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an  publication

vol.5, Issue June 2020



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# Billiards Buzz

Volume 5, Issue #46

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# FROM THE Head Rail

MIKE HOWERTON

**W**e are slowly making it back from the quarantines, but now we just seem to be moving on to the next crisis and obviously pool isn't nearly as important as some of the things going on out in the world right now. There is still no indication as to when we will all be able to get back to something even resembling "normal". We still have announcements of event cancellations and postponements in the pages of the magazine this month. We also have reports from a couple different "ghost challenge" events. This style of events seems to be the new normal and it might be all that we have as far as major events for a while.

We also have our regular team of contributors this month, and Melinda Bailey is back from her vacation with a great interview of Grace Nakamura. I am willing to bet that almost any reader will learn things about Grace that they didn't know before reading this interview.

I am still working on the poolondemand.com website and recently added Robin Dodson's instructional video on jump shots. There are also videos from Joe Tucker being added soon, as well as more from the archives of Jay Helfert. With all of this free time that we have indoors, now's a great time to check it out.

I ended last month's piece with the thought of staying safe out there. It seems appropriate again this month, for entirely different reasons. It's a crazy time out there. Let's get through it so we can all get back to the sport we love as soon as possible.



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Article by Skip Maloney

Photos courtesy Erwin Dionisio



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# **BASIC BANKING**

**Angle in equals angle out. This mantra of banking is correct, sometimes. Unfortunately, for players trying to pocket an elusive bank shot to win a game, this conventional wisdom sometimes clouds their judgement, causing a missed shot.**

**W**hen faced with a fairly straight forward bank shot where the object ball is no more than one diamond to the left or right of the intended pocket, but on the opposite side of the table an inch or two off the rail or less, and the cue ball lies at a point that doesn't require a difficult cut on the object ball, in-experienced bankers tend to make the same mistake over and over. If the object ball is on or near the rail it will always come off that rail short. If you were able to remember specifically the last twenty times that you were faced with a shot of this nature, you would have undoubtedly come up short of your intended pocket on the vast majority of your attempts. Our mind is able to pick the correct contact point on the object ball that you would expect would bank the ball in, and yet it hits the opposite rail short of the intended pocket. There are several reasons why this happens, balls banking short consistently, but we needn't examine why this occurrence

happens as much as just acknowledge that it does happen, and compensate for it.

There are a certain percentage of players that consistently shoot their bank shots using outside English on the cue ball in order to widen the angle by which the object ball leaves the rail. Although this technique will work with some table arrangements, it opens up a Pandora's Box of potential pitfalls like squirt and deflection, plus the position problems that will occur when inside English is required to send the cue ball to it's next position location. As a better alternative to adding outside English, you should alter your cut angle. Once you are aware of the problem and its simple solution, which is to overcut those shots as if to bank the ball two to four inches past the intended pocket, part of the analysis that you perform in your pre-shot routine, if you are faced with a bank shot of this type, is to automatically compensate by changing your cut angle slightly.



**JERRY BRIESATH**

How much to compensate is a tricky question in that each layout still has a few variables in its composition. The best way to familiarize yourself with this concept is to practice it occasionally. Perform some of the banks as cross side and some as cross corner banks with the object ball within one diamond of the intended pocket and far enough off the rail that a couple kiss problem doesn't exist. After shooting fifty of those practice banks, you should be consistently making them if you are compensating correctly. Once you see that slightly over-cutting them puts many more banks in the pocket, expect the added confidence that you will have in your banking ability to have you taking and making more simple bank shots in the course of your play.



# NEVER CHOKE AGAIN IN POOL

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

**“Choking” is when you know how to do something and have successfully done it before, yet in pressure situations you fail because of a lack of focus, poise, and execution.**

In the game of pool choking is a common occurrence, especially during tournaments when it seems as though the table gets longer and the pockets become smaller. This month I would like to share with you *why* choking occurs, and what *you* can do to minimize choking the next time you play when the stakes are high.

Choking in sports always begins with fear and self-doubt. Interestingly, for human beings fear can be real (i.e. somebody shooting a gun at you), or irrational (worrying about what somebody might think if I miss this next shot). Regardless of the source (real or irrational), *our bodies respond with anxiety in the same exact way*. In other words, your body doesn't care if it hears gun shots or is afraid of your opponent standing over the pool table – the physical anxiety (i.e. increased heart rate; tense, tight muscles; and shallow breathing are examples) will be experienced the same exact way.

Once fear kicks into *negative anxiety*, your mind will begin to exclusively focus on the physical symptoms of nerves (the shallow breathing, increased heart rate, stomach butterflies) instead of thinking about the shot you need to make on the table in front of you! From there, most players will start talking to themselves and say things like “don't screw up,” or “don't miss this next shot.” Guess what happens next? You got it – the shot is missed! Once your self-talk be-

comes negative and conservative, you are basically done (Don't believe me? Try NOT thinking of as pink elephant and see what happens. Now go tell yourself NOT to miss the next shot and see what happens).

Once the shot is missed, the player usually experiences more negative energy, more fear, more anxiety, and in some cases the day may end up being lost completely. It's amazing all this starts from fear – and *irrational fear* at that. Think about it – there is no *real* fear when playing pool, yet how many players allow their minds and bodies to experience fear as though they were in fear for their life?! Seriously, who cares about who you are playing or how many people are watching – *they cant take the stick out of your hands and make you miss shots!*

If you want to minimize choking, try the following tips:

- When you start getting nervous while playing, where is the fear coming from? Are you worried what somebody will think if you miss? Are you concerned who is watching you shoot? If you are feeling any of these kinds of things STOP immediately, stand up, take a few deep



breaths and remind yourself you are experiencing *irrational* fear.

- Develop a solid pre-shot routine as a way to both help you with your focus and pace, as well as prevent your mind from wandering and thinking about irrelevant things (i.e. like who is watching you).
- Breathing through your stomach is the best way to immediately calm your body down. Try taking 2-3 deep belly breaths and watch how your body responds – in just seconds your body will begin to automatically calm down.
- Self-talk (what you say to yourself) is also a great way to refocus and remain calm in tough situations. Tell yourself words like “focus” or “stay cool” and your mind and body will respond accordingly. In fact, you might even want to write one of these words down on your palm and look at it during matches just to stay in focus.
- Once you conquer fear, confidence will take over – leading you to synchrony between your mind and body, experiencing “the zone” more frequently, and positive self-talk (and more wins, too!).

*Dr. Christopher Stankovich is a nationally acclaimed expert in Sport & Performance Psychology and the Founder of Advanced Human Performance Systems. For more information on performance-enhancement products, including the popular “Mind of Steel for Pool Success” DVD please visit [www.drstankovich.com](http://www.drstankovich.com)*

# FIVE PRACTICE MISTAKES POOL PLAYERS MAKE

ANTHONY BEELER

**If you want to become the best pool player possible, it goes without saying that you need to practice effectively so that you increase your “offensive and defensive skills” which will lead to more consistency and better match play.**



**U**nfortunately, very few pool players do this successfully, which means they remain stuck at their current skill level while wasting time in the process. In fact, national league statistics show very few players have improved significantly over the past 10 years.

This is difficult to comprehend when you think about how much playing equipment and instructional material has evolved over the years. The reason, I believe, is because pool players go about improving their game inefficiently, repeatedly making these 5 Practice mistakes over and over again:

## **Practice Mistake 1: Thinking that constant repetition leads to big performance increases**

The first practice mistake is thinking that practicing the same shot over again will “fix” your game. Research shows that repetition is not as effective as variability. Banging balls doesn’t challenge the brain enough to cause it to do anything differently and has limited effect in changing motor patterns. It’s not about training the muscles (muscles have no “memory”), rather it’s challenging and training the brain, which creates the changes in movement. Research suggests that shooting 20 balls in 20 min-

utes (a different shot with each ball) makes practice more “deliberate” and allows the pool player more time to plan and review each shot.

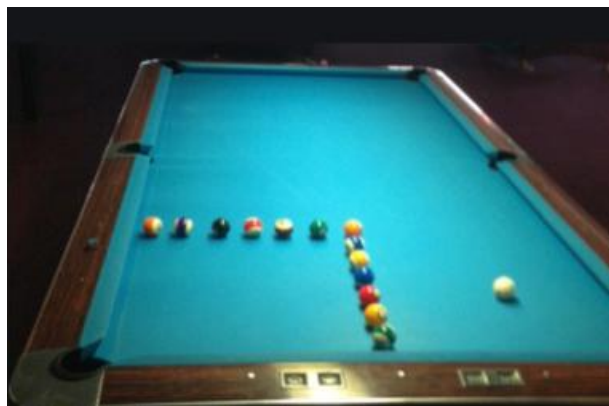
## **Practice Mistake 2: Lots of well struck balls during practice is a sign of improvement**

Although a player may start hitting the balls better with repetition, it doesn’t necessarily mean that they are improving or making permanent stroke changes. What’s most likely happening is the execution of their shots is benefiting from repetition – they get a sense of the timing required when the tip makes impact with the cue ball and they also make slight subconscious adjustments (based on sensory feedback). They are using their short-term memory, which they don’t have the

benefit of during an actual match. But because they are getting the outcome they want to see, they keep going with it over and over again, thinking that repeating the action will make it stick. Unfortunately, very little change in skill is occurring. This is the very reason that I get asked the question: “Why can’t I take my practice game to the pool tournament?” Hitting shots well during practice is fairly easy for any level of player with enough repetition, but when that pool player has to hit varied shots every few minutes, their real skills are exposed and the stroke they had during practice is nowhere to be found.

## **Practice Mistake 3: Practice should be fun**

There’s an appeal to the ego when you run several balls during practice, which can explain why you might want to continue doing it. If enjoying your time spent is your goal, then that’s great, but if developing your skills and playing better is the goal then you might need to rethink your



approach. Practice needs to be harder than the game to make positive changes in your play. Don't just bang balls around. Be structured and monitor your progress. Setting both short and long term goals is essential.

**Practice Mistake 4: Mechanics are the same as performance skills**

The average pool player practices to improve their mechanics. I've worked with enough players over the past 10 years to know this is true, even at the highest levels. Even though the focus needed to make real change in the stroke diminishes with each repetition, the player is usually focusing on their stance or a feeling during each repetition. Without knowing it, the pool player is training their attention in a way that is not how they would want to focus during a match. On the pool table, it's not about making stroke after stroke, focusing on technique – it's about solving a unique

problem each shot and letting the player's intention for the shot create the stroke. Unless we train ourselves (in practice) to prepare for each new challenge, we are not developing the performance skills needed to play better during a match.

**Practice Mistake 5: Practice and playing are two different things**

Most pool players see their practice time as something unrelated to match play. There's no overlap, or similarity of conditions, between the two environments. To make real change in skills (both mechanical and mental)

requires simulation and training of the external and internal variability that we feel during a match, due to having different shots and consequences for each shot's outcome.

If you are making any of these 5 Practice Mistakes and you'd like to learn how to practice more effectively, I would love to work with you enroll in my online class at Virtual Billiard Academy. Or feel free contact your local billiards instructor for additional guidance. Always remember, "practice" doesn't make perfect... "perfect practice" does!

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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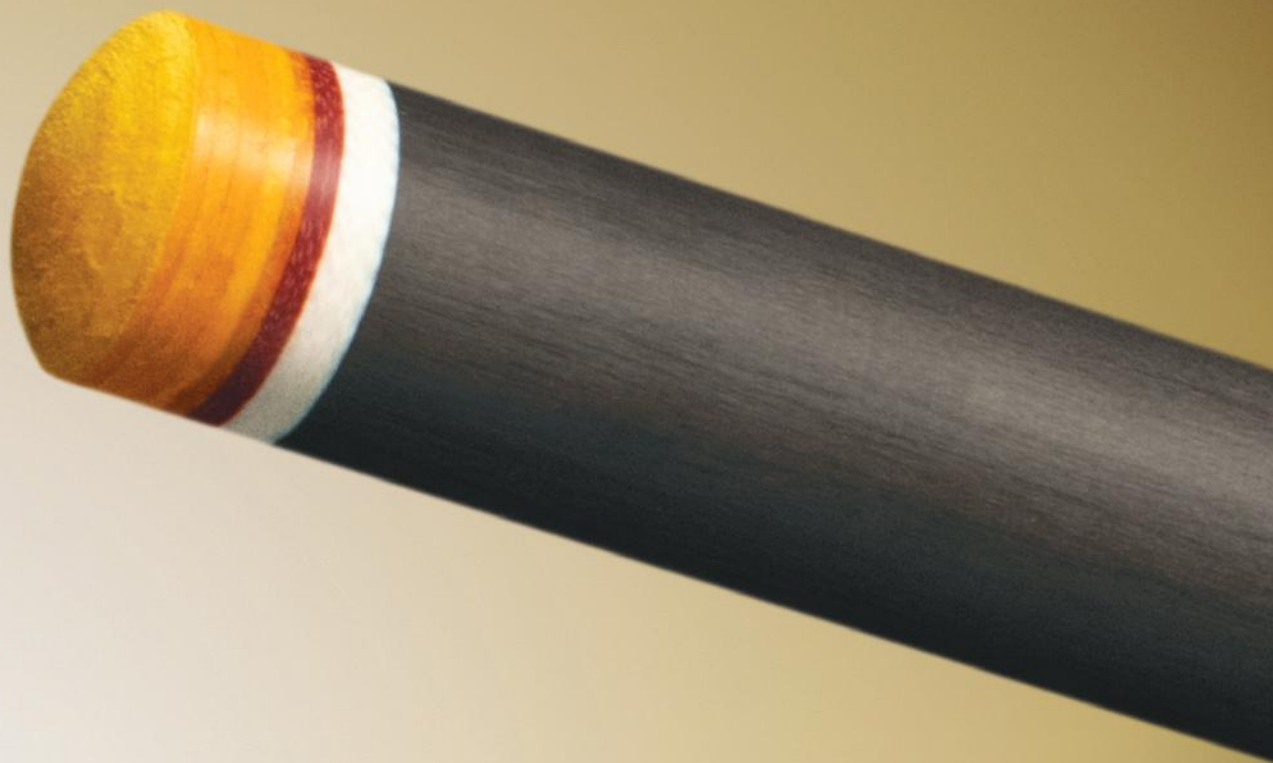
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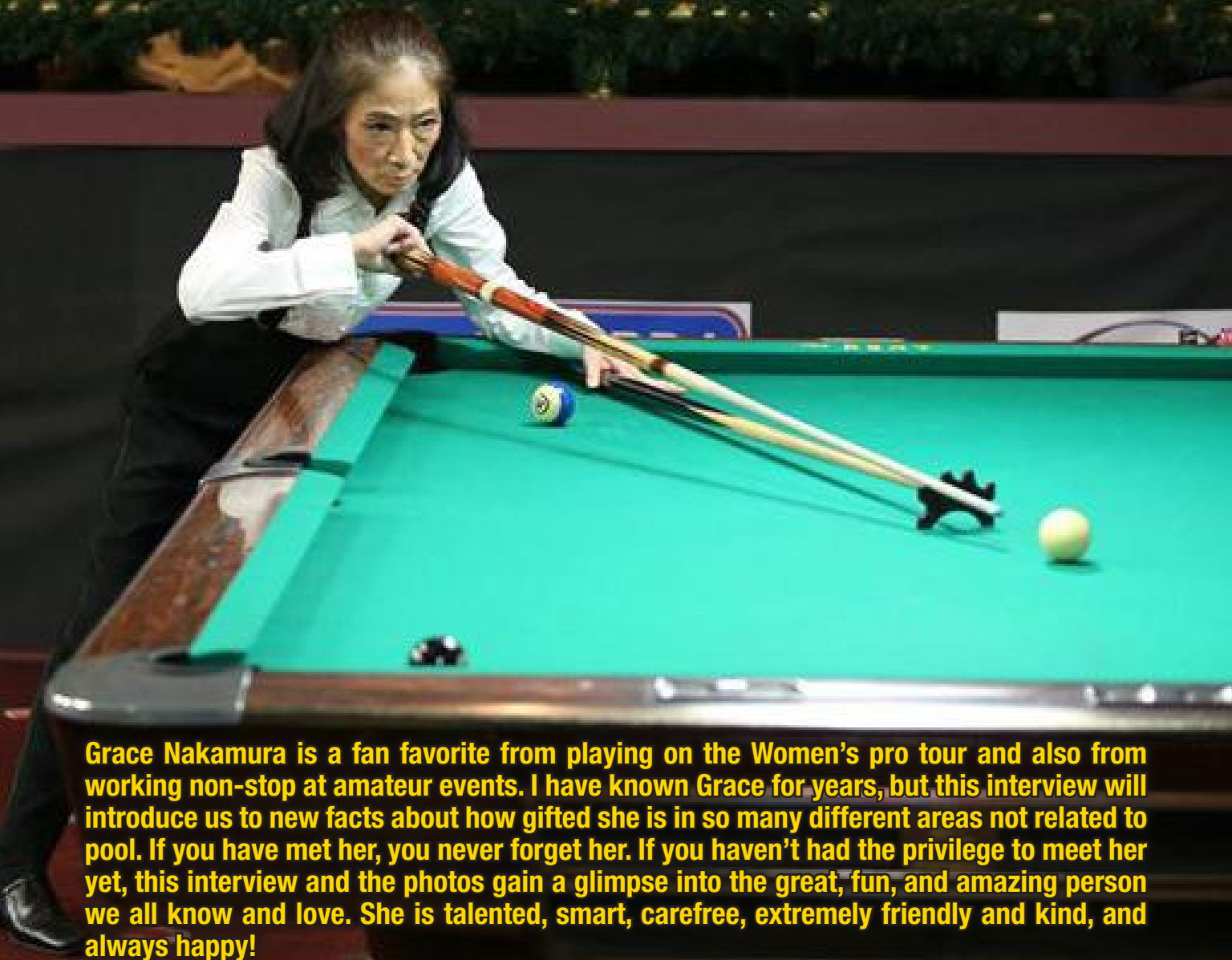
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# Grace Nakamura



Grace Nakamura is a fan favorite from playing on the Women's pro tour and also from working non-stop at amateur events. I have known Grace for years, but this interview will introduce us to new facts about how gifted she is in so many different areas not related to pool. If you have met her, you never forget her. If you haven't had the privilege to meet her yet, this interview and the photos gain a glimpse into the great, fun, and amazing person we all know and love. She is talented, smart, carefree, extremely friendly and kind, and always happy!

**Q:** Where did you grow up?

Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

**Q:** Do you have a degree?

Yes. Bachelors from the school of hard knocks!

**Q:** Ha, ha, that's awesome! How did music lead you to playing pool?

Well, I used to train in classical music, specifically the French horn, at Humber College in Canada. And like most girls in their teens, I fell in love.

**Q:** And...

*Unlike* most teens, I ran away with the guy – a rock and roller who was twice my age!

**Q:** That's not good. How old were you?

16!

**Q:** Yikes. I bet your parents weren't happy you ran away with an older guy.

Nope, not at all. As a matter of fact, my dad went looking for this guy

with a Samurai sword! Seriously! But, he finally gave in after I proved my sincerity and married him, while, also earning steady work as a musician.

**Q:** By playing the French horn?

Ha! No, my husband taught me to play bass. We played in a band, called "Kings and the Little One," and we toured Canada, playing about 50 weeks a year.

**Q:** So, what about the pool part of this love story?

Oh, yes, sorry! Being on the road with the band, the first thing we'd do when we pulled into a town was to eat and find a poolroom. The guys in the band all played snooker, so when we arrived at a new gig we would look for the local poolhall, best place to eat, and THEN we would set up our equipment. Priorities!



**Q:** Makes total sense to me! Do you think learning snooker first helped your 9-ball game?

Absolutely. Snooker is a tougher game with tougher conditions and on a larger table – those attributes helped me be ready for the lovely yet intricate game of 9-ball.

**Q:** You earned a trip to attend the 1979 Women's World Snooker Championship in Hayling Island United Kingdom. Tell the fine folks what you did to fund the trip.

There were several of us who could not afford the trip, so we came up with an idea - we organized a snooker marathon.

**Q:** A marathon?

Yes! We had friends and family sponsor us *per hour*. I played for 52 hours straight, only taking a 20-minute break every 8 hours. And then I was



*Grace at Steinway Billiards*

able to afford the trip. I so appreciate everyone helping me raise the money! That was a huge, vital step in my pool journey.

**Q:** That sounds exhausting, lol. Was that your first time out of the country alone when you traveled to the United Kingdom?

Yes, first time. I was 22...and I fell in love with it! So much so, that after divorcing in 1980, I moved to England to live and compete.

**Q:** What did you do to elevate your game?

Personally, solitary practice mostly helped me. Plus, I would match up with players who were better than me – that’s always a great way to elevate your game; always. Also, defeat helped me, as well.

**Q:** What do you mean by that, “defeat”?

After losing my first-ever snooker match BADLY, I moved to England and swore not to come back till I won a tournament. And in 1981 I won the Maureen Boynton Snooker Cham-

pionships and then came home. It’s amazing how defeat can inspire oneself.

**Q:** That’s pretty phenomenal to reach your goal in less than a year.

Thank you! Then, I took my pool cue, bass guitar, and headed home to work for my parents in a restaurant in Ontario.

**Q:** You then became a flight attendant. Why did you pursue that?

I had an itch to travel and a desire to stay active in tournaments, and this was the only way I could continue going to England for the World Championships because I could fly for FREE.

**Q:** Smart! Tell us how you joined the Women’s Professional Billiard Association (WPBA). Was it a dream to be a pro?

I earned my semi-pro status through the New England Women’s Amateur Tour, and was invited to play on the WPBA Tour. I earned my 4th and final point towards my pro card by defeating Vivian Villarreal in Seattle and yes it was a dream come true! I feel blessed to have been on the tour in its hey day with greats like Ewa Mataya Laurence, Lori Jon Jones, Mary Kenniston, Peg Ledman, and Vivian Villarreal.

**Q:** What has been your most coveted title or accomplishment?

Being inducted to the New England Billiard Hall of Fame, and being awarded the WPBA Tournament Directors award.



*A very young Skyler Woodward with Grace*



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Vicki Paski, Ewa Laurance, Grace and Mary Kenniston

**Q:** That IS a long time, wow. I have to ask, how do you not get frustrated with cheap pool players who won't buy tickets? Hahaha.

I challenge them to one game of 8-ball. They get the break, and if they win, they get a free ticket. If I win - they have to buy three! Either way, they are in a great raffle.

**Q:** That's very clever. Wait, I think you trapped me that way one time during BCAPL Nationals! So, I can't ask any more questions until I ask about Mister 8Ball! How did you get 8Ball, how old is he, what breed is he?

I got him after I lost my last dog, Cueball, during the course of a nasty divorce. 8Ball is a really cute, black Morkie (Maltese Yorkie mix) and I got him from a breeder. 8Ball is now four years old and the love of my life! He is also my coach lol as you can see in the photo of him on my back in his backpack while I'm shooting pool.

**Q:** What was your favorite event to play in?

The All-Japan 9-Ball Championships.

**Q:** What goals do you have (on and off the table)?

To pass on my knowledge to the next generation of players, and to be the best human being I can be.

**Q:** Many people may recognize you in the photos of this interview not just from being a professional women's pool player, but also because you attend all the big national events, BCAPL, ACS, VNEA, and APA to raffle cues. You are the *only* raffle girl who has endured selling raffle tickets for as long as you have. Why did you start that?

I first started raffling in order to be able to afford to be on the tour. But at 62, I have decided to hand the torch over to the younger raffle people.

**Q:** How long have you been raffling cues?

I've been raffling since 1999! Wow, that even shocks me that it has been that long, lol.



Grace and 8Ball



ing – smart, funny, and a great leader. But, I was there only about a year.

**Q:** Why only a year?

I had worked at Predatory before that (for about 10 years), but due to a non-compete agreement (I wish I had not signed), Predator made it impossible for me to continue working there.

**Q:** Gotcha. When you worked for Jacoby, did you work from Canada or were you at their shop in Wisconsin?

I worked from Canada! (for all three companies, actually) It was a blessing to be able to be in Canada and also work the phones for them without being in the States. That flexibility also allowed for me to create the Canadian dealer network (again, for all three companies).

**Q:** What is the “Canadian dealer network”? How did you start that?

It started by me calling everyone I know in the business in Canada and Japan! lol. The cue companies I worked for will only wholesale to actual storefronts (retail outlets such as proshops in poolrooms and retail stores that sell billiard products). As

**Q:** That is a fantastic photo of you two! When you raffle tickets at big tournament, 8Ball is in that small backpack the entire time - you keep him on you at all times. He doesn't mind that?

8Ball loves it - as long as he's with me (smile). We really hate to be away from each other and actually get separation anxiety when we are apart.

**Q:** I can relate! Because 8Ball is in your backpack at all times, I bet he's a conversation piece as well.

Yes - 8Ball has his own fans!

**Q:** 8Ball helps you sell raffle tickets, too, I bet?

Oh, for sure. I tell the players it's \$20 to pet him and that I'll throw in a raffle ticket.

**Q:** Haha. You have a TON of energy and an amazing personality. You always smile and are well-known for being one of the friendliest females in the industry. We appreciate that btw! Do you make it a point to always be in a good mood, or does that come naturally and you've always been this way?

I have always been that way, if I don't have fun, I QUIT!

**Q:** Where do you currently work?

I'm retired now. Before that, I had been working at Jacoby Custom Cues for ten years; I loved working there.

**Q:** You also worked at OB Cues, too, right?

Oh yes, I loved working for Royce Bunnell (RIP) at OB Cues! He was amaz-



*Loree Jon Hasson, Barbara Lee, Grace and Vivian Villarreal*



long as they were a legitimate business and purchased the minimum amount of product to qualify, they could become a dealer. Once becoming a dealer, I would look after all of their reordering and customer service.

**Q:** You were a huge asset to Jacoby Cues internationally, as well. Share with us why, please.

There is a very solid and high-end market for American cuemakers in Japan. I believe that my language skills were the reason I have done so well in retail. I speak fluent Japanese and could communicate with their buyers from Japan. As a matter of fact, I created the Japanese market for both Predator and Jacoby.

**Q:** What a great asset to them! Does it surprise you that most players in America have no idea about just how strong the cue demand is from Japan?

It is quite surprising, but unless players and billiard companies are in the retail end of our industry, they wouldn't know, so it makes sense.

**Q:** Have you retired completely from playing pool?

I will pick and choose the events I want to compete in, mainly the All Japan 9-Ball Open and probably the Canadian ACS Championships because my ladies team has either won it or come 2nd for the last ten years. We make a great team and all the ladies are wonderful to compete with.

**Q:** Most people I interview have overcome something. Is there any-

thing you'd like to share that we all can learn from? Or a difficulty you overcame?

I can't say I overcame any difficulties, it was my love for the sport and the discipline I received through martial arts and my father that helped me to motivate myself to become the best I could be.

**Q:** I love a good role model. When did you get your blackbelt?

My dad was is a Martial Arts Master, a seventh-degree black belt in Kendo, which he introduced to the Toronto community after growing up in Japan. He is very creative and always helping others. He took a team of women to tour Japan in 1972 and that's when I got my first degree black belt.

**Q:** What a great experience for you! What parts of becoming a black belt has helped your pool game?

The discipline involved in martial arts helped me to persevere and to become the best I could be in billiards... and to never give up.

**Q:** Priceless. And tell us a little bit more about your dad, please.

He was my mentor and my hero! He came to Canada after the war with \$2 in his pocket. He had to leave my



*Ballroom Dancing*

mother and older brother in Japan for 2 years while he made a life for us in Canada. He worked as a cabinet maker by day and taught ballroom dancing at the Arthur Murray School of Dance at night.

**Q:** Did you pick up any dance lessons by chance from him?

Sure did! I was his dance partner and learned to ballroom dance at the age of 5.

**Q:** Wow, age 5?! And tell us about your mom.

She is where we get our strength. She and my dad did the march from North Korea after the war looking after six sisters and four brothers, as she was the oldest. We were *never* left with a babysitter, she worked from home as a dress maker.

**Q:** She is an awe-inspiring woman. You moved from Toronto to England to New Hampshire and eventually back to Canada. Where do you reside now and what is/was your favorite place to live and why?

I now live in Toronto to be close to my mom who is now 94 years young! it's hard to say which I prefer. I miss my friends in the USA terribly, but free health care at my age is hard to beat here in Canada, lol.



PoolInAction.com

Grace and Karen Corr

**Q:** How did it feel to be inducted into the New England Pool and Billiard Hall of Fame? What an honor!

It was the crown jewel in my career and my proudest moment next to the Sportsmanship Award I received from the WPBA.

**Q:** I read that you feel you became “more dangerous” on the pool table after retiring from the WPBA tour. Curious, why was that?

I play for no other reason than my love for the game. Winning or losing really has no bearing other than the fact that no one likes to lose. I just love to play and its fun again.

**Q:** And finally, what’s your favorite quote or words you live by?

Treat others as you have like to be treated.

Grace and her dad from the 1964 Toronto Sportsman Show



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).

# Gospel Trick Shot #8

## Titanic

**History of the Trick Shot:** My Gospel Trick Shot road partners Mike Massey and Tom “Dr. Cue” Rossman worked with me on this shot. Mike was the first trick shot artist I saw use this shot in his show.

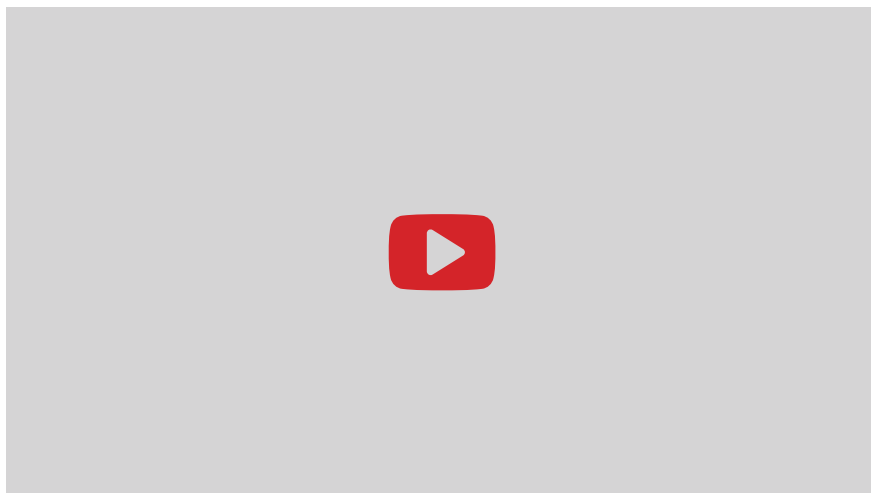
**GTS Name and Why:** The first thought I had about this shot was that everything must be sunk and hence the name Titanic. I later realized that there was another boat called the Ark, built by God, that was designed to float and save humanity. The comparison about which boat to be on as we travel through life crossed my mind! I realized that for years, I was on the Titanic. When I met Jesus, I switched to the Ark.

**Scripture References in NIV Translation:** Genesis 6:1-11:32; Hebrews 9:27; and Acts 4:12.

**Cue Ball Placement:** Place cue ball as shown and hit firm through the middle of the six object balls.

**Object Ball(s) Placement:** Place two balls each hanging near pockets B and E as shown. Follow set-up of Gospel Trick Shot #1 but move the two balls with the cue ball back about 1.5 inches. Aim those two balls frozen to the cue ball directly at the balls closest to pockets B and E. Place one ball near each of pockets A and D as shown. You can adjust to other sides of pockets A and D if needed. Place 8 Ball on rail on a cube of chalk.

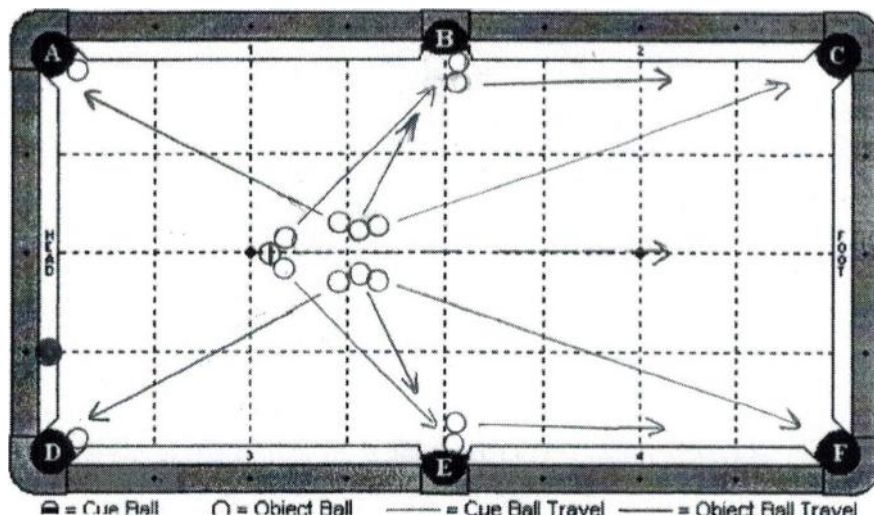
**Objective:** Stoke hard with good follow through to make 14 balls in one shot. For added affect, you can place the eight ball on a cube of chalk nearby and after the shot simply drop it in your side pants pocket.



**Special Notes:** Remove six balls in the middle and test with a firm stroke the cue ball with the two frozen object balls and the two hanging balls in each of pockets B and E. If this works then do the complete shot.

**Crowd Reactions Through the Years:** I start building the boat (pockets B, E, A, and D) and share that my Dad and I were in the U.S. Navy. I bring out the passengers in the middle, the

captain (cue ball), and the first and second mate (frozen to cue ball). Before I shoot, I challenge the crowd to switch to the Ark like I did years ago. I shoot, 14 balls sink, and fifteenth ball the eight ball goes in my pants pocket from sitting on a cube of chalk on rail! Cover line if you miss the shot can be that there were survivors on the Titanic! After applause, I encourage people to take our free literature to get more information about Captain Jesus!



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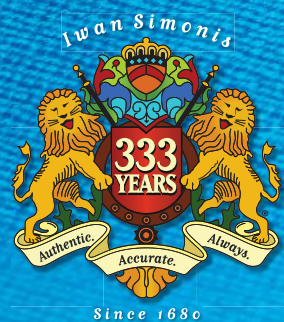
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The Winning Combination

# Fisher downs Baretta twice to win first WPBA Virtual 9-Ball Ghost Challenge

There was reportedly very little trouble finding members of the Women’s Professional Billiards Association (WPBA) who were anxious to play some competitive pool with each other, albeit from the comfort of their own home and/or pool room.

**B**ased on an idea brought up by Dawn Hopkins, Angela Janic, a relatively new member of the WPBA, volunteered to organize and coordinate the organization’s first (and definitely not the last) Virtual 9-Ball Ghost Challenge during the week of May 10-16. While so-called ‘ghost’ matches and isolated streaming events have been cropping up on the Internet since the restrictions brought on by the pandemic began, this was something relatively new; a 16-entrant, double elimination tournament with prize money that pitted players from around the globe against each other, playing against the ‘ghost,’

a ‘player’ normally only encountered in practice, when a player is alone.

From her home pool room in Dumfries, Scotland, Kelly Fisher went undefeated through the field and downed Jennifer Barretta, playing from her pool room in Brooklyn, NY (Skyline Billiards), twice; once, battling for the hot seat and again, in the finals. Talking to both players, it was apparent that winning or losing wasn’t among the things that resonated in their minds about playing in the tournament.

“It was really good fun,” said Fisher. “I really enjoyed it.”



Baretta had played some ‘ghost’ matches in a recent USA vs. Europe matchup and found the experience to be “kind of nerve wracking.”

“But now,” she said, “I want to play more of them.”

“In practice, I play the ghost all the time,” she added. “I play a race to 7, but I play so that if I miss, I have to kick and/or bank (subsequent balls).”



*Kelly Fisher*

This WPBA event was based on playing 10 racks, per player, per match. Players were allowed to begin shooting after their break with ball-in-hand. Essentially, each ball was worth one point, though if you ran the rack, you'd get an extra point for 10 points total, available per rack. There were 15 points available for a rack if you chose not to take advantage of ball-in-hand after the break. A number of the 30 matches ended before one of the competitors had completed the 10 racks, because one player had scored enough points to make 'catching' that player impossible.

Fisher's path to the winners' circle ran through Lonnie Fox-Raymond and April Larson, before coming up against Monica Webb in one of the winners' side semifinals. Barretta downed Eugenia Gyftopoulos and Canada's Suzanne Peters to arrive at her winners' side semifinal against Dawn Hopkins.

With Allison Fisher and LoreeJon Hason commentating on the live stream, Kelly Fisher defeated Webb 104-70. Barretta sent Hopkins to the loss side 83-69. In the hot seat match that followed, Fisher chalked up the event's highest score of 120, when she ran all 10 racks, four of them which she ran without benefit of ball-in-hand at the start.

Upon her arrival on the loss side of the bracket, Dawn Hopkins picked up an immediate rematch against Mary Rakin Tam, whom she'd defeated in the opening round and who was working on a three-match, loss-side winning streak during which she'd eliminated Cheryl Baglin, April Larson and one of the event's significant organizers, Angela Janic. Webb drew Line Kjorsvik, who'd lost her opening round match to April Larson and was also working on a three-match, loss-side winning streak that had eliminated Lonnie Fox-Raymond, Ewa Mataya Laurance and Suzanne Peters.

Rakin Tam and Kjorsvik advanced to the first money round, the quarterfinals. Tam defeated Hopkins 74-60, as Kjorsvik downed Webb 79-58. Kjorsvik then eliminated Tam 90-75.

The semifinals of this event – Kjorsvik versus Barretta - had a way of demonstrating the best that this particular format had to offer viewers. At the end of their 9<sup>th</sup> rack, the two were separated by a single point; Barretta ahead by one at 74-73. Barretta refused the ball-in-hand option after her break of the final rack, looking to chalk up 15 points instead of just 10. Unfortunately, she only added three balls to her score; missing the fourth ball and finishing her 10 racks with a score of

77. All Kjorsvik had to do was sink five balls. With two of the five down, she found herself hooked and forced to make a jump shot, which she missed to finish at 74.

In the finals that followed, with the racks-necessary extended to 13, and Jeremy Jones in the streaming 'booth,' commentating, Barretta was ahead by seven points after four racks, 45-38. Though Barretta would extend her lead by opting out of ball-in-hand in the 5<sup>th</sup> rack and running the table to hit 60 points, while Fisher had her 5<sup>th</sup> rack stopped at 6 balls, the tables started to turn, as Fisher started to pick up speed, reminding everyone of her "KwikFire" nickname.

They would both run racks #6 & 7 without ball-in-hand, leaving Barretta out in front by 16 (80-64). Fisher would go on to opt out of ball-in-hand for racks # 8, 9, 10 & 11 and ran all four, leaving her at 124 when she was through. Barretta, now working two racks behind Fisher, picked up only three in rack #8, and though she ran racks #9 & 10, she was, for the first time since her fourth rack, no longer in the lead, but behind Fisher by six at 109-103.

Fisher closed out her run with two break and runs, opting for ball-in-hand in both to finish her 10 racks with 144 points. In order to defeat Fisher, Barretta, at the time, was preparing to break her 11<sup>th</sup> rack and would have had to play all three of her last racks without ball in hand. Two without and one with ball in hand (assuming she ran the table) would have left her one point shy of Fisher's 144 total. Barretta missed a shot in the 11<sup>th</sup> rack and conceded the victory, punctuating the concession by going down on her knees and bowing. Fisher extended a hand to shake and all smiles, the two of them traded an across-the-ocean-via-Internet handshake.

In some ways, the entire event, to include how quickly it came together

## Super Billiards Expo

and successfully it occurred came as a bit of surprise. Angela Janic thanked particularly Jennifer Hamilton for her work on the live stream, noting that Hamilton had “kept us all organized and just did a fantastic job.”

“Thanks, too,” Janic added, “to everybody on the WPBA, the board and all the players. I had just sent messages out and asked people for help and everybody just jumped in and said yes. I’d read names but there are just too many of them.”

According to Janic, another edition of the WPBA’s Virtual 9-Ball Ghost Challenge will occur on Memorial Day weekend (May 31-June 6) and while no names have been confirmed for participation, she expects another field of 16.

“Nothing’s going to change much,” she said of the upcoming event. “It’ll probably get a little easier.”



Jennifer Barretta

After the imaginary handshake, and Janic thanking her for her participation, Fisher added her thanks to all those who’d been involved.

“It was such short notice and it happened so quickly,” said Fisher. “You did an absolute fantastic job putting it together and running it smoothly.”

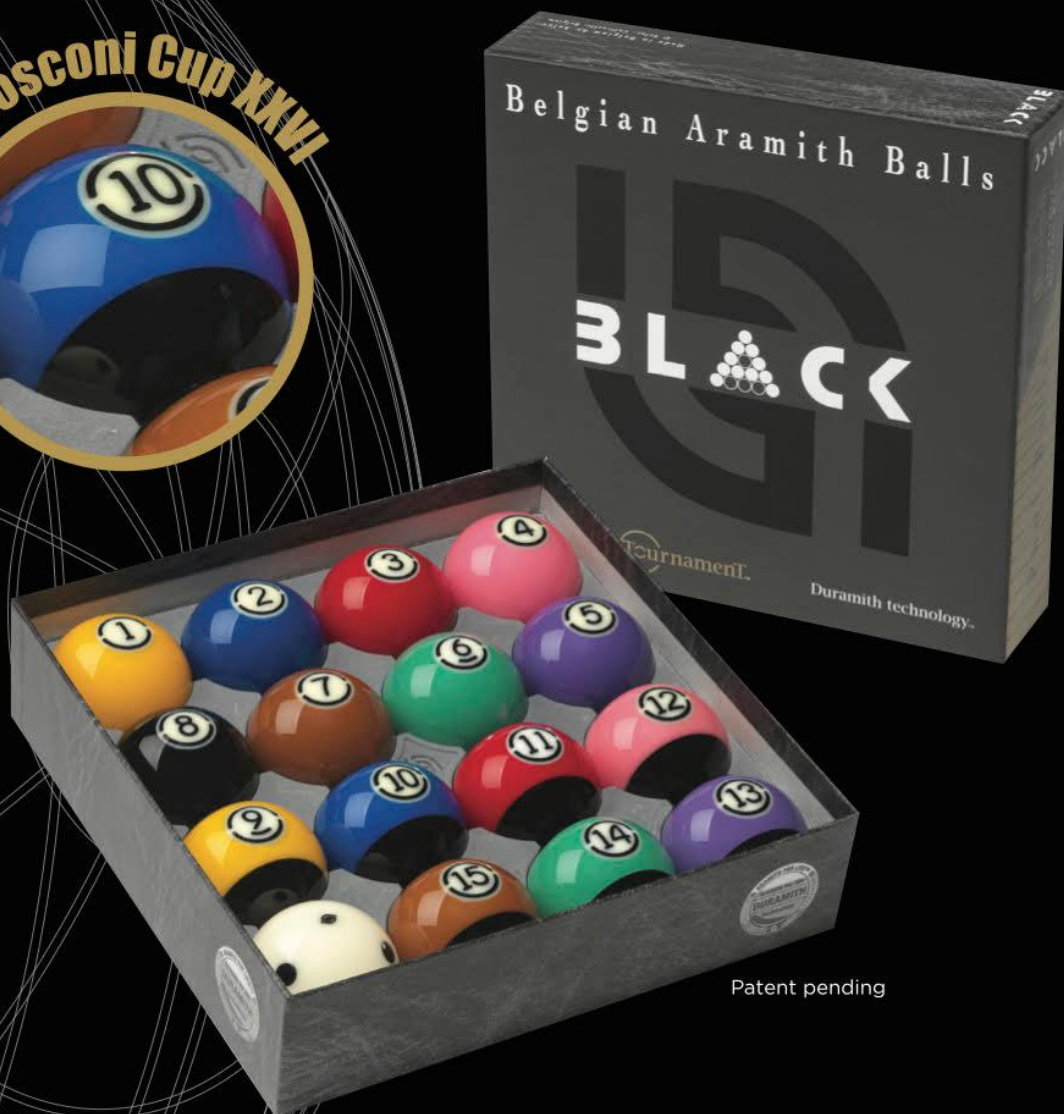
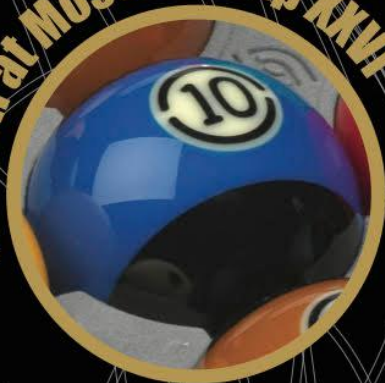
“It was great for the sport and great for the WPBA,” she added. “Thank you very much for doing this for us.”

- 1<sup>st</sup> Kelly Fisher \$655
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Jennifer Barretta \$395
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Line Kjorsvik \$240
- 4<sup>th</sup> Mary Rakin Tam \$150

An advertisement for AZB Marketplace. At the top, three yellow billiard balls with the letters A, Z, and B are shown. To their right, the word "MARKETPLACE" is written in large, bold, yellow letters, with "The Official Billiard Supply For AZBers" underneath in white. Below this, three pool cues are displayed diagonally. The cues are dark with a textured grip and feature the P3 logo and the word "REVO". The P3 logo is a stylized 'P' and '3' inside a circle. In the bottom right corner, there is a logo for "Powered By SEYBERTS.COM SEYBERTS BILLIARD SUPPLY" with a small graphic of a billiard ball.

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# ***Rocket Rodney***

## **wins The Social Pool Network's benefit tournament**

**They've been popping up on the landscape like weeds in a garden; pool competitions utilizing some variation of pool's 'ghost' games in which individual players pit their skills against an imaginary opponent that wins every game that they lose.**

**T**his past weekend (May 22-24), The Social Pool Network (TSPN) joined the party and hosted six top-notch pool players, competing against each other in a modified single-elimination tournament of what's known as Rocket Runout, one of a series of games invented by "Rocket" Rodney Morris and a friend, Ed Glode.

"We created these games about 12 years ago and hammered out these rules," said Morris, "right before (Ed) became mayor of Saratoga, Wyoming."

According to Tanya Mapes-Stremler, TSPN's Chief Operating Officer, it was Morris, in fact, in his role as TSPN's Vice President of player relations, who "took the lead" on the initiative that led to this weekend of tournaments.

"We all worked together," she said, "and did this as one team, but it was Rodney who came up with this idea."

And then, "Rocket" called five of his pool buddies – Johnny Archer, Tony Crosby, Tony Robles, Raj Hundal and Oscar Dominguez – and invited them to take part in a benefit tournament that would aid First Responders and Food Banks in the five states, represented by the six players; Georgia, Florida, New York (2), California and Hawaii. All six played on Friday, May 22. The four top scorers on Friday played on Saturday, and on Sunday, two of those four played in the finals



It should be noted that while the tournament did end on Sunday, and we've just provided you with the ultimate 'spoiler' alert, readers can still view the matches themselves on the TSPNCares page on Facebook. As of Monday night, donations were continuing to be accepted on the tspntournaments.com Web site, as well as entries for a number of raffles for pool-related, donated items. The matches themselves, streamed live and commented by the team of Neight Mindham (from CueltUp podcasts) and Mike DeMarco (with ShiptheCash stream) offer some entertaining play by the six professionals, playing a unique game.

Rocket Runout is one of a series of pool games, designated by Morris as the Saratoga series of games, which

of the event. Though Oscar Dominguez ended up scoring the two highest scores of all 12 matches, it was the "Rocket" himself, who downed Dominguez on Sunday to claim the first TSPN Cares benefit tournament title.

*Rodney Morris*



are a hybrid of 8-ball and 9-ball. In each of these Saratoga games, including the 9-ball variant played at the TSPN Cares benefit, the rack is divided up between the lowest stripes and the lowest solids and the 8-ball. In the TSPN Cares benefit that meant the balls numbered 1-4, 10-13 and the 8-ball were organized in a 9-ball rack. Played as a solo game, each player plays a rack in a race to a designated number; in the TSPN case, it was 20 racks. The game(s) could be played in a two-player matchup, as well. The object of the game is much the same as 8-ball; break the balls, select either stripes or solids, sink 'your' four balls (in rotation, low to high) and the 8-ball. Each pocketed ball is worth a single point and the 8-ball is worth 6, making the total points possible per rack, 10. There are 'less point' options available and rule specifics that would make this report longer than it really needs to be, like the 'Salvage' rule that states that if you've sunk a certain number of your designated solid or stripe balls and miss one, you may take ball-in-hand and try to run the other ones, which, if successful, will score you five points.

Thus, with the specific race-to-20 racks, 10-points-available per rack rule firmly in mind, we have a perspective on the scores that were recorded, beginning with Friday's six matches. As noted earlier, Dominguez, who played last among the six, recorded the day's highest (and event's second

highest) score point total of 152. Morris was second with 138 and Hundal checked in with 127. Though absolutely convinced that he wasn't going to be advancing to day two of this event, The Scorpion (Archer) recorded 120 to make the cut.

"I don't think I'll be playing tomorrow," he said, right after completing his 20 racks. "120 probably ain't going to make it."

But it did. As low men on the proverbial totem pole on Day One, the two Tonys (Crosby, 118 and Robles, 111) didn't make the cut.

On Day Two, Dominguez showed up with his 'A' game again and recorded the event's highest score of 166. For the second time, Morris came in second, this time with 122. Archer and Hundal, who chalked up 114 and 96, respectively, didn't make it to Day Three.

In the finals of the event on Sunday, it was Morris who showed up with his 'A' game, chalking up the third-highest point total of the 12 (131) and defeating Dominguez' effort by 12 points at 119.

In concept, the Saratoga series of pool games, especially the 9-ball variant, would appear to be easier than either of their hybrid forebearers; 8-ball or 9-ball. But like a lot of things, appearances can be deceiving.

"The (9-ball Saratoga) game seems easy, like all you have to do is run five balls," said TSPN's Mapes -Stremler, "but it's very deceptive."

"You not only have five balls, but you have to shoot them in rotation," she added, "so with calling shots and the other balls in the way, this is a challenging game."

"It improves everything about your game," said Morris. "There's a lot of strategy and a lot of thinking going on."

"In games, like 8-ball and 9-ball," he added, "normally, it's like connecting the dots. People like the creativity that comes into play with this game."

As with its streaming 'ghost' game predecessors - The Ashton Twins, Roy's Basement, and the WPBA (among others) - TSPN will likely be doing this again.

This one, it should be noted, is still happening, with the videos available on the TSPN Cares Facebook page and donations and raffle purchases still being accepted at <http://www.tsptournaments.com>. The raffle and donations are being extended for an indeterminate amount of time, based on site traffic. According to preliminary reports on the 'views' associated with the stream, around 12K people watched over the three days of the event. Sunday's finals recorded views of 6.2K.

Donated money, by the way, will be divided up among all six players and donated to their respective states in the following way:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Rodney 28% for Hawaii
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Oscar 22% for CA
- 3<sup>rd</sup> 20% for Johnny, GA
- 4<sup>th</sup> 15% for Raj Hundal, NY
- 5<sup>th</sup> 10% for Tony Crosby, FL
- 6<sup>th</sup> 5% for Tony Robles, NY



A close-up portrait of Pinar Toprak, a woman with long, wavy brown hair and blue eyes, looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background is dark and out of focus, with some blue and green bokeh lights.

***FILM COMPOSER***  
***PINAR TOPRAK***  
**HONES POOL SKILLS DURING LOCKDOWN**

**When the most predominant hobby of one's life happens to be what you do for a living, life can be pretty sweet, although it can make looking around for something to do in your spare time a bit of a challenge.**

**P**inar Toprak, originally from Istanbul, and currently residing in Los Angeles, is doing the thing she's known from an early age that she wanted to do – compose music. In her spare time, she has adopted two other passions; one, sailing, keeps her outdoors, while the other, shooting pool, keeps her indoors and makes her the appropriate subject of this particular profile.

“I started (shooting pool) as a teenager in Istanbul,” she said. “I was never a team sport person, because I couldn't really play any sports that had the potential of injuring my fingers (for violin, piano and guitar); it limited what I could do.

“I knew from an early age that I needed other outlets,” she added, “and I loved the self-competition (of pool). My brother was a player, too, and I just loved the whole geometry of it; the angles. As a kid, I just loved that.”

In the meantime, her aspirations continued to inform her choices in life and she came to the United States in 1997, when she was 17 years old. Originally settling in with a brother in Wisconsin, she spent a good deal of her time in Chicago, where she studied jazz. The scene shifted to Boston, where in addition to pursuing a degree in film scoring from Berklee College of Music, she spent a good deal of time at something of a legendary pool hall in the city, in the shadow of Fenway Park, called Jillian's.

She then moved to Los Angeles, where, by the age of 22, she had earned a master's degree in composition from California State University at Northridge. Within two years, she was earning credits on films, beginning with some short films, *Hold the*



*Rice, Headbreaker* (2004) and *When All Else Fails* (2005). In 2009, she picked up her first International Film Music Critics Association Award (IFMCA) for her music in *The Lightkeepers*, written and directed by Daniel Adams, with Richard Dreyfuss, Bruce Dern and Blythe Danner. Four years later (2013), she'd earn another IFMCA award for her work on the documentary film by Fritz Mitchell, called *The Wind Gods*, which is her personal favorite score.

Her work expanded to include music for video games, beginning with *Ninety-Nine Nights* (2006) and more recently, added music for the popular *Fortnite* (2017). A year later, she picked up another IFMCA award for “Best Original Score for a Documentary Film” for her score to *The Tides of Fate*. Last year, in addition to her work on the short, animated film, *Purl*, written

and directed by Kristin Lester, she became the first woman to score a Marvel super hero movie when she wrote the music for *Captain Marvel*, which *Variety* magazine called “the most high-profile accomplishment yet for a female in a notoriously male-dominated profession.”

“No man was ever asked ‘Do you think you got this action film because of your gender?’” she told the *Variety* reporter, Jon Burlingame. “I hope it's a question that's not going to be asked in the near future or ever again. This is going to be the norm. I never had a day in my life when I wasn't a composer or a woman. Those were who I am from the start.”

She's also become a force on the small screen, as well, having scored 10 episodes of the Syfy channel's *Krypton*, and HBO's *McMillions*. And in the midst of all this, she crafted the main theme for Walt Disney World's EPCOT theme park and wrote music for Christina Aguilera's 2019 Xperience show in Las Vegas.

**“ I HAVE A STUBBORN PERSONALITY, IF I'M NOT GOING TO BE GREAT, I'M NOT GOING TO DO IT. ”**

”

So, of course, she was looking around for something to do in her spare time and decided to resurrect her passion for pool. As a template for pursuit of this resurrected passion, she had the example of her mother, who started learning to be a musician in her mid-40s and now, in her mid-60s, is giving concerts.

“So I figured,” said Pinar, “that it’s not too late, but at that point, I also figured that if I was going to do this right, I’d get a teacher.”

“I had no idea who she was,” said the teacher she found - Rahmin Bakhtiari, co-founder and CEO of GoPlayPool.com, who says he has no idea how Ms. Toprak located him. “It wasn’t until we had spoken at some length before I realized who she was.”

It was evident to Bakhtiari that Toprak wasn’t just exploring an idle interest in the sport. He noted the way she held the cue stick and how she addressed the cue ball, and saw a degree of raw talent, with some Mid-Eastern three-cushion and carom billiards in her background.

“It’s been her passion since childhood,” he said. “She’s very observant, very attentive and she wants to learn.”

“She’s also got a feisty, aggressive attitude,” he added, noting that attitude’s rightful place in competition.

So just as all of this was coming to pass and Ms. Toprak was beginning to think she might be on the verge of competition at a tournament level, the pandemic stops by for a visit. The forward progress comes to a modified halt, with closures and the necessity



for social distancing. Without enough room, or at least the architectural configuration to accommodate a regulation-size pool table, Toprak found a 6 ft. portable table and brought it into her home, which she shares with her two children.

There is something of a balancing operation going on in Toprak’s life, what with her interests in music composition, sailing and now, increasingly, pool. Pool, she says, is slightly apart from the other two, because it has the ability to completely focus her attention on the task(s) at hand.

“I live in a sonically busy world,” she said, “always thinking about characters, themes and stories. I love things that allow me to completely clear my

head and it’s funny, but when I’m sailing, I actually think more.”

“Pool,” she added, “is the only activity (at which) I’m totally present,” she added, “so I really concentrate on how to improve and just learn, learn, learn. I become like a kid again. When I have that kind of mental relaxation, it shows, and I’m able to re-set.”

In other words, pool players on the West Coast, watch out!! As the pandemic restrictions begin to loosen up, Pinar Toprak gets back to lessons and then, tournaments start to make their appearance on calendars. You could have a handful of serious female competition on your hands, and she might even be whistling the tune to a film’s music that you might recognize as she chalks up a victory against you. It might even be from her most recent compositions on the soundtrack to the CW Network’s *Stargirl*, which will premiere next week (May 18).

“I have a stubborn personality,” she said. “If I’m not going to be great, I’m not going to do it.”

**“ POOL IS THE ONLY ACTIVITY (AT WHICH) I’M TOTALLY PRESENT, SO I REALLY CONCENTRATE ON HOW TO IMPROVE AND JUST LEARN, LEARN, LEARN. ”**

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# Rasson Welcomes Skyler Woodward to Pro Team

**A sponsorship contract has been reached between Rasson Billiards and the reigning two-time Mosconi Cup MVP, Skyler Woodward. Effective May 2020, Woodward joins the roster of professional players signed with Rasson Billiards, the world's leading manufacturer of commercial and professional billiard tables.**

“I am so very thankful to be joining the Rasson team,” says Woodward. “Since the first time I played on the Mosconi team I fell in love with the table and its play. In all honesty, I feel as if the table made my first performance in the Cup a little better. The consistency the table gives and the way the rails play never change. That makes it so much

easier to practice and play on because you can know you're getting the same results each and every time.”

Born in Paducah, KY, Woodward has represented the United States at every Mosconi Cup since 2015. Having been voted as the most valuable player (MVP) at the 2018 Mosconi Cup after winning five out of his six matches and repeating that nomination in

2019 with another dominant showing, Woodward then went on to be named the 2019 US Open 8-ball Champion. Considered one of the foremost faces in the industry, Woodward has received a number of accolades including first place rankings in the 2019 Derby City Classic Master of the Table, 2019 Derby City Classic 9-Ball Division, and the 2017 RYO Rack Classic.



“We’re happy to have Skyler Woodward join the team. Skyler is a great player and he played so well in the last Mosconi Cup,” says Junny Song, General Manager of Rasson Billiards. “With Skyler joining, we’re getting a stronger RASSON team, increased RASSON exposure and most importantly, the insight of such an esteemed player on what makes a good table. Working with the world’s best players keeps us driven to build and supply players with the best tables in the industry.”

With the partnership official, Woodward joins Jayson Shaw, Florian Kohler, Darren Appleton, Kevin Cheng, Fu Xiaofang, Shi Tianqi and Matthew Webber in the ranks of Rasson-sponsored billiards players. Both Woodward and Rasson are eager to see what the collaboration has in store for the billiards industry in 2020.

“I chose to join the Rasson team over any other due to the quality of the ta-

bles first and foremost,” says Woodward. “I want to say thank you from the bottom of my heart for giving me the

opportunity to be a part of a great team and have the honor of being a proud owner of such an amazing table.”

### About Rasson Billiards

Rasson Billiards was established in 1990 and has since become the leading manufacturer of billiard slate and billiard tables worldwide. Every Rasson professional table is built using the best selected woods, cutting edge materials, with exquisite craftsmanship, and the highest quality standards in the industry. Rasson offers its support to an array of international billiard tournaments like EPBF, ICP, ECP, UMB, WPA, and more. Rasson has been designated as the official table of partypoker Mosconi Cup, World Cup of Pool, World Pool Masters and by many international billiard organizations like Matchroom, WPBL, Dragon Promotions, GB9, and the Polish Billiard Association.

### About Imperial International

Imperial is the premier distributor of billiards equipment and the exclusive distributor of Rasson Professional Pool Tables in the United States. With over 60 years of experience, Imperial has made a name in the industry with some of the most well-crafted pool tables and accessories on the market with price ranges to fit any budget. For more information, visit the company's website at <http://www.imperialusa.com>. Follow Imperial on Twitter, Facebook @imperial\_usa and Instagram @imperial\_gameroom.



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# THORSTEN HOHMANN RELEASES CUE LAB MOBILE DIAGRAMMING TOOL

While pool players have a couple different choices when it comes to diagramming a situation on a pool table for later reference, not many of those solutions include input from a World Champion.

The iOS app Cue Lab is the culmination of a partnership between Bright Mediums and World 9-Ball and World 14.1 Champion Thorsten Hohmann.

When asked about the motivation behind a project like this, Hohmann replied “I’ve always been interested in billiard education. I’m a certified instructor in Germany and I’ve worked with groups since I was 15 years old. I always wanted to create a “Cue Table diagramming app” for mobile devices,



Thorsten Hohmann

partly because I want to use it myself and because I thought it would be a great tool for the community to exchange shots and drills. It’s perfect for coaches and their students or especially right now when not everybody has a pool table at home. It lets us participate in pool communication.”

While the app is currently only available for iOS, Hohmann said that they would love to also release a version for Android. “The team at Bright Medi-

ums has done a fantastic job putting all my ideas and features into reality. It’s still free on the App Store. We need users and feedback, so we can eventually create an Android version. It’s all self-financed and we have so many ideas how to improve it.” He said.

Anyone looking for more information on the app can find it online at [CueLab.co](http://CueLab.co) on Instagram and Facebook.

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# ***2020 BCA Home and Leisure Expo Cancelled***

## ***VirtuALL Event Planned For Late July***

**Superior, Colo., May 13, 2020 – The Billiard Congress of America today announced that the annual exposition that celebrates the business of billiards and home recreation is cancelled for the first time since the Expo began in 1984 due to the ongoing concerns of the coronavirus pandemic.**

**“R**ecognizing that hundreds of attendees plan for this Expo each year, as well as how many exhibitors and sponsors rely upon this event for a major portion of their livelihood, we have hoped that COVID-19 concerns might lessen by late summer,” Billiard Congress of America Chairman, Brian Igielski said. “Continuous monitoring of health advisories by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the WHO and the appropriate organizations in Las Vegas have made it clear that it is not possible to move forward with the 2020 BCA Expo.”

In place of the BCA Expo this year, the Billiard Congress of America will host a BCA VirtuALL Expo and Business of Billiards Education Series during the same week as the BCA Expo was planned (July 29-31). The BCA’s VirtuALL event will include a series of educational webinars that will provide tips on managing businesses during

this pandemic as well as guidance on the “new normal” facing the industry. The VirtuALL expo will also allow product showcase videos from any manufacturer in the industry who has participated in past BCA Expos and is a current BCA member. The BCA will be in contact with all 2020 BCA Expo contracted exhibitors in the very near future to discuss the VirtuALL Expo and 2020 BCA Expo deposits.

“Extraordinary times require extraordinary measures, and while we are

saddened to take this action of changing the live BCA Expo this year in Las Vegas to a virtual event, we know it is the right decision,” says BCA CEO Rob Johnson. “However, we are also excited to present the BCA’s VirtuALL event to assist our industry with needed education and promotion of our industry’s innovative products. We eagerly look forward to the time when we can all get together in person to do business, renew relationships and make new connections via the BCA Expo.”

### **About Billiard Congress of America**

Founded in 1948, the Billiard Congress of America is a non-profit trade organization dedicated to growing a united, prosperous and highly regarded billiard industry through Billiard Congress of America leadership. The Billiard Congress of America seeks to enhance the success of its members and promote the game of billiards through educational, marketing and promotional efforts, annual industry trade shows and other programs designed to encourage billiards as a lifestyle and make pool everybody’s game. For more information, visit [bca-pool.com](http://bca-pool.com) or call 303.243.5070.

# 32nd Annual BEF Junior National 9-Ball Championships Cancelled Due to COVID-19 Pandemic

**Superior, Colo., May 20, 2020 – The Billiard Education Foundation (BEF) today announced the unfortunate decision of cancelling the 32nd annual BEF Junior National 9-Ball Championships presented by Iwan Simonis.**



**D**ue to the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the BEF in conjunction with the Billiard Congress of America (BCA) has made the difficult and disappointing decision to cancel its National Championships and remaining qualifiers for the first time in the organization's history.

After a thorough assessment of the impact the devastating COVID-19 pandemic has had on pool room hosts throughout the country as well as in Las Vegas itself the BEF and BCA has made the responsible decision to cancel the junior national tournament and any scheduled qualifying events leading up to the 2020 BEF Junior National Championships.

"This is a heartbreaking decision for everyone involved with the BEF, but more so for the hundreds of juniors pool players who have dreamt of one day becoming a national champion and qualifying to compete in a world championship," said Shane Tyree, managing director of communications and membership for the BCA and managing director of the BEF. "Continuous monitoring of the health advisories by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the WHO and the appropriate organizations in Las Vegas have made it clear that it is not possible to move forward with the tremendous tournament that has been held for 30+ years."

As we assessed the feasibility of including these tournament opportunities as part of that resumption of play, a number of factors went into the decision to cancel the BEF Junior National Championships presented by Iwan Simonis, including:

- The inability to play qualifying tournaments in many of our local qualifiers.
- An indication from players and parents around the country that they will be unable or uncomfortable participating or traveling to these tournaments.
- The lack of testing and mitigation protocols that would need to be in place at these events should an individual participating or attending an event be diagnosed with COVID-19.
- The temporary closure of Las Vegas, as well as the uncertainty of how the city will reopen.

"Delivering this news comes with a very heavy heart," said Rob Johnson,

BCA CEO and director of the BEF. We have never had to cancel the BEF Junior Nationals, but, right now, as our world comes together, we must do everything we can to help stem the spread of this deadly virus. While we take this pause from the Junior Nationals this summer, we will remain committed to working with our volunteers and staff to continue to provide an unparalleled youth sports experience to all junior pool players and be back stronger than ever in 2021."

Sponsors for this year's event were to include:

- Aramith
- Diamond Billiard Products
- Iwan Simonis
- J. Pechauer Custom Cues
- Master Chalk
- McDermott Cues
- Predator Cues
- Ultimate Team Gear
- Billiards Digest

## About the Billiard Education Foundation

The Billiard Education Foundation (BEF) was formed in 1993 as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit charity committed to promoting a love of pool and building the next generation of players through youth programs and academic scholarships. The BEF is managed by the Billiard Congress of America. For more information about the BEF or to learn how you can support the foundation please visit [BilliardEducation.org](http://BilliardEducation.org).



# Super Billiards Expo Reschedules for October

**The Super Billiards Expo has postponed their event a second time, choosing the final weekend in October for its new dates.**

**A**llen Hopkins announced on his website at [www.superbilliardsexpo.com](http://www.superbilliardsexpo.com), that the event will now be held October 22nd - 25th and will still be at the Greater Philadelphia Expo Center in Oaks, Pennsylvania. More details are listed in his complete announcement...

Players, Exhibitors, TAP members, Friends, and family of the Super Billiards Expo,

We hope you all are doing well in these difficult times. Due to the ongoing

Covid-19 situation, we feel it is in everyone's best interest to once again alter the dates of the 2020 Super Billiards Expo. We had hoped pushing back two months would be sufficient time, but there remains too much uncertainty at this moment, and we want to ensure you all have ample time to make any required travel arrangements.

We are optimistic that the Covid-19 situation will be under better control by then, ensuring the safety of our



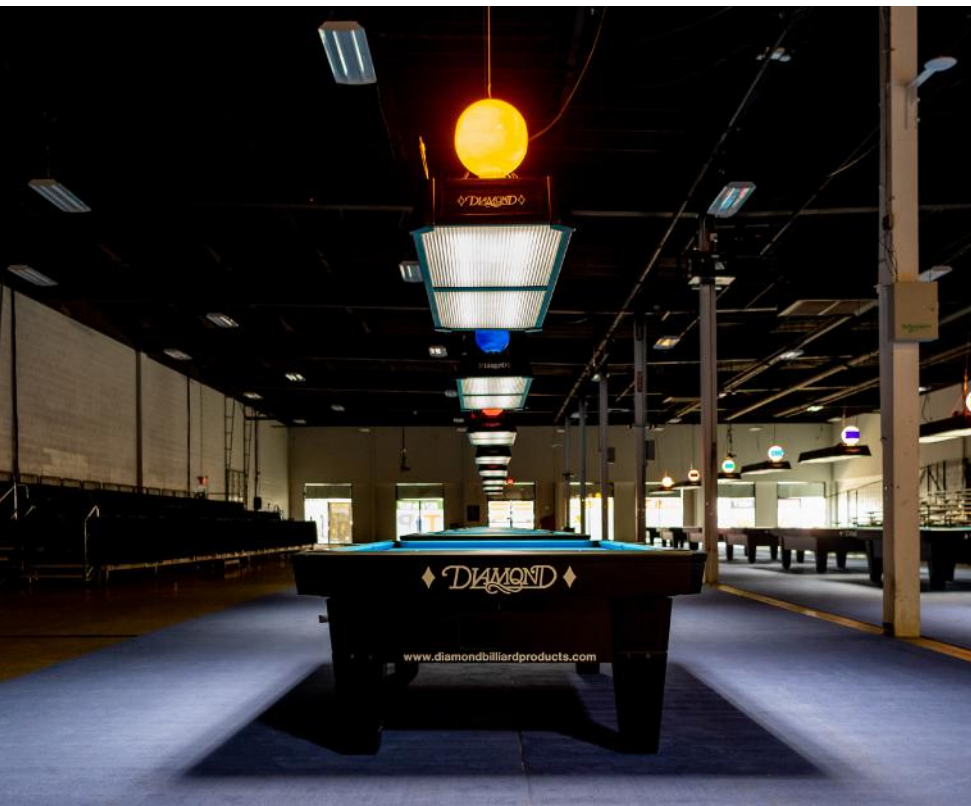
guests traveling in from around the world.

We look forward to having you join us on these new dates – entries will be carried over, unless we hear otherwise from you. If you are a player in our Players Championship Series of events and need to withdraw, for any reason, we'll gladly issue you a refund, as always.

Competitors in the TAP League Rally in the Valley will be notified by their TAP Representatives and updated directly there as well; any questions you may have will be handled by TAP Event Staff and Corporate Office.

Stay tuned to our website and our facebook page for future updates. We appreciate your patience and hope you all stay safe in the coming days.

Stay healthy – we'll see you in October!



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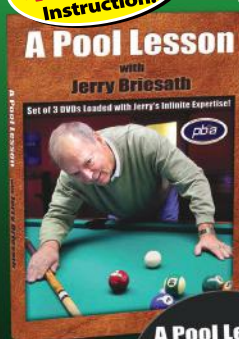
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- Jeanette “The Black Widow” Lee

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