch to win the four of the final six games and claim the Diamond Las Vegas Open championship at Rio Hotel and Casino. Chang’s 9-5

victory in the finals avenged an earlier 7-4 loss to the previously unbeaten Aranas the finals on the winner’s side of the bracket.

“(Aranas) made a lot of mistakes on some easy shots and that allowed me to get more points,” Chang said after the match.

The Filipino opened the title match by using a victorious safety exchange to run out and take an early lead. Aranas

appeared positioned to tack another rack onto his lead in the second game but misplayed position on the 9 ball, rolling the cue ball into the blocking 10 ball. He missed a kick shot on the object ball and Chang seized on the opportunity, using two breaks and runs along with an Aranas scratch on the break to build a 5-1 lead in a race to nine.

“In the final I wasn’t comfortable,” Aranas said.



The Filipino broke and ran in the seventh game to cut the deficit to three games and closed the gap even more when Chang missed a jump shot on the 4 ball in the following rack. Aranas appeared to be on the verge of slicing the lead down to one game but missed a makeable 8 ball in the corner pocket.

“That was the chance for me to get closer,” said Aranas. “I was thinking about the shot clock and I was kind of like rushing and I missed it.”

Chang cleared the table to push the lead to 6-3 but the Filipino continued to battle, taking advantage of a dry break by his opponent and adding a break-and-run to again narrow the gap to one game. Chang, who won the 2018 International Open, broke and ran in the 12<sup>th</sup> game, gutted out a win in the following game and closed out the match in the 14<sup>th</sup> rack when Aranas overran position on the 3 ball and ultimately overcut the shot.

“The most important thing of all is mentality. You have to go through the pressure,” said Chang. “The last thing is the gods. The gods if you something, you take it.”

The second-place finish is one of Aranas’s best in a 128-player tournament with an international field. The Filipino, who is reigning Super Billiards Expo 10 ball champion, opened the event with three consecutive 7-5 victories against Rory Hendrickson, Chris Melling and Maximillian Lechner. After defeating Ian Costello, 7-3, Aranas worked his way past Justin Bergman, 7-5, then jumped out to a 6-1 lead against Ralf Souquet only to see the German battle back and cut the lead to one. During a lengthy safety exchange with Souquet in the final game, the Filipino jumped in the 1 and 2 balls then ran out the rack to secure the match.

“Ralf is such a great player, he’s a legend to me,” Aranas. “It’s hard to give him a chance to get back on the table.”

Aranas then advanced to face Chang in their first matchup of the way, using two breaks and runs and a dry break from his opponent to jump out to an early 4-0 lead. After Chang used two breaks and runs and a scratch on the break by the Filipino to narrow the gap to 4-3, Aranas cleared the table in the eighth game then took advantage of two dry breaks by Chang to close out the match.

“I’m proud of myself for what I’ve done,” said Aranas. “This is probably the first time I’ve come this close in an event like this. This was a big opportunity for me.”

Justin Bergman is adamant that he didn’t play well during the event. Whatever game he did have was good enough for third place, as the young man from Illinois gutted his way past opponents until fatigue took its toll.

After a 7-4 decision against Kengo Suzuki in the opening round, Bergman took down John Morra, 7-5; Ta-Li Lin, 7-1 and Ko Pin-Yi, 7-5. After falling to Aranas 7-5 late early Saturday morning around 2 a.m., Bergman grabbed about an hour of sleep and was back at the table Saturday morning at 10 a.m. He gutted out back-to-back hill-hill matches against Corey Deuel and Poland’s Karol Skowerski before taking down Chris Robinson, 7-4. Now playing in the quarterfinals on the one-loss side, Bergman split the first six games with Souquet before a missed 5 ball by the German in the seventh game opened the floodgates.

“I changed my mind right before the shot,” said Souquet. “That basically threw me off completely afterwards. It wasn’t a tough runout, I just needed good shape on the 6 ball and, for whatever reason, I changed my mind.”

Bergman cleared the table to take a 4-3 lead, then took advantage of a couple additional missed shots by Souquet to close out the match, 7-3. His luck – and energy – would run out

## Diamond Las Vegas Open



Chang and Aranas lag for the break

in the next round against Chang as he failed to pocket a ball on the break in his first three attempts. Chang built a commanding 6-0 then held off a late

rally by his opponent, ultimately winning 7-3.

“I wasn’t comfortable and he’s such a great player, you have to do everything perfect to beat him,” Bergman said.

It was a turn-back-the-clock weekend for the 51-year-old Souquet, who used his first trip to American soil in 2020 to land a fourth-place finish. After an opening round forfeit by his opponent, the German rattled off four straight wins to reach the final four on the winner’s side before falling to Aranas. Souquet then defeated Ko Pin-Yi on the one-loss side of the bracket before falling to Bergman.

The Diamond Las Vegas Open is a presentation of Cue Sports International and sponsored by Diamond Billiard Products, an industry leader in pocket billiard table manufacturing. The event is being hosted by the Rio All-Suites Hotel and Casino and broad-

cast live on YouTube by CSI Media, a subsidiary of Cue Sports International. For more information, visit [www.world10ball.com](http://www.world10ball.com)

CueSports International (CSI) is an international billiards organization which produces the United States Open 8-ball, 10-ball, one pocket, bank pool and straight pool championships. CSI, which also operates national amateur pool leagues, has three divisions: CSI leagues, CSI events and CSI media. CSI leagues manages the [BCA Pool League](http://www.bca.poolleague.com) and [USA Pool League](http://www.usa.poolleague.com), the events division produces numerous amateur and professional events and the media department creates live video billiards content. For more information about CSI, visit [www.playcsipool.com](http://www.playcsipool.com) or find CueSports International on Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and Twitter.

The Diamond Las Vegas Open is sponsored by: Predator Group, Omega billiard supplies and Kamui cue tips.

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# Rocket Wins New England Hall of Fame 9-Ball Open

The stars were out at the Joss NE 9-Ball Tour's 2020 New England Pool & Billiard Hall of Fame 9-Ball Open on March 7th - 8th, and it was "The Rocket" Rodney Morris that was the brightest star of them all.

A field of eighty two players were in attendance at Snookers in Providence, RI to witness the induction of David Wright, Chris Leal, Mike Rinella, Jay Stevens, Cleiton Rocha, Pete Genovese & Ivan Lee into the New England Pool & Billiards Hall of Fame. If the list of inductees wasn't strong enough, the field of players in the weekend even included such notables as BCA Hall of Famers Johnny Archer, Mika Immonen, Rodney Morris and Pat Fleming, as well as Jeremy Sossei, Frankie Hernandez, Ron Casanzio and Joey Dupuis.

An early Hall of Fame battle on Saturday between Immonen and Archer saw Archer sent to the left side of the board 9-5. Immonen followed that up with a 9-1 shellacking of Hernandez in his next match. He would then defeat Dupuis to remain undefeated on Saturday. He was joined on the winners side at the end of the day by Morris, Sossei and local hero Suad Kantarevic. Kantarevic is a regular at Snookers, who was having the tournament of his life on this weekend. His undefeated streak on Saturday had already guaranteed him his best career Joss Tour finish.

Sunday morning kicked off with Immonen beating Kantarevic 9-7, while Morris sent Sossei to the one loss side by a slightly more comfortable 9-5 scoreline. Morris and Immonen are certainly no strangers to each other, facing off in many tourna-



Mike Zuglan, Rodney Morris, Suad Kantarevic and Snooker owner Steve Goulding

ments throughout their Hall of Fame careers. What might have been a tough match to pick a favorite in, turned out to be a lopsided win as Morris got into his groove and raced to a 9-1 win.

On the one loss side, Dupuis ended Sossei's day in 5th place in a 7-2 match. Meanwhile, Kantarevic was proving his day one results weren't a fluke. He had three straight 7-5 wins, eliminating Steve Tavernier, Dupuis and then Immonen in the semi-final match.

Kantarevic wasn't through though, as he came from the left side of the board

and grounded Morris for a 9-2 win in the first set of the finals. Morris quickly regrouped and scored an equally dominating 7-1 win over Kantarevic in the second set for the tournament win.

Sunday's second chance tournament saw Rocha celebrate his Hall of Fame induction by coming out of the one loss side to double dip Nick Coppola in the finals 3-0 and 3-0 to take first place.

The Joss NE 9-Ball Tour is back in action on March 21st - 22nd for the Kevin Ketz 9-Ball Open at Trick Shot Billiards in Clifton Park, NY.



# WPBA ANNOUNCES REJUVENATED REGIONAL TOUR PROGRAM

**The Women's Professional Billiard Association (WPBA) has made great strides in the last two years to expand the number of Tour stops on the WPBA Tour, and currently seven stops are already scheduled for 2020.**

In alignment with our strategic goals to expand the tour, the Board of Directors is revitalizing the Regional Tour Program (RTP).

To date, three regional tours have committed to joining the program:

- Tiger SMART Tour (Belinda Calhoun)
- Florida Coastal Ladies Tour (Janis Sessions)
- Tiger Florida Tour (Mimi McAndrews)

Both the Tiger Florida Tour and Florida Coastal Ladies Tour are coordinating their efforts and schedules to maximize opportunities for the women players in their region.

Major points within the new program include:

- There is no annual WPBA affiliation fee for any women's Regional Tour.
- A women's Regional Tour must offer a minimum of 4 regional tour stops per year.
- Players on any WPBA-affiliated Regional Tour are not required to join the WPBA.
- WPBA-affiliated Regional Tours need not be exclusively affiliated to only the WPBA.
- WPBA-affiliated Regional Tours may use tour stops as qualifiers to WPBA Pro Tour events if applied for in advance.

As more women's Regional Tours affiliate to the WPBA, the WPBA plans to reintroduce its annual Regional Tour Championship (RTC). Current women's Regional Tours or promoters desiring to initiate their own women's Regional Tours may contact the WPBA at [wpbaoffice9@gmail.com](mailto:wpbaoffice9@gmail.com) / (855) 367-9722 for affiliation applications and/or materials to assist in the formation process.

The WPBA Board of Directors is committed to providing opportunities for the next generation of women to become professional billiards players and join the ranks of our dedicated cadre.

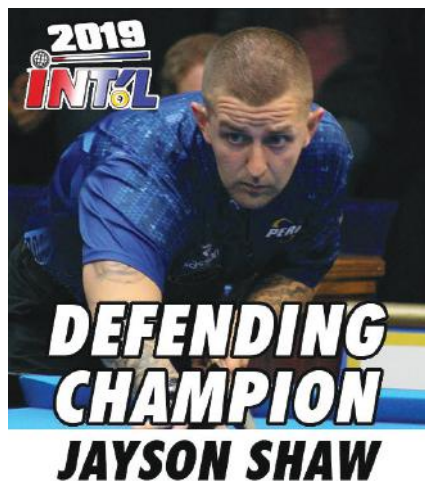


## THE 2020 INTERNATIONAL OPEN IS OPEN FOR BUSINESS!

NEWS PROVIDED BY: *The International 9-Ball Open*

**NORFOLK, March 9, 2020, 09:00am EST: The INTERNATIONAL is BACK with NINE days of pure pool from October 23rd through October 31st, 2020.**

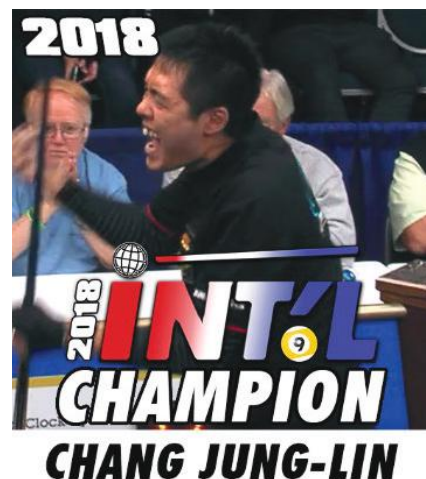
**W**ith two successful years under its belt, the *INTL*, as it is recognized, has quickly become one of the top tournaments in the world. Over the last two years, the *INTL* has brought over 200 players from over 23 countries together to play



under one roof. The players will be playing on the “triple gold standard” of professional pool: Diamond tables, Simonis cloth, and Aramith balls, and they will be playing in the same Sheraton Waterside Hotel ballroom as the past two Internationals, as well as its predecessor, the US Open. To say the least, familiarity will be their only solace, for the competition will be fierce. As the 1st tournament of the Mosconi Points 2021 Calendar, the 2020 *INTL* places itself in a unique position in the professional players mind – get ahead early in the points! The winner of the 2020 *INTL* leads the Mosconi Point standings right away! Also, being sanctioned by the WPA, the *INTL* is one of the last stops on the WPA 2020 tour and the last chances at the coveted points is sure to make for some heated play! With past winners such as 2018’s Chang Jung-Lin and 2019’s

Jayson Shaw, the players will definitely be charging out of the gate!

**9** Needless to say, with successful freshman and sophomore events, Pat Fleming, the producer of the 2020 *INTL*, is not content with sitting on his laurels. This year, Pat has made some significant improvements to his third International 9-Ball Open. So, you ask, what has changed? With \$50,000 added, the *INTL* now has an expanded field AND lower entry fee – 160 player field and \$500 entry fee – and first place is still \$30,000! This year, the *INTL* joins all other International Pro events by shifting to single elimination for the final 32 players. This is going to ratchet up the competition immensely! But that’s only the start.



**1** For 2020, while 9-ball is the centerpiece, Pat is grooming the *INTL* into something more than “just a 9-ball tournament”. In addition to the 160 player 9-Ball Open, the International will be showcasing the inaugural 32-player 2020 INTERNATIONAL ONE-POCKET OPEN. The One-Pocket Open takes place the first Friday and Saturday of the 2020 *INTL*, prior to the start of the 9-Ball Open, extending the *INTL* two extra days. With \$5000 added, an entry fee of \$300, and a \$4500 first prize, this is going to be filled fast – and fast paced

- with the world's best one pocket players! It is double elimination until the final 8 players. Then watch the sparks fly! It is sure to be the start of yet another great yearly INTL event.



Not content with two pro tournaments going on at one event, Pat Fleming, in partnership with Ra Hanna of *On the Wire*, is bringing back the junior's event. Better than ever, the 2020 Junior Invitational Championship will have both a Junior Men's AND a Junior Women's division. Eight Junior Men and four Junior Women, decided through qualifying events leading up the 2020 INTL, will compete in their divisions to be the 2020 Junior Invitational Championship Men's and Women's 9-Ball Champions! We are very proud to support the next generation of professional players and very happy to give them the opportunity to play at the 2020 International.

The Simonis-Aramith Arena will, once again, be center stage for the all of the 2020 INTL disciplines. Three levels of reserved seating will be available: TV Arena Table side seating, Tier 1 seating and Tier 2 seating, as well as general admission for the whole event. Day and evening sessions, full day passes, and Multiple day packages will be available. Tickets will go on sale Monday, April 6th, 2020 online through Tix.com: **TICKETS HERE**

Since the 2020 INTL has been extended to include two full weekends, it is expected to draw larger crowds for our vendors to cater to throughout the 9-day event. Interested vendors can sign up for vendor space here: **VENDORS HERE**

Accu-Stats Video Productions will be providing recording and live-streaming of the 2020 INTL, both through their Pay-Per-View and free streaming via their Facebook and YouTube channels. Suffice to say, Accu-stats is looking to have a few tricks up their sleeve

regarding production and access. Stay tuned for more information as it becomes available.

<https://www.accu-stats.com>

<https://www.facebook.com/ac-custats/>

<https://www.youtube.com/c/AccuStatsVideoProductionsTV>

For more up to date information on the 2020 INTL, visit both the INTL website and Facebook page.

<https://www.international9ballopen.com>

<https://www.facebook.com/theinternational9ballopen/>



**-The 2020 International is now accepting entryfees for One-Pocket and 9-Ball Player Entries.**

**-Spectator Tickets for Reserved and General Admission Seating will go on sale Monday April6, 2020.**

See the details below for more information on all of these events.

**Quick International Open Details**

- Play Dates: October 23-31, 2020
- Site: Sheraton Norfolk Waterside Hotel, Norfolk, Virginia, USA

- Discounted Hotel Room Rate: \$115.00 plus tax for a single or double
- Diamond Pool Tables, Simonis Cloth, and Aramith Balls
- TV Arena Seat Reservations available
- Pay-Per-View by Accu-Stats•Live Scoring by AZ Billiards
- Websites:
  - o <https://www.international9ballopen.com>
  - o <https://www.accu-stats.com>

**9-Ball Division**

- Play Dates: October 25-31, 2020 (Sunday thru Saturday: 7 days)
- Entry fee: \$500
- Size of Field: 160 players
- Added Money: \$50,000 guaranteed regardless of number of players.
- First Prize: \$30,000
- Prize Fund Breakdown with 160 entry fees:
 

1st: \$30,000	5-8th: \$5,000
2nd: \$20,000	9-16th: \$2,500
3-4th: \$10,000	17-32nd: \$1,250
- Format: Double Elimination, Race to 10
- Alternate break and neutral rackers
- Official rack is the Outsville Accu-Rack 9-Ball Rack template
- Single Elimination for final 32 players
- Sanctioned by: World Pool Association (WPA)
- Mosconi Points awarded

**One-Pocket Division**

- Play Dates: October 23-24, 2020 (Friday and Saturday: 2 days)
- Entry Fee: \$300
- Size of Field: 32

- Added Money: \$5,000 guaranteed regardless of number of players.
- Prize Fund Breakdown with 32 players:
 

1st: \$4,500	3-4th: \$1,900
2nd: \$3,100	5-8th: \$800
- Format: Double Elimination, Race to 3
- Single Elimination for final 8 players

**Junior Division**

- Play Dates: October 30-31, 2020
- Size of Junior Men's Field: eight
- Size of Junior Women's Field: four
- Format: Double Elimination, Race to 9, Alternate Breaks
- More details to follow.

**ENTER AS A CONTESTANT NOW:**

There are several ways to pay your entry fee.

- Pay online with a debit/credit card or PayPal: **ENTRY FEES**
- Mail check or money order payable to: "International 9-Ball Open" Addressed to: International 9-Ball Open, PO Box 299, Bloomingdale, NJ 07403.
- Pay on site with money order or cash (only if the field is not full).
- *OR*, for the 9-Ball Open only, you may pay a non-refundable \$250 deposit, online or via mail, with the balance of \$250 to be paid by October 1, 2020.

**RESERVE YOUR HOTEL ROOM NOW** (\$115 Discount Rate, single/double):

**RESERVATIONS**

**BUY SPECTATOR TICKETS HERE** – Tickets go on sale Monday, April 6, 2020:

**TICKETS**

Any Questions? Contact: Pat Fleming  
 International 9-Ball Open  
 PO Box 299  
 Bloomingdale, NJ 07403  
 973-838-7089  
 pat.fleming@international9ballopen.com

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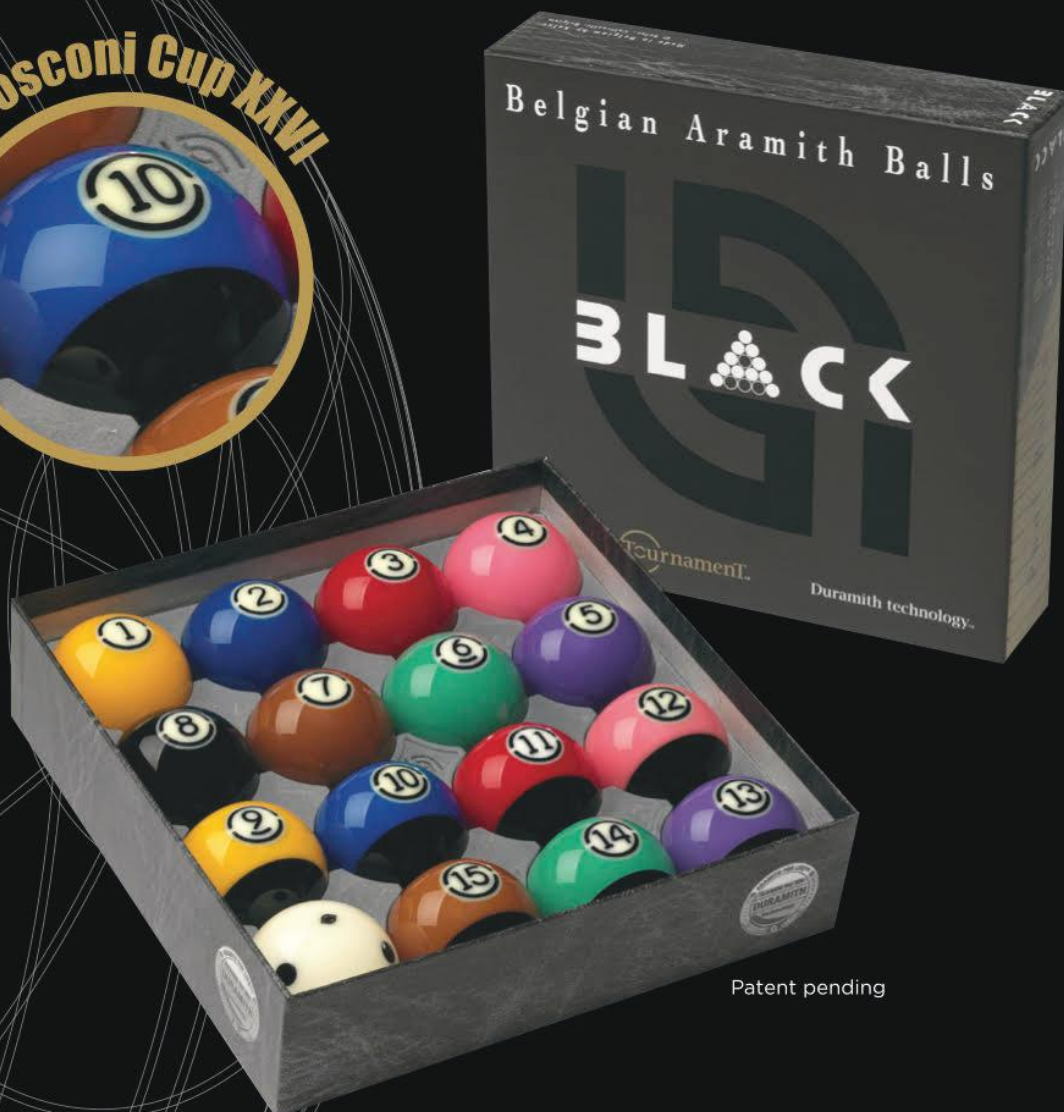
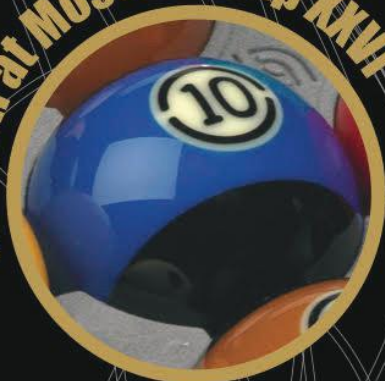
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# POOL AND COVID-19



**As we sit around at a hypothetical AZBilliards Central and ponder how, in the absence of industry activity, especially tournaments, we should proceed, it's easy to be reminded of Rick Blaine, played by Humphrey Bogart in *Casablanca*.**

**R**ick famously talked about the significance of his specific problems at the time by saying to one of them, Ilsa, “that I’m no good at being noble, but it doesn’t take much to see that the problems of three little people don’t amount to a hill of beans in this crazy world. Someday you’ll understand that.”

It’s obvious in what follows - interviews with a small handful of individuals, a fraction of the number of people associated with the sport of pool who are being affected - that we’re speaking to the pool world equivalent of Rick’s “three little people.” These select few may not “amount to a hill of beans in this crazy (corona virus)

world,” but they reflect thoughts and actions that are likely common to the relatively small world of people who love and participate in the sport of pool.

“Vegas was a ghost town,” said Janene Phillips, tour director of Florida’s Sunshine State Pro Am Tour, who, along with co-director Bobby Garza, had travelled to Las Vegas to participate in the BCAPL World Championships and the Cue Sports International Expo, only to find themselves returning home early, when CSI cancelled the events’ final four days, ending it on Tuesday (March 17). She was speaking just outside her boarding gate at McCarran International Airport.

“They shut down the casinos and restaurants,” Phillips went on to say. “It was unreal. It only took us 20 minutes to get to our gate here at the airport and most of that time was walking to the gate.”

Phillips was sympathetic with the powers-that-be that opted to continue with plans to hold the event at all.

“You couldn’t have predicted something like this,” she said, “and it would have meant that everybody would have been out thousands of dollars in plane flights.”

“The (venues) did the best with what they had to work with,” she added. “The hotels were sanitizing every-

thing and there were hand-sanitizer stations everywhere.”

As she prepared to board her flight, headed home, she was also reflecting on what lay ahead for her. Tour directing the Sunshine State Pro Am Tour is her *job*, and there’s a great deal of uncertainty about what lies ahead, and not only just for her.

“This is impacting the whole world,” she said. “It’s going to mean a changed schedule for the Sunshine State Pro Am Tour. We’re still scheduled for a stop in April (25<sup>th</sup>), and as long as they’re (Brewlands in Tampa) back up and running, we’re still having it.”

The likelihood of that shifted dramatically in a matter of days and while we haven’t communicated with Brewlands directly, it’s probably a safe bet that the April 25 event will be cancelled.

“We’ve cancelled all Tri-State Tour stops through the end of March,” said tour representative Todd Fleitman, “and we’ll be letting people know as we hear of further developments. I wouldn’t be surprised if this didn’t go much further than that.”



“And there are a lot of things that will probably have to be delayed,” he added, “like our June (end of 2019-2020 season) Invitational.”

Fleitman also noted that going forward, this crisis is likely to affect the industry overall, to include tour sponsors and companies that offer merchandise and prizes. It is also likely to impact Fleitman’s ability to earn money as an instructor.

“All lessons have ceased,” he noted. “People are just not playing.”

As a tournament director, he’s hearing from players from all sides of the political spectrum, regarding the virus and its impact on the community, including conspiracy theorists, and those, like Fleitman himself, who believe that it would be difficult for anyone in a position of authority to do well under these circumstances.

“I’ve spoken to some pool players who are stockpiling food for two months,” he said.

“We’re hanging in there,” said Monica Savedra, one of a group of people who tour-direct the DFW (Dallas-Fort Worth) 9-Ball Tour. “We had a tour stop scheduled in late March (28-29) in Frisco, TX that they closed on us and we found out by a Facebook post.

“We’re just going to have to regroup and rethink,” she added. “We had a ladies-only event, scheduled for April 11, that we’re probably going to have to cancel, as well. We’re just going to have to rethink the schedule. Dallas has announced shutdowns and the Dallas City Council has been meeting to extend the closure plan.

Savedra has been fielding phone calls, text and Facebook messages – about two dozen a day – requesting information and in some cases, refunds of money already submitted for tour





stop payments. Those calls and texts are likely to continue.

Stephanie Mitchell's Corner Pocket room in Largo, FL was still open last week, although she fully expected that a total shutdown was going to be mandated soon. A lot of her regular business emanates from pool league activity and a lot of that has already been shut down; cancelled, as of March 16. She's making an effort to keep her employees working and is considering room renovations to do that.

"Just trying to keep us all afloat," she said, "and figure that the place will be better when I do re-open."

Mitchell is, of course, not alone in deriving a majority of her business from pool league activity and the American Poolplayers Association (APA) leagues are the largest. According to Jason Bowman, APA's Marketing Manager, decisions about cancelling league activities are made at the local level.

"Leagues are shut down across the board," he said, "but the leagues

themselves are franchise operations, so while we can advise, we can't make the decision. They're following the directives of local, state and federal officials."

The APA issued a press release on Monday, March 16 (published on our site that day), announcing the postponement of its annual Poolplayer Championships, which were scheduled for April 29-May 3 at the Westgate Resort and Casino in Las Vegas. President Greg Fletcher indicated that he's in communication with the Westgate and that information about a future date would be passed on to members as soon as that information is available.

In the meantime, said Bowman, the organization is reaching out to its franchises and alerting them to the plight of the venues in which the league's teams operate. There is a financial and personal side to the equation. The bars and pool rooms will be in search of ways to keep their business operating, including, as an example, developing means of offering pick-up and delivery of food at establishments where such a thing is possible.

"We're encouraging league operators to help rooms by curating that information," said Bowman.

In addition, he noted, there is a social component to the weekly league nights and there is some concern about the members who will lose that interaction; for some, a more serious loss than others.

"A lot of people play in the APA," Bowman noted, "and social distancing can mean social isolation. We're encouraging people to reach out to each other, maybe not in the pool hall, but to stay in touch, while we try to provide some of that through social media.

"We're trying to encourage league operators to be leaders in their community," he added.

Among others in the industry being keenly affected by this global issue are the professional players, like Thorsten Hohmann, who, when we reached him, was staying with friends in the Houston area, "until they throw me out on the street," he said. The friend has a table in his home, so Thorsten will be able to practice, but the interruption of events has a long-range





just did not reach, all functioning under the same set of circumstances and likely experiencing the same set of concerns, differentiated by their particular industry perspective.

Of the many things all of those interviewed and the multitude of US citizens not interviewed here have in common is an inability to predict the immediate future. Asked what the future holds for their individual personal and professional lives, they (we), at this stage, are forced to answer, "I don't know." It highlights something that all of us can agree upon, regardless of recently-apparent differences when it comes to the politics of the situation.

We are all in this together.

Stay safe and in touch.

impact on his day-to-day livelihood. Like others at his level of professionalism in the field, making their money entails scheduling for world-wide events, well ahead of time to assure flights and accommodations.

"So many cancellations," he said. "Flights, entry fees, hotels."

"Some flights are easy to cancel and you can get an immediate refund," he added, "but it's really on a case by case basis. It's just the way it is."

Hohmann will spend part of his time, working on his new pool App, called CueLab (more on this in Mike Howerton's interview with Hohmann, which can be found at ???????). The future, however, is a little cloudy.

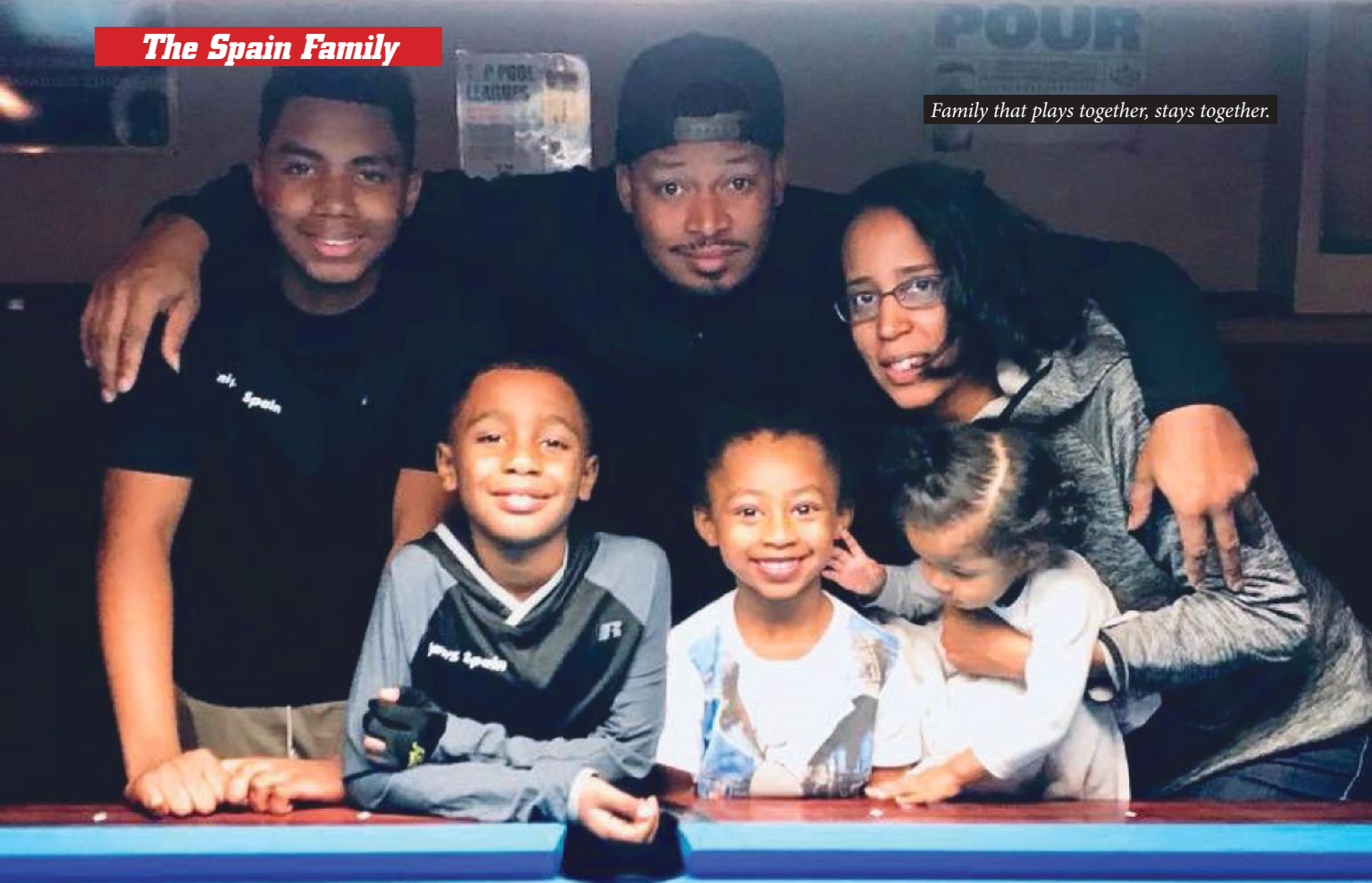
"Everything has been cancelled," he said, "so it doesn't make sense to talk about the future events."

"But other people are more affected," he added. "It's going to cost me actual money and moving forward, the ability to make more, but I just hope everybody stays safe. I have a Mom in Germany and I just hope everybody follows the rules and stays home."

They were personal and professional calls that we made to these people, prompted by a desire for comment, but more importantly, by relationships that had been established with

these industry professionals, over many years. We wanted to know what was going on in their lives in regards to the corona virus, but we also just wanted to check in with these friends of long standing. Obviously, there are a lot of people we were unable to or





# The Spain Family

**It's a well-known adage that "the family that plays together, stays together." In Glen Burnie, MD, this is particularly true of the Spain family, which, late in life for the adults and early on for three of the four children, discovered pool and as a result, have a table in their living room and something enviable to do as they, like the rest of us, practice our social distancing.**

**W**hile the Spain children – Frank III (17), D'Angelo (9), Franki (7) and Demi (2) – have gotten a head start in what might turn out to be a career for one or all of them, their parents came to the sport late in their lives. Born in 1981, Frank II didn't get involved with

the sport until he was in his 30s. He'd been introduced to it during a 2006-2010 stint in the Marine Corps as an Aviation Operations Specialist (training pilots).

"Back in the day," Frank II recalled of time in the early 90s, "I used to work in a bowling alley."

"When I came home from the Marine Corps," he added, "I really didn't start up playing in a pool league until 2015."

Initially, once the sport had sparked his interest, Frank II was looking to improve to the level where he could compete beyond local leagues, and potentially, professionally. He con-

vinced his wife, Angela, to get a pool table, which ended up in their living room. As it turned out, Frank II's path, didn't take too many steps in the direction of professional competition, it turned, with the interest of his children, toward teaching.

"Once my son started showing interest, I became more of a student of the game," said Frank II. "I wanted to teach not only what I knew, but much more."

"With the kids beginning to get interested, I couldn't invest the time in myself to become a true competitor," he added, "so I went from being a player to becoming, through the BCA, a professional instructor (or PBAI, Professional Billiards Association Instructor)."

His experiences with the APA and its leagues led him to an observation that the organization encouraged the development of Junior Leagues and each year, held a Junior Championship in the organization's home city of St. Louis, MO. Maryland's APA leagues, however, had not caught up with this



2020 9 ball event at Big Dogs Paradise in Mechanicsville, MD - Split first - Father & Son

addition of junior leagues, and Spain set out to change that.

"I started putting pressure on the greater DC area APA league operators,

Dave and Vicki Beatty," he said, "and after about two years, they gave me a green light to start a juniors' league."

Since that time, three years ago, a lot of area parents have become involved in the effort and there are now a total of about five APA junior divisions in both Maryland and Virginia. Two of them are run by Spain himself. The children, particularly Frank III and D'Angelo have established themselves as future forces to be reckoned with. They finished 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> at their APA Divisional Playoffs in their Junior League and though they did not excel at last year's APA Junior Championships, it was their first time out. They both competed in qualifying tournaments for the annual Billiards Education Foundation's Junior Nationals and competed last year. According to Frank, they "didn't do too well in Vegas, so they still have some work to do there," but again, they were both just starting out. The two youngsters competed in the Joss Northeast 9-Ball



## The Spain Family



Maryland's first ever BEF National qualifiers event - April 2019 at Bank Shots Bar & Grill, Laurel, MD - Jawz took 3rd place for the 12 & under and Sniper took 5/6th place in the 18 & under

Tour's Junior events earlier this year and won their respective divisions; Frank III in the 18-and-under division and D'Angelo in the 12-and-under division.

Frank II's love of the game has spread rapidly to his children and his wife, Angela, as well. While Frank works at a variety of jobs to make ends meet, Angela works as an administrative assistant to a consulting firm and says that she had no interest in pool whatsoever, when her husband began playing in local leagues.

"None at all, until he started playing," she said. "He asked me to join him, playing in the leagues and I told him I didn't even know how to hold a stick."

"He told me that you didn't have to be good to play," she added, "so I went out with him, watched some of the ladies play and thought, 'Oh, OK, I can do this.' That's when I joined a league



Scotch Dbls 9 ball event at Bank Shots Bar & Grill, Laurel, MD - 2nd place \$1,000



Greater Washington DC APA  
Jrs 2019 National Qualifiers -  
Center Pocket, Crofton, MD

and now, I play more than he does. I'm a captain with one of the teams I'm on."

Though she has no aspirations to elevate her skills to the level of regional tour competition like the nearby J. Pechauer Northeast Women's Tour, Angela has travelled to watch women

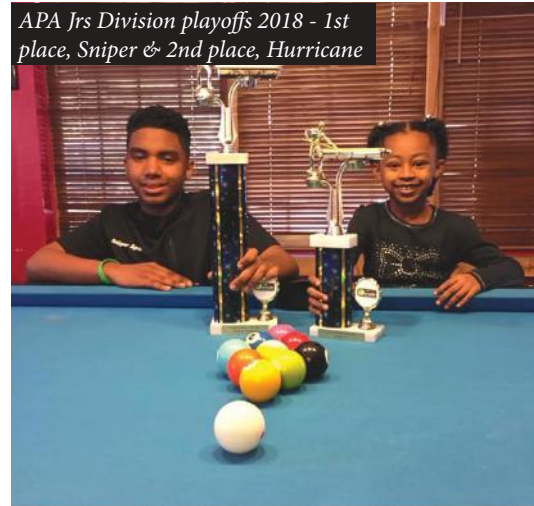
play on that tour (cementing the notion that she's a long way from competing at that level) and befriended a regular competitor on the tour, Lai Li, who recently finished as runner-up at the tour's season opener.

"We went to a local doubles tournament at Triple Nines recently, where Lai Li and D'Angelo played as a team and so did Frank and little Frank," she said. "They ended up splitting first and second place. They were in the finals, but it was just so late, they decided not to play a final match and just split the money."

Husband and wife find that it's different aspects of the game that attract them. Frank likes the problem-solving, while Angela appreciates being able to share the sport with her children.

"Every time you break," said Frank, "it's a different game. You have different questions to answer.

"That's the most intriguing part about it," he added. "You're always having



APA Jrs Division playoffs 2018 - 1st place, Sniper & 2nd place, Hurricane



PIC-COLLAGE

to think about different and creative ways to figure out the answers to these puzzles, and patterns. Problem-solving."

It's why, he says, he became an instructor; looking for different ways to solve the pool 'puzzle' and bring different tools to the proverbial and actual table.

"I taught the kids how to play chess," he said. "How to think and how to make moves with a purpose. When you have that mentality, you can apply it to any sport, or any game or to life, in general.

"You can always relate it to life," he added. "Do everything with a purpose. Do it like you mean it. Commit to it."

"What I like," said wife, Angela, "is doing it as a family. There are not many things that you can do as a family."

Growing up, an only child for nine years, she didn't do a lot of sports.



Scotch Doubles event 2019 - First place split - Frank/Sniper & Lai Li/Jawz at The New Greenroom, Dundalk, Md

Staying mentally sharp away from the table by playing chess



The three young shooters have already got pool nicknames; Frank II is Sniper, D'Angelo is Jaws and young Franki is Hurricane. The two boys are sponsored by Jacoby Custom Cues and Murphy Enterprise Solutions and will be, in the months and likely years ahead of them, looking far and wide and travelling to locations to qualify for junior tournaments wherever they occur. Sniper could end up competing at the college level at Lindenwood, and with brother as a role model, D'Angelo could follow him in a few years.

Don't say you haven't been warned!!

Always tall, there were those who thought she'd gravitate towards basketball, but the only thing she did do, was become a cheerleader. So, as with her discovery of the sport itself, she discovered something else.

"I also like winning," she said.

Though during their trip to the APA Junior Nationals last summer, Frank II and D'Angelo, who at 9 is still a little distance from having to make college decisions, did visit with Mark Wilson and had discussions about Lindenwood University with its pool sports program.

"They were both very interested," said Angela. "D'Angelo is only 9, but he likes the idea and Frank (17) is thinking about going there."

Next in line to learn the game and already a presence at the home pool table are a seven-year-old and a two-year-old daughter, Franki and Demi, both of whom are demonstrating some interest in pursuing the sport, which is just fine with Mom and Dad.

"Demi's only two and I can't keep her away from the table, either," said Frank II.



Frank III And D'Angelo in St. Louis for the APA Junior Nationals

  
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# MARIO HE



**With the lack of events to report on at the moment, we are teaming with the Supr Charged Agency to feature interviews with various European and American players. Hopefully this will give all of the readers a chance to get to know these players better.**

First off, we have Mario “Panda” He from Austria.

Mario He was born August 3rd, 1993 in Rankweil, Austria. He is a former winner of the European Pool Championships, and winner of both the 2017 and 2019 World Cup of Pool events alongside Albin Ouschan. He has also won five Euro Tour events between 2016 and 2019, an accomplishment shared with only six other players in history.

Read more about his fifth Euro Tour win here.

**Q:** First off, can you tell us about the Panda nickname? How and when did that get started?

**A:** Well, Albin called me that once, and I guess it fits me.

**Q:** When did you get started with the game?

**A:** I started playing in 2004 at the age of 11 years old at a pool hall called “Patrick’s” in Rankweil.

My idol when growing up and still to this very day, is Wu Jiaqing. I am impressed by the Chinese players and I can see that China produces a lot of great young players.

**Q:** What first got you interested in playing pool?

**A:** A friend in my school took me to the pool club and when I started playing, I immediately loved it. I just love the way the game is set up, always different layouts, and limitless ways to improve your game.

**Q:** What are your greatest accomplishments so far in your career?

**A:** 2 x World Cup of Pool Champion  
5 x Eurotour Winner  
European Champion

**Q:** Can you tell us a little about those wins?

**A:** Both WCOP wins were amazing, especially the 2nd one after a very bad time in my career (4 months ban). I can still feel the consequences and it's more than 1 year ago.

All the Eurotour wins were great, because I guess it's one of the toughest tournaments to win since there are so many great players from Europe competing and many unknown, but fantastic players participating.

**Q:** How often did you practice when you were getting started?

**A:** When I was younger I practiced 5-7 days a week and 3-6 hours each session. I felt addicted to pool and I got so excited just to enter the pool club.

**Q:** How about now? Do you still practice that much?

**A:** Today I'm playing so many events that I don't have so much time to get to practice, but when I have a week off, I go 4-5 times a week and the session is 2-4 hours. I use some drills, but mostly I replay difficult situations from previous matches and standard shots.

**Q:** What should newcomers to the game focus on the most?

**A:** The most important thing is to get a good straight stroke. It's also



important to be able to play all shots both without and with english. Having those basics makes the more difficult steps much easier.

**Q:** What do you consider the strongest part of your own game?

**A:** I am getting stronger in critical situations and have a good shot selection.

**Q:** What is your favorite game and why?

**A:** 9-ball and straight pool. 9-ball is a very dynamic and offensive game, but also a little defense is needed to be successful. There are many 2-way shots and in 9-ball the craziest best shots are made.

Straight pool was one of the first disciplines which I was practicing every day until today. It's a great game to improve your own game, seeing different ways to run out a rack and get to know a lot about splitting balls.

**Q:** Is fitness important for pool players?

**A:** Yes, fitness is important for pool players, especially for tournament players who need to stay focused in

tournaments over a period of time. It's also smart to have good fitness for your overall health.

**Q:** What are the 3 most important factors in terms of technique?

**A:** 1. Having a straight stroke  
2. Having good cue action  
3. Stay down during the shot

**Q:** Which players do you think are the tops in those aspects of the game today?

**A:** It's difficult to say who has the best stroke today. I think Joshua Filler and Fedor Gorst are the straightest shooters and Jayson Shaw and Jeffrey De Luna might have the best cue action. As far as what I would call a smooth stroke, I really like Ruslan Chikhov's stroke.

**Q:** How is your own mental strength and do you have any advice for players who need to work on that part of their game?

**A:** I think my own mental strength is at a top level. I love to get into pressure situations and I can handle it. I have never felt the Mosconi Cup situation, but I'm looking forward to get-



ting to know the feeling of this event one day.

In terms of advice, I can say that you need to be self-critical and work on your weaknesses. Take advice from the right people and play with stronger opponents. Play big events to get stronger.

**Q:** How important is the equipment you play with?

**A:** Nowadays there are so many different products on the market that the importance of having the right equipment is very important.

For example, the chalk. I actually think this might be one of the most important factors when it comes to the equipment.

Even before I got sponsored by them, I used the TAOM chalk. I think it's the best chalk at the market right now.

Since I started using TAOM chalk about a year and half ago, I have gotten maybe 2-3 skids total. The chalk just feels good, not too creamy and it has a good grip on the tip.

**Q:** In your opinion, what is required to be a good ambassador/sponsored player?

**A:** It's important to represent the sponsor on the events the sponsored player plays. Also social media is a good way to announce your sponsors after a post. The communication has to be good between player and sponsor, also everyone has to treat each other very well and represent each other the best way they can. The most important thing is that both parts are satisfied with what they get from each other. Different sponsors may want different things. A local company from Austria, for example, wants to see the player on national TV and not just in a stream of some event.

**Q:** What's the main differences between events in Europe and the US?

**A:** Usually in the US there is more prize money because there is also a higher entry fee, which I think is good. In Europe I think we have very well organized tournaments. It's a different feeling when you play an event in Europe, like the Eurotour. You feel straight from the 1st round that it's a tournament and not a gambling game. In the US you might have some side action going on, which is not bad, but I think it's always important to concentrate on one thing.

**Q:** What are your goals for 2020?

**A:** At the moment it's difficult to tell my goals for this year because of the situation right now. I cancelled the US Open because I'm not allowed to fly to the US. (Ed. Note: This interview took place before the US Open's Postponement)

I'm always trying to play my best game and to win as much as possible. This year I am not sure what's going to be played and which tournaments are going to be postponed or even cancelled.

**Q:** Who do you think will win the big events this year?

**A:** World Cup of Pool  
I hope Austria ;)

- US Open  
SVB or Filler

- 9-ball WC  
I hope ME, but many players can win this event.

- 2020 Mosconi Cup  
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# IMRAN MAJID

## INTERVIEW

**With the lack of events to report on at the moment, we are teaming with the Supr Charged Agency to feature interviews with various European and American players. Hopefully this will give all of the readers a chance to get to know these players better.**

This time, we have The Maharaja, Imran Majid.

Name (and nickname): **Imran Majid (The Maharaja)**

The Maharaja means Indian king. A lot of people say I am the best Indian player in the world!!

Age: **47**

City: **London, UK**

**Q:** When did you get your start playing pool?

I started playing snooker first at the age of 13. I have five 147 breaks and I have beaten Stephen Hendry and Mark Williams in tournament play.

**Q:** Who was your inspiration/idol when you were young?

Stephen Hendry was my idol when I was young.

**Q:** Why Stephen Hendry?

Hendry took the game to the next level and invented 'one visit' snooker. He used to kill off a frame in one visit more regularly than anyone else! He also had a great temperament and his technique was outstanding!

The experience was to be honest quite unexplainable. I was playing for my continent and also my self dignity and pride. I wanted to test myself on the big stage and I passed the test with flying colours. I was under pressure a lot and was shaking but I handled the pressure very well. I beat Johnny Archer 7-2 in my singles and beat Earl Strickland and Rodney Morris in the doubles with my partner Nik Van den Berg. Strickland and Morris were undefeated in 6 Mosconi doubles matches previous to this, so it was extra sweet!

**Q:** How often did you practice at an early age and how often now?

When I was younger I used to practice nearly everyday for 5 to 6 hours. These days I don't practice as much because I simply don't have the same energy as before. I practice maybe 4 times a week these days but I do a lot of coaching which keeps me in touch with the game. My memory gets refreshed a lot when I'm teaching so it's a good thing!

**Q:** Do you use drills when you practice?

I don't do too many drills. I prefer playing people or playing the ghost. I have beaten all the ghosts from 9-ball up to 15-ball. It took me 7 months to beat the 15-ball ghost so I was very happy to beat it. I play snooker once a week as well, which keeps me in good stroke! Before a big tournament though, I will do some standard drills and practice the break a lot.

**Q:** What should newcomers practice most?

Newcomers need to play a lot more big tournaments...throw themselves in the deep end. That's how they will improve and gain experience quickly.

**Q:** What are newcomers doing wrong?



**Q:** Who do you admire amongst today's players?

I admire Alex Pagulayan because he is an all rounder, very good at all games.

**Q:** Who is the next big thing in pool today?

In pool today, I think the next big thing is Joshua Filler. Well, he is already big.

**Q:** What are your greatest accomplishments?

My greatest accomplishments are firstly making the Mosconi cup team,

and then winning the World Team Championships and then winning a couple of Eurotour stops.

**Q:** How big was it to get picked for the Mosconi Cup team?

It was massive for me to be selected for the Mosconi cup. I was ranked number 2 in Europe at the time. That's why I was selected. It's the biggest stage in the world of pool so I was over the moon to be selected.

**Q:** Tell us about the experience of playing it.

## Imran Majid Interview

Some very good players lose matches because their break is weak!

**Q:** What should advanced players practice most?

Advanced players should practice the break shot more as it is the most important shot in the game!

**Q:** What is the strongest part of your game?

I don't really have too many strengths or weaknesses. I am pretty good all round.

**Q:** What is the weakest part of your game?

Maybe I could improve my kicking skills a little.

**Q:** Is fitness important for pool players?

Yes, I think fitness is very important in all sports. I have been to the latter end of many big tournaments, for example the US Open and World Championships, but I think my fitness level hurt me because I seemed to lose energy! I think it's unfortunate for my pool career that my wife is a great cook and makes an awesome chicken curry...lol!

**Q:** What is your favorite game?

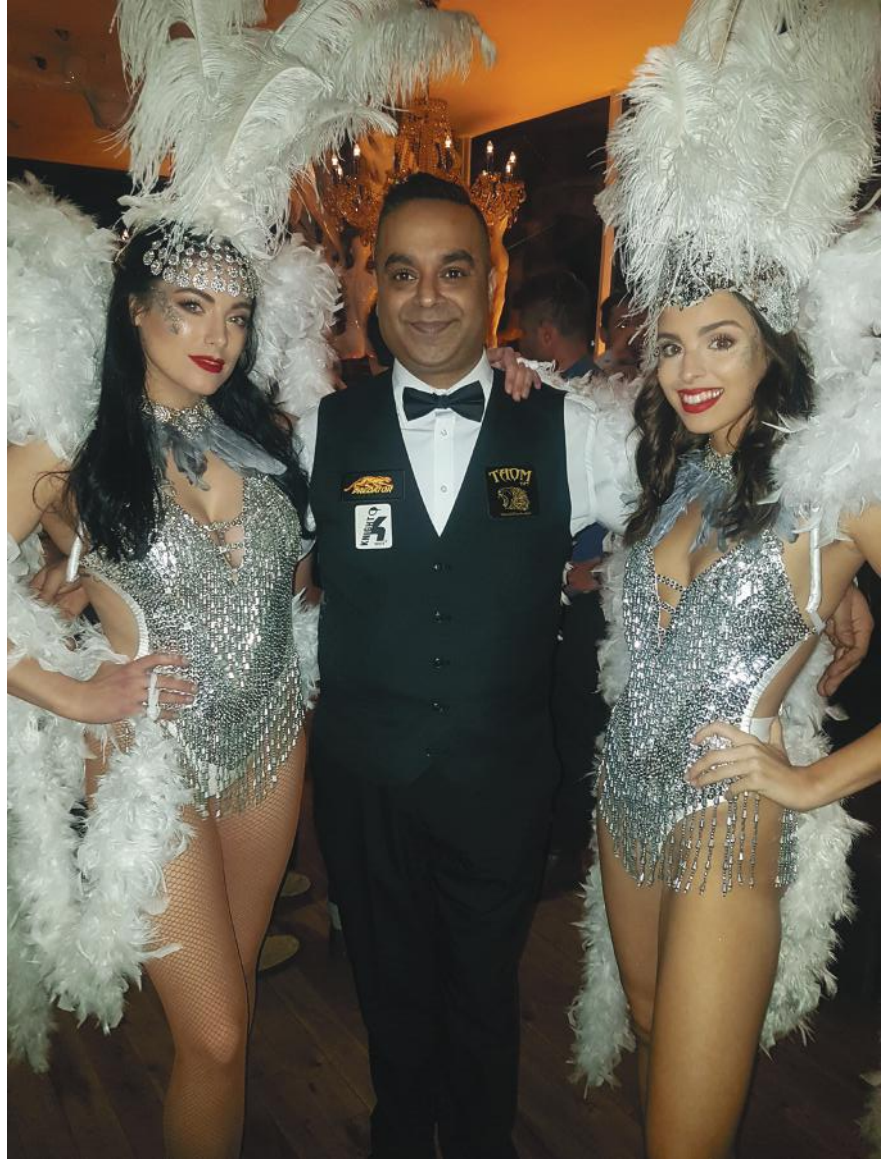
My favourite game is 10-ball and I also love one pocket but it's unfortunate not too many people play it in Europe.

**Q:** What are the 3 most important factors in a players game?

I believe that the 3 most important factors in pool are:

**Self control first.** Self control is 10 times more important than cue ball control!

**Discipline** - If you are playing pool at a high level you should treat it as a pro-



fession and do the right things on and off the table!

**Self belief** - You won't get anywhere if you don't believe in yourself!

**Q:** Who has the best stroke in pool today?

I think Joshua Filler has the best stroke in pool today. He can generate a lot of power effortlessly. He is a total natural talent and I believe he will dominate for many years to come!

**Q:** How is your mental strength?

My mental fitness is quite good. Darren Appleton once told me I have very good composure, maybe one of the

best in the world! I do work a lot on my mental game and also teach it a lot. I'm not scared to play anyone and don't get phased in pressure situations!

**Q:** Do you have any advice/tricks for players?

Advice/tricks I can give is to follow your dreams and goals ... don't let anything get in the way!

Before a big match or tournament don't think about pool. Do something different like listen to music, watch a film or simply hang out with friends. Save your mental energy for the pool match ahead!

**Q:** How important is the equipment?

I don't think equipment is that important. A good player can play with anything to a certain extent. For example, I saw Joshua filler win the China Open with a carbon fibre shaft, then after the tournament literally threw it in the bin. He then changed back to wood and won a couple of more major events!

**Q:** Do you use TAOM because they are a sponsor, or because you like their products?

I use Taom products because they are extremely good. I especially like the new Fusion tips and the pyro chalk is a good combination with it.

**Q:** What in your opinion is required to be a good ambassador/sponsored player?

A good ambassador for any company should promote the brand to their full potential. Advertising logos for any brand is massive so a sponsored player should always make sure the

logos are intact when playing. Feedback about equipment is very important to any company, so keep them up to date with feedback...but truthful feedback. If you don't like a product for some reason, you should tell the sponsors and maybe they can engineer the product to improve it.

**Q:** What should the billiard industry do to get more recognition outside the industry?

I think the billiard industry should raise the profile of the game to attract external sponsors. Things like players wearing waistcoats and bow ties...also WWF style introductions to matches can all make pool more appealing to companies outside the industry. Maybe have a speed gun on the break as well, it all adds to great viewing for audiences!

**Q:** Thoughts on Matchroom and their efforts to make pool great?

Matchroom are a blessing for the pool industry. They have put some second tier sports such as darts and poker on the map! They are the best sports pro-

motion company in the business and we should work with them to make pool great! They are increasing prize money so it can only help players and the industry.

**Q:** You do a lot of commentary, do you enjoy it?

Yes I do a lot of commentary, mainly for the Eurotour and some World Championships.

I enjoy it a lot and people give me good reviews about my commentary because I have the technical knowledge and can spice it up as well!

It also helps me to read the tv table to see how it is breaking, etc.

I can also promote my sponsors while commentating which goes out to a massive audience reach. That is good for my sponsors!

Recently, I have taken on a new commentating venture which is in the Oslo billiard centre in Norway. I commentate on the one and only Bragging Rights Challenge...lol!!



## Imran Majid Interview

So yes, it's a lot of fun and I enjoy it...I may be working with Kozoom in the near future.

**Q:** Tell us about your 2019 goals and results

My 2019 season wasn't that great... had some personal problems. My only real notable result was 9th place at the US Open where I beat some great players en route.

My goal is to win a major event, which I am still trying for. Perseverance is the key and I will continue to pursue my goals, and I will succeed!!!

**Q:** Was getting picked for 2019 Mosconi Cup a goal?

Yes, being selected for the Mosconi Cup was one of my goals! Not just a goal, but the ultimate goal!

**Q:** Your thoughts on the outcome of Mosconi Cup 2019?

I feel that Team EUROPE missed a trick in 2019 with their team selection, especially for the doubles. There was a loophole with the fans choice and Johan spotted it and took full advantage. I think Alex Lely will do a great job now for team Europe and I predict they will win this time in 2020

**Q:** You play lots of events in Europe these days. What's the main differences between events in Europe and the US?

I feel that events in Europe have more strength in depth. For example, there are probably about 75/100 players that could win a Eurotour event, but a similar tournament in the USA could only have 10 possible winners. Players in Europe are willing to travel abroad a lot more to play tournaments so they will gain experience quicker...i think this is the underlying factor!

**Q:** Goals for 2020

My goal for this year will remain the same to try and win a major, but with the current virus situation it looks like a lot of events will be postponed!

This is a bit heart breaking, because I have put in a lot of practice recently!

**Q:** Who will win these majors this year?

- World Cup of Pool


I think Austria will win the Cup again... they are built for this particular tournament!

- US Open

I will win the US Open this year!....got-ta be positive right?

- 9-ball WC

The WC is open to maybe 100 players to win. If I had to guess, maybe it's SvB's time!



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**TAOM Billiards are happy to announce that GO Custom will from now on use «TAOM On Top». They will deliver all their custom made playing cues with TAOM tips as the standard option.**

«We take great pride in delivering optimized and custom made cues. For

us the TAOM playing tips are the best, and we are thrilled to reach an agreement with TAOM Billiards.», says Goran Kobas, the owner of GO Customs. They manufacture custom made carbon shafts and cues, offering a lifetime guarantee.

«TAOM Billiards are excited about adding TAOM on Top to Go Customs cues. This is yet another proof that

our products are superior and we look forward to this cooperation», says Joonas Ohtonen, co-founder of TAOM Billiards. A Finnish company producing hand made chalks, tips and gloves.

### ABOUT

TAOM Billiards is a Finnish company producing hand made chalk, tips and gloves in the billiard industry. TAOM is changing the face of snooker and pool by changing the very foundation upon which players rely: the chalk. No more miscues. No more kicks. No more bad contacts. Just clean, durable, reliable chalk. They also manufacture high quality leather tips made from a selection of the best pig skins. Products preferred by many of the worlds top pool and snooker players. Visit at [www.taombilliards.com](http://www.taombilliards.com)

GO Customs is a Dutch company producing top quality carbon shafts and cues. 15 years at inventing, testing, create, repair and improve all possible shafts, cues and other products. The choice of players worldwide. Visit at [www.go-customs.com](http://www.go-customs.com)



This press release is written and distributed by Supr Charged Agency on behalf of TAOM Billiards and Go Customs. Visit at [www.suprcharged.com](http://www.suprcharged.com)

# Tourney Results

02/29 - 03/01

## Jerry Olivier Ladies Tour 2020 Stop 2

### Skinny Bob's Billiards

Round Rock, Texas

- 1 Ming Ng \$800
- 2 Michelle Cortez \$640
- 3 Natalie Rocha \$465
- 4 Teresa Garland \$340
- 5 Kim Pierce \$165
- 5 Angie Payne \$165

02/29 - 03/01

## Q City 9-Ball Tour Stop 2020 NC State 9-Ball Open

### Randolph's Billiards

Hickory, NC

- 1 Mike Davis \$1,200
- 2 Justin Martin \$750
- 3 Barry Mashburn \$450
- 4 Brian Capps \$280
- 5 Mackie Lowery \$160
- 5 Josh Heeter \$160

03/01 - 03/01

## Tri State Tour 2019-2020 Stop

### Steinway Billiards

Astoria, NY

- 1 Bryan Jeziorski \$900
- 2 Matt Klein \$610
- 3 Mike Strassberg \$370
- 4 Emmanuel Arelzga \$240

- 5 Marco Daniele \$150
- 5 Joe Rubino \$150
- 7 Ali Saeed \$110
- 7 Demain Patrick \$110
- 9 Jaydev Zaveri \$85
- 9 Stewart Warnock, Sr. \$85
- 9 Jay Choi \$85
- 9 Ocheign Carlos \$85

03/03 - 03/09

## 2020 Scotty Townsend Memorial Open 9-Ball

### Arena Billiards

West Monroe, LA

- 1 James Aranas \$4,000
- 2 Josh Roberts \$1,900
- 3 Shane McMinn \$1,500
- 4 Billy Thorpe \$1,000
- 5 Jeffrey De Luna \$700
- 5 Tony Chohan \$700
- 7 Roberto Gomez \$400
- 7 Dallas Broussard \$400
- 9 Clint Freeman \$200
- 9 Dennis Orcollo \$200
- 9 Francisco Bustamante \$200
- 9 Naoyuki Oi \$200

03/03 - 03/08

## 2020 Scotty Townsend Memorial One Pocket Division

### Arena Billiards

West Monroe, LA

- 1 Francisco Bustamante \$10,000

- 2 Justin Hall \$6,000
- 3 Dennis Orcollo \$3,000
- 4 Jeremy Jones \$2,000

03/03 - 03/08

## 2020 Scotty Townsend Memorial 10-Ball Mini

### Arena Billiards

West Monroe, LA

- 1 Dennis Orcollo \$1,700
- 2 Aloysius Yapp \$1,020
- 3 Roberto Gomez \$680

03/07 - 03/08

## 11th N.E. Pool & Billiard Hall of Fame 9-Ball Open

### Snookers - Sports Billiards, Bar & Grill

Providence, RI

- 1 Rodney Morris \$1,450
- 2 Suad Kantaravic \$1,000
- 3 Mika Immonen \$800
- 4 Joe Dupuis \$650
- 5 Steve Tavernier \$500
- 5 Jeremy Sossei \$500
- 7 Angelo Millauro \$350
- 7 Ryan Lineham \$350
- 9 Raphael Dabreo \$250
- 9 Patrick Helie \$250
- 9 Mike Pettit \$250
- 9 Eric Hamel \$250
- 13 Matt Tetreault \$150
- 13 Keith Platt \$150

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13 Jared Demalia \$150  
13 Derrick Cunningham \$150

## 03/07 - 03/07

### Tiger Florida Tour 2020 Stop 2

#### Brewlands Bar & Billiards

Lakeland, FL

1 Jessica Barnes \$425  
2 Sherie Hensley \$300  
3 Nicolle Cuellar \$180  
3 Jeannie Seaver \$180  
5 Lisa Cossette \$90  
5 Mitchell Monk \$90  
5 Sonya Chbeeb \$90  
5 Jeri Bouvette \$90

## 03/07 - 03/07

### Sunshine State Pro Am Tour 2020

#### Racks Billiards

Sanford, Florida

1 Manuel Montas \$1,000  
2 Ameet Kukadia \$600  
3 Cody Ingle \$400  
4 Guy Skehan Jackson \$280  
5 Stan Delonjay \$180  
5 Evan Huynh \$180  
7 Brent Mireles \$120  
7 Vernet Lasrado \$120  
9 James Antionetta \$90  
9 Larry English \$90  
9 Kristian Dimitrov \$90  
9 Kenny Jones \$90

## 03/07 - 03/07

### Sunshine State Pro Am Tour 2020 One Pocket Event

#### Racks Billiards

Sanford, Florida

1 Mike Davis \$1,500  
2 Michael Delawder \$950  
3 Anthony Meglino \$580  
4 Pedro Botta \$350

## 03/07 - 03/08

### JPNEWT Tour 2020 Stop #1

#### Triple 9 Bar & Billiards

Elkridge, MD

1 Shanna Lewis \$800  
2 Lai Li \$450  
3 Nicole Nester \$330  
4 Teri Thomas \$150

5 Sharon O'Hanlon \$100  
5 Kia Sidbury \$100  
7 Eugenia Gyftopoulos \$70  
7 Linda Haywood Shea \$70  
9 Elaine Wilson \$50  
9 Colleen Shoop \$50  
9 Nicole King \$50  
9 Christina Madrigale \$50

## 03/07 - 03/08

### Q City 9-Ball Tour Stop

#### Break and Run Billiards

Chesnee, South Carolina

1 Gary South \$800  
2 Junior Gabriel \$500  
3 Landon Hollingsworth \$300  
4 Randy Tate \$200  
5 Trey Frank \$100  
5 Bill Fowler \$100

## 03/07 - 03/08

### 11th N.E. Pool & Billiard Hall of Fame 9-Ball Open Second Chance

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

Providence, RI

1 Cleiton Rocha \$310  
2 Nick Coppola \$200  
3 Joe Darigis \$150  
4 Jim Prather \$100  
5 Demian Provost \$50  
5 Miguel Laboy \$50

## 03/07 - 03/07

### New England 9-Ball Tour Stop #15 Joe Brown Memorial

#### Buster's Billiards

Somersworth, NH

1 Geoff James \$630  
2 Xhuljiano Kamxhiu \$430  
3 Justin Myers \$300  
4 Sydney Dupont \$200  
5 Anthony Petruzzelli \$115  
5 Junnel Balofinos \$115

## 03/08 - 03/08

### Tri State Tour 2019-2020 Stop

#### Steinway Billiards

Astoria, NY

1 Russell Masciotti \$700  
2 Matt Klein \$460

3 Allison LaFleur \$290  
4 Jason Goberdhan \$175  
5 Thomas Schreiber \$110  
5 Ada Lio \$110  
7 Sherwin Robinson \$85  
7 Brandonne Alli \$85

## 03/11 - 03/14

### 2020 Diamond Las Vegas Open

#### Rio All-Suite Hotel & Casino

Las Vegas, NV

1 Jung-Lin Chang \$17,000  
2 James Aranas \$10,000  
3 Justin Bergman \$6,000  
4 Ralf Souquet \$4,000  
5 Pin-Yi Ko \$2,500  
5 Chris Robinson \$2,500  
7 Kun Lin Wu \$1,500  
7 Karol Skowerski \$1,500  
9 Eklent Kaci \$1,000  
9 Joshua Filler \$1,000  
9 Corey Deuel \$1,000  
9 Dennis Orcollo \$1,000  
13 Chia-Chen Hsieh \$600  
13 Alexandros Kazakis \$600  
13 Carlo Biado \$600  
13 Naoyuki Oi \$600  
17 Fedor Gorst \$400  
17 Ian Costello \$400  
17 Shane Van Boening \$400  
17 Mika Immonen \$400  
17 Warren Kiamco \$400  
17 Jeffrey De Luna \$400  
17 Jayson Shaw \$400  
17 Darren Appleton \$400  
25 Che-Wei Fu \$300  
25 Konrad Juszczyszyn \$300  
25 Tomasz Kaplan \$300  
25 Aloysius Yapp \$300  
25 Yu-Hsuan Cheng \$300  
25 Cheng-Chieh Liu \$300  
25 Jesus Atencio \$300  
25 Denis Grabe \$300

## 03/14 - 03/14

### Q City 9-Ball Tour Stop

#### Mickey Milligan's Sports Bar

New Bern, NC

1 Joey Tate \$500  
2 JT Ringgold \$350  
3 Michael Thompson \$200  
4 Ron Sellers \$125

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