

Billiards Buzz

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FROM THE Head Rail

MIKE **HOWERTON**

Can I see how happy I was to see Earl and Efen playing each other one more time? Don't get me wrong, Bustamante and Souquet were both fun to see, but Earl and Efen was a rematch of that rivalry that has been going on for so long.



It's tough accepting that there is a good chance we might not ever see these two lining up to lag against each other ever again.

Sure, they might not have played like they did "way back in the day", but with a rivalry like this, the level of play is secondary to just seeing the two players interact against one another.

Hopefully this won't be the last event like this with the Legends of the Game. It Emily at Matchroom doesn't want to do another one, I wonder if there is some Hall of Fame with video production on his resume that would be interested.

Until next month,
Mike



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«When I play all the big tournaments around the world, we only use Aramith and Simonis. You know you get 100% high quality. It just makes the game easier to play. »

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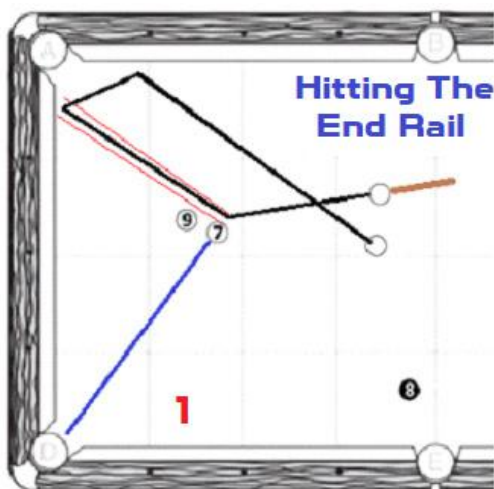


I'M A POOL WATCHER, Pt. 2

Last month I opened this series with a look at some positions that appeared in matches between the pros. In part 2, I am going to continue our examination of the various points that were a part of my notes from watching the pros play in recent months. For a complete introduction to this series, please see the January issue.

TWO RAILS AND OUT, OR NOT

Diagram #1 shows a commonly occurring position where you may wish to go two rails and out, but are wondering if there is room for the cue ball to pass the potential blocker and then hit the end rail, while avoiding a scratch. To determine if this route can be played, look at the cue ball's path off the tangent line, and the line that goes past the potential blocker (the 9-ball) and that then extends to the end rail. If there is room, then you can go ahead and play the route as shown. Notice the red channel for the cue ball and how small it is.



JUMPING VERSUS KICKING

In the last several years advances in jump cues and the prevalence of so many skilled jumpers, led by Fedor Gorst, has led to a major leap in skill by a growing legion of pros who are gaining precious ground on him in this department.

Skill at jumping can get a player out of safeties and often enable them to go on the offense by playing not just to avoid a foul, but to make the damn ball and, at the same time, to play shape!

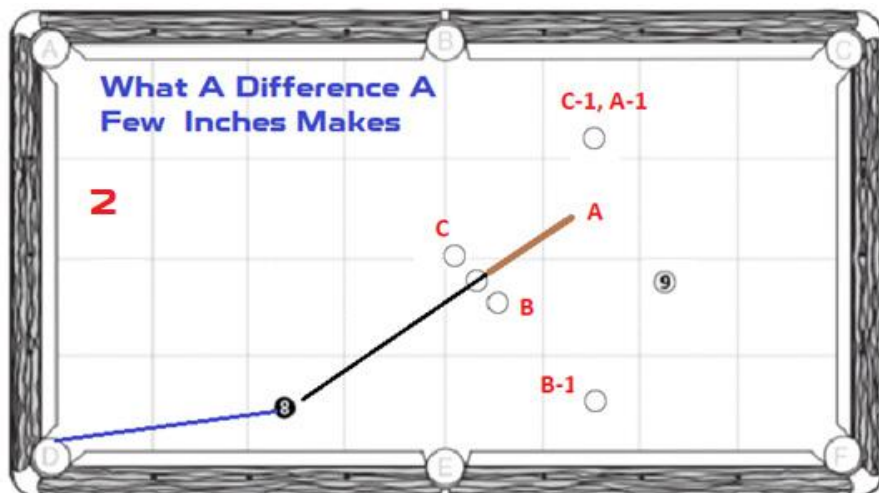
As the pro's proficiency at jump shots rises, it seems to me that they have lost a fair amount of skill on the medium to

difficult kick shots. Today, as I watch the pros play kick shots, I can predict with accuracy when they are going to miss the ball entirely, and often badly – especially on those kicks where the object ball is far from the rail.

So, should good players practice kick shots, or will they figure that their time is better spent working on jump shots. I know what Efren Reyes' answer would have been back in the day!

WATCH THE CUE BALL'S LANDING SPOT

Here's a viewing tip that will improve your pool watching skills, and your



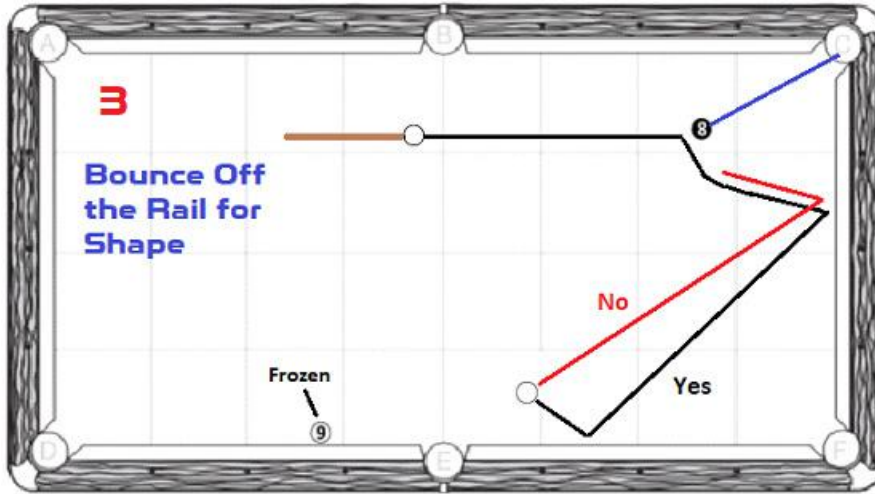
SIGEL SAYS TO BOUNCE IT OFF THE RAIL

At the 2025 International Open Mike Sigel gave an explanation for why it is better to have the cue ball bounce off the rail on certain position plays. Indeed, the rail does give you a specific target to hit, and then to bounce off of. In contrast, it is much tougher to have the cue ball stop a certain distance short of the rail without a specific target. In addition, the recommended approach elevates your chances of having a playable shot even if you miss your desired position. The black line for the position play in **Diagram #3** shows the cue ball going into the rail and out. The last thing you want is to have the cue ball become frozen to the rail like the 9-ball is.

BALLS ARE PERFECTLY IN SYNC

Diagram #4 shows a position play from the 6 to the 7 in which the needs of both balls – the object ball and the cue ball – can be met by applying just enough force so that the object ball makes it to the pocket (with inches to spare) and the cue ball arrives in ideal position for the next shot.

When the balls are in sync like this, you need only concentrate on rolling



game: When watching the pros play position, pay close attention to where the cue ball comes to rest. What do you think of its location? Did they play near perfect position? Or could it have been even better? Now imagine if the cue ball was a half or a full ball to the left or right of where it stopped – or 1.5 ball widths as in the example. Would that give the pro a better angle, or not?

Diagram #2 shows the cue ball, which stopped at Position A. From here the play is to send across table and out to Position A-1. The cut is significantly from Position C, but the goal is to send it to Position C-1 as in the previous example. With the cue ball in Position B the objective is to send it to Position B-1 by using low left english in a way that opens up the rebound angle off the side rail.

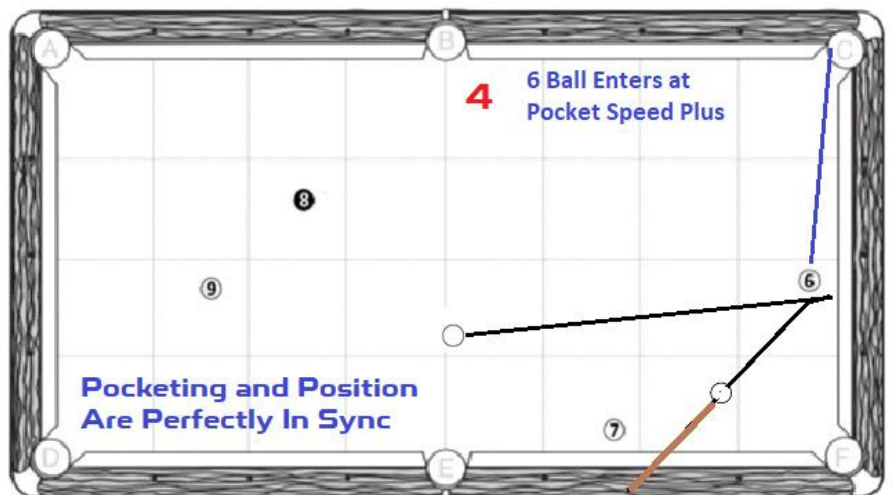
COMPARING 9-BALL AND 10-BALL

In today’s pro game of 9-Ball the players almost always make the 1-ball into the side. This means that they are facing a potential runout of 8 or fewer balls, often on a wide open layout.

In contrast, it is much more difficult to make just one, if not more balls on the break in 10-Ball. There is also a strong tendency for balls to form messy con-

figurations of 4-5 balls near a rail. As a result, you must be patient and be ready to employ a variety of defensive maneuvers in the hopes of winning the battle for the table. And, when you do gain control, you could be facing a full rack of 10 balls with numerous obstacles to negotiate.

I enjoy watching both games because of their similarities, and their many differences. Indeed, when preparing a new edition of *Play Your Best 9-Ball* I added three chapters on 10-Ball covering 103 pages that feature tons of examples of the pros in action. The new edition is a 544 page master class in both games titled *Play Your Best 9&10 Ball*.



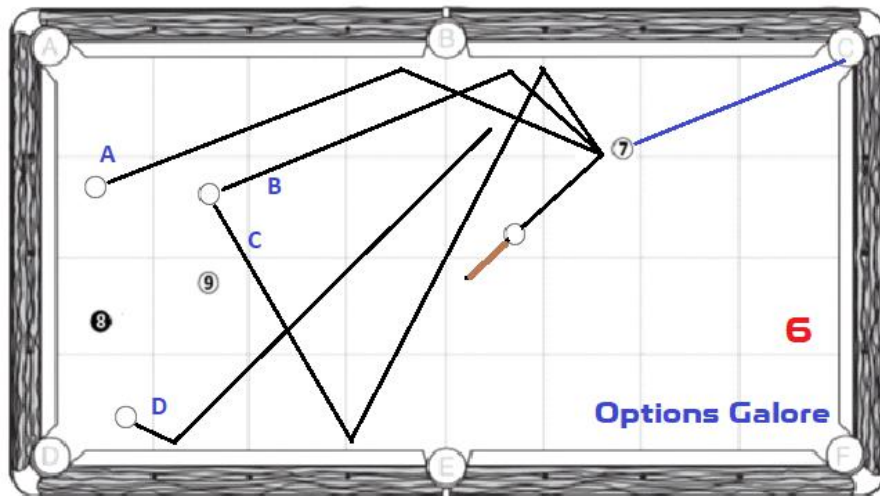
the ball into the pocket and the cue ball will take care of itself. Now I realize that some players (far too many in my opinion) feel more comfortable shooting at higher speeds. But, in cases like this, getting used to rolling a ball in when the situation calls for it will prove to be an invaluable addition to your game.

WIDELY SPACED OBSTRUCTERS

When potential obstructers are close together, it is easy to see the hazard that they represent, one that could force you to thread the needle between the two balls. In **Diagram #5**, playing position on the 6 requires a two rail cross table route. What is not so obvious is the small pathway that you have when there are widely spaced blockers, such as shown by the 8 and 7 balls. As you can see, the cue ball missed each ball in passing with very little room to spare. The lesson: even though two balls are far apart, they can still form a narrow channel for the cue ball. This, in turn, will call for your very best effort to avoid hitting either ball.

OPTIONS GALORE!

In certain positions you may have several routes to choose from. In **Di-**



agram #6 I show four possible routes from the 7 to the 8 ball. These may not be exactly playable as shown, but certainly close enough so that you can see what might be available to you. For example, the down-the-side-rail route might be best played on Route A, which will send the cue ball past the far side of the side for near perfect shape on the 8. If you don't feel (or you just can't) draw past the side, the using Route B, where the cue ball hits the rail on the near side of the side pocket, could be the better choice.

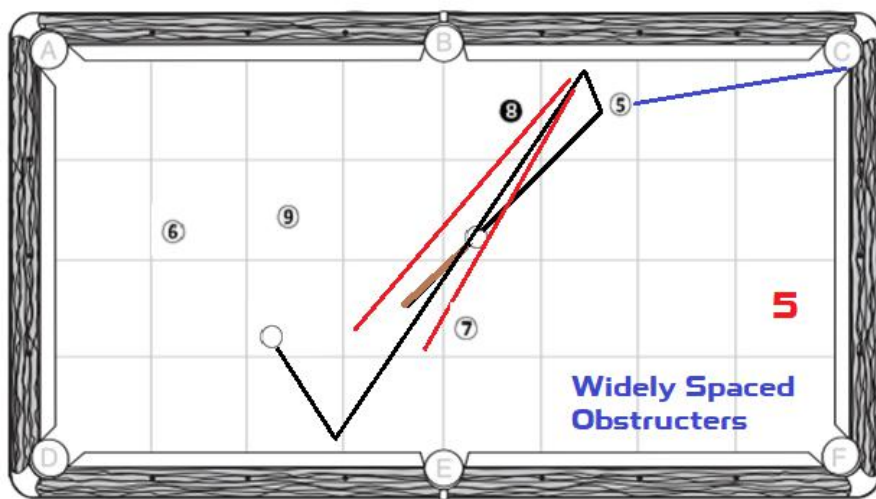
From the position shown, and certainly if the cut on the 7 was a little thinner, then the smart choice could be Route C, which enables you to avoid

the Pocket E. Finally, Route D to the short side of the 8 may actually be your best bet. Remember, small differences in the cue ball or object ball's position could make any of these 4 routes preferable to the others. So, part of being a superb player is recognizing these nuances and planning accordingly.

SHADOW BALLS REVISITED

In the January 2023 feature for the Billiards Buzz, my first, I introduced the concept of Shadow Balls. These are balls that are in or close to the vicinity of the position zone for your next ball. As such, they exert a profound influence on where you can, and should, send the cue ball. Shadow Balls are also big hazards because it can be quite easy for the cue ball to end up behind them, especially if you lose your focus for just a split second.

Diagram #7 is taken from a match between two top WPBA players. The 9 is acting as a Shadow Ball, one that makes it tough to get ideal shape on the 7. In this case, the player was well aware of the possibility of getting behind the 9, so she overprotected against a hook, came up short of ideal shape, and then compounded her error by missing the 7. Now, imagine for a moment how simple this run might





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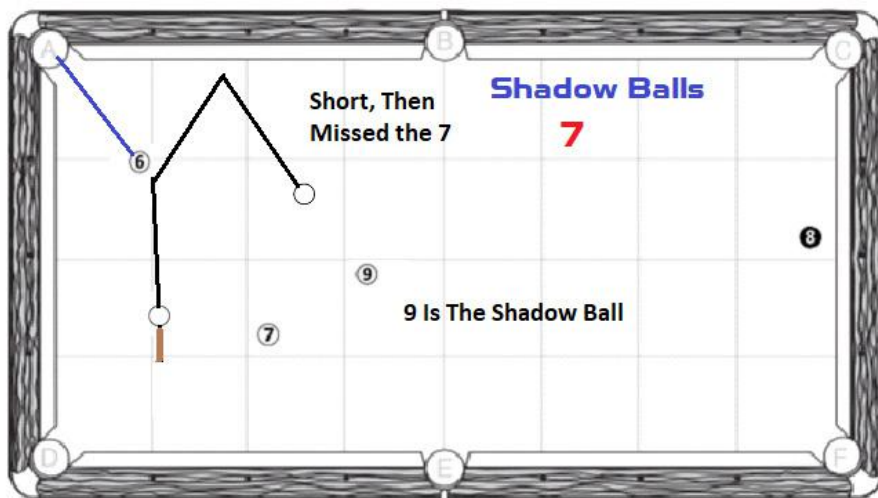
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have been if the 9 was located a diamond closer to the end rail. So, when planning your runs, be on the lookout for Shadow Balls, and plan accordingly.

AMATEURS AND THE 3 FOUL RULE

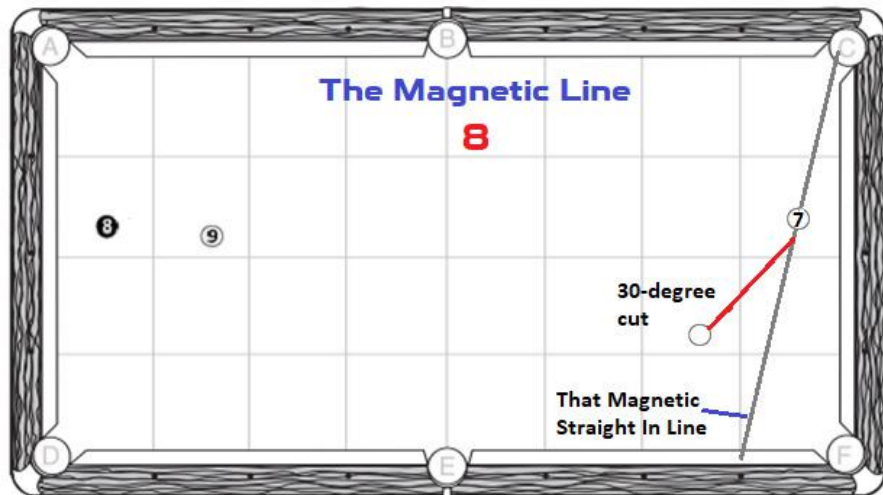
The pros are so good at escaping safeties with kicks and jump shots, and they are so highly skilled at running out. As a result you seldom see them win using the 3-foul rule, or even attempting to do so.

I am somewhat conflicted when giving amateurs below the B+ level a recommendation to increase their attempts to win this way. It may be a challenge for an amateur to execute the 3 foul strategy, and I think amateurs need to work more on seeing patterns, playing position, and running out. On the other hand, an amateur may have a good chance against certain opponents to snag a game now and again using this tactic, especially against players who kick and/or jump poorly. So there you have it – as it so many matters pool, arguments can be made for employing a specific tactic, or not!

THE MAGNETIC LINE

We all make mistakes, and the pros are certainly no exception. In fact,

one of the biggest even great players make – over and over again – is shown in **Diagram #8**. The goal, when playing shape on the 7 is to leave a big enough angle so that traveling far back down the table, such as for shape on the 8, is no big deal. The cue ball on the 30-degree cut line is in excellent position for getting to the 8.



Unfortunately, I see the pros leave the cue ball on or right next to the straight-in line – so often do they commit this error that it seems as if the cue ball is magnetized to this line!

When the pros leave the shot straight in, then get set to see one of my favorite recovery routes – that being a massive draw with english (right in this case) that will open the rebound angle and accelerate the cue ball far down the table.

When the cue ball is left a little above the line, then it's time for a power follow shot (speed 7 or above) with inside running english. If struck well, the ball will go 2 rails out of the corner and take off far down the table.

In sum, while it is nice to be able to play these two power position routes, it's better to allow for a good sized margin for error when playing shape on balls near the end rail.

ABOUT PHIL CAPELLE

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

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The Shot After the Sirens: How to Rebuild Focus Under Pressure

ANTHONY BEELER

I was in the finals of the Rack and Cue 9-Ball Championship facing “Nickel Jack” Goode—a talented player who often snuck alcohol into the pool room.



Jack earned the nickname because he put nickels in his ears during match play. The match came down to the final shot. I was down on the tournament-winning ball, focused and ready, when a sudden crash of glass shattered the silence.

My first thought was that Jack had thrown his fifth of whiskey into the wall—something he was capable of. Startled, I stood up, unsure what would happen next. But Jack snapped, “What the hell are you looking at me for? I didn’t do a damn thing!”

He was telling the truth. Jack had handed the bottle to his buddy, Buford Walker, who was watching from the overhead bleachers. Buford, in his eighties, was in bad shape. He passed out, fell forward, and went headfirst into the pinball machine below. The crash was glass and metal exploding. The aftermath was worse—blood everywhere.



The room turned to chaos. People yelled. Chairs scraped. Paramedics were called. Soon an ambulance siren filled the building as Buford was wheeled out on a stretcher. Then the room went quiet again—the strange kind of quiet where everyone realizes

the match is still happening, and you still have to shoot.

When I returned to the table, the image of Buford’s bloody head kept flashing in my mind. That’s what real distractions do: they don’t just interrupt the shot, they hijack your attention. In moments like that, “try harder” is useless. What works is a repeatable routine—something you can run on command when your emotions spike and your mind won’t settle.

“DISTRACTIONS DON’T BEAT PLAYERS—UNMANAGED REACTIONS DO. WHEN YOUR BREATHING SHORTENS, YOUR GRIP TIGHTENS, AND YOUR STROKE SPEEDS UP, YOU’RE NO LONGER PLAYING THE TABLE—YOU’RE PLAYING YOUR OWN ADRENALINE.”

”

So, I did what I teach players to do: I ran a full reset. Not once, but as

many times as it took until the picture cleared and my body felt steady again. Here's the exact focus reset that brought me back:

Preset your grip. Loosen it, then rebuild it with intention.

Cock your wrist. Your grip-hand thumb should point straight to the floor.

Put your vision center on the shot line. Commit your eyes to the line, not the noise.

See the shot line (bottom of the cue ball). Use a clear visual anchor.

Set the tip of your back foot to the line. Don't cross the shot line.

Take a couple of smooth practice strokes. Slow the tempo and stabilize the motion.

Stop. Hold your rifle still. Aim and center. You can't aim with a moving rifle.

Pull back slowly (one and a half seconds). Slow is steady and precise.

Stroke forward smoothly (half of a second). Deliver straight—don't jab or steer.

Evaluate your finish. Hold for a four count. Stay down and note where your tip finished. Your tip should always finish on the felt.

That checklist does two things: it restores mechanics, and it gives your mind one thing to focus on at a time. Distractions don't beat players—unmanaged reactions do. When your breathing shortens, your grip tightens, and your stroke speeds up, you're

no longer playing the table—you're playing your own adrenaline.

Bit by bit, the noise drained out of my head and the table got quiet again. The routine did its job. I let the cue go, stayed down, and watched the winning ball disappear into the corner.

That match taught me a lesson I've never forgotten. You can't control what happens around you, but you can control the sequence you return to. Pressure will show up in different forms—noise, hecklers, a bad roll, a moment of chaos. When distractions show up—and they will—your routine is the rope that pulls you back to focus. Make it unbreakable.

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

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CHALKIN' UP THE MEMORIES...



Back in southern California, things were falling into place. The Stagger Inn had become one of the region's main action spots and just about everyone passed through its doors. I was giving lessons or going to Bellflower Billiards in the afternoons and each night I'd be sweating the action and betting on the side or in action myself.

Early one night, I had just arrived and the Stagger Inn was just starting to fill up. A short blonde girl marched up to me and asked if my name was Mary and did I wanted to play some nine ball. Ya think?

We went over to the nine footer and started playing races to seven even for a hundred. Her stakehorse paid me off after each set and finally they pulled up after I'd won four.

Kelly (Simpson) Oyama came back with a different stakehorse each night but with the same result. On the fourth night, she showed up but this time she betting her own. Over the course of the few days, we had become somewhat friendly with each other and when it was over for the night, she told me she was done with me and asked me if I wanted to go with her to hit some spots where she'd made money. I agreed and that was the beginning of a longtime friendship.

Another night, I was introduced to a man named Lou Cannon. I was told he was the houseman at the House of Billiards in downtown LA at Sixth

and Western. He told me to stop by one night and he'd match me up. A few nights later I decided to go there and he did just that and later introduced me to several players including an older Black man named Robert Woods – known in the pool world as “LA Rags.”

Lou told me that Rags was the best Black player in LA for many years and had known and played them all – from Minnesota Fats to Luther Lassiter to “Cowboy” Jimmy Moore. We hit it off and became sparring partners. Even though he was in his sixties by then, he still played great and I learned a lot from him. Some nights after we were

done playing, we'd stop and get something to eat before heading home.

One night after we were done playing, he asked me if I was hungry. I said I was but this time, he said we were going to his favorite spot. We hopped into his car and off we went.

After about fifteen minutes, we turned into a soul food restaurant – the parking lot was packed but we managed to get the last spot. By this time, I had started to become slightly uneasy as the complexion of the neighborhoods had changed on our way there. Rags just winked as he opened the door for me and we walked into a place where I



Kelly (Simpson) Oyama - 1985 US Open 9 Ball Championship - Norfolk, VA - Photo courtesy of the Pool & Billiard Magazine Collection

I had to admit I didn't.

"Dothan, Alabama! Checkers Lounge! Remember? You played four different guys and beat their butts. I was one of their girl friends - we loved watching you spank their asses! We'd never seen a girl that could play pool let alone beat those guys! It sure shut them up! We loved it! You inspired us so much that we all went out and bought cue sticks and started playing pool!"

And, yes, I did remember! Each one of those guys thought that he was the best player of the four!

Rags and I talked and laughed all the way home as he told me stories from his time in pool.

By this time, I'd fallen into something of a routine. I'd give some lessons and make the rounds hitting all the various spots. I played in the various tournaments in southern California and either Robin Dodson or I won the women's events.

However, the action had started to dry up for me so I decided to sign up with one of the temp agencies in LA. I had taken shorthand and typing in high



Jay Swanson - "Swanee" - 1984 Red's - Houston, TX - Photo courtesy of Mike Haines & Bill Porter

was the only white person in the room filled with about a hundred people or so.

All of a sudden, I heard an older lady exclaim, "Rags! You're a sight for sore eyes! Who's your lady friend?"

He introduced me to her - she was the owner of the restaurant. She took us to a table and seated us. She asked me if I had ever eaten soul food before and I told her no. She then said to trust her because I was going to have the best food I'd ever eaten! Rags just grinned...

While we were waiting for the food to arrive, it seemed like every person in the restaurant had stopped by to say hello to Rags and chat a bit. He was a rock star!

Finally, the food began to arrive - there was a little bit of this, a little bit of that. About a dozen or so various dishes filled the table and we filled our bellies. And, man, was it good!

Needless to say, that became our new spot whenever we wanted to get something to eat!

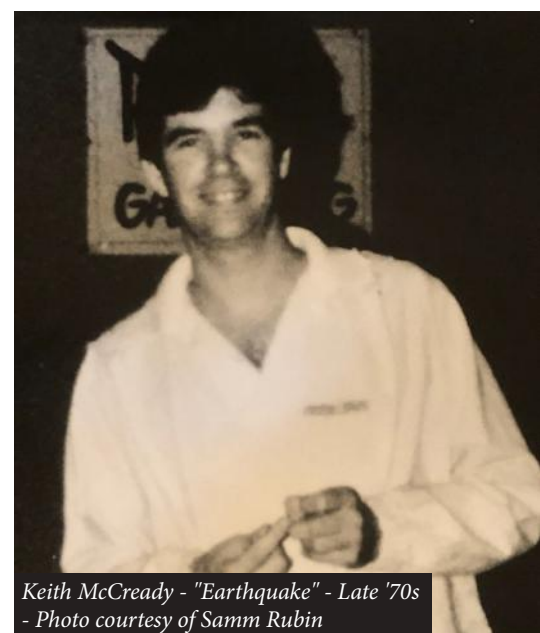
A few weeks later, I heard that Swanee and Keith were going to match up at the Billiard Tavern in San Diego to play some nine ball for \$10,000. I asked Rags if he wanted to drive down there with me to sweat it. He agreed so he met me at the Stagger Inn on the day of the match to head on down.

We'd left early in the afternoon to beat the traffic and it was a beautiful southern California day. I'd never been to San Diego before so we got off the interstate at La Jolla and drove along the coast. With still a couple hours to kill, we drove over the bridge to Coronado and on the way back to San Diego, the city lights had just started to twinkle. It was beautiful.

On the way down, Rags and I had discussed the match and decided we would bet on Swanee. We did and several hours later, Swanee had won. Walking back to the car, I heard, "Mayree! Mayree!"

We turned around and saw this young woman - dressed to the nines - running towards us in her high heels.

"Mayree! Do you remember me?"



Keith McCready - "Earthquake" - Late '70s - Photo courtesy of Samm Rubin



Mary Kenniston - 1984 Los Angeles, CA - Photo courtesy of the Robert Ross Collection

school and I could type over a hundred words a minute – plus I liked it. It wasn't long before I had my choice of assignments as I had become a favorite with the agency.

I ended up taking a job working at the VA Hospital in Long Beach for one of the doctors who was doing research into PTSD and other things. I showed up and reported to the office and there was no one there. Finally, after about an hour, this thirty-something man with long hair and a beard – he looked like Jesus in scrubs and Birkenstocks – came rushing into the office. His arms were filled with books and folders and he dumped them all on the desk.

I didn't say a word but wondered why he was sitting at the doctor's desk. All the doctors I knew from back east wore white coats so surely he wasn't a doctor. Wrong.

He introduced himself, apologized for being late and pointed to the table where there were piles of paper-filled folders. Told me it would be great if I could make a dent in them. It turned out that they were all articles detail-

ing his various research topics for submission to the various medical journals. This was right up my alley as in high school I had worked doing typing in the Medical Records department in a local hospital where my mother was the medical records administrator.

So, I dove in and it wasn't long before I hated the typewriter – it was a relic. I also realized that although I could see the doctor was brilliant, his best game was not writing the articles. They were filled with misspellings, grammatical errors and frankly, they just didn't flow. I hated typing them up verbatim so I took it upon myself to clean them up since there was no way any medical journal would print them the way they were written.

That still didn't change the fact that the typewriter itself was slowing me down. The ribbon kept coming off, the keys would jam – it seemed that I spent more time getting the typewriter fixed than I did typing.

The next day, I waited for the doctor to come in. Again, he showed up with his arms full and dumped it all on his desk. He seemed startled to see me there but then remembered I was the new girl.

He asked me how it was going and I decided to dive right in. I told him the typewriter constantly jammed up and I asked if he could get me a different one. He laughed and told me to dream on – said it would be months before that would happen even if it were approved. He asked me if I knew what kind I wanted so I told him a correcting IBM Selectric – it was state of the art at that time.

He didn't even blink. He dug into his briefcase, pulled out his checkbook, signed one, handed it to me and told me to go get one! Never even asked what it would cost.

So that solved problem number one! Problem number two was that I had

to tell him that he wrote like a fifth grader!

And so I did - although not in those terms. I asked if he would mind if I corrected his spelling, the grammatical errors and improved the flow of what he had written. He laughed and told me that his wife normally had done that for him but she had recently taken a big job so she didn't have time for that anymore. He told me to have at it although be sure that I didn't change the meat of the article.

That day, I went to an office supply store and bought a used Selectric. I took it back to the office and soon my fingers were flying over the keyboard and the finished pages stacked up. I hardly ever saw him. He traveled between the hospitals in Westwood, Irving and Long Beach – he was hard to track down. He'd pop in once in a while but mostly we communicated with notes or I left messages for him at the various phone numbers he had given me. I'd just leave the finished articles in folders, he'd read and edit them and I'd get them ready to submit.



Robert Woods - "LA Rags" - Mid '60s - Photo courtesy of the Pool & Billiard Magazine Collection

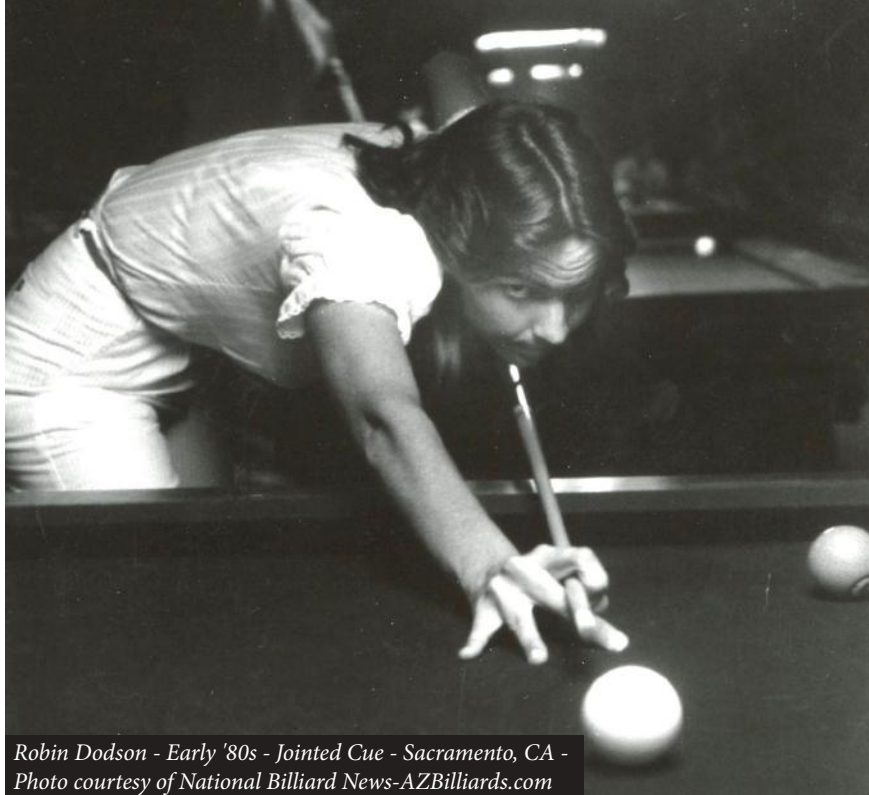
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Robin Dodson - Early '80s - Jointed Cue - Sacramento, CA -
Photo courtesy of National Billiard News-AZBilliards.com

It turned out to be one of the best jobs I ever had. I had a key to the office so I had access 24 hours a day so I could work when I wanted.

The doctor and I had become friendly even though we didn't see each other often. I had mentioned that I played pretty good pool and he didn't mind that I'd miss a few days here and there to play in the various events out west. I walked in one day and he was there going through the piles of finished work I'd done. He told me he had told his kids that I played pool and they wanted a pool table for Christmas. He asked if I could find him one. Again, he gave me a blank check so I headed back out to the Valley to see Lou Butera at the Golden West showroom. We selected a 4 x 8 with balls, cues, etc. and I arranged to have it delivered to his home and set up the day before Christmas.

I ended up going over to the doc's home in Westwood after Christmas to meet the family and get them started with basic fundamentals and how to play eight ball. This turned into a lesson every other week and the oldest

boy had natural ability and picked things up pretty quickly. He soon started to be able to play pretty good.

And while I was at the Golden West showroom, Lou told me he'd sold a table to a couple that lived in a high rise in Long Beach. They wanted lessons but he didn't want to drive all the way there and asked if I was interested. Of course I was!

I showed up at the appointed time and we started making small talk. They had a southern accent so I asked them where they were from - turned out it was Paragould, AR.

When they told me that, I almost fell over. One of the biggest scores NY Blackie and I had made was in Paragould. He had played the best player in town over the course of a week and we left with almost \$13,000! Turned out they knew exactly who we played, where we played and all the various people I'd gotten to know while we were there. Talk about starting on a good note!

They had purchased a 3 1/2 x 7 and covered it with red cloth! I had never seen

that before! I ended up selling them a couple of Meucci cues and, to be honest, they seemed more interested in hearing my road stories than learning to play pool which was fine with me. I just showed up once a week to collect my hundred dollars for the "lesson."

So, between typing papers, going to Bellflower Billiards, the Stagger Inn and playing in some tournaments, about once a week I'd drive over to the House of Billiards to play a few of my customers and spar with Rags. It was one of those nights that Lou introduced me to one of his regulars, Freddie Guarino. Freddie was from West Haven, CT - across the Long Island Sound from where I'd grown up. Culturally we were very similar and we hit it off. He had come to LA after being discharged from the Air Force and had never left.

Soon we were a couple and we started going to all the different rooms and tournaments in southern California. Everyone seemed to know and like Freddie which was a positive for me - I'd always shied away from guys in the pool rooms. I always thought they were great to hang around with but not to get involved with.

Freddie had a pretty good job running the computer operations for a small aerospace firm in Torrance. A few days a week, we'd meet after we got off from work and have dinner. After we'd eat, we'd hit a spot or two or go to Los Alamitos to bet the harness horses. At least, Freddie did - I always brought a book with me!

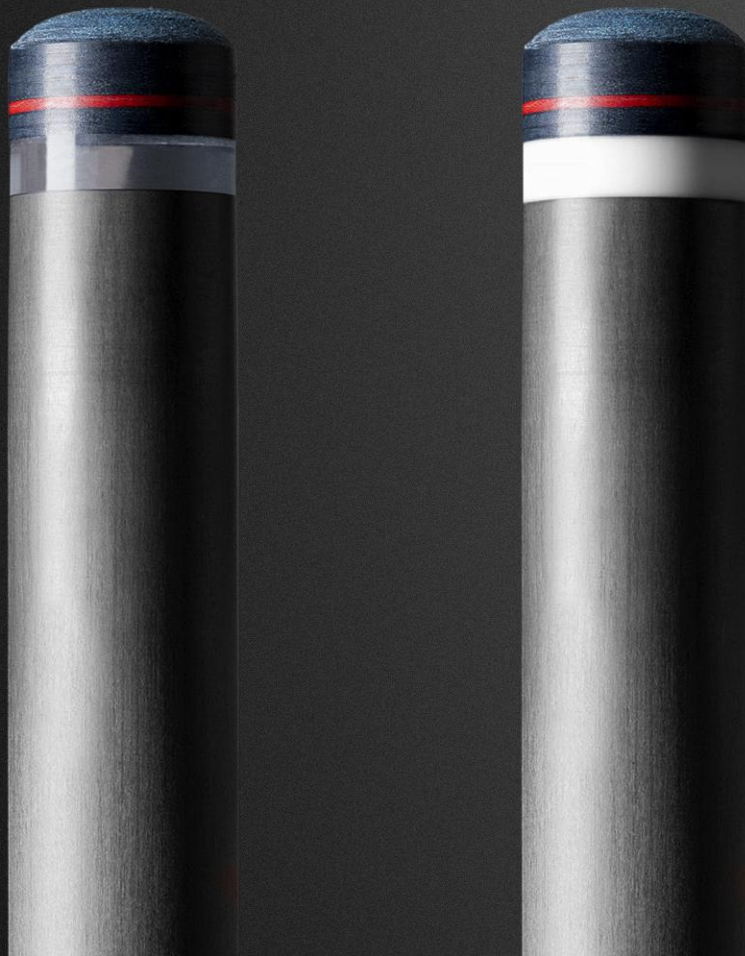
Life was good.

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



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10-DAY MARATHON CROWNS DERBY CITY'S NEWEST KINGS

AzB Staff / Photos courtesy Erwin Dionisio

After ten days of play (some longer than others), the Derby City Classic has crowned its 2026 Champions.

As a reminder, the first four days of the event saw Fedor Gorst defeat John Morra in the finals of the Bigfoot Challenge. It was Gorst's first Derby City Bigfoot title.

The next event to play down to a winner was the annual Banks Ring Game on the final Friday of the event. That event was won by Devin Poteet for his first career Derby City title, as he outlasted a field of six players. Second place was taken by Billy Thorpe.

That left the three main divisions of play (Banks, One Pocket, and 9-Ball) with the goal of being down to the fi-

nal pairings to begin the final day on Sunday, February 1st.

The Divisions

- Bank Pool: This division got down to two players on Wednesday night when Fedor Gorst eliminated Sky Woodward to earn the right to play Justin Hall. Hall had received a bye into the finals due to the unique buyback format in use at Derby City.
- One Pocket: As is usually the case at Derby City, scheduling problems with multiple divisions in

play reared their ugly heads. The One Pocket division didn't get down to its final two players until mid-afternoon on Saturday (January 31st), with Roland Garcia defeating Anthony Meglino to earn his spot in the finals against Shane Van Boening.

- 9-Ball: Whittling down the 9-ball division to two players proved to be a difficult task. Organizers agreed late Saturday night to bring back the final six players early on Sunday to play down to the final two.

The Filler Factor

One player who seemed to be doing his best to get through the final rounds of play was former Master of the Table Joshua Filler. Filler had been forced to forfeit his second-round match due to a stomach bug, but he came back stronger than ever. Filler ended his Saturday play with a 40-minute win over Roland Garcia, a 30-minute 9-2 win over Van Boening, and then a 35-minute win over Gorst.

Early matches on Sunday morning had Meglino taking his first loss of the event to Vitaliy Patsura, Van Boening beating Jon-



Justin Hall, Joshua Filler and Shane Van Boening

athan Pinegar 9-4, and Filler slowing down for a 50-minute win over Marco Teutscher. Meglino had the misfortune of drawing Patsura again in the 13th round of play, and it went just about the same way as their previous meeting. Meglino lost to Patsura 9-5 the first time they played and 9-6 the second time. Meanwhile, Filler had his running shoes back on in his match with Shane Van Boening, cruising to a 25-minute 9-0 whitewash. That brought the 9-ball down to its final two players: Patsura and Filler.

The Crowning of Champions

Circling back to the bank pool finals, it was Justin Hall scoring a hill-hill win over Gorst for his first Derby City Classic Banks title. The One Pocket division was won by Shane Van Boening with a 4-2 scoreline over Garcia. It was Van Boening's third career Derby City One Pocket title. The final match



Devin Poteet

of the event saw Joshua Filler take an 11-7 win over Patsura for his third consecutive Derby City 9-Ball title.

The most important title to the players, the Derby City Classic Master of the Table (along with its \$20,000

prize), was won by Shane Van Boening for the third time in his career. With ten career Derby City Classic titles, Van Boening is still three wins behind the GOAT, Efren Reyes, and his thirteen career wins.



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Action Photography ©mediumpool

Derby City Classic Gallery



Anthony Meglino



Hayden Ernst



Kristina Tkach



Bank Ring Game Roster



Shane Van Boening



Vitaliy Patsura



Mickey Krause



Jonathan Pinegar



Roland Garcia



Lee Vam Corteza

Photos courtesy Erwin Dionisio

HOMETOWN HERO KO PIN-YI WINS CHINESE TAIPEI OPEN AFTER DENYING NALAUNAN

Ben Hudd - www.absolute-pool.com / Photo courtesy Erwin Dionisio

Ko Pin-Yi sealed his sixth World Nineball Tour ranking title on home turf, defeating Ronel Nalaunan 13-11 in a gripping final to win the fourth staging of the Chinese Taipei Open in the Taiwanese capital.

Ko, whose most recent taste of success on the tour came at the Lushan Open in China 18 months ago, added to his title tally and pocketed the \$30,000 top prize to return to the world's top eight in the WNT rankings.

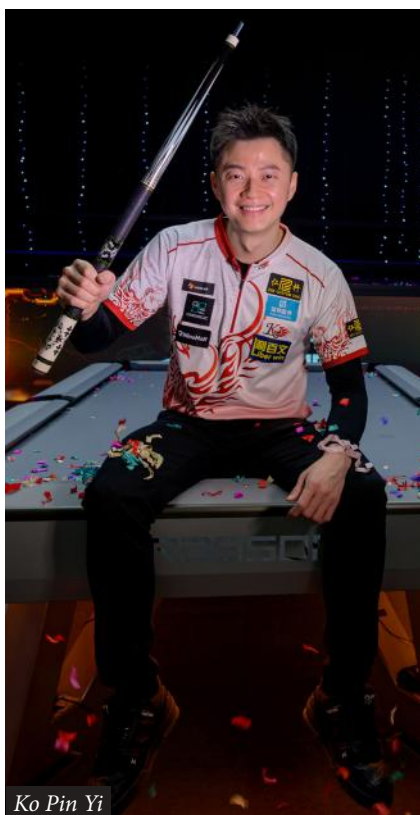
Filipino underdog Nalaunan obtained the early ascendancy and gained a 5-2 advantage with a break and run, although Ko quickly restored parity at five apiece in a final which seemingly ebbed and flowed.

Nalaunan remained within touching distance of the 2015 world champion throughout the contest, and he would develop an opportunity at the business end following a tremendous jump-bank on the three ball.

Breaking to force a deciding rack, Nalaunan appeared poised to level the final before unfortunately over-running position, which sparked a safety battle that Ko would ultimately emerge victorious from.

In the semi-finals, the Taiwanese star overcame Filipino Aivhan Maluto, who had entered uncharted territory in a ranking event, having dropped just ten racks in prior wins over Dang Thanh Kien, Lin Ta-Li, Kuo Po-Cheng and Trinh Van Binh.

It was a rather commanding campaign for Ko until the championship match against Nalaunan, who reached an elusive ranking final with notable



Ko Pin Yi

wins over the likes of Reyes Cup MVP AJ Manas, Jeffrey Ignacio and Naoyuki Oi.

His 11-10 semi-final victory over former world champion Francisco Sanchez Ruiz was the jewel in the crown nonetheless, with Nalaunan executing a sensational Efen Reyes-esque kick shot in the deciding rack of an epic battle.

Elsewhere, defending champion Jeffrey Roda failed to qualify for the sin-

gle elimination phase following brutal hill-hill defeats at the hands of Dang Thanh Kien and Toh Lian Han respectively.

Top seed and 2024 champion Carlo Biado endured defeat in the last 16 against Wu Kun-Lin, while 2023 winner Ko Ping-Chung, David Alcaide and Johann Chua were all beaten at the same stage.

US Open champion Aloysius Yapp was defeated in the last 32 at the hands of Indonesian teenager Albert Januarta, who was denied in a hill-hill match in the preceding round against Michael Baoanan despite a spirited fightback.

South Korea's Harin Lee became the latest female player to reach the last 64 of a WNT ranking event following one-loss side wins over Chien Ching-Ju and Nicholas Tan, following in the footsteps of her good friend in Seo Sea.

Liu Shin-Mei, the 1999 and 2002 women's world champion, stunned Philippines Open runner-up Arseni Sevastyanov in the first round, with Sevastyanov suffering back-to-back losses after his cues were lost on his flight to Taiwan.

The inaugural Carabao International Open in Jakarta, boasting a \$100,000 prize fund, will act as the next ranking tournament, as the World Nineball Tour debuts in Indonesia from February 4-8.



Duong Quoc Hoang



Francisco Sanchez Ruiz and Ronel Nalaunan



Jonas Souto



Robbie Capito

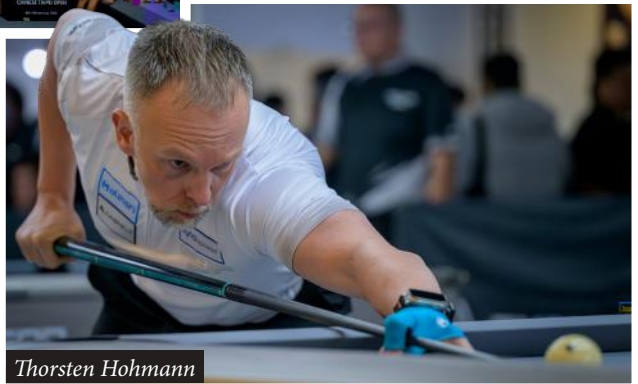
Francisco Sanchez-Ruiz, Ronen Nalaunan, Ko Pin Yi and Aivhan Maluti



AJ Manas



Naoyuki Oi



Thorsten Hohmann

MORRA DEDICATES FIRST TURNING STONE CLASSIC TITLE TO FRIEND MIKA IMMONEN

AzB Staff

Considering his dominance over the past few years, any story from a running of the Turning Stone Classic is expected to revolve around nine time winner Jayson Shaw or one of the best players in the game right now, Moritz Neuhausen.

While most fans in attendance expected a win from one of these two players, the news of their expected win may not have made it to Canada yet, as John Morra turned in a dominating display of pool playing ability to win his first Turning Stone Classic title.

Morra ran through his first three rounds of play, defeating Troy Deo-charran, Marco Kam and Brian Vu by a combined score of twenty seven racks won and one rack lost. Morra was tested in the 4th round by Florida's Donny Mills before winning 9-6. Next up for Morra was South American Jesus Atencio, who Morra downed 9-4 to earn his place in the final four undefeated players on the final day of play.

The tournament bracket brought together Shaw and Neuhausen in one winner's side match (won by Shaw 9-5), while Morra was making quick work of countryman Martin Daigle in the other.

The hot-seat match was expected to be a great one, between Shaw and Morra, and it was, if you were a Morra fan. Morra showed little mercy as he jumped to a quick 5-0 lead over Shaw and cruised to a 9-1 win to take the hot-seat.

Proving that he is ready for the big time, Atencio made his way through the one loss side with wins over Neu-

hausen, Daigle and Shaw to earn his place in the extended final match.

Morra took a quick 3-1 lead in the finals, but Atencio came back to tie things at 3-3. From that point in the match, it was pretty much the "John Morra Show" as he broke and ran three racks and controlled the racks that he didn't run. Morra held an 11-3 lead and while Atencio fought back as

much as he could, the end result was sealed with Morra winning 13-6 for his first career Turning Stone title.

Morra dedicated the tournament win to his friend Mika Immonen, who passed away late last year. "I love Mika so much and this is the first Turning Stone without him and I know he was with me the whole way," said Morra after the finals.



John Morra and Jesus Atencio

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FROM THE LOSS SIDE, TKACH CLAIMS TITLE TO \$25K-ADDED, WPBA OLHAUSEN IRON CITY INVITATIONAL VI

Skip Maloney - AzB Staff / File photos courtesy Erwin Dionisio

Weeks from her 16th birthday, Savannah Easton battles Tkach to double hill in semifinal

They came into and out of this past weekend's (Jan. 14-18) WPBA Olhausen Iron City Invitational VI as the top two women in the WPBA rankings. In what was the first (recorded with us) win of the new year for both of them, Kristina Tkach and Pia Filler navigated their way to the hot seat match, and eventually, the finals. Filler won the first matchup. Tkach came back from the semifinals to claim the title. One day ahead of her birthday (Mon. Jan. 19), she claimed the trophy with her father at her side. She and Filler both stayed right where they were, at the top of the WPBA list. The \$25,000-added event drew 48 entrants to Iron City Billiards in Birmingham, AL.

Savannah 'Roadrunner' Easton, from Las Vegas, who was among the 16 competitors with a bye in the opening round of the event's second stage, would advance to a winners' side semifinal. On the loss side, she would win two and then, having already assured that she would be recording her highest finish of the 19 WPBA tournaments that she has entered since 2022, when she was 12 years old, would play for advancement to what would have been her first appearance in a WPBA final. About three weeks away from her Sweet 16th birthday,

the 'Roadrunner' battled the WPBA's top-ranked competitor (Tkach) to double hill in her first WPBA semifinal. It was, in effect, an advancement from 'up and coming' competitor, to now definitely here.

The event played out through two stages. Going in, the top 16 on the WPBA rankings were seeded into the second stage, while 17 through 32 on the list battled 16 other invited competitors in the event's first stage. It

was a predominantly American field that took to the tables, with seven other countries represented.

With a bye, to open the second stage, Tkach went through four opponents to get to the hot seat match. She opened with an 8-3 win over Canada's Joanne Ashton, before USA's Loree Jon Brown chalked up six against her, in what fell short of a single game from going double hill. Tkach advanced to a winners' side quarterfinal, where she faced her



second Canadian opponent, Brittany Bryant, allowing her just a single rack in the match and advancing to face Bulgaria's Kristina Zlateva in one of the winners' side semifinals.

Filler, in the meantime, also with an opening-round bye in the event's second stage, sent Krystal Depelsmaeker (6) and Ashley Benoit (3) to the loss side, and in her winners' side quarterfinal, downed Slovakia's Kristina Grim 8-3. Filler drew the USA's 'Roadrunner' (Savannah Easton) in the other winners' side semifinal.

Tkach downed Zlateva 8-5 and advanced to the hot seat match. She was joined by Filler, who'd defeated the 'Roadrunner' 8-2. Filler claimed the hot seat 8-4.

Moving over to the loss side, Zlateva picked up Spain's Maria Teresa (Mayte) Ropero Garcia, who opened her campaign with a strong 8-1 victory over Russia's Aleksandra Guleikova 8-1 and then, won a double-hill battle against the USA's Briana Miller. Garcia moved out of the proverbial frying pan, right into the 'fire' of Turkey's Eylul Kibaroglu, who sent her to the loss side 8-4. Things didn't get any easier on the loss side, though for starters, Garcia did defeat Loree Jon Brown 8-6 and Caroline Pao 8-5, to draw Zlateva.

Brittany Bryant, in the meantime, who'd had her hands full on the winners' side of the bracket, winning an opening-round, double-hill match versus Avah Weems and an almost-double hill match against junior competitor Jordan Helfrey, got sent to the loss side by Tkach (8-6). She drew Kibaroglu in her first loss-side match, defeated her 8-3, and then, battled to double-hill against Ashley Benoit, before prevailing to draw Easton, the 'Roadrunner.'

In her third, double-hill match, Bryant was eliminated by Easton, who moved on to the quarterfinals. She was



joined by Zlateva, who'd eliminated Maria Teresa (Mayte) Ropero Garcia in a match that featured as many games as syllables in Garcia's name, 14 (8-6).

Things had been tightening up as the loss-side matches were drawing to a close. To this point, the last four loss-side matches had featured an overall, aggregate game/rack score of 32-25 (all winners vs. players eliminated); two double-hill and one each, 8-6 and 8-5. The quarterfinal made that aggregate score 40-31, with Easton winning it 8-6 and advancing to the semifinal against Tkach.

Dependent on how well-versed one might be regarding their own 16th year around the sun, it's hard to imagine, when this young woman stepped to the table to compete against the WPBA's top-ranked competitor, how she was managing the varied amounts of pressure and stress that had to, at some level, been ping-ponging around inside her adolescent head. But, in a testament to her ongoing maturity, she met the challenge, battled Tkach to double hill, and eventually, one assumes, took pride in what she had accomplished in her 19th WPBA event. It seems likely that those who were able

to watch her do it certainly did.

The second and final match between Tkach and Filler begged for a double-hill show, and in the race to 10, it was still 'in the cards' at a 6-6 tie. But it was all Tkach from there, as she chalked up a four-pack and claimed the title, her first since winning the WPBA's Olhausen, Colorado Classic last August.

Tour representatives thanked the ownership and staff at Iron City Billiards for their hospitality, along with event sponsors Olhausen, CPBA Billiard Cloth, Kamui, and J. Pechauer Custom Cues; Presenting sponsors, Taom, Brunswick, Diamond Billiard Products and Jacoby Custom cues; and tour sponsors. Tour director Frank Maialetti gave a 'shout out' to Lonnie Fox-Raymond for her commentary on the live stream and reminded everyone that many of the matches can be viewed on the WPBA's YouTube channel.

Next up on the WPBA calendar will be the \$50,000-added Classic Billiards Players Championship. Scheduled for the (long) weekend of Feb. 12-16, the event will be hosted by Classic Billiards in Lauderhill, FL.

GARCIA & TUCKER

MUSIC CITY OPEN CHAMPS

Mary Kenniston / Photos courtesy Pool Action TV

Eager to shake off the holiday rust, players from all over converged at JOB's in Madison, TN – a suburb of Nashville – for the 38th Annual Music City Open 9 Ball Championships.

Promoted by PoolActionTV.com and held January 14th-18th, owner Ricky Gamble, General Manager Jeannie Casey-Hutto and their staff welcomed players and fans for their \$7,000 added event. Played on seven foot Diamonds, the tournament began on Wednesday evening with an Open Mini followed by the \$6,000 added Open event, the Midnight Madness and the \$1,000 added Ladies event.

Plenty of well-known names could be seen around the room including the newly minted Ultimate Pool USA Hall of Famer Dave Matlock, BCA Hall of Famer Kim Davenport and defending champ Shane McMinn.



Roland Garcia

Vendors Smash Billiards and Cuelees were also on site this year.

The festivities began with the Open Mini which attracted 63 players. They paid a \$40 entry to compete in the single elimination race to seven event. There were lots of heavy hitters and great matches and the finals were no different – Roland Garcia versus Dave Matlock. However, this time the match was all Garcia as he cruised to a 7-0 victory.

Friday night saw the ladies players auction, meeting and draw. Thirty four players played in this double elimination tournament with races to seven and winner breaks.

Kelly Wyatt's path to the hot seat began with a bye and included wins over Debbie Johnson (0), Amanda Huff (2) and then she eked out wins over Linda Brewer and Toni Tucker (6).

Rae Norgaard's journey also began with a bye followed by victories over Jorgan Withers (1), April Bailey (2), Rhannee Monroe (4) and then edged out Laura Kanov (6).

Norgaard was defeated in the hot seat match 7-4 and headed to the one loss side to await an opponent. Wyatt locked up her seat in the finals.

On the west side, Toni Tucker defeated Michelle Hicks and then Rae Norgaard to advance to the finals – both scores 7-5. Hicks finished in fourth place and Norgaard in third.

Needing to defeat Wyatt twice to claim the title, the finals began and it was tight until Tucker pulled away to reach the hill first (6-4) and then won the final game to close out the first set.

A lady on a mission, Tucker began the set 5-0 and closed it out 7-2 for the title!

The Midnight Madness Mini began on Saturday night as eight players posted a \$500 entry to compete in this single elimination tourney. Races were to 11 with winner breaks. It came down to two players – Eric Roberts and Hennessee.

They decided to chop the pot.

While all the other events played out, the Open continued with a full field



Toni Tucker



Eric Roberts and Jonathan Pinegar

of 128 players who posted their \$100 entry fees to compete in the \$6,000 added Open 9 Ball – races to 11 and winner breaks.

Rocketing out of the gate to the hot seat match were Lukas Fracasso-Verner and Roland Garcia. Lukas coasted to wins over Kyle Stack (0), Greg Tavani (1), James Earp (2), Mike Laney

(0) and Travis Southard (1) until he ran into Thomas Haas. This match was a tester but Lukas posted an 11-9 victory and moved on to the hot seat match.

In the lower portion of the bracket, Roland Garcia had more of a battle but claimed wins over Brandon Farrow (7), Bralen Martin (8) and Ricky Evans (6) before the matches began to get tougher. Next was Charlie Bryant (“Hillbilly”) who went down 11-9, he skunked Hennessee 11-0 and then duked it out with Devin Poteet. He survived 11-9 and then faced Lukas in the hot seat match.

The hot seat match was a sweater’s delight which went down to the wire! Garcia made two combos in the final game to lock up his seat in the finals. Fracasso-Verner headed west to await an opponent.

On the one loss side, Sky Woodward was on the hill 10-7 and Thomas Haa

s came from behind winning four games in a row to defeat him 11-10. Woodward finished in fourth place.

Waiting for Haas was Fracasso-Verner – the winner would advance to the finals. With both players trading games right from the start, at 3-3 Lukas made a 5-9 combination to take the lead and then won the next four games making it 8-3. Haas rallied to make it 9-6 but then Fracasso-Verner won the next two games to advance to the finals. Haas finished in third place.

Since this was double elimination, Lukas had to defeat Roland twice to win the tournament. He won the lag but Roland drew first blood and ended up leading at 5-2. Lukas made it 5-3 but then Roland put on a clinic as he pulled away to reach the hill and then take the title 11-3.

Congratulations to Roland Garcia and Toni Tucker for becoming this year’s Music City Open 9 Ball champions!

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EARL STRICKLAND

TRIUMPHS AS WNT LEGENDS CONCLUDES A HISTORIC WEEK

Jack Mitchell - Matchroom Multi Sport / Photo courtesy Matchroom Multi Sport

Earl Strickland was crowned WNT Legends Champion after producing a commanding performance to defeat Francisco Bustamante 11-6 in the final, lifting the title in front of a packed and passionate crowd at Gateway Mall, Quezon City.

The American completed a remarkable week in Manila, bouncing back from defeat on the opening day to close out the tournament in style and remind all he is still one of the greats of pool.

Reflecting on his victory, Strickland said: "I'm thrilled to win, especially after falling short on Day One. I proved that you can never count an old dog out. I know my days are numbered,

but if I keep shooting like that, who knows? I'm proud of myself.

This week is one I'll never forget. It was an honour to share the stage with four great players. I've said it before and I'll say it again - there will never be another Efren Reyes, and this week was a reminder of that. Even though the crowd was rooting for the opposition, their passion added something really special to this event."

Final

Earl Strickland 11-6 Francisco Bustamante

Strickland took early control of the final, opening up a 3-1 lead before Bustamante responded with trademark resilience to level the match at 6-6. However, the momentum soon swung decisively in Strickland's favour.



Capitalising on a series of late errors, The Pearl surged clear, stringing together five straight racks to close out the match and secure the WNT Legends crown.

Bustamante said: "I'm disappointed not to get the win. I made too many mistakes and Earl took full advantage of them – well done to him. But despite the result, I enjoyed this week. It was special to play against Ralf and Earl again, and to share the stage with Efren in front of our home crowd. I'll never forget this experience. Even if we're not in our primes anymore, this week showed that we've still got it."

Third Place Playoff

Ralf Souquet 11-9 Efren Reyes

Earlier in the day, Ralf Souquet claimed third place with an 11-9 victory over Efren Reyes, gaining redemption after his opening-day defeat in a tense and closely fought contest.

Souquet said: "I was happy to get some revenge after Day One, although it wasn't my best performance. It's never easy playing in front of a crowd that's fully behind your opponent. Of course I'm disappointed not to reach the final, but this week has been truly special. Thank you to all the fans who came out – it's been a real pleasure to play in front of such a passionate audience."

Reyes added: "I didn't make a ball off the break, which ultimately let me down, and the luck wasn't on my side today. Congratulations to Ralf – he was the better player today. Even without winning, I'm happy. This week has been one I'll never forget. Whether you were here in person or watching at home, thank you to everyone who supported us."

Staged in partnership with Puyat Sports at Gateway Mall, Quezon City, WNT Legends marked a historic mo-

ment for the sport, as four of the greatest players the game has ever seen returned to the arena together one final time. A celebration of rivalry, respect, and camaraderie – a chapter in pool history that will long be remembered.

NEXT WNT RANKING EVENT

The World Nineball Tour continues with the inaugural Carabao International Open, taking place in Jakarta, Indonesia, from 4-8 February, featuring 128 players competing for a \$100,000 prize fund.

NEXT MATCHROOM MAJOR

Following Jakarta, Premier League Pool returns, now heading to Florida, USA, from 18-22 February, where 16 of the world's elite will battle it out. Player announcements will be revealed in the coming weeks.

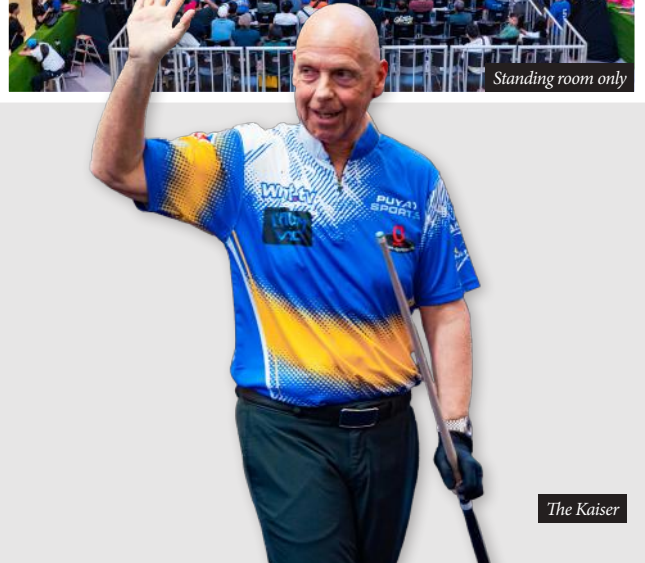
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MEGLINO COMES FROM THE LOSS SIDE TO WIN MICHAEL FEDAK'S FL STATE OPEN 8-BALL CHAMPIONSHIP

Skip Maloney - AzB Staff / Photo courtesy Event Staff

The Sunshine State, where the table elite meet to beat (each other).

At the Florida State Open 8-Ball Championships this past weekend (Jan. 10-11), sponsored by Dr. Michael Fedak, Anthony Meglino came from the loss-side to double-dip the opponent who'd sent him there, Tony Robles, and claimed the event title. The \$5,000-added event drew 61 entrants to Paradise Billiards in Lantana, FL.

Of the 13 entrants in the '700' Fargo-Rate range, Meglino (789) was the highest rated, followed by Francisco Diaz-Pizarro (784), Justin Hall (762), Max Eberle (755), Johnny Archer (752), Robles (734) and Tommy Kennedy/Monaim Neffati (738). The full '700' range of FargoRates in the event represented 20% of the 61-entrant field.

Meglino and Robles met first in the hot seat match. In winners' side races to 6, none of the five opponents Meglino faced on his trip to the hot seat match got closer than two racks against him, compiling an aggregate game score of 30-6. He opened with a shutout over Max Eberle, ahead of defeating Monaim Neffati (2), Casey Silvers (2) and David Jacobs (1) to draw Ray Linares in one of the winners' side semifinals.

Robles, in the meantime (destination: hot seat match), accrued a five-match, aggregate game score of 30-8, sending Allen Auman (1), David Grossman (0), Carlos Nurinda (4) and Curtis Kelly (0) to the loss side. He picked up David Broxson in the other winners' side semifinal.

Meglino defeated Linares 6-1, while Robles downed Broxson 6-3. In a

somewhat predictable, double-hill hot seat match between two competitors who've come to know each other quite well over the years, Robles claimed the seat.

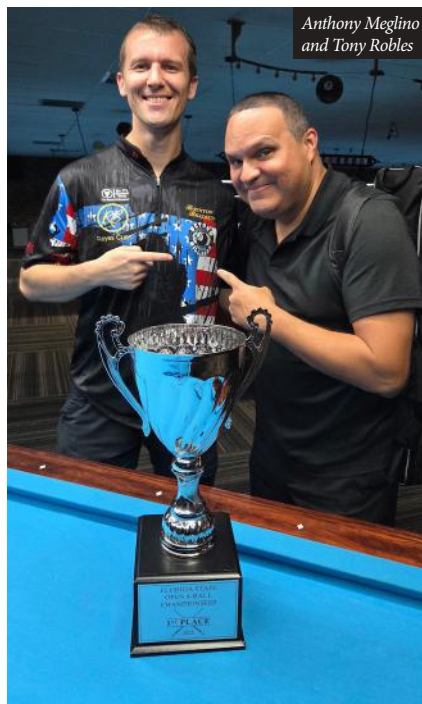
Following his defeat at the hands of Meglino, Monaim Neffati joined the ranks of the one-lost, where all sorts of potential, title 'spoilers' were lurking. In races to 5, Neffati went on an eight-match winning streak that would take him all the way to the semifinals. He had one discernible 'hiccup' in the run. With an aggregate game score of 15-6 in his first three loss-side matches, he moved into the 'money' round (13th/16th), where everyone began racing to 6, and ran into a double-hill challenge from Francisco Diaz-Pizarro. He survived it to down Raul Alvarez (4) and David Jacobs (2), ahead of picking David Broxson, fresh from his winners' side, semifinal loss to Robles.

Linares came over to the loss side and drew Steven Nevins, who'd lost a second-round, double-hill match to Trenton White and headed out on seven-match, loss-side winning streak. Nevins owns Paradise Billiards and (not related to that ownership), when the races adjusted to 6, he won his next three by allowing each of his opponents (Casey Silvers, Curtis Kelley and Tommy Kennedy) to chalk up just a single rack against him.

Both long-term, loss-side residents, Nevins and Neffati, extended their loss-side winning streaks; Nevins 6-4 over Linares, Neffati 6-2 versus Broxson. Neffati then brought Nevin's streak to an end with a 6-2 victory in the quarterfinals. In a fairly-even FargoRate match between Neffati (738) and Meglino (789), Meglino prevailed in the semifinal 6-3, advancing for a rematch, hopefully two, against Robles in the true double-elimination final.

In the only match of their three that didn't require a single, deciding game, Meglino won the opening set of the two-set final 6-3 over Robles. He backed that up with their second, double-hill match and prevailed again to claim the Florida State Open 8-Ball Championship.

Tour director Roxanne Rodowicz thanked Steven Nevins and his staff at Paradise Billiards for their hospitality. She also thanked Dr. Michael Fedak for his generous sponsorship of the event, along with Boynton Billiards, a billiard supply company with two locations in Palm Beach County.



Anthony Meglino and Tony Robles

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POTEET GOES UNDEFEATED

TO WIN SOUTHERN SHOWDOWN IN JONESBORO, ARKANSAS

Skip Maloney - AzB Staff / Photos courtesy Tournament Staff

A few months over 11 years ago (Aug., 2014), Arkansas native, Devin Poteet traveled to Myrtle Beach, SC to compete in a stop on Shannon Daulton's Great Southern Billiard Tour.

He went undefeated to claim the event title, chalking up the win in what was only his second (recorded) cash payout in a pool tournament. His first win (recorded with us) became his last one, until this past weekend (Jan. 3-4) in Jonesboro, AK; about two hours northeast of Little Rock and an hour or so northwest of Memphis, TN (Memphis to Jonesboro, being the shortest leg in a tri-city, isosceles triangle).

Through a series of up-and-down years that followed Poteet's first win and cash payout, with two 'payout' gaps, in 2019 and '22 through '24, Poteet stayed in the game. In 2025, he

recorded nine cash payouts, which included 3rd place finishes in the 2025 Houston Open and the Midwest Billiards and Cue Ball Expo 9-Ball Tournament in Des Moines, IA. He also cashed in the 2025 Derby City Classic (Bank, One Pocket, 9-Ball), Buffalo's Pro Classic and the 52nd Texas Open. A little over two months ago, he finished 9th at the International Open's One Pocket Championship, closing out what has now become his best recorded earnings year.

In the \$1,000-added, Split Bracket Southern Showdown in Jonesboro

this past weekend, Poteet went undefeated to claim the third-highest, single-event payout of his entire (recorded with us) career at the tables. This, by the way, is strictly about recorded tournament payouts, not any 'alternate' means by which one can earn money at the game(s).

Split into a handicapped 31-entrant High Side bracket and a 55-entrant Low Side bracket, the two, double-elimination brackets played down until there was a winner from both, at which point, the two winners (Poteet and Kyle Hurley, who makes his debut in our player database with this report) squared off in a set of best-of-three races to 11.

Hurley's trip to the Low Side Bracket win was notable for its 85% game-winning average over the course of six matches (40-7). He was giving up 'beads on the wire' in races to 6 in four of his six matches, and racing to 5 in the other two. Nobody chalked up more than a single rack against him until he got to the winners' side semi-final, where Ken Schaufler put up a double-hill fight (5-2, Schaufler racing to 3) that did eventually put Hurley in the Low Side hot seat match.

From the other end of the bracket, Ashley Anderson was making her way to the hot seat match. She was racing to 3 from start to finish and was either being awarded 'beads' or playing straight-up to 3. She won all of her first four matches, ahead by two (to



Kyle Hurley and Devin Poteet



include the ‘beads’ she’d been awarded at the start of each), until she drew Jonathan Trudeau in the other winners’ side semifinal. Anderson won that straight-up race to 3, double hill, and advanced to meet Hurley.

Hurley claimed the hot seat 6-1 over Anderson, who headed off to the semifinals. There, she ran into Dallas Stone, who’d lost his opening match to Joseph Lewis and headed out on a nine-match loss-side winning streak during which, in races to 6 and 5, all but one of his opponents had failed to chalk up more than three racks against him. In a straight-up race to 5, Rockie Farris gave him a double-hill run for his money. Stone survived to down Schaufler, freshly arrived from the winners’ side 5-1. Stone advanced to the quarterfinals and met up with Allen Templeton, who’d defeated Jonathan Trudeau 4-1 to get there.

Stone chalked up his ninth, loss-side win 5-1 over Templeton in that quarterfinal and then, had his loss-side streak ended by Anderson in the semifinal 3-2 (Stone racing to 5). Still rac-

ing to 3, Anderson put up a double-hill fight in the Low Side final, but Hurley prevailed to win the Low Side bracket and punch his ticket to the two-man final.

Poteet battles 12-year-old Gavin Mathew twice in High Side bracket hot seat match and final

We’ve been trying to avoid continually pointing out that Gavin Ray Mathew from Frisco, TX isn’t even a teenager. Yet. He’ll become one this October. Our reasoning has to do with the fact that he’s FargoRated at 616, and the general reaction of “Oh, wow! He’s just 12?” is unsustainable and basically, not significantly relevant to his work at the tables. That, combined with the fact that when we search for him in our database for up-to-date information on what he’s been up to, we have to select the ‘Man’ option.

What’s significant in this report is the fact that Mathew, like eventual, overall winner Devin Poteet, went undefeated to the High Side hot seat match. Racing to 7, Mathew awarded a single ‘bead on the wire’ to his first

opponent, John Thomas and defeated him 7-4. For the rest of his trip to the hot seat match, he was picking up ‘beads on the wire’ in increasing numbers; 1, 2, 3 and 4, in order. After Thomas, he defeated Tommy Greer (racing to 8) 7-2, Gary Abood (racing to 9) 7-7, and in a winners’ side semifinal, Lukas Fracasso-Verner (racing to 11) 7-8.

Meanwhile, Poteet was awarding ‘beads’ right from the start, in all but one straight-up race to 11. He gave up 2 or 3 until he reached Mathew in the hot seat match, and awarded him 4. In the straight-up race to 11, one of the winners’ side quarterfinals, Poteet downed Jonathan Pinegar 11-2. In the other winners’ side semifinal, he downed Dee Davis (racing to 9) 11-3 to meet up with Mathew.

In their first of two, Poteet gave up just a single rack to Mathew (not counting the four he gave him at the start) and claimed the hot seat. Mathew headed west to a semifinal rematch against Fracasso Verner, who’d followed his earlier loss to Mathew with loss-side victories over Jonathan Pinegar, double-hill, and, in the quarterfinals, Gary Abood (racing to 9) 11-7.

As in their first meeting, Mathew began the semifinal against Fracasso-Verner with four beads on the wire in a race to 11. Fracasso-Verner got a rack closer this time, but it was Mathew, with a 7-9 win, who turned back for a rematch against Poteet in the High Side final. Mathew got two racks closer to Poteet than he did in the hot seat match, but it was Poteet who claimed the High Side title, 11-3.

The final was a best-of-three in potentially five games to 11, with Hurley starting each of them with six ‘beads’ on the wire. They played 30 games, two sets that came within a single game of double hill. Poteet won them both 11-4 to claim the Southern Showdown title.

NEXTGEN — BETS —

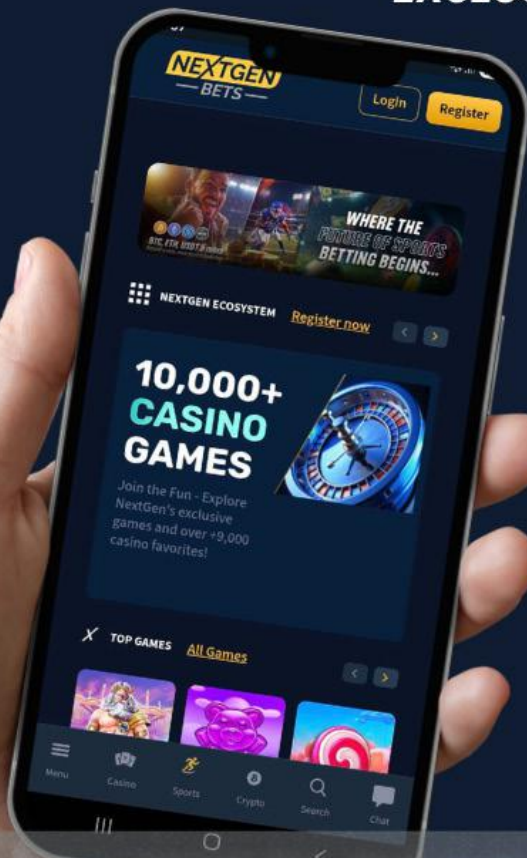
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MAKHANI

WITH HOME-FIELD ADVANTAGE WINS '20 AND UNDER BOYS' JIC SEASON 5 OPENER

Skip Maloney - AzB Staff / Photos courtesy JIC Tour

Gavin Matthew wins 14U boys, Noelle Tate and Harper Carson win girls events

“We’re back!” said the flyers promoting this past weekend’s (Jan. 10-11) set of four tournaments, hosted by Breaktime Billiards in Clemmons, NC. It was held under the banner of the Junior International Championships (JIC), which headed into its fifth season. Gone were indications of the JIC’s former partnership with the Predator Group, known, collectively, for about a year as the Predator Junior American Series, which launched in 2024. It supplemented the JIC-only branding for that season and used a unified national structure with multiple age divisions and stops.

With Predator becoming more invested in global World Pool Association (WPA) partnerships, their focus shifted away from the US-only junior tour. In what was reportedly an amicable parting of the ways, the JIC’s founder and event organizer from the get-go, Ra Hanna and his On The Wire Creative Media organization, turned back to ‘doing his thing’ in the field of junior competition.

It began, actually, last July when Hanna organized a team-oriented ‘Hanna Cup’ in Tacoma, WA last July. Two teams (Lambo and Payne) of five players, who were selected by their captains, Landon Hollingsworth and Payne McBride, squared off in a three-day, 14-match event at the Bates Technical College TV studio.

Team Lambo (Hollingsworth, Eddie Vondereau, Hayden Ernst, Joey Tate, and Gabriel Martinez) defeated team Payne (Payne, D’Angelo (Jawz) Spain, Lazaro Martinez, Niko Konkel and Jas Makhani) 11-3. Hollingsworth was the event’s MVP.

Next up was the International Open in St. Augustine, FL in November, where six of the competitors from the Hanna

Cup competed. About two weeks later (Dec. 12-13), the first of four scheduled JIC ‘boot camps,’ with Jeremy Jones addressing and advising junior competitors, preceded a 64-entrant Open event, eventually won by Hayden Ernst. That event was held in the Bak Room Billiards Studio, owned by Bobby Chamberlain, Ken Tran and Anthony Milanesi, where Jayson Shaw



had recently set a new world 14.1 record by running 832 balls.

Which brings us up-to-date on the JIC's Season Five. According to Hanna, the initiative and on-going goal of the organization is not always or necessarily about tournament play or cash payouts.

"My total vision is to get kids prepared for professional pool," he said. "I have no interest in anything else."

While the JIC offers numerous opportunities for junior competitors, none is more central to the mission than the 'boot camps,' at which the young men and women meet, greet and learn from someone who's already crossed the 'bridge' to professional competition and is engaged in helping them learn how to make that happen.

"We're locked in to improving the quality of the athletes," said Hanna, "(with a) training ground for people coming up."

"They (have the opportunity) to go to other venues to compete," he added. "The kids in the JIC are the serious ones. They want to cross that 'bridge,' to make a transition to the pros."

The JIC is not the only game in town of course. The Billiards Education Foundation offers a variety of training options, as do independent operations, like Roy Pastor's Red Dragon Billiards Club in Harvard, MA. Pastor, a PBA Master Instructor who leads a Break and Run Premier Junior Instruction program, has been coaching juniors for over 20 years. Many of his US students (he hosts international students, as well) have 'fed' into the JIC program over the last five years; Sofia Mast and Lukas Fracasso-Verner among them.

But the advent of the Junior National Championships five years ago, spearheaded by Hanna, heightened the profile of junior competition, na-



tion-wide. And the beat goes on.

This past weekend's events in Clemmons, NC featured four separate tournaments; two '20 and under' divisions (boys and girls) and two '14 and under' divisions, as well. The matches played out in double-elimination brackets.

Jas Makhani, whose father, Sundeep Makhani, owns the host venue, Breaktime Billiards, was competing with an obvious 'home field advantage.' He went undefeated through a field of 16 to claim the '20 and under' boys' title. Texas native, 12-year-old Gavin Mathew, who'd gone undefeated to the hot seat and finished 3rd in the '20 and under' boys division, went undefeated in the three-entrant '14 and under' boys' division to claim that title.

Noelle Tate went undefeated in the six-entrant '20 and under' girls' di-

vision, while Harper Carson, in the three-entrant, '14 and under' girls division, lost her opening match, won a double-hill battle against Tanvee Vallem in her (their) one and only loss-side match and claimed the title with a 9-6 win over Aalimah Fulgern in the finals.

Some further notes about the 'main event,' to keep you abreast of the '20 and under' boys' field, from which competitors could be showing up on a pool 'doorstep' in your neighborhood, soon possibly. Makhani's trip to the hot seat match was not without its challenges. In the bracket's races to 9, he faced three opponents, two of which (Caleb Schwettman, his first opponent and Gage Smith, his third) chalked up six racks against him. Makhani won his 'middle' match against Collin Stafford 9-2. He'd face his winners' side semifinal opponent (Smith) again, in the finals.

Junior International Championship

Gavin Ray Mathew, in the meantime, ran into an immediate, double-hill challenge from Jordan Witkin in his opening match. Mathew survived that, and in a manner of speaking, ‘tightened the screws’ as he advanced. He defeated Davin Greene 9-5 and in the other winners’ side semifinal, Keaton Crouch 9-2.

Makhani downed Mathew in the hot seat match 9-4.

Gage Smith moved on over the loss side and picked up Ethan Randall, who’d lost his opening match to Collin Stafford and then, fought tooth-and-nail through two, double-hill matches, against Schwettman and Greene. Hilton Shuler almost made it three in a row, but Randall stopped him one game short of double hill to win 9-7 and meet Gage.

Crouch arrived on the loss side of the bracket and drew Jordan Witkin, who’d followed his opening-round

loss to Mathew with three straight wins, over William Drye (5), Collin Stafford (4) and Matthew Bishop (5).

Smith downed Randall and Witkin eliminated Crouch, both 9-3. Smith defeated Witkin in the quarterfinals 9-7.

The fight for advancement to the finals went double hill, which at the junior competition is almost always entertaining. Gage won it. Makhani closed out his undefeated run in front of a hometown crowd with an 11-6 victory over Gage.

Hanna thanked Sundee Makhani and his staff for their hospitality, making note (in a Facebook post) that “Breaktime Billiards was a first-class host and a fantastic venue for Junior cue sports.”

“From the tables, to the atmosphere, to the way every detail was handled,” he added, “the entire Breaktime staff went above and beyond all weekend

and made this stop truly one of a kind.”

He also thanked the competitors themselves, “who made the trip, battled rack after rack and represented with class.”

“We see you,” he added. “This is the road. This is the grind. And this is how champions get built.”

The next stop on the JIC’s calendar, scheduled for Feb. 6-8, will be hosted by Action Lounge and Billiards in Leonardtown, MD. Further dates can be found on the JIC’s Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/JUNIORINTERNATIONALCHAMPIONSHIPS>) where interested competitors can learn of other JIC activities from live announcements about upcoming events.

Hanna also thanked sponsors Cuetec, Littman Lights, Savage Billiard Apparel and WBCA.

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The advertisement features a black background. At the top, the words 'SEARCH. FIND. PLAY.' are written in large, bold, yellow-outlined letters. Below this is the 'PlayPool.com' logo, with 'PlayPool' in green and '.com' in white. The central graphic shows a smartphone displaying a map with several location pins (one red, others blue) and a globe showing North America. In the bottom left corner, there are two logos: 'Available on the App Store' and 'ANDROID APP ON Google play'.



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FROM CUTBACKS TO INCREASES

EPBF PRIZE MONEY BOOMS UNDER PREDATOR PARTNERSHIP

AS THE EURO Tour enters the second year of its landmark partnership with the Predator Group, the impact on European pool is already impossible to ignore.

Only a short time ago, discussions centred on reducing Men's prize money from €45,000 to €40,000 per event. Instead, the opposite has happened.

In the very first year of the Predator partnership, Men's prize funds increased to €50,000 per event and in 2026, they rise again to a record-breaking €60,000 per tournament. The Women's EuroTour has seen an even more dramatic transformation. Previously competing for just €6,000 per event, women players are now playing for a strong €20,000 prize fund per tournament, marking a major step forward in opportunity and recognition.

With Men's and Women's events combined, the EuroTour series prize fund has grown annually from around €300,000 to nearly half a million euros, highlighting the scale of Predator's commitment to the European game.

IBPF President David Morris said, "It just shows the belief Predator has in the EuroTour. We were at €300,000 for the combined series and now we're very close to the half-million mark with men and women together. I always knew there was a market for this kind of growth, and Predator has stepped up and is truly changing the scenery for pool players across Europe."



David Morris with the EPBF

The partnership goes beyond prize money alone. In 2025, the top eight-ranked men and top four-ranked women prior to each event, received hotel accommodation, fully paid by the tour for their individual use. For 2026, this initiative has been expanded further, with double-rooms now fully covered for the top-ranked players.

Morris added, "Accommodation is one of the biggest expenses for players who are not yet fully funded. By offering paid double rooms, we hope this not only eases the burden but also encourages established players to support and mentor newer players coming through. This will be a big boost for the tour."

Predator's Global Head of Events, Vincent Rochfort, said, "We are delight-

ed to be part of the EuroTour series. It aligns perfectly with what we are doing across the PBS series and with what the Predator Group wants from this partnership. We strongly believe in putting money directly into the players' pockets; that is our goal, to make the players want to compete at Predator-backed events."

The Euro Tour season kicks off in Turkey this March, with registration opening on Saturday January 10th. With record prize funds, enhanced player support, and a clear player-first philosophy, the EuroTour continues to set new standards for professional pool in Europe.

As the new season approaches, Tables 1 and 2 for all Euro Tour events can be found on YouTube, via the Pro Billiard TV channel – <https://www.youtube.com/@ProBilliardTV>

For all results, live scoring and draws at all the Euro Tour tournaments, visit <https://www.epbf.com/tournaments/eurotour/information/>

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The Belgian 2025 Carom 3-cushion World Champion just renewed his partnership with Simonis and Aramith, the World's leading Cloth and Ball brands.

Probably everything has already been said about Frédéric Caudron and his achievements. But at 57 years-old, the one called the “The Extraterrestrial” keeps building his legacy in the history books of his sport.

Just 16 months after his comeback on the UMB Tour, Frédéric Caudron claimed last October in Antwerp in his home country the 4th World Carom 3-cushion Championship title of his career. He is also back in the UMB Top 10 World ranking after having resumed the Tour with zero points and officially the 3124th player in the ranking.

We are proud to continue this 35 year-old collaboration with this sports Legend who has brilliantly claimed in January his 10th Belgian Championship in Blankenbergue and who doesn't plan to stop there any time soon.

Frédéric Caudron: “It is a very special feeling to be supported by the same company for such a long time. It shows mutual trust and respect, and sharing the same vision for decades.”

Jérôme Poncelet (Group Commercial Director): “Our partnership with Frédéric is very special to us. We share the same home country, Aramith and Simonis being 100% Belgian, from the

design of our products to their manufacturing. But most importantly, we are proud to maintain such partnerships for decades as we do with many other athletes and sports organisations. These long-term commitments that we share with our partners have contributed to the development of billiards around the world and to its ever-increasing appeal towards younger generations. We wish all the best to Frédéric and many more titles to keep inspiring other players and beyond.”

For more information, please contact our Marketing & Communication manager at arthur.broudehoux@SimonisAramithStrachan.com

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Tourney Results

Jan 02 - Jan 04

Paradise Tavern 550 & Under

Paradise Tavern

- Lone Tree, Colorado
 1 Jason Cowan \$600
 2 John Bonewitz \$400
 3 Josh Thomashefsky \$150
 4 Michael McMinn \$130
 5 John Rolston \$85
 5 Rock Hrovat \$85
 7 Danny Figueroa \$55
 7 Holly Figueroa \$55

Jan 03 - Jan 04

Q City 9-Ball Tour Stop

Stixx And Stones Billiards

- Lewisville, Texas
 1 Jimmy Tanner \$700
 2 Matt Lucas \$480
 3 Cayden Skipper \$240
 4 Javier Oliu \$140
 5 Michael Hayden \$100
 5 Todd Ackerman \$100

Jan 03 - Jan 03

2026 Rack Race Stop #1

Rack and Grill II

- Augusta, Georgia
 1 Josh Roberts \$1,040
 2 Sam Harris \$520
 3 Richard Kilgore \$340
 4 Tracy Prescott \$260
 5 BJ Ussery \$140
 5 George Spires \$140
 7 Chandler Ackerman \$80
 7 Colston Harrelson \$80
 9 Bradley Harrelson \$60
 9 Calvin Le \$60
 9 John Maikke \$60
 9 Steven Ellis \$60

Jan 03 - Jan 04

Split Bracket Southern Showdown

The Wolf Den

- Jonesboro, AR
 1 Devin Poteet \$2,300
 2 Kyle Hurley \$1,100
 3 Ashley Anderson \$500
 3 Gavin Mathew \$500
 5 Dallas Stone \$400
 5 Lukas Fracasso-Verner \$400
 7 Allen Templeton \$250
 7 Gary Abood \$250
 9 Dee Davis \$150
 9 Dee Davis \$150
 9 Jonathan Pinegar \$150
 9 Jonathan Pinegar \$150
 9 Jonathan Trudeau \$150
 9 Ken Schaufler

Jan 08 - Jan 11

Turning Stone Classic XLI

Turning Stone Casino

- Verona, NY
 1 John Morra \$10,000
 2 Jesus Atencio \$6,500
 3 Jayson Shaw \$4,000
 4 Martin Daigle \$2,700
 5 Moritz Neuhausen \$2,000
 5 Waleed Hashem \$2,000
 8 Jeremy Sossei \$1,600
 8 Joey Cicero \$1,600
 9 Chad Bazinet \$1,200
 9 Denys Zbikowski \$1,200
 9 Erik Hjorleifson \$1,200
 9 Jake Jackson \$1,200
 13 Dylan Spohr \$950
 13 Frankie Hernandez \$950
 13 Hunter Lombardo \$950
 13 Kevin Clark \$950
 17 Alex Bausch \$599
 17 Brian Vu \$599
 17 Bucky Souvanthong \$599
 17 Dan Mulhollen \$599
 17 Donny Mills \$599
 17 Garrett Vaughan \$599
 17 Grayson Vaughan \$599
 17 Vincent Beaurivage \$599
 25 Brad Guthrie \$400

- 25 Christoph Neumayer \$400
 25 Danny Hewitt \$400
 25 Dave Fernandez \$400
 25 Harold Rousseau \$400
 25 Ron Casanzio \$400
 25 Sylvain Fortier \$400
 25 Tommy Cayer \$400

Jan 08 - Jan 11

2026 4th Universal Chinese Taipei Open

Taipei City

- 1 Pin-Yi Ko \$30,000
 2 Ronen Nalaunan \$12,000
 3 Aivhan Maluti \$6,000
 3 Francisco Sanchez-Ruiz \$6,000
 5 Dang Thanh Kien \$3,000
 5 Kun Lin Wu \$3,000
 5 Michael Baoanan \$3,000
 5 Naoyuki Oi \$3,000
 9 Albert Januarta \$1,500
 9 Carlo Biado \$1,500
 9 David Alcaide \$1,500
 9 Johann Chua \$1,500
 9 Lin Ta-Li \$1,500
 9 Ping-Chung Ko \$1,500
 9 Ryan Higaldo \$1,500
 9 Wiktor Zielinski \$1,500
 17 AJ Manas \$750
 17 Alexis Ferrer \$750
 17 Aloysius Yapp \$750
 17 Che-Wei Fu \$750
 17 Chen Wei \$750
 17 James Aranas \$750
 17 Jaycee Cordova Garcia \$750
 17 Jui An Hsu \$750
 17 Julian Serradilla \$750
 17 JV Vicedo \$750
 17 Kouki Sugiyama \$750
 17 Lo Ho Sum \$750
 17 Ping Han Ko \$750
 17 Po Cheng Kuo \$750
 17 Raymund Faraon \$750
 17 Yu-Lung Chang \$750

Jan 10 - Jan 10

Lucasi Florida Tour 2026 Stop 1

Village Cue Club

North Palm Beach, Florida

- 1 Jeannie Seaver \$700
- 2 Debbie Teichert \$400
- 3 Miranda Blaisdell \$250
- 3 Stephanie Mitchell \$250
- 5 Jessica Barnes \$130
- 5 Kim Housman \$130

Jan 10 - Jan 11

Florida State Open 8-Ball Championship

Paradise Billiards

Lantana, Florida

- 1 Anthony Meglino \$3,815
- 2 Tony Robles \$2,300
- 3 Monaim Neffati \$1,500
- 4 Steve Nevins \$1,000
- 5 David Broxson \$600
- 5 Raymond Linares \$600
- 7 David Jacobs \$400
- 7 Tommy Kennedy \$400
- 9 Carlos Nurinda \$200
- 9 Curtis Kelly \$200
- 9 Justin Gilsinan \$200
- 9 Raul Alvarez \$200
- 13 Casey Silvers \$150
- 13 Francisco Diaz-Pizarro \$150
- 13 Max Eberle \$150
- 13 Victor Perez \$150

Jan 11 - Jan 11

Amazin' Billiards 540 Max

Amazin Billiards

Malden, Ma

- 1 George Rouille \$630
- 2 Shaun Page \$480
- 3 Jimmy Maniatis \$360
- 4 Kevin Taylor \$250
- 5 Andrew Downs \$160
- 5 William Aley \$160

Jan 14 - Jan 18

Music City Classic

JOB Billiards

Madison, TN

- 1 Roland Garcia \$4,400
- 2 Lukas Fracasso-Verner \$2,500

- 3 Thomas Haas \$1,600
- 4 Skyler Woodward \$1,100
- 5 Devin Poteet \$800
- 5 Jonathan Pinegar \$800
- 7 Joe Prince \$480
- 7 Kim Davenport \$480
- 9 Eric Roberts \$300
- 9 Rusty Jackson \$300
- 9 Shane McMinn \$300
- 9 Travis Southard \$300
- 13 Josh O'Neal \$240
- 13 Manny Perez \$240
- 13 Ricky Evans \$240
- 13 Robb Saez \$240
- 17 Barry Emerson \$160
- 17 Charlie Bryant \$160
- 17 Chase Stumfoll \$160
- 17 James Blackburn \$160
- 17 Josh Roberts \$160
- 17 Mike Laney \$160
- 17 Ron Frank \$160
- 17 Trey Frank \$160

Jan 14 - Jan 18

2026 Music City Classic Midnight Madness

JOB Billiards

Madison, TN

- 1 Eric Roberts \$2,000
- 1 Jonathan Pinegar \$2,000

Jan 14 - Jan 18

2026 Music City Classic Ladies Division

JOB Billiards

Madison, TN

- 1 Toni Tucker \$1,000
- 2 Kelly Wyatt \$700
- 3 Rae Norgaard \$460
- 4 Michelle Hicks \$280
- 5 Laura Kanov \$225
- 5 Lisa Porter \$225
- 7 Amber Jordan \$160
- 7 Rhannee Monroe \$160

Jan 15 - Jan 18

WPBA Iron City Invitational V

Iron City Billiards

Birmingham, Alabama

- 1 Kristina Tkach \$11,000
- 2 Pia Filler \$7,000

- 3 Savannah Easton \$4,800
- 4 Kristina Zlateva \$3,600
- 5 Brittany Bryant \$2,600
- 5 Maria Teresa Roper Garcia \$2,600
- 7 Ashley Benoit \$2,100
- 7 Caroline Pao \$2,100
- 9 Eylul Kybaroglu \$1,600
- 9 Kaylee McIntosh \$1,600
- 9 Kristina Grim \$1,600
- 9 Loree Jon Hasson \$1,600
- 13 Kennedy Meyman \$1,200
- 13 Marharyta Fefilava \$1,200
- 13 Monica Webb \$1,200
- 13 Olivia Cheng \$1,200
- 17 Cathy McDaniel \$800
- 17 Janet Atwell \$800
- 17 Jordan Helfrey \$800
- 17 Lonnie Fox-Raymond \$800
- 17 Rebekah White \$800
- 17 Susan Williams \$800
- 17 Tracy Hardie \$800
- 17 Veronique Menard \$800

Jan 17 - Jan 17

Q City 9-Ball Tour Stop

Mickey Milligan's Sports Bar

New Bern, NC

- 1 Wilson Dorsey \$500
- 2 Tal Watkins \$300
- 3 Tyrone Davis \$195
- 4 JT Ringgold \$115

Jan 17 - Jan 18

Zingale's 600 & Under

Zingales Billiards

Tallahassee, Florida

- 1 Claver Meza \$7,000
- 2 Horelbin Ramos \$4,000
- 3 Shane Feeney \$2,300
- 4 Fonsi Lopez \$1,700
- 5 Antonio Cipollone \$1,250
- 5 Carlos Rodriguez \$1,250
- 7 James Chapman \$1,000
- 7 Rap Francisco \$1,000
- 9 Doug Johnson \$650
- 9 Jamie Burton \$650
- 9 Joel Haskin \$650
- 9 Luis Martinez \$650
- 13 Eric Huddleston \$500
- 13 Michael Kayrouz \$500
- 13 Rishabh Sharma \$500
- 13 Ryan Urso \$500

Jan 17 - Jan 18

Classic Billiards Fedor Fest Open 8-Ball

Classic Billiards

Lauderhill, Florida

- 1 Carlos Alberto Gomez \$1,470
- 2 Max Eberle \$990
- 3 Bob Zide \$700
- 4 George Saunders \$580
- 5 Andy Darato \$400
- 5 Kris Clark \$400
- 7 Manny Menes \$290
- 7 Rich Britt \$290
- 9 Allen Cocks \$175
- 9 Brad Hughes \$175
- 9 Jim Gardner \$175
- 9 Marc Dufresne \$175

Jan 17 - Jan 18

Classic Billiards Fedor Fest 499 & Under 9-Ball

Classic Billiards

Lauderhill, Florida

- 1 Chris Provenzano \$1,200

- 2 Stan Rodowicz \$700
- 3 Gabriel G del Olmo \$510
- 4 Gianni Ravecca \$340
- 5 Douglas Grant \$260
- 5 Michael O'Hare \$260
- 7 Anthony McGuire \$200
- 7 Tracy Chirino \$200
- 9 Alicia DeAbrue \$100
- 9 Don Trimble \$100
- 9 Felipe Silva \$100
- 9 Giancarlo Carrasco \$100

Jan 23 - Jan 26

Derby City Classic 2026 Bigfoot Challenge

Horseshoe Southern Indiana

Elizabeth, IN

- 1 Fedor Gorst \$16,000
- 2 John Morra \$8,000
- 3 Gerson Martinez \$4,000
- 3 Roland Garcia \$4,000

Jan 24 - Jan 24

3 Of A Kind Team Tournament

Village Cue Club

North Palm Beach, Florida

- 1 Curtis Kelly \$500
- 1 Dylan Bryant \$500
- 1 Justin Gilsinan \$500
- 2 Cory Wolnewitz \$300
- 2 Sam Kantar \$300
- 2 Willie Rubin \$300

Jan 31 - Feb 01

Massachusetts State 9-Ball Championships IV

Raxx Pool Room, Sports Bar & Grill

West Hempstead, NY

- 1 Curtis Wright \$1,050
- 2 Jake Jackson \$750
- 3 Jimmy Nou \$600
- 4 Bob Mendenjian \$450
- 5 Chad Bazinet \$300
- 5 Joe Dupuis \$300
- 7 Ivaylo Petrov \$200
- 7 Tsephel Tenzin \$200
- 9 Bochen Jiang \$100
- 9 Drew Herbert \$100
- 9 Jeremy Sossei \$100
- 9 Omar Ashiq \$100

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Upcoming Tournaments

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

FEBRUARY/MARCH

Carabao International Open

Feb 04 - Feb 08

Jakarta
Jakarta,

WPBA Classic Billiards Players Championship

Feb 12 - Feb 15

Classic Billiards
Lauderhill, Florida

Jay Swanson "Swanee" Memorial 9-Ball Tournament 2026

Feb 16 - Feb 17

Griff's
Las Vegas, Nevada

Premier League Pool 2026

Feb 18 - Feb 22

Classic Billiards
Lauderhill, Florida

2026 Las Vegas Open

Feb 18 - Feb 23

Westgate Las Vegas Resort & Casino
Las Vegas, Nevada

Women's Las Vegas Open 2026

Feb 19 - Feb 23

Westgate Las Vegas Resort & Casino
Las Vegas, Nevada

US Open 10-Ball Championship 2026

Feb 28 - Mar 04

Griff's
Las Vegas, Nevada

Pattaya Open Pool Championship

Mar 02 - Mar 06

S1 Pool Hall & Sports Bar,
Pattaya

US Open 8-Ball Championship 2026

Mar 04 - Mar 07

Griff's
Las Vegas, Nevada

Bank Shot Bar & Grill B&L Super Quad

Mar 07 - Mar 08

Bank Shot Bar & Grill
Laurel, MD

2026 US Open Bank Pool Championship

Mar 07 - Mar 10

Griff's
Las Vegas, Nevada

2026 US Open One Pocket Championship

Mar 10 - Mar 13

Griff's
Las Vegas, Nevada

European Open 2026

Mar 10 - Mar 15

Hotel Hills Sarajevo
Lidza, Sarajevo

2025 FINAL MONEY LIST

	NAME	COUNTRY	\$ AMOUNT
	Carlo Biado	 PHI	323.000,00 US\$
	Aloysius Yapp	 SIN	301.450,00 US\$
	Fedor Gorst	 USA	284.220,00 US\$
	Joshua Filler	 GER	274.116,00 US\$
	Shane Van Boening	 ALB	179.775,00 US\$
	Moritz Neuhausen	 GER	178.838,00 US\$
	Alex Kazakis	 GRE	143.741,00 US\$
	Pijus Labutis	 LTU	140.750,00 US\$
	Ko Ping Chung	 TPE	136.000,00 US\$
	Francisco Sanchez-Ruiz	 ESP	135.700,00 US\$

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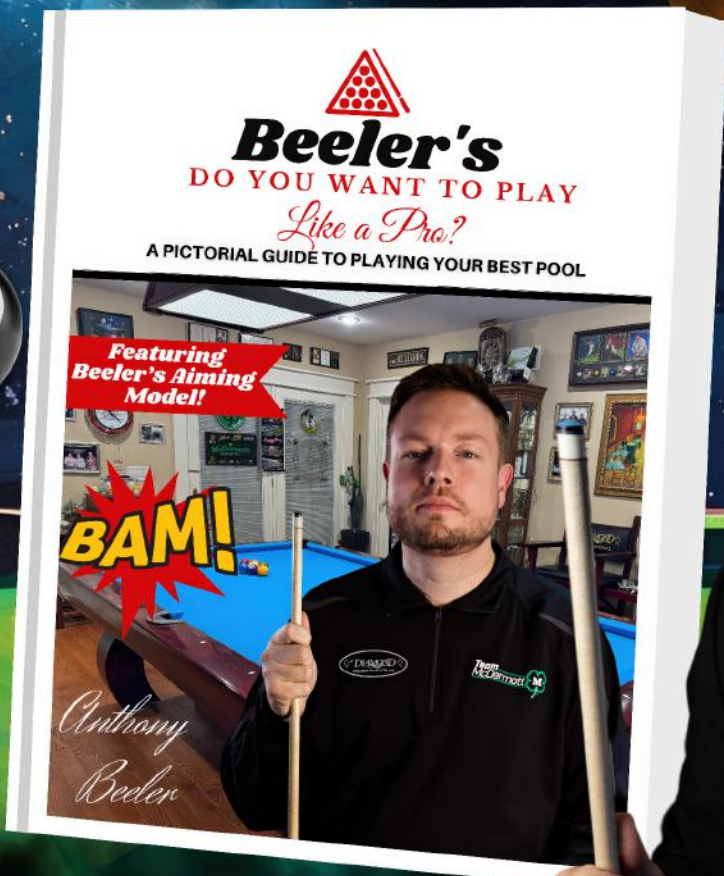
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