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Repeat Offender



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FROM THE Head Rail

MIKE HOWERTON

There are some months when this section is the hardest thing to put together (and almost always the last thing written). Sometimes I just don't have a soap box to get up on top of. I'm going out to left field for this one.

Saw some talk online about how one of the top pros was one of the most honest guys on tour and no one would question anything he did. I had to chuckle. I've met very few top players that were "pure as the driven snow".

One player does stick out though. I had an interview lined up with this player many many years ago and was asking around for comments from other players about him. Every single person I talked to gushed about what an amazing guy this player was. It got to the point where I started questioning what was going on. I had never met a player who was loved by everyone.

I finally got the player on the phone to do my interview and it immediately struck me that this guy was one of the nicest guys I had ever talked to. I could hear him interacting with his son in the background, and the love that was in his voice was heart warming.

I've interacted with this player off and on, ever since that interview, and I still say that you are going to have a hard time finding a more honest guy than Tony Robles.

OK, now that I've gushed over him, let's see if we can't me a soap box for next month.

Until next time.





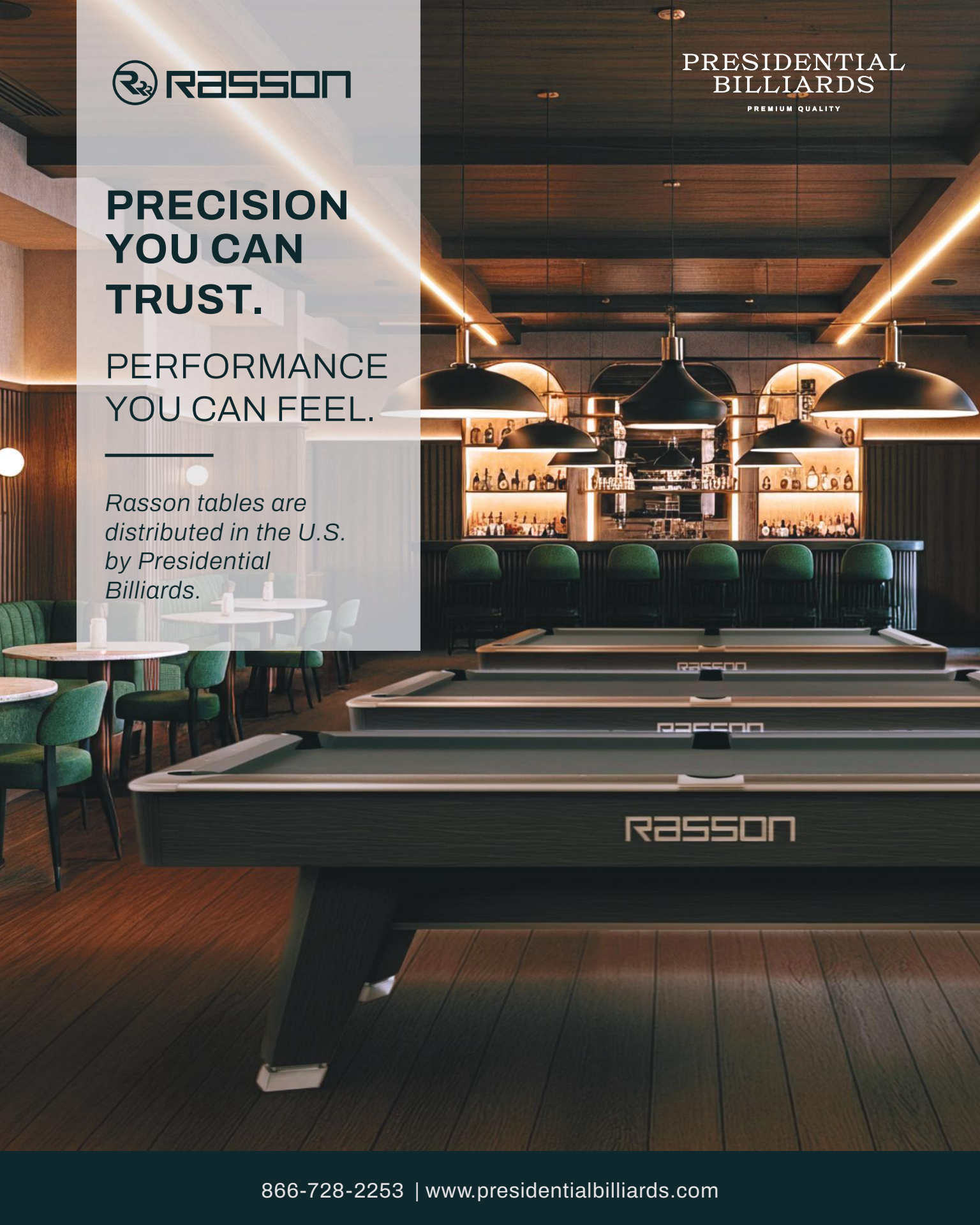
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CAPELLE'S TARGET BALL EXERCISES, PT. 2

May 12 of this year marks the twentieth anniversary of the publication of Capelle's *Practicing Pool*. In chapter 5 the book is loaded with 48 pages of exercises on all facets of position play. Included are several exercises that use what I call a Target Ball. In the May issue you will find an introduction to my Target Ball exercises. In Part 2 I will continue with more ideas on how to practice using these exercises, including a section on practicing with a friend.

ENJOYABLE PRACTICE & EFFECTIVE LEARNING

Pool provides you with the ability to practice however you choose to. This enables you to structure your sessions to be both as fun and as effective as possible. The fun part comes from playing each shot to the best of your ability, and from enjoying the good ones while learning something from every shot.

You can also make your practices as effective as you can. One way to get the most out of your practice time is to do Target Ball exercises. You will be playing a wide variety of shots, which keeps you engaged. Furthermore, the shots you choose to practice can more closely mirror the process of playing each shot in a match where you must constantly rise to the occasion, and use your powers to create a successful shot where do-overs are not allowed.

WHY POSITION ZONES ARE NOT CIRCLES!!!

The big idea of Target Ball exercises is to, obviously, make the ball, AND

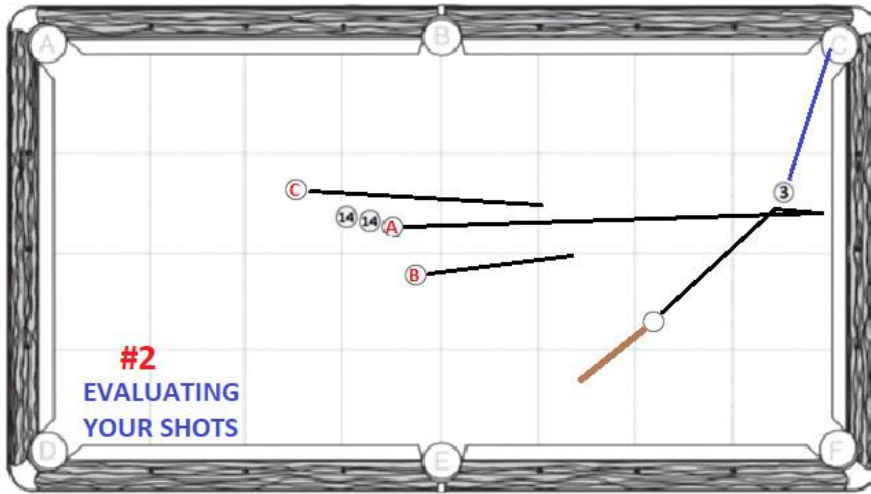
to play good to great position. Hitting the target ball softly and as fully as possible is the primary objective. But even if the cue ball stops a little short or long, or a small distance to one side or the other, that shot should still be considered a success.

While playing or practicing it helps to know the shape of the position zone you are playing for. While so many instructors and their students continue to use circles as targets, the true shape of the vast majority of position zones is a trapezoid, as shown by the red lines in **Diagram #1**.

The goal when playing the 4-ball is to hit the 12-ball lightly, which is the Target Ball. With the cue ball inside the zone, you now have an excellent angle for sending the cue ball across and down the table for shape on the 6-ball.

A secondary objective is to have the cue ball stop inside the position zone. Now, for a circle to include the near and far ends of this position zone, it would have to extend way out to the sides of the trapezoid, as shown by the big blue circle. If the circle stayed inside the boundaries as shown by





#2
EVALUATING
YOUR SHOTS

the small blue circle, then this circle would be awfully small, and it would thus eliminate much of the position zone.

DIALING IN DISTANCE & DIRECTION

The goal in the exercise shown in **Diagram #2** is to pocket the 3-ball and send the cue ball into contact with the 14-ball (the Target Ball). Shot A shows a nearly perfect result as the cue ball struck the Target Ball about a half ball to the side on a full hit. In addition, the 14-ball only moved about a ball's width, indicating that the speed control was close to perfect. I would give this rep an A-A+!

In Shot B, the cue ball stopped a little short of perfection, but the cue ball was about seven inches off line. While there is room for improvement, this was a pretty good result. Finally, in Shot C the cue ball stopped about 10 inches long and a little more than a ball's width wide of perfection. The direction was okay, but the speed could be greatly improved upon.

After playing each shot of a Target Ball exercise, take a moment to evaluate your results. When you do this, each

shot then becomes more valuable because you will be using each rep to refine your game and as a stepping stone towards improving your position play.

THE POSSIBLE ELEMENTS OF EACH SHOT

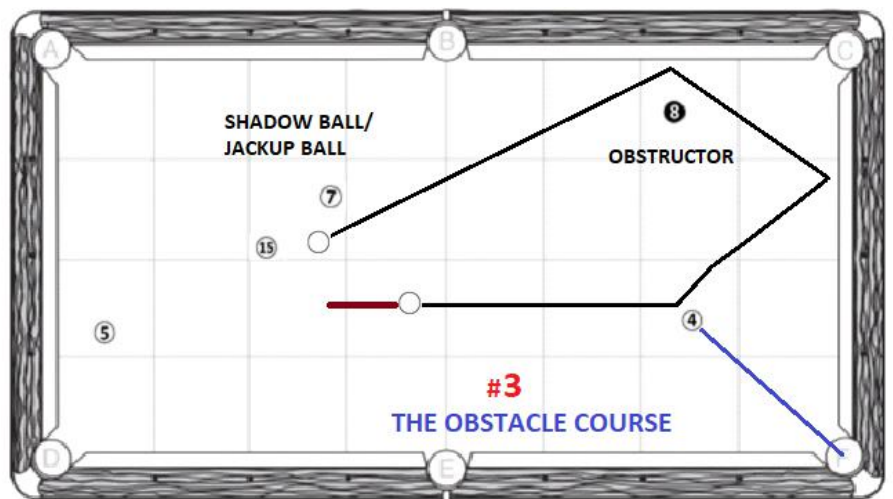
A big goal of the Target Ball exercises is to make each shot a little to a lot different from the shot you just played. This is so unlike the kind of drills that have you playing the same shot over and over till you get it down pat. And, as you well know, in a game you only get one chance to get a shot right before you must move on to the next shot, or to the chair.

So, when doing Target Ball exercises, you will be facing with the unique challenge that each shots presents you with. As you move through a rack, you may need to play a succession of long shots, hangers, thin cuts, stop shots, soft follow shots, power draws, cluster busters – in short, whatever you come across.

Along with the type of shot you are facing, while planning each shot keep in mind that most position plays, especially in the early stages of a rack, are filled with obstacles. These include Shadow Balls, Jackup Balls, balls close to your route, and so many more.

So, as you begin to practice playing Target Ball shots, you may wish to stick with the basic Target Ball position plays as shown in **Diagrams #1** and **#2**. Or, you may wish to create a realistic obstacle course as shown in **Diagram #3**.

As you examine **Diagram #3**, imagine playing this 2-rail route to the 15-ball (the Target Ball) without the obstacles. Getting the direction and speed right on this long distance position play is a formidable task. Now add in the 8-ball, which illustrates a typical troublemaker when playing position.



#3
THE OBSTACLE COURSE

While this shot has a high degree of difficulty, you can up the challenge even more by adding the 7-ball. This ball acts as both a Shadow Ball (see Buzz, Jan. 2023 and Feb. 2026) and as a Jackup Ball (see Buzz, April 2026). When the 7-ball acts as a Shadow Ball, it can be a royal pain, especially if the cue ball stops behind it, leaving you hooked. Furthermore, if the cue ball stops close to the 7-ball on the other side, you may have to jack-up over it when playing the 5-ball.

In sum, adding obstacles like the 8-ball and the 7-ball adds a healthy bit of realism when practicing using a Target Ball. In addition, these balls may force you to take a little more time in the planning phase, making the shot more like those you will encounter in an actual match.

PRACTICING TARGET BALL

The goal when practicing Target Ball exercises is to master a wide variety of position routes while simulating the conditions that you will be facing in actual play. Among the skills that you are out to master are direction control and speed control, which are the primary components of each shot. You will also be seeking to build these skills within the context of a complete process for playing each shot, which includes planning, playing, and learning from each one. (In my upcoming book, *Pool Is The Answer*, I have two big chapters that discuss my process at great length.) When you practice like you play, you will be far better prepared to meet the challenge of playing your best pool when it counts the most.

In *Play Your Best 9&10 Ball* there is a chapter with over 70 position routes. You could begin making an arsenal of position plays that you want to

master first, and then keep adding to them. As you play each one, be sure to alter slightly the position of the cue ball and/or object ball. This forces your brain to consider that nuances of each rep rather than simply trying to copy shots you've played before. For more on this, please see Diagram #4 in the Buzz, July, 2024.

Once you have an arsenal of position plays you are working on, or will be soon, I suggest that you pick out 15 for each session. Number these from 1 to 15. Then, for each rep, pick them at random by using a number generator like this one:

<https://www.random.org/sequences/>

I ran a test for 15 shots and came up with this sequence of shots:

14 - 11 - 9 - 5 - 1 - 13 - 6 - 10 - 3 - 12 - 8 - 2 - 15 - 7 - 4

Imagine practicing by having shots chosen for you at random, just as they might come up in a game. With this approach, you will have to go through the planning phase on each one. And each rep will have that much more meaning to you because you really want to produce a strong result in real

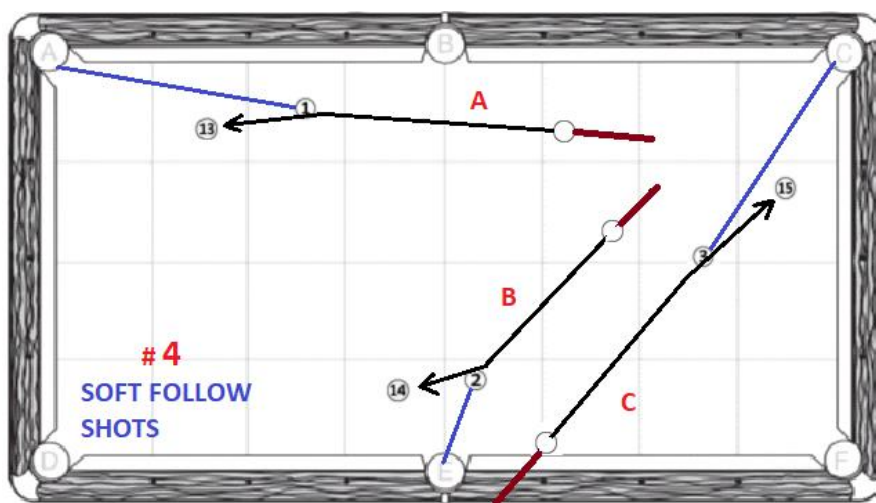
time. This stands in sharp contrast to practicing a string of identical shots where each miss can be so easily discounted and atoned for.

SOFT FOLLOW TARGET BALL

A group of the most valuable and yet overlooked position plays (especially in Straight Pool and 1-Pocket) are soft follow shots. When you include them in your Target Ball exercises, you will be able to refine your speed control, to work on a soft and super smooth delivery – skills that will carry over to other parts of your game. In addition, you will have a chance to score some Target Ball “ringers,” just like in horse-shoes. When playing these, you must, like in other shots, lock in on your position zone and the speed, and you line of aim, then put these elements together as you execute the shot.

Diagram #4 shows three soft follow Target Ball position plays. Again, I suggest that you use the random generator tool shown previously while mixing these up with other shots in your session.

Shot A requires a soft stroke at medium range. This one will test the accu-



racy of your final stroke into contact. And, to hit the 13-ball as squarely as possible, you need to gauge just how far the cue ball will veer to the left after contact on this small angled cut shot. Notice that on these three softly hit shots that the cue ball spends virtually no time traveling down the tangent line after contacting the object ball. It is possible that on this and the following two shots that you will have to cheat the pocket slightly to score a full hit on the Target Ball.

Shot B is about a 20-degree cut into the side pocket. You may need to cheat the pocket, which is not difficult to do with the 2-ball this close to the pocket.

The cue ball is frozen to the rail in Shot C, and the 3-ball is midway between the cue ball and the pocket, which adds measurably to the challenge. Use short WUS and a relatively short final stroke, and do not move a single inch until the cue ball is well on its way. I think you will discover that making the ball and hitting the 15-ball (the Target Ball) is a major challenge – but should you succeed, you deserve to give yourself a round of applause!

TARGET BALL COMPETITIONS

The conditions in which you play each shot of your Target Ball exercises should mimic actual game conditions as closely as possible. This means playing a different shot on each rep, which forces you to go through every step of The Shot Cycle. This includes planning each shot in detail before taking your stance, just like you would in competition.

Another helpful addition to your Target Ball exercises is the taping of your sessions. This enables you to evalu-



THE CONDITIONS IN WHICH YOU PLAY EACH SHOT OF YOUR TARGET BALL EXERCISES SHOULD MIMIC ACTUAL GAME CONDITIONS AS CLOSELY AS POSSIBLE. THIS MEANS PLAYING A DIFFERENT SHOT ON EACH REP, WHICH FORCES YOU TO GO THROUGH EVERY STEP OF THE SHOT CYCLE.



ate your process, including the good things you want to be a part of your game, and items that need to be corrected. These would include your fundamentals, your speed control, and your aiming process.

Competing at Target Ball exercises with a friend can enable you to add to the realism of these shots. You could take turns selecting a shot, just like you might have done when playing H-O-R-S-E in basketball.

I suggest that you flip a coin to see who starts first. Y is for You and F is for friend. Let's say your friend wins the flip, and he or she decides to let you go first. A sequence could follow this order:

SHOT 1: Y, F – SHOT 2: F, Y – SHOT 3: Y, F – SHOT 4: F, Y, Etc.

Following this sequence the first shooter plays one shot. Then from that point forward you each play two shots in succession. This allows you both to play two shots at in suc-

cession, and to alternate who gets to select the shot. On the final shot, the first player (in this example it's You) ends with a single shot.

There are so many variables that one way to grade each set of shots could be on the honor system. This enables you both, when the winner is not so clear-cut, to discuss why one shot was better than the other. Remember, the two main elements are direction and speed control.

The big idea when doing these Target Ball shots is to play higher quality shots, and to learn from each one. This learning process is a collaborative affair as both you and your friend can put in your two cents. By engaging in these evaluations you will be developing a mind for pool.

I encourage you to give Target Ball exercises a try, including both the solo and pairs versions. I would love to hear your comments. My address is:

capellepublishing@gmail.com

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.

Purposeful Practice: How to Get Better Faster

ANTHONY BEELER

Most players practice pool by doing one of two things: they either bang balls around the table with no plan, or they jump straight into playing matches and hope they somehow get better.

The problem is that neither approach gives you the structure needed to improve. Good practice is not just about hitting balls. Good practice is about hitting balls with a purpose.

One of my favorite ways to begin a practice session is very simple: throw all 15 balls out on the table and shoot them in while concentrating on one specific part of the game. The key phrase is **one specific part**. Do not try to fix your stance, stroke, bridge, aiming, speed control, and position play all at the same time. That is too much information for your brain to process. Instead, pick one item and make that the theme of the rack.

For example, suppose you are working on your bridge. Throw all 15 balls out and shoot every shot while focusing

only on building a better bridge. Maybe you are working on a closed bridge. Use that bridge on all 15 shots. Then throw out 15 more balls and work on an open bridge. Then do the same thing with a rail bridge. The balls themselves are not the main point of the drill. The main point is building repetition around a skill that needs to become automatic.

However, there is an important rule I like to follow: **you should never reach shot 21 on anything without switching your practice up**, except for ball-running drills. In other words, do not stand there and shoot the exact same shot 50 or 100 times in a row. At some point, you stop learning and start getting lazy. Your mind checks out. Your body starts going through the motions. Practice must stay fresh enough to keep your brain involved.



Mechanics

The first part of practice should be mechanics. This is where you work on the fundamentals that control everything else. Your stance, bridge distance, alignment, stroke, eye patterns, aiming, and cue delivery all fit into this category. Mechanics are the foundation of your game. If the foundation is weak, everything you build on top of it will be unstable.

Some of the biggest payoff items to practice are bridge distance, stance, aiming, timing, stroke length, and side-spin systems. These are not always the flashiest parts of the game, but they affect nearly every shot you play.

Ball Running

The second part of practice should be ball running. This is where you test whether your mechanics are holding up under more realistic playing conditions. Playing the ghost is a great example. Throw out a rack, take ball in hand after the break, and see if you can run out. Straight pool is another excellent practice game because it teaches cue ball control, pattern play, break balls, and decision-making. Ball running forces you to connect shots together. It is not enough to make one ball. You must plan the next one, and the one after that.

Another ball-running drill I like is very simple. Throw all 15 balls out on the

PURPOSEFUL PRACTICE
Practice with a plan. Improve with purpose.

Throw out all 15 balls and shoot them in while concentrating on **ONE** specific aspect of your game.

- 1 MECHANICS**
 - Bridge Distance
 - Stance
 - Stroke
 - Aiming
 - Sidespin Systems
- 2 BALL RUNNING**
 - Play the Ghost
 - Straight Pool
 - Run Out Drills
 - Long Term Concentration
- 3 SPECIALTY SHOTS**
 - Defense
 - Kicks
 - Jumps
 - Break
 - Combination

15-BALL FOCUS DRILL
Throw out all 15 balls and shoot them in while concentrating on **ONE** specific aspect of your game. 15 more balls. Work on a different aspect. Build repetition. Build skills.

BALL RUNNING CHALLENGE
Throw out all 15 balls. Nothing touching. See how many you can run in a row without missing. Make all 15? Throw out 15 more. Build long-term concentration. Respect every shot.

PRACTICE FROM EASIER TO HARDER
Start simple. Build the foundation. Increase the challenge. Create confidence. Create results.

PURPOSEFUL PRACTICE TODAY. BETTER RESULTS TOMORROW.

table, making sure no balls are touching. Then see how many balls you can make in a row before you miss. Do not worry about playing a formal game. Do not worry about solids and stripes. Just shoot the best shot available and try to keep the run going. If you make all 15, throw out 15 more and keep counting.

This drill is excellent because it builds long-term concentration. Many players can focus for three or four shots, but they lose discipline after that. Their pre-shot routine gets loose. Their cue ball control becomes careless. They take an easy shot for granted. This drill punishes that. If you miss, the run ends. Over time, it teaches you to give every shot the same level of respect, whether it is the first ball or the fifteenth.

Specialty Shots

The third part of practice should be specialty shots. This includes defense, kicks, banks, jumps, the break, combinations, caroms, and other shots that may not come up every rack but can

decide matches when they do. Many players lose because they are weak in these areas. They may shoot straight, but when they get hooked, they panic. They may run balls well, but they cannot play a reliable safety. They may pocket balls, but their break does not give them a fair chance to win.

Another important rule is to practice from easier to harder. Start with something you can do correctly, then gradually increase the challenge. If you are working on draw, begin with short, controlled draw shots. Then increase the distance. If you are working on kicks, start with natural one-rail systems before moving into more complicated routes. If you are working on position

play, begin with simple stop-shot and follow routes before trying advanced three-rail patterns.

Practicing from easier to harder builds confidence and creates correct habits. Practicing only difficult shots often creates frustration and bad mechanics especially when you are learning something new.

Purposeful practice beats long practice. A focused 45-minute session can do more for your game than three hours of careless ball banging. The players who improve the fastest are not always the ones who practice the most. They are the ones who practice the smartest.

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...



It turned out my shift boss, Mike, was right – I was nervous but soon calmed down and after an hour or so, I'd smoothed out. However, I noticed one of the players kept staring at me – openly.

About two or three hours later when I was starting to shuffle the cards for the next hand, Jack ("TreeTop") Strauss told me that he'd finally figured out why I looked so familiar to him. He'd seen me a couple years ago at a pool room in Houston and that I was the first female player he'd ever seen that could play some and who wasn't afraid to bet.

That got the attention of most of the others at the table as pool and poker were like brothers and sisters. Most pool players played a little poker and most poker players played a little pool. A few of the other players at the table started asking me questions between hands such as if I knew certain players like Amarillo Slim, Minnesota Fats or Willie Mosconi.

And so it went...I'd deal to these guys a few nights a week. The only difference was that they didn't tip after each hand like in most poker games. Mike told me to swing by the cage before reporting to work each night to pick up my tip. It was always a black - a hundred dollar chip. Pretty good for 1986!

Although I didn't know them at all when I first started dealing to them, I'd heard of most of them. Some were nice and others were downright hostile. They all played very well except the guy in the four seat. He played

pretty good but he lost every one of the big pots he was involved in. I think they let him win some of the smaller ones to keep him in the game. He probably thought he was a very good player but in reality, he was just not good enough to beat them. Consequently, he was almost always in a bad mood.

After a few weeks of watching him lose thousands almost every night, he lost a particularly huge pot. While I was shuffling for the next hand, he kicked me hard in my left shin. I quickly looked up at him but he had his head down while he played with his chips.

A few nights later, the same thing happened. He lost another big one and kicked me again. I gave Mike the sign

that I wanted to be relieved. He immediately came over and as I was getting up, I whispered to him that he'd probably fire me for what I was about to do but I was going to do it anyway.

He looked at me with alarm but I kept walking – right around the table and straight to the four seat. I leaned over and told him just loud enough for him to hear that if he did it one more time, I was going to come over the table and rip his head off.

I took a break after that and when I sat back down at the table, Stupak wanted to know what I had said to the guy in the four seat. I told him that that was between the player and I and to ask him. Maybe he'd tell you.



Jack Strauss ("TreeTop") - Poker Hall of Famer - mid '80s - Photo courtesy of Gipsy Team



Charlie Brinson & Martha Wilson - 1989 Anniston Open - Anniston, AL - Courtesy of the Wade Crane Collection

Well, I found out later he already had told Stupak while I was gone. Looking to embarrass me, Stupak said the game wasn't going to start until I told him what had been said.

So, I told him – that twice after losing huge hands, the guy had kicked me in the shin – hard. I repeated what I had told him.

Stupak glared at me and asked if I knew who he was and said that I had no right to speak to one of his friends like that.

I figured here it comes - I was going to get fired.

“Yes,” I answered. “I know who you are. You are the owner of this casino and as the owner you shouldn't let anyone – let alone a friend of yours – treat your employee like that.”

Waiting for his response, I stared at him.

You could've heard a pin drop in the poker room. I thought Mike was going to faint. The rest of the table was stunned.

And then he burst out laughing and said, “Dealer, you've got balls! Shuffle the cards!”

He turned to the guy and told him to knock it off.

The next night, I swung by the cage to pick up my envelope and there were TWO blacks in there. And from then on, two blacks were in the envelope after a night of dealing to Stupak's crew.

So, it turned out that dealing at Vegas World had turned into a pretty good deal. I'd figured that after I broke in, I'd move to a different casino. However, I loved it and I was making pretty good money there. Plus, every time I wanted to go play in a WPBA event,

one of the guys on the extra board would cover my shift. I had the best of both worlds.

Soon it was time to go back to Charlotte, NC – one of my favorite cities in the US – to play in the North Carolina Spring Open. It was also one of my favorite events of the year and not just mine, but was a favorite of all the players. Twice a year, spring and fall, we all went to Rob's Roost – a stripper club a few miles out in the country. They'd set up four tight Gandy pool tables and a small set of bleachers.

It was run by a father-son team. Even though it was a pretty rough place, they had several good size bouncers who had been given strict instructions to keep close watch on the players, especially the ladies, while the tournament was going on. We never felt safer.

And there was action galore – the tournament itself was more of a side show. All the players, stakehorses, sweaters and side bettors would converge on the place for almost a week. It was like Christmas twice a year!

There was a Comfort Inn and a Waffle House in the parking lot a couple miles from Rob's Roost at the exit off the interstate and we overtook the



Co-owner Robin Kiker, Wade Crane & Tournament Director Scott Smith - 1986 North Carolina Fall Classic - Rob's Roost - Charlotte, NC - Courtesy of the Wade Crane Collection



Buddy Hall - "The Rifleman" - BCA & One Pocket Hall of Famer - 1986 North Carolina Fall Classic - Rob's Roost - Charlotte, NC - Courtesy of the Wade Crane Collection

I'm telling Buddy I didn't want to play but he wasn't listening. Before I knew it, Buddy had shoved a cue into my hand and whispered, "You're stealing. Don't worry about it. Just play your game."

Stealing. \$200 a game. Shit. I told him not to put me in action.

We started playing and I could see that Buddy was right - I WAS stealing. The problem was that I was so high it was like I was trying to shoot a basketball into those tiny pockets. I was helpless but even so, I was managing to win - it was just taking a lot longer to get the money.

Buddy sidled up to me and drawled, "Girl, you don't have to stall."

Astonished, I stared at him.

"I'm not stalling. I'm trying!"

As time went on, the high wore off and I ended up ten games winner.

We were all pretty happy as we drove back to the room but I chewed him a new one for making me play.

The following day, I came out of my poolside room and saw besties Chris Sigel and Linda Crane in their bikinis and sunning themselves on the other side of the pool. It wasn't even noon yet but they were already

place. It was filled with pool players and the Waffle House stayed busy for the entirety of the tournament.

I had rented a car and when I drove up to the hotel to check in, I saw Buddy Hall and a couple players checking in. I walked in and we started talking while we waited our turn. Buddy got his room first, told me the number and said to swing by after I checked in - there'd be a few others there too.

I finally got my key, unpacked and walked over to Buddy's room. Pool players were hanging out by the pool drinking and laughing and many doors were open - the party was already in progress.

There were about 15-20 people there plus plenty of booze. I've never been much of a drinker - nothing against it - I just don't like the taste of it and don't like the way it makes me feel. There were a couple of joints being passed around the room so I took a couple hits.

A few hours later, most everyone had left - there were only a few of us left. Buddy wanted to take a ride down to where the tournament was being held to see if there was anything going on. I was still pretty high but a couple of us told Buddy that we'd go down there with him.

"Just don't match me up! You know I can't make a ball when I'm stoned!"

He laughed and we all headed to his car.

We pulled up in front of the place but there were only a few cars in the lot. We parked and walked in the doorway - we stood there a minute to let our eyes get accustomed to the dark.

There was a table lit up over by the bar - the rest of the place was dark. I could see a few guys over there and all of a sudden we heard, "Hell, I'll stake that girl to play you some!"

I grabbed Buddy's arm and tried to get him to leave. He laughed and started walking over there. The guys all knew Buddy and were trying to match me up.



Jean Balukas, Mary Kenniston, Kelly Oyama, Ewa Laurance, Vicki Paski, Anne Mayes, Geri Titcomb and Laura Smith - 1986 North Carolina Fall Classic - Rob's Roost - Charlotte, NC - Photo courtesy of Mary Kenniston

sharing a joint and had a couple of beers open.

They tried to wave me over but I said I had to get over to Rob's Roost for the players meeting and Calcutta.

All of a sudden, they burst out laughing and were pointing at someone who I couldn't see. A few seconds later, Buddy's wife, Sherry, came around the corner with her arms full of Waffle House styrofoam boxes.

She hated me and those two knew it. Grinning, they watched her shuffle down the sidewalk while trying to balance all that food.

Now, the sidewalk between the edge of the pool and the rooms wasn't that wide - maybe five feet.

Since I had just left my room, I was facing the pool and the girls. Now Sherry was almost as wide as she was tall. I stepped back closer to the building to

let her pass a little more easily but she was still so big she had to turn sideways. Glaring at me as she began to pass, she cussed me under her breath. I guess she'd heard about the night before. As she got a little too close to me, I put my palm out to create some distance between us.

I don't know what she thought I was going to do but she took a step backwards - and fell straight into the pool. She hit the pool hard - water flew up in the air and splashed all over Chris & Linda! They squealed as the cool water hit them.

Sherri sputtered as she came to the surface trying to grab all the food that had popped out of the boxes. Waffles, eggs, hash browns, sausage all floating on the surface. The girls were laughing so hard they were crying...

I winked at them and laughed all the way to Rob's Roost.

I walked in and Buddy and Leonard Bludworth were just inside the door. Standing slightly behind Buddy, Leonard was grinning at me from ear to ear as Buddy said, "Tell me you didn't just push my wife into the pool."

With a half smile, I told him that I didn't push her - she fell in all by herself.

Laughing so hard, Leonard was crying. Buddy turned to look at him and then at me. He just shook his head as he started to crack a smile.

"Oh, mannnnnn..." he said.

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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FILLER RECLAIMS HIS CROWN

TO BECOME THE FIRST TWO-TIME UK OPEN CHAMPION

Joshua Filler delivered one of the most dominant performances ever seen in a Matchroom Major final, dismantling Poland's Wojciech Szewczyk 13-1 to reclaim the UK Open title and become the first player in history to win the prestigious title twice.

The German star lived up to his nickname "The Killer", producing a ruthless display from start to finish and securing victory in record-breaking fashion to add another chapter to his remarkable legacy.

Reflecting on his historic triumph, Filler said: "Winning any Major title is special, but this one means a lit-

tle bit more. Every year the standard gets higher and the competition gets tougher, so to come through a field like this and play the way I did in the final is something I'm extremely proud of.

"I didn't come here with any complicated game plan. My mindset is always simple — I come to every tournament believing I can win it. This week

I trusted myself, stayed focused and delivered when it mattered most."

Final

Joshua Filler 13 – 1 Wojciech Szewczyk

Despite Szewczyk winning the lag, an early scratch from a failed safety escape handed control to Filler, who im-



Joshua Filler and Emily Frazer

mediately began his charge towards a second UK Open crown.

The German was relentless from the outset, combining a devastating break with flawless position play to race into a commanding 9-0 lead in just 42 minutes. With every opportunity, Filler tightened his grip on the match, leaving his opponent with little room to respond.

Szewczyk was finally presented with a chance in the tenth rack after Filler broke dry. Although the Pole initially failed to capitalise, a rare missed 5-ball from Filler opened the door for him to get on the board and reduce the deficit to 9-1.

Any hopes of a comeback, however, were quickly extinguished. Filler immediately restored control, punishing a missed 2-ball from Szewczyk to move 10-1 ahead before continuing his relentless march towards the finish line. The Polish cueist was handed opportunities in the closing stages but was unable to convert, while Filler remained clinical whenever he returned to the table.

Filler sealed victory in emphatic fashion, producing a swift 2-9 combination on the hill to complete a stunning 13-1 triumph — matching the scoreline from his previous Matchroom Major title victory at the European Open in Sarajevo last year.

Filler added: “There are so many great players on the World Nineball Tour. You look at players like Fedor and Aloysius and you know every match is going to be a battle.

“But I’ve always believed my toughest opponent is myself. If I stay disciplined mentally and trust my game, I know what I’m capable of. Today I managed to do that from the first rack to the last.

“I’ve now played in three UK Open finals and without question that’s the



best I’ve ever performed in a final. Everything came together at the right time.”

Earlier in the day, Filler produced another commanding display in the semi-finals, defeating home favourite Jayson Shaw 11-2. Much like the final, the German established an early lead and never looked back, showcasing the ruthless form that would ultimately carry him to the title.

The victory marks another historic milestone for the former world champion. Having first lifted the UK Open trophy in 2023, Filler now becomes the first player in World Nineball Tour history to win the event twice, further cementing his status as one of the defining players of his generation.

With multiple Matchroom Major titles already to his name, the latest triumph serves as a reminder of why Filler remains one of the most feared competitors in world pool and a constant contender whenever the sport’s biggest trophies are on the line.

The 2026 UK Open Pool Championship, the fifth edition of the prestigious event, took place at the Brentwood Centre from 26–31 May, delivering six days of world-class nine-ball action on the World Nineball Tour. With one of the sport’s most coveted Open ti-

tles at stake, the game’s biggest stars went head-to-head in a thrilling week of drama, upsets, and unforgettable moments.

NEXT MATCHROOM MAJOR

The World Nineball Tour heads back to the United States for the second edition of the Florida Open Pool Championship, returning to the stunning Caribe Royale Resort in Orlando, Florida from 4–9 August. A 256-player field from around the globe will once again battle it out in the Sunshine State, with defending champion Aloysius Yapp looking to retain his crown on the other side of the Atlantic.

NEXT WNT RANKING EVENT

The action continues this week with the return of the Mezz Hill-Hill Estonia Open, taking place from 5–7 June in Tallinn, Estonia. With a \$25,000 prize fund up for grabs, players will be eager to secure valuable ranking points as the races for the Mosconi Cup, Reyes Cup, and now the World Pool Masters intensify.

For all the latest updates, follow Matchroom Pool on Facebook, Instagram, X, TikTok, and YouTube.

FILLERS TAKE THE TITLES IN LUXEMBOURG

IT WAS DOUBLE delight for the Fillers as both Joshua and Pia claimed the PREDATOR Luxembourg Open titles at the GridX complex on Sunday evening.

It was Joshua's 11th Euro Tour crown, while Pia made it championship number four and the second time that they have triumphed simultaneously, following on from Lasko, Slovenia in 2022.

Joshua defeated Wojciech Szewczyk 9-5 for the title, a match that was finely poised at 5-4 in Filler's favour before he got the better of the closing stages. In the women's final, Pia showed huge resilience to come from 4-1 down to triumph 7-5 against Spain's Mayte Ropero who was chasing her maiden Euro Tour title.

Joshua certainly earned his trophy as he battled through a stellar field after a shaky start in his opening match against Poland's Adam Stankiewicz. Improving game-by-game, he took down a string of tough opponents including Daniel Maciol, Mateusz Sniegocki, Miesko Fortunski and then Wiktor Zielinski in the semi-final.

He said, "I feel amazing because I was kind of struggling but from match to match, I was just raising my game and I felt more comfortable on the table. Overcoming all the Polish players, I played like six Polish players, all the top ones and it feels amazing as I had to play the toughest players and I beat them.

"I'm a positive person even when I have those times and you never want to be in that position where you play so bad but I was there and somehow, I won the match even though I missed

so many balls. I keep telling myself 'play the match' and don't think about anything and I went step-by-step but if you're a champion you have to be in the right mindset and not be bothered by any mistakes you do.

"When you're in the final, you're always going to be playing someone who fought his way through and played good as well – otherwise he wouldn't be in the Euro Tour final. For me it doesn't matter who I play – I always go with the same mindset and if I play my game, I know it's always going to be a tough one for my opponent.

"When I won my tenth one I spoke about Ralf Souquet's record but there's still I think 12 titles missing. With all respect, you see how tough it is to win a Euro Tour and Ralf winning

so many – it's incredible. I don't know if I'll ever get there but I'll just have fun with the next ones and try to win as many as possible!" he added.

In the Predator Luxembourg Women's Open Germany's Pia Filler showed why she is the most improved player in the women's game as she overcame another losing position to win against the odds. Having lost her opening game of the championship to Lena Primus, she fought through the one-loss side beating a slew of class players and faced Ina Kaplan in the semi-final. Again, trailing 4-2, she picked it up and won 7-6 to make the final.

Commented Pia, "I mean today the semi-finals and final I probably played my worst to be honest but I never



and I want to improve every single day.”

The Predator Euro Tour returns from 25-28 June at its regular summer stop in St Johann im Pongau in the Austrian Alps. The Euro Tour is preceded by a full programme of Predator Pro Billiard Series resorts in the same venue.

Tables 1 and 2 at all Predator Euro Tour events are streamed throughout on YouTube, via the Pro Billiard TV channel – <https://www.youtube.com/@ProBilliardTV>

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Pia Filler

give up and I believed in myself and I'm very proud to have another Euro Tour title. The game is not over until the last ball goes down and I know I'd already won a Euro Tour before, she'd not so mentally I thought I was in a better position.

“But you've got to keep fighting and capitalise on any chances you possibly get and I did. I try to get as good as I possibly can and try and get a little bit better, and every single day I'm working hard with Josh, luckily. You never know how far you can go

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 The advertisement features a portrait of Phil Capelle on the left. To the right, a collection of his instructional books is displayed. The books include titles such as 'PLAY YOUR BEST 9 & 10 BALL', 'CAPELLE'S PRACTICING POOL', 'Six Words to Pool Greatness', 'CAPELLE'S COLUMNS', 'PLAY YOUR BEST STRAIGHT POOL', 'PLAY YOUR BEST EIGHT BALL', 'CAPELLE on 9-Ball Archer vs. Reyes', 'A MIND FOR POOL', 'PLAY YOUR BEST POOL', and 'MINE MASSEY'S WORLD OF TRICK SHOTS'. The Accu-Stats Video Productions logo is in the bottom left corner.

LUNDA, RIVAS & BUSTAMANTE CONQUER BUFFALO'S

It's the tournament that every one pocket aficionado looks forward to all year long – the big one!

Owner James Leone (“Buffalo”), his General Manager Steve Tesvich (“Bullseye”) and their crew welcomed players and fans from all over the world to the Eleventh Annual Buffalo's Pro Classic.

With \$31,000 added to three events and over a half million dollars in the three players auctions, it's a magnet to some of the best players on the planet.

BCA and One Pocket Hall of Famers Efrén Reyes and Francisco Bustaman-

te plus One Pocket Hall of Famer Jeremy Jones were there as well as Buffalo's House Pro Tony Chohan – winner of three Buffalo's Pro One Pocket titles and two runner-up appearances.

Reigning Beyond Billiards Making It In America Tour (MIA) champ Justin Hall, Roberto Gomez, the current MIA Beasley Open One Pocket champ and fresh off his victory at the MIA Bayou State One Pocket Championship, Fedor Gorst were also there.

In addition were 2023 Buffalo's Pro One Pocket and 2025 US Open One Pocket champ Evan Lunda, two-time Derby City Classic One Pocket titlist Billy Thorpe as well as the 2025 USA National Men's 10-Ball champ, Lukas Fracasso-Verner.

Current Canadian 8, 9 and 10 Ball champ plus US Open Bank Pool and Ten-Ball champ, John Morra, was spotted in addition to Spain's Ivan Belmonte, Estonia's Mark Mägi and from the Netherlands, Alex Lely, Marco Teutshcher and Sanne Krom.

This past Tuesday night and after the players auction and meeting, the festivities began with the \$1,000 added One Ball One Pocket Championship.

Forty two players paid the \$200 entry fee to play in this single elimination race to four tournament. After several hours of play, the final four were Francisco Bustamante versus Alex Lely and Evan Lunda versus the other Buffalo's House Pro Sergio Rivas.

Lunda defeated Rivas 4-2 and Bustamante edged out Lely 4-3. The final match saw Bustamante take no prisoners as he claimed the title with a 4-0 victory over Lunda.

For an added treat, Fedor Gorst and Francisco Bustamante played a 125



Evan Lunda and Fedor Gorst

point exhibition match of K-Ball – the game invented by Danny Kuykendall, a solid player in his own right and former owner of Danny K's in Orange, CA. It was first introduced this past January at the Derby City Classic with Shane Van Boening and Roberto Gomez playing a 200 point match.

K-Ball is basically fifteen ball rotation but scored like straight pool – each ball is counted as one point. It's all offense – a safety is penalized by fifteen points.

K-Ball Rules

- All 15 balls are racked, stripes and solids separated like in 8 ball, one in front, two and three balls on corners.
- Balls broken hard, with a total of three balls crossing the head string or being pocketed to indicate a legal break.
- If the player makes a ball on the break, he or she has cue ball in hand anywhere on the table. If a ball is not made on the break, the opposing player has cbih.
- After each miss, the opponent has cue ball in hand. Safety play is not allowed.
- After all balls on the table are pocketed, balls are racked and the player pocketing the final ball breaks the balls, continuing the run.
- All balls are shot in rotation, and every pocket is called. Each ball pocketed counts one point, and a certain number of points is played to., for instance a 100 or 150, or whatever predetermined number.

The match was close with Fedor taking the match 125-113 with Danny doing commentary. Danny said that he'd post the full match on his Facebook page soon.

It was a packed house on Wednesday evening as the players auction for the main event, the \$20,000 added Buffalo's Pro Classic One Pocket, began.

Thirty three players joined the fray paying the \$2,000 entry fee. This double elimination event featured races to five on both sides.

Since they had to use a 64 man bracket, Josh Roberts and Justin Hall were the only two players who didn't receive a first round bye. Hall won their match 5-3 and then sent Tony Chohan west by the same score of 5-3. He then ran into Mark Mägi who sent him packing 5-3 after a first round bye and the defeat of John Morra 5-2.

After defeating Hall, Mägi went on to beat Roberto Gomez – also 5-3 – before losing to Evan Lunda 5-3.

Lunda's path to the final four included a first round bye and followed that with victories over Redgie Cutler 5-3, Devin Poteet 5-0 and Shane Wolford 5-4 before emerging from the final four on the winners side over Mägi.

In the lower portion of the chart, it was Francisco Bustamante and Fedor Gorst making their way through the field. Bustamante's path included a first round bye followed by wins over Marco Teutscher 5-3 and Alex Lely 5-3.

After his first round bye, Fedor Gorst defeated Josh O'Neal 5-2 and Jon Demet 5-0.

Bustamante and Gorst met in the fourth round and it was intense! Neck and neck the entire match, Bustamante made a phenomenal back cut on a spot shot to tie it up at four apiece. They duked it out but it was Gorst who prevailed and moved into the winner's side final four.

Moving through the bracket were Ivan Belmonte and Roland Garcia. Belmonte had a first round bye and wins over both Ike Runnels and Efred Reyes – both 5-4 before losing to Roland Garcia 5-1.

Garcia had a first round bye and defeated both Brandon Shuff and Chip Compton 5-3 before beating Belmonte and moving into the other slot of the winners side final four.

Round Five saw Lunda versus Mägi and Gorst versus Garcia. Moving into the hot seat match were Lunda after a 5-3 match and Gorst after surviving a 5-4 match. Garcia and Mägi headed to the one loss side.

In the hot seat match, it was Lunda who took his place in the finals after a 5-2 match. Gorst also headed west to await an opponent.

After his third round loss, Justin Hall went to work. Down went Mike DeLawder 5-0, Jeremy Jones 5-4, Ivan Belmonte 5-1, Sky Woodward 5-2 and avenged his loss to Mark Mägi 5-3.



Francisco Bustamante and Evan Lunda

After losing to Justin Hall in the second round, Tony Chohan put his head down and went through John Morra 5-2, Alex Lely 5-1, Corey Deuel 5-3, Shane Wolford 5-2, Chip Compton 5-4 and Roland Garcia 5-1.

Waiting for Chohan was Hall and what a battle it was! Hall pulled ahead 3-1 but Chohan rallied to tie it up. Hall was first on the hill but Chohan didn't go down easily. He tied it four each. The final game was filled with great safeties and shots by both but it was Hall who sunk the final bank.

Chohan finished in fourth place and Hall now faced Gorst for the other finals slot. Gorst easily defeated Hall 5-1 and moved into the finals leaving Hall in third place.

Before the finals on Sunday afternoon, Tony Chohan was inducted into the One Pocket Hall of Fame. Presented by attorney Joe Long, a longtime supporter of one pocket, he spoke about

watching Tony come up through the ranks and called the legendary Billy Incardona up to speak about their longtime friend. A One Pocket Hall of Famer himself, Billy said he knew and played them all and called Tony the greatest American player he's ever seen. One Pocket Hall of Famer Francisco Bustamante also stepped up to offer his congratulations. Joe then called Tony up to become the latest inductee into the One Pocket Hall of Fame after which a subdued but truly elated Tony Chohan graciously accepted the honor. Congratulations to Tony – well deserved!

Since this was true double elimination, Fedor Gorst would have to beat Evan Lunda both sets to claim the title. With tens of thousands of dollars on the line, the players put their heads down and played their hearts out.

Lunda won the lag and the first game and then Gorst won the next two to take the lead making it 2-1. Now Gorst's break, he uncharacteristically missed a cross corner bank and sold out. Lunda made four from there and hung one. From there, however, he maintained the lead and won the game 8-3.

Tied at 2-2, you could've heard a pin drop in the arena. Game Five was filled with intentional fouls, safeties, kicks and banks. With both players owing multiple balls, Gorst finally left an opening for Lunda to escape. He ran nine from there.

Score 5 to -2. After Lunda getting a bad roll, Gorst fired in a bank and ran a couple more – score 5-1. A few shots later, Fedor ran four more & left one in his hole – score tied at five each. Lunda made one and kicked the ball out of Gorst's pocket taking the lead 6-5. Gorst made an incredible bank, got perfect posi-

tion and ran the remaining two balls to steal the game and take the lead in the match 3-2.

Game Six was a quick one with Gorst taking the win and putting him on the hill 4-2.

Game Seven saw Lunda capture a 6-1 lead. Gorst made a slight comeback to get to four but Lunda ended it all as he fired in a fantastic below the side pocket shot and banked his case ball to take it. Score was now 4-3.

In what would turn out to be the last game of the set, Lunda pocketed two balls and then both players vied for a shot. Gorst got the first look and made three behind it. Back and forth it went with both players moving and taking intentional fouls. Stuck at six and then seven, Lunda had several opportunities to win the game but failed. Gorst pocketed several great shots and won the game forcing a second set.

After a short break, the second set of the finals began. Gorst won the lag and Lunda drew first blood by dropping one. Gorst answered with four of his own and froze Lunda behind a ball. Lunda later caught an opening and pocketed a few more to take the lead 6-5. He then missed but left the ball in his hole which Lunda pocketed – now 7-5. Gorst then made a long cross table bank to take the first game.

In Game Two, Lunda broke but Gorst had the first opening – he made two plus one for Lunda. After jockeying back and forth, Gorst fouled and left Lunda with a bank. He made it and hung the next one in the jaws leaving Gorst with an open table. Back and forth it went until it was tied at six apiece. Lunda reached the hill first and left game ball in his hole. Gorst pocketed the ball and jumped the table – score 7-5. Many shots and moves later, both players were on the hill. After numerous shots at their pockets, Lunda finally claimed Game Two.



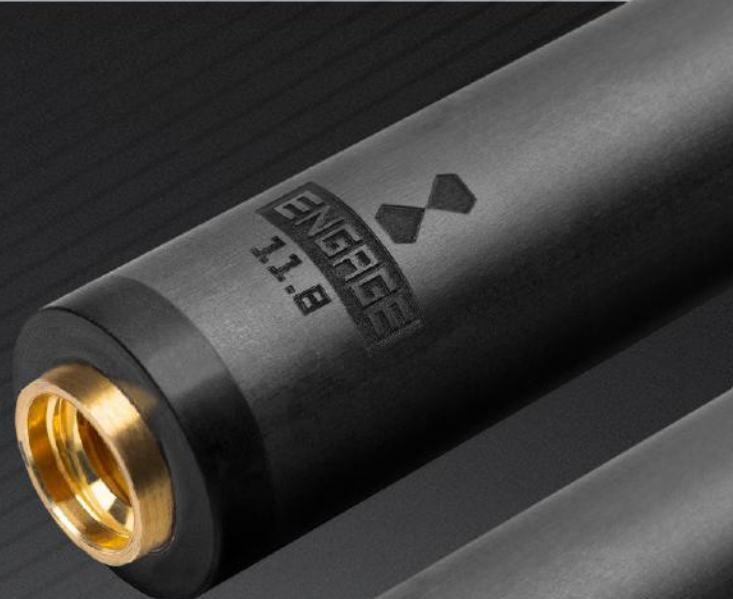
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Buffalo's Pro Classic

Game Three saw Lunda take a six ball lead but then came Gorst. He pocketed four with enough free to win the game but missed – now 6-4. A couple shots later, Lunda hung a ball in his pocket and watched Gorst run out to win the game 8-6 and take the lead 2-1.

Lunda broke in Game Four but poorly with only three balls leaving the stack. Gorst drew first blood by pocketing a ball followed by a safety. Tied at three each, fatigue was setting in as three unforced errors were made by both, however, Lunda still managed to make a couple to take a 5-2 lead.

After several shots by both, Gorst scratched leaving Lunda with a three and out. Score was tied at two apiece.

Game Five Gorst pocketed the first four balls and then played safe. He then made quick work of the rest after a mistake by Lunda to take the game and the lead – 3-2.

Game Six was all Lunda as he ran eight and out to tie it up.

Race to two for it all!

Gorst then made short work of Game Eight and for the second time, was on the hill first.

With an opening shot, Gorst saw a dead ball in the stack and was poised to run out the case game and abruptly stood up from the shot and took a break.

Back from his break, Gorst shot into the stack but not hard enough – the ball hung in the hole leaving Lunda the opportunity to make several balls. He pocketed one but over hit his position. He was forced to pocket Gorst's ball before leaving the table.

Both players were fighting hard – Lunda to tie it up with a chance to win his second Buffalo Pro Classic title and Gorst trying to claim his first.

They scratched and clawed to 6-2 Lunda. With finally a shot to close out the game and tie it up at four apiece, Lunda calmly shot them in.

Hard to believe the tournament came down to one game for it all!

Gorst broke but Lunda was the first to score and extended his lead to 4-0. Gorst finally looked at a bank, shot it but it ran out of gas and sat in his pocket. Gorst tapped the ball in making it 4-1. A few shots later, Lunda had an open shot to run out the match for the title. He cut one in, pocketed two more and then banked the winning ball for his second Buffalo's Pro Classic One Pocket title!

What a match! Throughout both matches, nerves got them both as they came with phenomenal shots and missed makeable balls but this one was finally in the books!

Congratulations to Evan! Fantastic tournament, Fedor!

While the Pro One Pocket Classic was winding down, the \$10,000 added Open 9-Ball was just getting started. 149 players paid a \$100 entry fee and was played on seven foot Diamonds. Races were to 7/7 with alternate breaks. The format was double elimination until down to the final sixteen. From there, it was single elimination with races to nine.

Some familiar names included defending champ Chris Reinhold, Corey Deuel, Shane McMinn, John Macias, Mitch Ellerman, Joey Aguzin, Devin Poteet, Johnathan Pinegar (“Hennessee”), Chase Stumfoll, Ike Runnels, Mike Jones, Scotty Boggs, Carl Honey, Donny Branson, Emily Sumrall, Louis DeMarco, Manny Perez, Greg Hogue, Ashley Benoit, Brian Parks and Guama Sanchez.

After a players auction and meeting, play began and after many hours of play, the field was whittled down to



the sixteen player single elimination round. Races were to nine from there.

The sixteen players were John Morra, Jeremy Jones, Devin Poteet, Marco Teutscher, Matthew Wiseley, Francisco Bustamante, Josh Roberts, Dallas Broussard, Bobby Emmons, Sergio Rivas, Shane McMinn, John Macias, Chris Reinhold, Billy Thorpe, Brandon Shuff and Sky Woodward.

Played down to the final four were two old schoolers Francisco Bustamante versus Jeremy Jones and two young guns – defending champ Chris Reinhold and Buffalo's House Pro Sergio Rivas.

After winning their matches, Bustamante and Rivas moved into the final race to nine. Rivas shot out to a 5-0 lead on his way to the title. Bustamante finally got on the board making it 6-1, won a few more but still trailed 8-4.

Rivas closed out the match 9-4 to take the title. Congratulations to Sergio! Great tournament, Francisco!

PoolActionTV.com thanked James Leone (“Buffalo”) and his staff for going the extra mile to show players and fans the Big Easy spirit.

And that was it! Another fantastic event in the books! Can't wait until next year!

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MENARD, FROM LOSS SIDE, DEFENDS HER WPBA SIGNATURE SERIES TITLE AT BORDERLINE BRUNSWICK ARENA

7-year-old Ella Troiano (Ella T) makes her WPBA debut

St. Philippe, Quebec's Veronique Menard returned to Janet Atwell's Borderline Brunswick Arena in Bristol, TN this past weekend (Apr. 30-May 3) and successfully defended her WPBA Signature Series title that she earned at last year's, first-ever Brunswick WPBA SemiPro event at the same location. As we reported last year, the WPBA's addition of a SemiPro event to its calendar was an idea brought to its Board of Directors by Atwell in 2024 and initiated lengthy discussions regarding where the FargoRate 'line' would be drawn, regarding which WPBA members, at what FargoRates, would be allowed to compete in a SemiPro event. Various rates were discussed until the '650' line was approved and utilized last May.

"The WPBA's \$25k-added (or more) events meant that the top-rated women (nationally and internationally) were filling the 64-player spots," said former WPBA Tour Director Jerry Stuckart in last year's report, "and the lower-ranked players were not getting invited to compete."

"That was what tipped the scales with the Board of Directors to initiate the SemiPro events," he added.

"(The Board of Directors) has definitely seen the value of the SemiPro events," said Atwell, noting that its first 2025 qualifying competitor in the Series was Rachel Wallace, who finished third behind Menard's capture of the Series' debut title and run-

ner-up, Ashley Benoit (both of whom were already qualified at the time). Wallace consequently competed in the WPBA Raxx Mezz Olhausen CPBA Invitational about two months ago, finishing (along with Atwell herself) in the cash-payout tie for 17th.

This year, Wallace, fresh off her victory at the SBE Women's Amateur Championship last month (her second; she won in 2024 as well) went head-to-head against Menard in the hot seat match and final, winning the former





and ending as runner-up to Menard in the final. She was, once again, awarded a qualifying spot in a future WPBA event, to be determined by the WPBA, based on entrant-numbers as they develop for upcoming events.

Last year's event drew 89 entrants. There were a number of same-weekend conflicting events, including, arguably most significantly, the APA's National Championships, that impacted this year's Pechauer WPBA Signature Series event #2, which drew only 47 entrants. One of whom, it should be noted, was Atwell herself, who finished in the tie for 9th/12th at the Series inaugural event last year and moved up considerably to 4th this year, thanks, in part, to some of the 'perks' of competing in one's (in this case, literally) 'home room'; familiarity with the tables and any unique qualities they might possess, along with the good 'vibes' of family, friends and supportive spectators. On the debit side of that 'home room' ledger were her duties as owner of the room, and her job as the event's actual tour director, and the fact that leading up to the event and during it, she had little, if any, spare time to practice.

"I played really solid," she'd tell us on Monday. "I was hoping to do well, but between the running around, and the hosting and being the (actual) tour director..."

One more item, before we move on to the event narrative itself – the somewhat professional debut (as differentiated from appearances she's already made at other professional events, demonstrating her skills) of NH's 7-year-old Ella Troiano, already with a sponsor (J. Pechauer Custom Cues) and pool nickname, Ella T. If she'd done any serious advancement in the bracket, this story might have started with her, but it wasn't expected and didn't come to pass. She went two-and-out. It's amusing to speculate how the assembled competitors and spectators might have changed their tune from "How cute!" to "Uh, oh!" if the grammar school student, with her step-stool to gain enough height to reach up over the table, had started making some advancement 'noise.'



We'll boldly predict that it won't be long before such potential advancement becomes a reality, because in addition to already understanding a lot about the game itself, combined with her possession of more than just a few skill basics, she absolutely loves climbing that little stool, lining up a shot and putting those little round balls into their designated pockets. She'll never want for fan support.

In the straight, double-elimination bracket for the event, both Menard and Walters were awarded byes in the opening round and set out on a four-match trip to the hot seat match. Walters opened with a confidence-boosting shutout over Anna Marks and then faced the two Callado sisters, back-to-back, downing and defeating the first (Emilyn) 7-1 and drawing the second (Eleanor) in one of the winners' side semifinals. Menard got by Carol Clark (1), Kim Pierce (3) and survived a double-hill match versus Kindra Prestegard to draw her hostess and friend, Atwell, in the other winners' side semifinal.

Menard and Atwell came within a game of double hill, but it was Menard who advanced to the hot seat match 7-5. Walters joined her after sending Eleanor Callado to the loss side's 5th/6th matches 7-4. Among many potential outcomes that might have been considered by spectators or the players themselves, as Menard and Walters squared off to battle for the hot seat, the way it turned out was likely not among them. Walters gave up just a single rack to Menard and claimed the 'seat.'

On arrival to the loss side, Atwell and Eleanor Callado drew Emilyn Callado and Ashley Benoit, respectively,

setting up a potential sister battle in the quarterfinals. Emilyn had followed her loss to Walters by eliminating Amy Theriault 6-2 and then shutting out Kia Bennett. Benoit had followed her loss to Atwell with victories over Tracy Hardie 6-2 and Amy Beauchamp 6-4.

Eleanor did her part in setting up for a match against her sister by downing Benoit 6-4. Atwell, though, defeated sister Emilyn 6-1.

In one of those 'spirited,' almost-double-hill battles, Callado downed Atwell 6-4 and advanced to face Menard in the semifinals. Menard earned her second shot versus Walters with a 6-3 victory over Callado.

Somewhat like the hot seat match, the Pechauer WPBA Signature Series' Stop #2's final was not something likely to have been predicted. Walters had won 87% of the games she played to win the hot seat match 7-1. Menard

won 77% of the final's 13 games, capturing her second straight Signature Series title 10-3.

A \$1,000-added Second Chance event, which drew 23 entrants, was won by Christy Norris, who went undefeated through the single-elimination bracket, downing Jessie Sexton in the final 5-1. Tracy Cantrell and Serena Copeland shared semifinal honors.

WPBA representatives thanked Atwell and her staff for their hospitality and Atwell herself for her tour direction of the event. Atwell thanked the WPBA for adding the Signature Series to their events and offered congratulations to Walters for the win and earning her second 'qualification' to an upcoming WPBA event. She, too, thanked her Borderline Brunswick Arena staff and volunteers, as well, and added a huge 'thank you' to Team Pechauer, without whom, she stated in a FB post, the event "couldn't have been done." She

also made note of MADE OF WOOD, who crafted the event's trophies. In expressing her appreciation of the competitors who joined her in the event and "made this so special," she noted that she "makes new friends at every event, and (that she's) watching new stars rise and become recognized because of what we're building at Borderline."

"The future of women's pool is strong," she wrote, "and it was on full display here at Borderline Billiards. There are some incredible players coming up and opportunities like this will help them find that stepping stone to the Pro arena."

The next stop on the WPBA calendar, scheduled for the weekend of June 4-7, will be its annual Soaring Eagle Masters. The \$40,000-added event will be hosted by the Soaring Eagle Casino and Resort in Mt. Pleasant, MI.

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GORST & MORRA

PUT ON A CLINIC AT THE BAYOU STATE CLASSIC

Emerald Billiards in New Iberia, LA was the place to be the last few days. Owner Zack Louviere and General Manager, Tommy Terrebonne, welcomed players and fans for their Fourth Annual Bayou State Classic.

This year's event featured an added \$17,500 to two divisions - the Making It In America Tour One Pocket and the Bar Table 9 Ball championships.

Special sponsors of this event were attorney Joseph J. Long, Monster Energy drink and PoolActionTV.com.

This was the last tournament remaining to build points - the points leader for the season will receive a \$4,000 package including entry in Buffalo's Pro Classic plus a room and travel allowance.

The entry fees for this event were modified according to each player's

FargoRate and known ability - \$450 for 740 and over, \$300 for 620-739 and \$150 for 619 and below. Races were 4/3 with one extended race to five in the finals.

Players received 1,000 points for attending plus ten points for every dollar earned. All winners side matches



John Morra

received cash plus 25% of the field received additional payouts.

Roaming the room was BCA and One Pocket Hall of Famer Francisco Bustamante, reigning Texas Open One Pocket and US Open Eight Ball titlist Fedor Gorst, 2024 Buffalo's Pro Classic champ Roberto Gomez and the 2024 Big Tyme Classic One Pocket champ and Buffalo's House Pro Tony Chohan.

Justin Hall, fresh off taking down the MIA Beyond Billiards One Pocket event in Davie, FL, was joined by 2026 US Open Bank Pool and US Open Ten Ball champ John Morra. Current Derby City Classic Banks Ring Game champ Devin Poteet, John Wayne Pro Open winner Billy Thorpe, this year's Music City Open titlist Roland Garcia and one pocket specialists Josh Roberts and Chip Compton were also spotted.

The \$12,500 added MIA One Pocket Championship began on Tuesday evening with twenty players, a players auction and meeting.

After several rounds of play, Fedor Gorst, Justin Hall, Roberto Gomez and John Morra reached the final four on the winners side.

Gorst had blitzed Cory Jaap, Stephan Cavanaugh and Billy Thorpe – all 4-0 on his way to the final four on the winners side. He then played Hall who received a first round bye and then defeated Tony Chohan and Ken Nguyen by the same 4-0 scores. Gorst secured his slot in the hot seat match after a 4-1 win over Hall.

After his first round bye, Morra defeated Francisco Bustamante 4-1 and Devin Poteet 4-2. Gomez and Morra fought it out to get to the hot seat – Morra advanced 4-2.

On the west side of the chart, Roland Garcia was eliminating one player after another – down went Chris Facundus 3-0, Billy Thorpe 3-2 and Francisco Bustamante 3-1 before facing Roberto Gomez.



After being bounced to the one loss side in the third round, Josh Roberts knocked out Jaden Acuna and Tony Chohan – both 3-0 before facing Justin Hall. He knocked out Hall 3-1 but Gomez ended his streak by the same score. Roberts finished in fourth place.

Gomez cooled his heels while waiting for the results of the hot seat match. It was Morra who won the match 4-2 and sent Gorst over to the waiting Gomez.

These two champs fought it out tooth and nail but when the smoke cleared, it was Gorst who prevailed 3-2 leaving Gomez in third place.

The finals were one extended race to five. They flipped a coin, Morra won the break and won the first game. Gorst answered by winning the next four games putting him on the hill – score 4-1.

Morra then won the next game – now 4-2 but Gorst claimed the next game and the title.

After the tournament was over, it was announced that Roberto Gomez was the Making It In America One Pocket tour points leader. He was awarded a free entry into the season finale –

the Buffalo Pro Classic One Pocket Championship at Buffalo's Billiard plus a \$1,000 room credit and a \$500 travel credit. Josh Roberts was the runner-up and received a \$500 travel allowance. Congratulations to both players!

Play began in the \$5,000 added Bar Table 9 Ball Championship on Friday evening after the players auction and meeting. 117 players paid their \$100 entry fees to compete in this double elimination event. The format was races to 7/7 and alternate breaks. The final match would be one extended race to nine.

To no one's surprise, Fedor Gorst mowed down his opponents on his way to the final four on the winners side. His opening match was a tough one but he blew through Roberto Gomez 7-2. He followed that with wins over Matthew Wisely 7-0 and Anthony Bamugo 7-2. Things got tougher the next match but he beat Francisco Bustamante 7-4 and survived a close one against Devin Poteet 7-6.

The always tough Roland Garcia tore through Richie Cormier 7-3 and Jesus Arriaga 7-6, Josh Roberts (7-6), Steve Lenz 7-2 and Stevie McClinton 7-3.

Bayou State Classic

In the lower portion of the bracket, it was John Morra who survived a close one against Cody Jaap 7-6. He went on with wins over Thomas Haas 7-4, Mike Luster 7-2, Brennan Oubre 7-1 and Billy Thorpe 7-4.

Also sending his opponents to the one loss side was Jeff Phillips. After receiving a first round bye, sent packing were Fat Cat Carlos 7-3, Jimmy Randolph 7-4, Victor Perez also 7-4 and Billy Sanders 7-5.

Into the final four on the winners side and vying for the hot seat match were Garcia vs. Gorst and Morra vs. Phillips. Garcia won his match 7-3 and Morra won his 7-3. Both advanced to the hot seat match.

The hot seat match was all Morra as he won easily over Garcia – score 7-2. He locked up his seat in the finals as Garcia headed west.

After a third round loss, Justin Hall was a man on a mission. Down went Bryan Landry 7-3, Gustavo Flores 7-1, Brennan Oubre 7-1, Josh Roberts 7-5, Devin Poteet, Thomas Haas 7-4 and Jeff Phillips 7-3.

Hall was finally knocked out by Fedor Gorst 7-3 finishing in a well-deserved fourth place finish.

Gorst then exacted his revenge against Garcia – score 7-3. He advanced to the finals leaving Garcia in third place.

As previously mentioned, the finals were one extended race to nine and just like in the one pocket championship, it was Morra and Gorst. It was neck and neck all the way – 5-5, 6-6, 7-7 and it was Morra who reached the hill first.

All the pressure was on Gorst as it was his break. He broke the balls, made a couple and was left with a back cut

on the two with tough position on the three – and he missed!

Morra jumped out of his seat and went to the table with a nice layout – and he missed too!

Back at the table, Gorst runs the balls to a 6-9 combination, makes it and tied it up!

One game for it all!

It was the case game – Morra's broke and everyone held their breath as they watched the cue ball headed to the side pocket for a scratch. It didn't fall but was deep in the jaws. He was left with a cross-table straight in on the two and made it!

Taking a deep breath, he pocketed the rest of the balls for the game, match and title.

Congratulations to both John Morra and Fedor Gorst for becoming this year's Bayou State Classic champions!

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DUARTE

COMES FROM INITIAL LOSS-SIDE TO WIN 13TH GEORGE 'GINKY' SANSOUCI MEMORIAL

The George 'Ginky' Sansouci Memorial began, back in 2011, at NYC's Amsterdam Billiards, as more or less of a New York, annual Celebration of Life for its namesake.

Prior to his death, in March that year, 'Ginky' had become a prominent, well-liked and respected member of the NYC and nationwide pool community. 'Fireball' Mike Dechaine defeated Dennis Hatch in the final of the first, somewhat hastily-arranged, 'proof of concept'

event, which quickly became known as just 'The Ginky.' In its second year, it was organized and run by a collaboration between three local pool tours; The Tri-State Tour, Tony Robles' Predator Pro Am Tour and the Mezz ProAm Tour). It became a double event, with a Pro and Amateur division. At the

time, with 48 entrants in its Pro event and 128 in its Amateur division, the 2nd Annual 'Ginky' became the largest New York City pool tournament, ever.

That second year featured two iconic, Pro division matches between two of



Edward Duarte

the sport's more colorful characters at the time; Earl 'The Pearl' Strickland and the event's defending champion, Dechaine, who grabbed the hot seat over Strickland 8-4. Strickland and Warren Kiamco battled to double hill in the semifinal and it was Kiamco, who took the first shot at the 9-ball, lined up for him, straight as an arrow shaft. The 9-ball dropped, but the cue ball followed it into the hole. The final was nowhere near as dramatic. Up 7-5, Strickland chalked up four more, extending the race to 13, and then added two to finish things.

By 2013, the 'Ginky' had migrated to Steinway Billiards in Astoria (Queens), where it remained for nearly 10 years. Jayson Shaw won it three times, including 2014 when he defeated Karen Corr in the final. Local player, Zion Zvi, won it twice; once, in 2013, defeating the late Mika Immonen in the final. In 2019, Greece's Alex Kazakis defeated Jayson Shaw in the final. There's a 'blank' in the 2018 history of the event, and after two years in the COVID era ('20, '21), during which it wasn't held, there was another 'blank' in 2022.

By 2023, as it migrated to Raxx Billiards on Long Island, it had become a single ProAm event, won by Lukas Fracasso-Verner, who had won an earlier Amateur side of 'The Ginky.' There's a third 'blank' in the 2024 event, and last year (by then, more of an amateur event), it was won by Dylan Spohr.

Which brings us to the 2026 edition of the Ginky Memorial (it's 13th, absent the 'blanks' and the COVID years), a \$5,000-added Open event, that drew 76 entrants to its continuing home



Lidio Suazo

on Long Island at Raxx Billiards. After a double-elimination Stage 1 that reduced the field to a Final 16 (eight from each side of the bracket), four rounds of single-elimination eventually crowned the 'Ginky's' 2026 champion, Eduardo Duarte, who'd lost a Stage 1 match to Robert Calton, and went undefeated the rest of the way, defeating two on Stage 1's loss side to join the Final 16 and the four he needed to claim the title.

Half of the Final 16 that advanced to single-elimination play were the undefeated competitors who would have engaged in a winners' side quarterfinal of Stage 1's double-elimination bracket. It was a blend of old and new members of the NYC-area pool community; eventual runner-up Lidio Suazo, Tony Liang, Basdeo Sookhai,

Robert Calton, Erick Edgardo Garcia Molina, Max Watanabe, Jaydev Zaveri and Sherwin Robinson.

The eight competitors who advanced to the Final 16 from the loss side were evenly split, between those who'd won only a single match on the loss side of the double-elimination bracket and those who'd won more than that. Leading the pack of those who'd had to win more than a single, loss-side match was Cesar Turios, who'd lost his opening, winners' side match, double hill, to Rajkumar Persaud and won five on the loss side. He'd survived the last of the five by winning a double-hill battle versus Nadkisshare Lall. Kevin Shin won three on the loss side before a forfeit leapfrogged him into the Final 16. Duc Lam and Harry Artinian had each won three on the loss side.

The four who'd defeated just one opponent on the loss side were: Duarte 10-7 over Keith Jawahir, Eddie Pacumio 7-5 over Lee Wang, Demarco Tran 7-2 over Kyle Leung, and Mikhail Kim 8-3 over Armando Baquero.

“ EDUARDO DUARTE COMPLETED HIS SINGLE-LOSS RUN TO THE TITLE WITH A 7-4 VICTORY OVER SUAZO. ”

Ginky Memorial

The Final 16 rounds the last turn in the track and heads for the finish line

Coming out of that turn, Duarte got off to a fine start with a 7-3 win versus Max Watanabe, only to have Mikhail Kim come at him, double hill. Duarte nosed ahead of that challenge and in one of the semifinals, drew Sherwin Robinson, who'd just survived a double-hill bout of his own against Basdeo Sookhai.

Lidio Suazo, in the meantime, picked up his double-hill challenge in the opening round, and won it over Cesar Turcios. He advanced to take on the player who'd sent Duarte to the loss side in Stage 1, Robert Calton. In a manner of speaking, Suazo did Duarte a bit of a favor, spoiling any thoughts Calton may have been entertaining about a rematch. Suazo eliminated Calton 8-2 and in the other semifinal, picked up Jaydev Zaveri, who'd ousted Erick Edgardo Garcia Molina 7-3.

Duarte and Suazo gave up only three racks, total, to their semifinal opponents. Duarte gave up just one to Rob-



Jaydev Zaveri

inson and advanced to the final. Suazo gave up two to Zaveri and joined him.

The FargoRate calculations regarding the battle between Duarte (679) and Suazo (640) in their race-to-7 final

weren't as close as one might think, given just a 39-point differential in their rates. Take a guess... we'll wait. ...

Suarte had the edge, of course, but it was a 38-point edge; a 69% chance of winning versus Suazo's 31% chance. These calculations are based only on the Rates themselves and the race number, without any consideration of a specific competitor's match history. FargoRate calculations give a '600' competitor competing against a '699' competitor a one-chance-in-ten; 10.6% versus 89.4%, to be precise. Just FYI, regarding FargoRate calculations.

Edward Duarte completed his single-loss run to the title with a 7-4 victory over Suazo.

Tour director Mike DeMarco and John Francisco thanked Holden Chin and Josh Friedberg and their Raxx Billiards staff for their hospitality, support and the \$5,000 they contributed to the event's prize pool.



Sherwin Robinson

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NEW CHAMPS CROWNED AT ULTIMATE POOL USA FLORIDA OPEN

Dave and Leah Bartosiak, owners of Classic Billiards in Lauderhill, FL, have thrown open their doors to welcome world class players to their room.

Just since the beginning of this year, they've hosted challenge matches between top pros, fan meet and greets, the WPBA Classic Billiards Players Championship, the Premier League Pool Championship, the USBA International Open Carom Championship and this past weekend, the Ultimate Pool USA Florida Open.

Featuring six divisions – the Florida Shootout, the Florida 10-Ball Showdown, the Florida Open, the Florida Women's Open, the Junior Open and the Florida Mixed Pairs Championship – the tournament opened with the Florida Shootout.

The event kicked off this past Thursday as twenty eight players – featur-



Chris Melling



Gavin Mathew

ing international stars, past Shootout champs, Ultimate Pool pros and local favorites – battled it out in the Florida Shootout. After two days of play, four players remained – Shane Thompson versus Craig Waddingham and David Alcaide versus Justin Bergman.

Thompson advanced to the final match with an 8-3 win over Waddingham and Bergman defeated Alcaide 6-4 to lock up the other berth.

After being runner-up five times in past Shootouts, Bergman was determined to take this one down. And take it down he did with a convincing 6-1 score.

Friday had a full day of action with the start of the other divisions.

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over Jordan Helfery and Krissy Myers took the title of Second Chance Women's Open champion.

Gavin Mathew took the title of Florida Junior Open champion after a close contest (6-5) with Gage Smith.

Skylar Hess was the Second Chance Junior Champion.

A field of 160 players from all over the world competed in the Florida Open.

The huge field was narrowed down to two as Gerson Martinez Boza edged out Jesus Atencio (7-5) and Joven Bustamante won the six ball shootout

The Mixed Pairs Championship had a full field of 32 teams. Whittled down to the teams of Chris Melling and Sofia Mast vs. Craig Waddingham and Amy Beauchamp, it was Melling and Mast who claimed the title.

The 10-Ball Showdown featured eight top players. The final match was tight as Chris Melling and Tom Cousins battled it out, however, Melling added another title to his resume as he closed out the match 5-4.

Sofia Mast became the Florida Open Women's champion after a 7-3 victory



versus Shaun Wilkie to advance to the finals.

Gerson Martinez Boza then defeated Joven Bustamante in the final match to claim the title of Florida Open champion.

Mike DeLawder was the Florida Open Second Chance champ.

Ultimate Pool USA thanked every player, fan, referee, staff member, sponsor and viewer who helped make the Florida Open 2026 another incredible event and congratulated all the champions and finalists.



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TADARAVIČIUS CLAIMS FIRST JUNIOR TITLE WITH NXT GEN LONDON TRIUMPH

Lithuania's 15-year-old rising star Ažuolas Tadaravičius captured his maiden junior title on the World Nineball Tour after a dominant 9-3 victory over two-time champion Jack Beggs in the NXT GEN London final.

Tadaravičius produced a composed and clinical performance to defeat one of the junior circuit's most successful players, securing the biggest win of his young career and lifting the NXT GEN London trophy in style.

The victory serves as redemption for the Lithuanian youngster, who came agonisingly close to claiming a title earlier this season before finishing runner-up at NXT GEN Sarajevo. This time, Tadaravičius made sure there would be no repeat heartbreak, capping off an impressive week with a commanding display in the final.

Alongside the title, Tadaravičius earns 2,500 ranking points and moves to the summit of the NXT GEN rankings, strengthening his position as one of the brightest prospects in junior pool.

Reflecting on his breakthrough success, Tadaravičius said: "I'm incredibly happy to win my first NXT GEN title. It's a special moment for me, especially after coming so close in Sarajevo earlier this year. That result motivated me to work even harder and come back stronger."

"To win the title against Jack makes it even more memorable. He's a great player and a good friend, but whenever we play each other we both want to win. We push each other to be better, and I'm really pleased with how I performed in the final."

"I still have another year on the NXT GEN circuit, but my goal is to keep developing my game and compete regularly in the main World Nineball Tour events. That's where I want to be, and this win gives me a lot of confidence for the future."

The triumph marks a significant milestone in Tadaravičius' career and underlines his growing reputation on the international stage. Having turned disappointment into success, the Lithuanian teenager now heads the NXT GEN rankings and will look to carry his momentum into the remainder of the season as he continues his rise through the World Nineball Tour ranks.



Ažuolas Tadaravičius

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JAVIER TERAN

WINS USBA INTERNATIONAL OPEN

Javier Teran has won the 2026 United States Billiard Association (USBA) International Open Carom event at Carom Billiards in Lauderhill, Florida.

Teran emerged from stage one with one small blemish on his record, as he dropped his group stage match to Mauricio Aguilar. By virtue of the 22 points that Teran scored in the losing effort, he won the tiebreak over two other players with 5-1 records in his group, Aguilar and Ricardo Carranco, to emerge as top seed from Group A.

In the second stage of the event, Teran was in Group F, along with Carranco, Juan Diaz and Christian Portilla. Teran scored dominating wins over all three competitors, scoring an average of 1.607 and allowing an average of 14 points against him in the three matches.

In the single elimination round of sixteen, Teran scored a tight 35-33 win over Tae Kyu Lee in 26 innings. Another close match took place in the round of eight, with Teran defeating William Villanueva 35-31 in 28 innings. The semi-finals was Teran's best performance of the day, with a lopsided 35-23 win over Pedro Piedrabuena in just 19 innings (an average of 1.842). The finals saw Teran facing Jose Juan Garcia, who had been 1 point short of an undefeated record through the event so far (Garcia dropped a stage one match to Andres Garcia 25-24).

Garcia had been the talk of day two, with his six inning match against Jorge Rodriguez. Teran was too much for Garcia though, as he won the final match 35-31 in 24 innings. Teran's

high run of ten in the final match was the best run in single elimination play.

The win was worth \$7000 for Teran, with Garcia settling for \$5000 in second place prize money. Garcia ended

up tied with Piedrabuena and Pedro Gonzales for the high run bonus, with all three players running 12. Piedrabuena won the bonus for best grand average, with an overall average of 1.892 points per inning.



Javier Teran



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SYED USMAN

GOES UNDEFEATED/UNSCORED UPON TO WIN USSA TN STATE SNOOKER CHAMPIONSHIPS

At the first stop on the United States Snooker Association's (USSA) 2026 Tour, held this past weekend (May 16-17), Tennessee native Syed Usman went undefeated to claim the event title. Usman defeated North Carolina's Mark Ziegler in the finals. The event drew 7 entrants to the Nashville Snooker Academy in nearby Brentwood, TN.

With the report basics of 'who, what, when and where' taken care of, we'll hit the 'Pause' button here before proceeding, because, as you may have noted if you frequent these AZBilliards pages, you'll have noticed that reporting on events that have drawn 7 entrants is not usually on our 'dance' card. However, the event was sanctioned by the USSA (founded in 1991, with a tour that was inaugurated in 2009). The USSA is a member of the World Snooker Federation (WSF), the PanAmerican Snooker and Billiards Association (PABSA), the International Billiards and Snooker Federation (IBSF) and affiliated with the American Cue Sport Alliance (ACS), so we acted on the assumption that when the first stop on its 2026 tour (of a projected dozen stops leading to a National Snooker Championship) was announced (by us, and other media), it was something that we should look into. That, combined with the fact that our Web site is not known as AZ8ball9ball-10ball,OnePocketHeyball, we deemed it prudent and worth time to report on the event in the pages of AZBilliards.

So, we called up the folks at the Nashville Snooker Academy to track down all the pertinent information regarding the event; its competitors, results, payouts and photos. Imagine our surprise when the 'folks' at the Academy

turned out to be one guy and that his Academy was a well-appointed room with a single snooker table in a large, second floor to his garage in Brentwood, TN, a suburb of Nashville.

His name is Zia Sheik and he is the sole proprietor of the Nashville Snooker Academy, which has been

running snooker events and teaching the game to those with interest in the Nashville area (and elsewhere) for the past three years (August '23 to present day). He's organized and run the TN Snooker Championships three times, beginning in 2024 and won the first two.



How, one might well be asking, can a billiards sport be considered relevant enough here in the United States, when a State Championship that's been running for three years, sanctioned by a national association (the USSA) draws only 7 entrants? And how, if the notion is expanding the profile of snooker, does one go about doing that? One player at a time, apparently.

"And that," said Sheik, "is what I'm trying to do."

Sheik faces some huge obstacles in the realization of that attempt, not the least of which is the standard size of the tables that the sport he's trying to promote requires to be played. It's a 'huge' barrier in its own right. A standard 9 x 4 ft. pool table with a variable standard that includes space around the table so that the games can be played, making it 19 x 14 ft. of space, creates a need for about 266 sq. ft. A standard 12 x 6 ft. snooker table with its space around the table to play requires 352 sq. ft. of space, making it a difficult size to install in a local bar (sizes can vary when it comes to any kind of pool table, so the 'table' and 'space' calculations can vary as well). Combination pool hall/bar/restaurant spaces tend to be larger, but they can put a lot more 7 ft., coin-op tables in the space they do have and are not likely to even think about putting a snooker table in there, to play a game that a lot of pool players here in the US have never played before.

But here's the 'kicker' for all you pool players who love the varied games that you play. About two weeks ago, The World Snooker Federation's International Championships were held and in the Men's Division, China's Wu Yize walked away from the tables with a £500,000 first prize (about \$627,000, US). There were, of course, a number of snooker tournaments played around the world that led to the overall championships, which, according



to Sheik, average somewhere in the vicinity of \$150,000 for the winner. But however you look at it, over half-a-million dollars speaks to an international popularity of the game, which, possibly, might inspire entrepreneurs, event coordinators and (hopefully, as far as Zia Sheik is concerned) sponsors to promote the game and nudge it into the general direction of mainstream.

An Explanatory 'Side Step' . . .

This is the part where we make an attempt to familiarize readers with the basics of snooker. If you've ever played the game, or been curious to look and discover how to play the game, you can safely skip over the italics portion of all this and get on with what will eventually be a 'visit' from Allison Fisher and some details about the TN State Snooker Championships below.

Snooker is a game of points. It's scored like the APA amateur leagues score 9-ball matches; one point for every ball, two for the 9-ball, with competitors racing to a specified number. With snooker, competitors play 'frames' (snooker's word for 'games') that are governed by the elimination of all of the balls (except the cue ball) on the table. There are 22 of them; the cue ball, 15 red balls and six colored balls, each with a point value. The Red balls are worth a single point and the colored balls are worth an ascending number of points; Yellow (2), Green (3), Blue (5), Brown (4), Pink (6) and Black (7).

The 15 red balls are set up on the table like a standard rack in 9-ball, 8-ball, etc. In addition, each of the colored balls rests in a specific spot on the table. Frame-play proceeds from a normal break of the central rack of 15 red balls. The basic rule of a player's task

as he/she steps to the table is to pocket a red ball, then (and only then) to pocket a colored ball of choice. That process is repeated until the rack is cleared. Once the last red ball has been pocketed, players must then pocket the remaining colored balls, in a specific order, ranging from the two-point yellow ball to the seven-point black ball.

However, there's a further consideration on the table as play progresses. Until all of the red balls have been eliminated, any colored balls that are pocketed, return to the table in the spot where it began before the break. This process can be repeated, over and over, which can lead to a 'perfect' frame score, rarely achieved of 147 points, which could happen if and only if you pocket each red ball, after which you pocket the black ball, which is returned to the table before play moves on. You pocket another red, then pocket the black again (it's been returned to the table), you pocket a red ball, black ball, etc., etc. So, 15 red balls (15 points), plus 15 black balls (105), all of the other colored balls, including the black ball, for the last time (27) equals 147 points, the 'perfect' frame score. A much harder task than the more standard games' relatively simple 'break and run' game. It can be done, but if you're a newcomer to the game, you probably shouldn't expect to see it any time soon.

The players alternate turns until the 'frame' is complete, although if the frame arrives at a point in time, where one of the competitors is so far ahead in points, that catching the leader would be impossible, the competitor with the lower score can concede the frame. This happens a lot. The alternative being that the player with the lowest score decides to try and prevent his opponent from pocketing further balls as he/she attempts to catch up on points. That player would

repeatedly employ safety shots that 'snookers' his opponent (leaves cue ball behind another ball in a way that prevents him from hitting the required ball, red or colored). Missed balls or pocketed cue balls incur a points penalty, so technically, with no chance of catching an opponent with more points, a player could continue snookering his opponent, pocketing a few balls and when options run out, snooker his opponent again. And again, and again. Dependent on the score at any given moment, this 'safety' strategy could work, with the lower-score player collecting penalties and pocketing balls on his/her turn, until such time as he has to 'snooker' his opponent again. Not, generally speaking, a successful maneuver, which is why concessions are common.

Dependent on the event, whether it be just a random game or moving up to sanctioned Championship levels, snooker matches are generally 'best of' situations. In this past weekend's TN State Snooker Championships, the opening round was best-of-five, the semifinals were best-of-seven and the final was best-of-9.

"It's a game you could fall in love with, under certain circumstances," said BCA Hall of Famer, Allison Fisher, a Women's World Snooker Champion seven times between 1985-1994, and five times the UK National Champion in the same time period. "I grew up with it (in the UK). There were Snooker clubs with tables and it was a place to mingle."

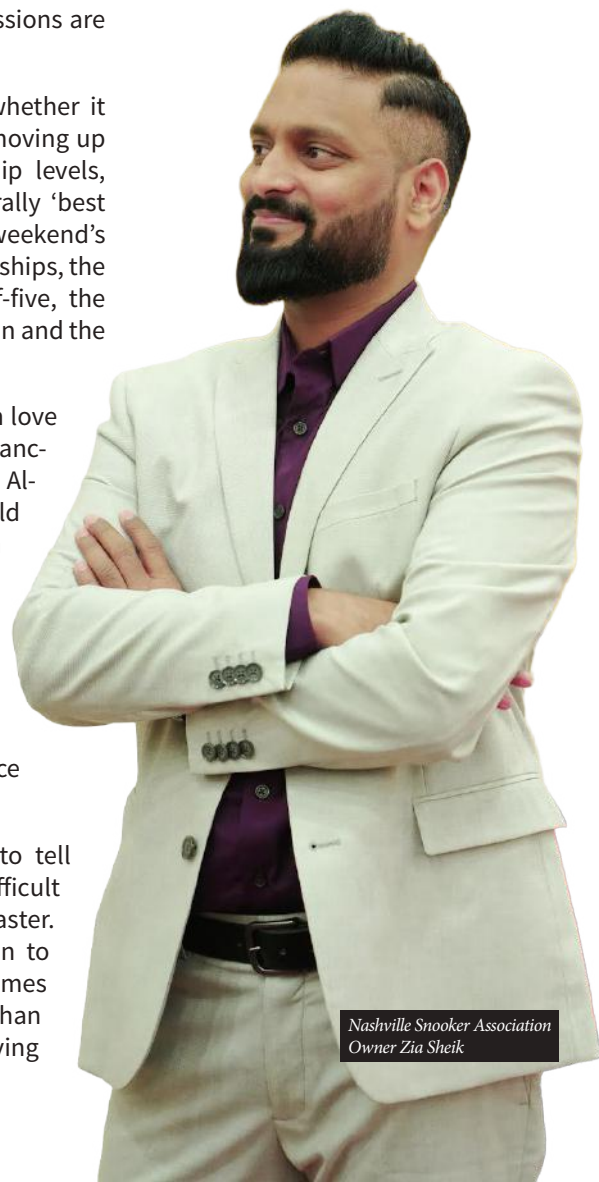
She'd be among the first to tell you that snooker is a difficult game to learn, let alone master. It's a much easier transition to come from snooker, to games like 9-ball, 8-ball, 10-ball, than it is to come to snooker, having

played those more common games. She suspects that progress toward making it a mainstream billiards option here in the USA would be a tough 'row to hoe,' as they say.

"It is a very difficult game," she said. "It's focused on fundamentals and can be a little disconcerting to play."

"It will," she added, "certainly improve your fundamentals."

As a member of the World Professional Billiards and Snooker Association, she was among a lot of people who watched (via stream) China's Wu Yize win that most recent World Championship, in what she described as the



Nashville Snooker Association
Owner Zia Sheik

“best snooker match she had ever seen.”

“Snooker is more like chess than it is just playing with balls,” said Zia Sheik. “It will help your thinking, because (like chess) you have to think four or five steps ahead. You will get very sharp when you play.”

Seven snooker players, meet, greet and compete at a single table in a room just large enough

Enthusiasm for snooker would appear to be encoded in Zia Sheik’s DNA. We’d go so far as to predict that if the entire pool community from Boston to LA could be injected with half of his enthusiasm, snooker would be a mainstream game by sometime next week. Listen as he writes an opening paragraph about this past weekend’s event in an e-mail to us.

“The Nashville Snooker Academy played host to an unforgettable weekend of elite cue sports, culminating in a historic performance at the Tennessee State Snooker Championship,” he wrote. “In a stunning display of precision, Syed Usman captured the state title, etching his name into the history books by completing the entire tournament without dropping a single frame.”

Usman played three shutout matches. He was one of three competitors from Tennessee. Liam Barry and Malyar Raziqi were the other two. Two were from North Carolina; Runner-up Mark Ziegler and Govinda Semeta. Krishanu Chattaraj traveled from Atlanta, GA. In a single-elimination, opening-round, best-of-5 match, Usman defeated Raziqi 3-0. In the second round, best-of-seven semifinal, he eliminated Semeta 4-0 (and in the process, earned a ‘Highest Break’ trophy for chalking up 31 straight points off of a break). In the final, best-of-seven race, Usman claimed the title over Ziegler 5-0.

It was the first time that Usman and



Ziegler had reached the finals of the Tennessee event, leading Sheik to describe it as a “milestone event,” moving on to speak of Ziegler’s runner-up finish.

“Tournament debutant Mark Ziegler earned immense respect from the field,” he wrote. “His brilliant run to the final table establishes him as a premier force to watch in the region’s cue sports scene.”

Sheik has a way of making even his ‘thanks’ sound exciting.

“The spectacular execution of this weekend’s event was made possible through the unwavering support and vital contributions of the United States Snooker Association (USSA),” he wrote. “The tournament organizers express their deepest gratitude to main sponsor Ugadi IndiaGrill, supporting sponsor Zfinity Global and Century Cue Tips (who provide for the event’s trophies) for their foundational investment in growing the sport.

“Without their dedication to the snooker community,” he added,

“staging a championship of this caliber would not be possible.”

The next stop on the US Snooker Association Tour, scheduled for the weekend of May 29-31, will be the Wiraka Colorado Snooker Open (Wiraka is a snooker table manufacturer). The event will be hosted by the Hampton Inn and Suites in Boulder, CO.

Individuals who would like further information about Snooker and its efforts to raise the profile of this billiards discipline, can do so in a number of ways. Be prepared, because Zia Sheik of the Nashville Snooker Academy will, for sure, get you excited about the game and its potential here in the US.

Email – nashvillesnookeracademy@gmail.com

Facebook Page – <https://www.facebook.com/nashvillesnookeracademy/>

Instagram Page – <https://www.instagram.com/nashvillesnookeracademy/>

WORLD NINEBALL TOUR

UNVEILS TITAN SERIES FOLLOWING LANDMARK DYNASPHERES PARTNERSHIP

The World Nineball Tour is proud to introduce the new Dynaspheres Titan Series ball set following a groundbreaking multi-year partnership with Dynaspheres, who become the Official Ball Sponsor of the World Nineball Tour across all major events worldwide.

As part of the landmark partnership, the Dynaspheres Titan Series will serve as the official ball set of the World Nineball Tour, beginning with the 2026 UK Open Pool Championship from 26-31 May — marking the first time Dynaspheres balls will be used officially on Tour.

The new Titan Series ball set introduces a fresh evolution of the iconic Nineball design, maintaining the distinctive yellow and black ‘bumble bee’ colour tone while incorporating a new design aimed at further enhancing player performance and visibility under arena conditions.

The partnership represents a significant step forward, with the World Nineball Tour and Dynaspheres work-

ing together to deliver innovation at the highest level of the sport.

Adrian Wang, President GDM SPORTS BV, stated: “The Titan set was developed for the modern professional game: fast, precise, and uncompromising, with high-contrast colors engineered for TV clarity. Becoming the official balls of the World Nineball Tour is a significant milestone for DynaSpheres and a strong validation of the quality and consistency our team has worked tirelessly to achieve. We are excited to be part of the future of professional 9-ball.”

Emily Frazer, CEO of Matchroom Multi Sport, added: “Partnering with Dynaspheres is a significant moment for the World Nineball Tour as we contin-

ue to push professional pool to new levels both on and off the table. The introduction of the Titan Series brings a fresh look and feel to the game, and we’re looking forward to seeing it make its debut at the UK Open Pool Championship in May. We’re always focused on improving the experience for players, broadcasters and fans alike, and Dynaspheres share that same ambition for innovation and excellence.”

The Dynaspheres Titan Series World Nineball Tour ball set will also be made available for fans and players to purchase soon.

For all the latest updates, follow Matchroom Pool on Facebook, Instagram, X (Twitter), TikTok, and YouTube.



MATCHROOM LANDS IN CHINESE TAIPEI

WITH WORLD POOL MASTERS AND FULLCAN SPORTS CHINESE TAIPEI OPEN DOUBLE-HEADER

The World Nineball Tour arrives in Chinese Taipei next January as the prestigious World Pool Masters returns alongside the Fullcan Sports Chinese Taipei Open, delivering an electrifying nine days of world-class nineball in Taipei City.

The landmark double-header will see Matchroom and Fullcan Sports join forces to showcase two of the sport's biggest events on one stage.

The World Pool Masters returns from 12-14 January, bringing together 16 of the world's best players for one of the sport's most prestigious and historic titles. The invitational showdown will introduce a historic first for the event with a spectacular two-table arena setup, creating more action, more drama, and an enhanced experience for fans watching inside the arena and around the world.

Before that, the Fullcan Sports Chinese Taipei Open returns for its fifth edition from 6-10 January, marking its debut as a co-promoted event on the World Nineball Tour. Established as one of the region's premier competitions, the tournament will welcome a 128-player international field competing through a double-elimination format to the Last 64 as the world's elite, rising stars, and home favourites collide in a thrilling race for glory at Songshan Cultural and Creative Park in Taipei City, Chinese Taipei.

The landmark double-header further strengthens the World Nineball Tour's presence in Asia and brings two world-



class events to one of pool's most passionate and successful nations.

Marvin Wang, CEO of Fullcan Management Consulting, said: "Becoming a joint promoter of this landmark double-header is a deeply humbling milestone for Fullcan Sports. This is a natural evolution of our mission to elevate the stage for world-class players and maximise excitement for global fans.

"We are immensely grateful to Matchroom for their trust. Alongside our global ambassadors—Carlo Biado, Aloysius Yapp, Francisco Sanchez Ruiz, and Moritz Neuhausen—we look

forward to bridging East and West. Thank you, and we cannot wait to welcome you all to Taipei in 2027."

Emily Frazer, CEO of Matchroom Multi Sport, said: "As Matchroom heads to Chinese Taipei next January, we're bringing two world-class events to one of the strongest and most passionate nations in pool with the return of the World Pool Masters and the Fullcan Sports Chinese Taipei Open.

"The Chinese Taipei Open has already established itself as one of Asia's leading events, and we're excited to welcome it to the World Nineball Tour as a co-promoted event. Alongside the World Pool Masters, it creates an incredible nine-day showcase of world-class pool. Our partnership with Fullcan Sports is an important step in continuing the growth of the sport across Asia, and we're excited to bring the world's best players to Taipei next January."

Further details regarding qualification criteria for the World Pool Masters, ticket information, and global broadcast coverage for both events will be announced soon.

The world's best are coming. Two major titles are on the line. Chinese Taipei is set for an unforgettable start to 2027.

ARAMITH AND STRACHAN SIGN 3-YEAR SPONSORSHIP WITH LUCA BRECEL

The 2023 World Champion will partner with the World's leading billiard balls and cloth with the ambition to climb back the rankings and to capture again the ultimate prize at the Crucible.

Known as the “Belgian Bullet”, Luca Brecel had already made history long before becoming World Champion. At just 14 years-old, he became the youngest-ever European Under-19 champion, announcing his arrival on the international stage.

At the age of 17 and 45 days, just one year after turning professional, he became the youngest player ever to compete at the Crucible, breaking Stephen Hendry's long-standing record. Luca also became the youngest player to make a century break at the crucible during his debut match, which he eventually lost against Stephen Maguire.

Luca went on to claim 3 ranking titles before making history at the 2023 World Championship where he won 11 straight frames during the final against Mark Selby and completed a 17-15 comeback. It marked the first time in Crucible history that a player had recovered from such a position, securing one of the most iconic finals in snooker history. He became the first mainland European World Champion.

Since then, many things have been said about Luca's performance inconsistencies and withdrawals from some events which made him disappear from the rankings. One thing remained the same though: his passion for the sport and his fighting spirit.

Luca Brecel is getting back in shape and is ready to open a new chapter. As official cloth and ball suppliers to the World Snooker Tour since 1980,

it is important for Strachan Cloth and Aramith Balls to support players who change the dimension of their sport and inspire new generations to join the table.

Luca Brecel: “Last year was a challenge but it has only strengthened my mentality and now I am entering this next chapter with even more fire, motivation and determination than ever. I am very proud to begin a new partnership with Aramith and Strachan. Two brands that represent excellence, precision and high quality performance. This partnership also reflects my ambition and desire to compete in elite sport to the maximum of my capabilities.”

Jérôme Poncelet (Iwan Simonis Group Sales Director): “We are very proud to welcome Luca who is recognized as one of the most talented snooker players. Our Belgian group of companies is especially thrilled to partner with Top players from our home country. We share with Luca and our other brand ambassadors the same passion for our sports. With the performances they are able to deliver, they inspire new generations all around the world. We wish Luca all the best for the upcoming 2026-27 season.”

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





Simonis Cloth and Aramith Balls

play so true,

you really have to ask yourself
would you rather play against your opponent...

...or against your

equipment?

Tourney Results

May 02 - May 02

The West Coast Women's Tour 2026 Stop 1

Dog House Billiards

Cotati, California

- 1 Donna Mae Bulanadi \$350
- 2 Maria Lopez \$295
- 3 Lela Andrews \$225
- 4 Janna Sue Nelson \$175
- 5 Alexis Iwan \$125
- 5 Lyndee Russell \$125
- 7 Julie Cook \$75
- 7 Kacie Ragen \$75

May 06 - May 10

2026 USBA International Open Championship

Carom Billiards

Lauderhill, FL

- 1 Javier Teran \$7,000
- 2 Jose Juan Garcia \$5,000
- 3 Harry Zamora \$2,500
- 3 Pedro Piedrabuena \$2,500
- 5 Alexander Salazar \$1,250
- 5 Mauricio Grajales \$1,250
- 5 Pedro Gonzalez \$1,250
- 5 William Villanueva \$1,250
- 9 Andres Lizarazo \$500
- 9 Harry Pena \$500
- 9 Hugo Patino \$500
- 9 Juan Diaz \$500
- 9 Luis Aveiga \$500
- 9 Tae Kyu Lee \$500
- 9 Victor Cuzzi \$500
- 9 Wilmer Geraldo \$500

May 07 - May 10

2026 Predator Luxembourg Open

Luxembourg

- 1 Joshua Filler \$8,850
- 2 Wojciech Szewczyk \$5,900

- 3 Wiktor Zielinski \$4,130
- 3 Yuma Dornier \$4,130
- 5 Aleksa Pecelj \$2,950
- 5 Mustafa Alnar \$2,950
- 5 Roman Hybler \$2,950
- 5 Valentin SCHMITZ \$2,950
- 9 Alvaro Canoniga \$1,770
- 9 Daniel Guttenberger \$1,770
- 9 Dimitri Jungo \$1,770
- 9 Fabrizio Ingrassi \$1,770
- 9 Jan Van Lierop \$1,770
- 9 Juri Pisklov \$1,770
- 9 Maximilian Lechner \$1,770
- 9 Paul VILCHES-PARDO \$1,770
- 17 Amil Andre Gangflot \$1,180
- 17 Ante Sola \$1,180
- 17 Benjamin Belhassen \$1,180
- 17 Denis Grabe \$1,180
- 17 Dennis Laszkowski \$1,180
- 17 Eric MATTERN \$1,180
- 17 Felix Vogel \$1,180
- 17 Kristian Mrva \$1,180
- 17 Lazar Kostic \$1,180
- 17 Martin Kempster \$1,180
- 17 Mieszko Fortunski \$1,180
- 17 Mika van Berkel \$1,180
- 17 Niklas Dohr \$1,180
- 17 Radoslaw Babica \$1,180
- 17 Tobias Bongers \$1,180
- 17 Tomasz Kaplan \$1,180
- 33 Andreja Klasovic \$236
- 33 Dominik Jastrzab \$236
- 33 Fabio Rizzi \$236
- 33 Fatjon Lamce \$236
- 33 Hubert Lopotko \$236
- 33 Jakub Chrobot \$236
- 33 Jaroslav Polach \$236
- 33 Karl Gnadeberg \$236
- 33 Maks Benko \$236
- 33 Mario He \$236
- 33 Marko JOVANOVIC \$236
- 33 Mateusz Sniegocki \$236
- 33 Tim Jonkman \$236

- 33 Ugar Turku \$236
- 33 Walter Laikre \$236
- 33 Wiktor Fortunski \$236

May 07 - May 10

2026 Predator Women's Luxembourg Open

Luxembourg

- 1 Pia Filler \$3,769
- 2 Maria Teresa Ropero Garcia \$2,355
- 3 Ina Kaplan \$1,766
- 3 Sara Rocha \$1,766
- 5 Ana Gradisnik \$1,060
- 5 Darya Siranchuk \$1,060
- 5 Katarzyna Wesolowska \$1,060
- 5 Linnea Hjalmarstrom \$1,060
- 9 Christine Steinlage \$471
- 9 Deu Va \$471
- 9 Jolien Schuurman \$471
- 9 Marion Jude \$471
- 9 Monika Zabek \$471
- 9 Oliwia Zalewska \$471
- 9 Romina Lenk \$471
- 9 Vania Franco \$471

May 09 - May 09

Q City 9-Ball Tour Stop

Borderline Billiards

Bristol, TN

- 1 Cole Lewis \$450
- 2 Bryan Toman \$250
- 3 Jerry Street \$100

May 12 - May 17

2026 Bayou State Classic 9-Ball

Emerald Billiards

New Iberia, LA

- 1 John Morra \$4,500
- 2 Fedor Gorst \$2,200
- 3 Roland Garcia \$1,500

4 Justin Hall \$1,000
5 Billy Thorpe \$600
5 Jeff Phillips \$600
7 David Barndt \$380
7 Thomas Haas \$380
9 Billy Sanders \$280
9 Devin Poteet \$280
9 Francisco Bustamante \$280
9 Stevie McClinton \$280
13 Chip Compton \$200
13 Christian Diaz \$200
13 Josh Roberts \$200
13 Steve Lenz \$200
17 Brennan Oubre \$150
17 Dallas Broussard \$150
17 Jeremy Howard \$150
17 Matthew Wisely \$150
17 Oscar Ruiz \$150
17 Sean Wedlake \$150
17 Victor Perez \$150
17 Zach Eisner \$150

May 12 - May 17

2026 Bayou State Classic One Pocket

Emerald Billiards

New Iberia, LA
1 Fedor Gorst \$8,000
2 John Morra \$6,000
3 Roberto Gomez \$3,800
4 Josh Roberts \$2,100

May 14 - May 18

TAOM Arena Open 2026

Kuala Lumpur

1 Jeffrey Ignacio \$10,000
2 Sean Mark Malayan \$4,500
3 Irsal Nasution \$2,200
3 Ri Teng Liu \$2,200
5 James Aranas \$1,100
5 Jeffrey De Luna \$1,100
5 Nicholas Tan \$1,100
5 Ponco Klinton Manurung \$1,100
9 Aivhan Maluti \$500
9 Alvin Lombok \$500
9 Andri Januarta \$500
9 Hsuan-Wei Kuo \$500

9 Lo Ho Sum \$500
9 Paolo Gallito \$500
9 Tan Den Jie \$500
9 Valeriano Pajuay \$500
17 Aaron Reyes \$250
17 AJ Manas \$250
17 Alexis Ferrer \$250
17 Carlo Biado \$250
17 Darren Young \$250
17 Edward Koyongian \$250
17 Fu Huan \$250
17 Hui-chan Lu \$250
17 Jeffrey Consigna Roda \$250
17 John Carlo Mirafior \$250
17 John Rebong \$250
17 JV Vicedo \$250
17 Lee Han Qiang \$250
17 Patric Gonzales \$250
17 Ryan John P Badal \$250
17 Yu-Lung Chang \$250

May 16 - May 17

Joss Tour 2025-2026 Stop 18

Raxx Pool Room, Sports Bar & Grill

West Hempstead, NY
1 Yesid Garibello \$1,050
2 Mhet Vergara \$750
3 Christoph Neumayer \$550
4 Frankie Hernandez \$400
5 Brian Vu \$300
5 Duc Lam \$300
7 Frankie Hernandez \$200
7 Jeremy Sossei \$200
9 Dave Wallace \$100
9 Paul Raval \$100
9 Rajmond Pali \$100
9 Sean Morgan \$100

May 16 - May 17

2026 US Snooker Association Tour Stop 1

Nashville Snooker Academy

Nashville, TN
1 Syed Usman \$350
2 Mark Ziegler \$150

May 16 - May 17

Joss Tour 2026-2027 Stop 18 Second Chance

Raxx Pool Room, Sports Bar & Grill

West Hempstead, NY
1 Dan Sharlow \$300
2 Paul Raval \$200
3 Holden Chin \$100
4 Dave Latsha \$60

May 16 - May 16

Sullivan Pool Tour Stop

Shooters Family Billiards

Wayne, New Jersey
1 Tamer Bajnouk \$1,000
2 Dave Gerson \$675
3 Giovanna Napolitano \$350
4 Jesse Hornbeck \$205
5 Harsh Marlecha \$85
5 Herschel Jordan \$85

May 19 - May 24

11th Annual Buffalo's Pro Classic

Buffalo's Billiards

Jefferson, La
1 Evan Lunda \$35,000
2 Fedor Gorst \$18,000
3 Justin Hall \$10,000
4 Tony Chohan \$8,000
5 Mark Magi \$4,500
5 Roland Garcia \$4,500
7 Chip Compton \$3,000
7 Skyler Woodward \$3,000

May 19 - May 24

11th Annual Buffalo's Pro Classic One Ball One Pocket

Buffalo's Billiards

Jefferson, La
1 Francisco Bustamante \$3,700
2 Evan Lunda \$2,100
3 Alex Lely \$1,000
3 Sergio Rivas \$1,000
5 John Morra \$400
5 Josh Roberts \$400

5 Louis Demarco \$400
5 Roberto Gomez \$400

May 19 - May 24

11th Annual Buffalo's Pro Classic 8-Ball

Buffalo's Billiards

Jefferson, La
1 Sergio Rivas \$6,000
2 Francisco Bustamante \$4,000
3 Chris Reinhold \$2,450
3 Jeremy Jones \$2,450
5 Brandon Shuff \$1,300
5 Josh Roberts \$1,300
5 Marco Teutscher \$1,300
5 Shane McMinn \$1,300
9 Billy Thorpe \$600
9 Bobby Emmons \$600
9 Dallas Broussard \$600
9 Devin Poteet \$600
9 John Macias \$600
9 John Morra \$600
9 Matthew Wisely \$600
9 Skyler Woodward \$600

May 20 - May 23

Jacoby Scottish Open 2026

McGoldrick's Sports Bar

Rutherglen, Glasgow
1 Oliver Szolnoki \$8,000
2 Albert Januarta \$5,000
3 George Antonakis \$3,250
3 Jayson Shaw \$3,250
5 Aloysius Yapp \$2,000
5 Jokubas Silantjevas \$2,000
5 Jonas Souto Comino \$2,000
5 Pijus Labutis \$2,000
9 Felix Vogel \$1,025
9 Fraser Patrick \$1,025
9 Petri Makkonen \$1,025
9 Sullivan Clark \$1,025

May 23 - May 24

NWPA Tour 2026 Stop 2

The Pocket

Boise, Idaho
1 Kathie MacDonald \$685
2 Maryann McConnell \$470

3 Jordan Oakes \$315
4 Regene Lane \$195
5 Marion Poole \$110
5 Nicole Donisi \$110
7 Linda Massey \$65
7 Sarah Myers-Mitchell \$65

May 23 - May 25

Ginky Memorial 2026

Raxx Pool Room, Sports Bar & Grill

West Hempstead, NY
1 Edward Duarte \$5,000
2 Lidio Suazo \$3,000
3 Jaydev Zaveri \$1,800
3 Sherwin Robinson \$1,800
5 Erick Edgardo Garcia Molina \$725
5 Mikhail Kim \$725
5 Robert Calton \$725
5 Shawn Sookhai \$725

May 23 - May 23

Q City 9-Ball Tour Stop

Sticks & Stones Family Billiards

Rock Hill, South Carolina
1 Josh Heeter \$600
2 Chris Clary \$400
3 Bill Fowler \$250
4 Micah McSwain \$150
5 Darryl Caldwell \$100
5 Zach Martin \$100
7 Kenneth Massagee \$55
7 Onyx Stinson \$55

May 23 - May 24

Carolina Billiards Circuit Stop 3

Breaktime Billiards & Sports Bar

Clemmons, NC
1 Justin Martin \$1,250
2 Mike Davis \$940
3 Greg Taylor \$700
4 Monaim Neffati \$500
5 Steven Page \$350
5 Tommy Kennedy \$350
7 Justin Mawyin \$200
7 Wilson Dorsey \$200
9 Adam Davis \$100

9 Christy Norris \$100
9 Greg Kane \$100
9 Joshua Shultz \$100

May 26 - May 31

2026 UK Open

Brentwood, Essex

1 Joshua Filler \$40,000
2 Wojciech Szewczyk \$18,000
3 Jayson Shaw \$10,000
3 Jonas Souto Comino \$10,000
5 Aloysius Yapp \$7,150
5 David Alcaide \$7,150
5 Naoyuki Oi \$7,150
5 Niels Feijen \$7,150
9 Alexandros Kazakis \$4,000
9 Dean Shields \$4,000
9 Eklenk Kaci \$4,000
9 Elliott Sanderson \$4,000
9 Fabio Rizzi \$4,000
9 Mario He \$4,000
9 Mustafa Alnar \$4,000
9 Pijus Labutis \$4,000
17 Alexis Ferrer \$2,000
17 Casper Matikainen \$2,000
17 Denis Grabe \$2,000
17 Francisco Sanchez-Ruiz \$2,000
17 Gary Wilson \$2,000
17 Kledio Kaci \$2,000
17 Lukas Fracasso-Verner \$2,000
17 Marvin Asis \$2,000
17 Mateusz Sniegocki \$2,000
17 Maximilian Lechner \$2,000
17 Oliver Szolnoki \$2,000
17 Quoc Hoang Duong \$2,000
17 Sanjin Pehlivanovic \$2,000
17 Stuart Bingham \$2,000
17 Tyler Styer \$2,000
17 Wiktor Zielinski \$2,000
33 Antonis Brabin \$1,000
33 Bernie Regaliaria \$1,000
33 Besar Spahiu \$1,000
33 Boris Ivanovski \$1,000
33 Dimitris Loukatos \$1,000
33 Felix Vogel \$1,000
33 Fitim Haradinaj \$1,000
33 Francesco Candela \$1,000

- 33 Fraser Patrick \$1,000
- 33 Georgi Georgiev \$1,000
- 33 Harry Vergara \$1,000
- 33 Imran Majid \$1,000
- 33 Jeffrey Consigna Roda \$1,000
- 33 Joe Prince \$1,000
- 33 Karl Gnadeberg \$1,000
- 33 Konrad Juszczyszyn \$1,000
- 33 Kostiantyn Ivanov \$1,000
- 33 Lo Ho Sum \$1,000
- 33 Maks Benko \$1,000
- 33 Marc Bijsterbosch \$1,000
- 33 Marcel Price \$1,000
- 33 Michael Baoanan \$1,000
- 33 Mieszko Fortunski \$1,000
- 33 Nick Chatoupis \$1,000
- 33 Niklas Dohr \$1,000
- 33 Quinten Pongers \$1,000
- 33 Ricardo Gutjahr \$1,000
- 33 Robbie Capito \$1,000
- 33 Roman Hybler \$1,000
- 33 Ronen Nalaunan \$1,000

- 33 Thorsten Hohmann \$1,000
- 33 Tobias Bongers \$1,000

May 30 - May 31

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

Snookers - Sports Billiards, Bar & Grill

- Providence, RI
- 1 Joe Dupuis \$1,500
 - 2 Beau Powers \$900
 - 3 Francisco Cabral \$700
 - 4 Curtis Wright \$550
 - 5 Omar Ashiq \$400
 - 5 Ron Casanzio \$400
 - 7 Kevin Guimond \$300
 - 7 Ray McNamara \$300
 - 9 Bochen Jiang \$200
 - 9 Dan Sharlow \$200
 - 9 Paul Cormier \$200
 - 9 Steve Mack \$200

- 13 Bob Mendenjian \$100
- 13 Evan Moreau \$100
- 13 Matt Bonarrigo \$100
- 13 Max Watanabe \$100

May 30 - May 31

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

Snookers - Sports Billiards, Bar & Grill

- Providence, RI
- 1 Matt Bonarrigo \$330
 - 2 Ashley Benoit \$220
 - 3 Nick Coppola \$150
 - 4 Kiet Mieu \$100
 - 5 Max Watanabe \$50
 - 5 Rick Bentley \$50

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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.

JUNE/JULY

Mezz Hill-Hill Estonian Open 2026

Jun 05 - Jun 07
Hill-Hill Billiard Cafe
Talinn, Pohja

The West Coast Women's Tour 2026 Stop 2

Jun 06 - Jun 06
Rack N Cues Billiards and Brews
Windsor, CA

2026 Billard Beckmann Men's Open

Jun 16 - Jun 23
Alpina Sport und Wellnesshotel
St. Johann im Pongau,

Carrinho Women's Open 2026

Jun 17 - Jun 23
Alpina Sport und Wellnesshotel
St. Johann im Pongau,

2026 Predator Mixed Doubles Open

Jun 17 - Jun 23
Alpina Sport und Wellnesshotel
St. Johann im Pongau,

NWPA Tour 2026 Stop 3

Jun 20 - Jun 21
Silver Star Saloon
Vancouver, Washington

2026 Universal Open

Jun 25 - Jun 28
Jakarta Indonesia

2026 Mezz Bucharest Open

Jul 03 - Jul 05
Club IDM
Bucharest

2026 USA National Pool Championships

Jul 05 - Jul 11
Dubuque Iowa
Dubuque, IA

2AM Prague Open

Jul 08 - Jul 11
2AM Billiards
Prague

The West Coast Women's Tour 2026 Stop 3

Jul 11 - Jul 11
Family Billiards
San Francisco, CA

Shane vs Fedor King of the Hill

Jul 11 - Jul 12
Hilltop Promotions Studio
Anderson, SC

2026 McDermott Open

Jul 16 - Jul 19
Yale Billiards
Wallingford, Connecticut

NWPA Tour 2026 Stop 4

Jul 18 - Jul 19
Players Sports Bar
Kennewick, Washington

2026 Empire State Classic

Jul 23 - Jul 26
Raxx Pool Room, Sports Bar & Grill
West Hempstead, NY

iCue Snooker Open 2026

Jul 25 - Jul 26
iCue Billiards Club
Rowland Heights, CA

Vice City Classic

Jul 29 - Aug 02
Classic Billiards
Lauderhill, Florida

2026 Banca Del Fucino WPA Women's World 10-Ball Championship

Jul 31 - Aug 06

2026 Rome Wheelchair Open

Jul 31 - Aug 03
Rome Italy

2026 Women's Doubles Master Showdown

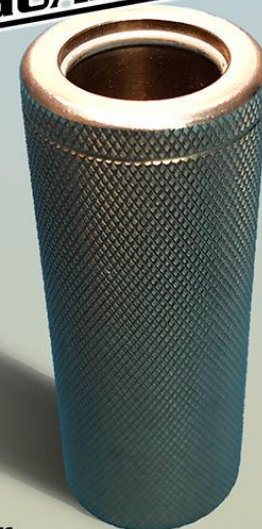
Jul 31 - Aug 04
Rome Italy

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	NAME	COUNTRY	\$ AMOUNT	
	Joshua Filler	 GER	148.525,00 US\$	↑
	Fedor Gorst	 USA	135.350,00 US\$	↓
	Aloysius Yapp	 SIN	110.400,00 US\$	↓
	Shane Van Boening	 USA	83.900,00 US\$	
	Francisco Sanchez-Ruiz	 ESP	72.125,00 US\$	
	Wiktor Zielinski	 POL	70.104,00 US\$	
	Chezka Centeno	 PHI	63.719,00 US\$	
	John Morra	 CAN	62.475,00 US\$	↑
	Carlo Biado	 PHI	57.950,00 US\$	↓
	Wojciech Szewczyk	 POL	56.900,00 US\$	↑

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