



INTERNATIONAL POOL TOUR

2 0 0 6 S E A S O N P R E V I E W

It's the **BIGGEST THING** in the history of pro pool — five events (and one big qualifier) with **\$8.54 million** in prize money. It's enough to make you giddy — just ask the **150 TOUR MEMBERS**. It's also slightly overwhelming, so we'll spell it all out for you: the **frontrunners and dark horses**, the tight pockets and slow cloth, the impact and significance, and how moneymen **KEVIN TRUDEAU** believes it will all make dollars and sense.

SCHEDULE:

North American 8-Ball Open Championship

July 22-30
The Venetian in Las Vegas, Nev.
Purse: \$2 million
• First prize: \$350,000

World 8-Ball Open Championship

September 2-10
Reno Hilton in Reno, Nev.
Purse: \$3 million
• First prize: \$500,000

Players 8-Ball Championship

October 22-29
The Excel London
in London, England
Purse: \$1.27 million
• First prize: \$200,000

Masters 8-Ball Championship

November 26-December 3
Rosemont Convention Center
in Chicago, Ill.
Purse: \$1.27 million
• First prize: \$200,000

King of the Hill Invitational 8-Ball Shootout

December 12-17
The Wynn in Las Vegas, Nev.
Purse: \$1 million
• First prize: \$200,000

2007 Tour Qualifier

December 12-17
The Wynn in Las Vegas, Nev.
• Prizes: 50 IPT Tour Cards
(\$100,000 value each)



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IT ALL STARTS HERE

The IPT's first season is finally upon us. Will it be pool's big break?

WHEN YOU CONSIDER the history of pro pool, it almost sounds like science fiction — a change of fortune so instantaneous and improbable that it could only have jumped out of an episode of “The Twilight Zone.”

Well, in this case, it was an infomercial for “Natural Cures.”

It was only a year ago when controversial media maven Kevin Trudeau began making plans for an international 8-ball tour that would offer millions of dollars in prizes — figures exponentially higher than the purses available at the time.

Many billiard industry figures, stung by past get-rich-quick schemes, shrugged or sneered. It'll never happen, they said. What's the scam?

The success of Trudeau's King of the Hill invitational in December 2005 — in which winner Efen Reyes earned the highest-ever prize of \$200,000 — quieted critics. And now, here it is — the inaugural season of the International Pool Tour, with 150 tour members battling in five events for \$8.54 million in prize money, and then a giant qualifier for the 2007 season.

Without a doubt, it's the biggest thing that has ever happened to professional billiards.

“I think this is going to help every part of the billiard industry,” said Hall-of-Famer Nick Varner, a tour member as well as a professional cuemaker. “The exposure the game is going to get should touch everybody who's involved in billiards. Everything that's happening with the IPT seems to be record-breaking.”

BD will document all the history-making action over the next six months. In the meantime, here's a crib sheet for some of the big storylines.

HOW BIG IS BIG?

- The cover of our November issue will feature the winner of the \$500,000 first prize at the IPT World 8-Ball Open Championship. That's *really* big. The \$350,000 first prize for the North American 8-Ball Open Championship isn't chicken cutlets, either.
- The tournaments will be big: The North American event will require about 70,000 square feet of space — about 1.5 football fields — needed for 60 tables, live TV and video tape production, and player hospitality areas, according to tour director Deno Andrews.
- The production costs will be big — about \$1 million per event, plus the prize money, Trudeau says.
- And the pressure will be big. In the multiple round-robin format, each player will have at least four matches per day, and each game will be factored into a statistical index determining which players advance.

WHAT ABOUT THE PLAYERS?

The folks who will reap the quickest rewards from the IPT are the players, and they've been practicing their (cue) butts off.

Rodney Morris, an elite men's player and house pro at Capone's in Spring Hill, Fla., took the step of bringing in a standard IPT table with IPT cloth for practice. With two infants at home, he's excited about the possibility of making a living solely from prize winnings.

“It's giving me new hope that I can make some good money playing, instead of having to do other things to make money,” Morris said.

The IPT has pledged to provide other sources of revenue beyond prize money, such as profit-sharing, a cut of qualifier entry fees for player referrals, and appearance fees for non-tour events.

WHO WILL DOMINATE?

If we consider December's King of the Hill event an indicator, it looks like the Philippines will rule. The top three finishers at the event (not including Mike Sigel, who was seeded in the final) were Filipinos Reyes (1st), Francisco Bustamante (3rd) and Marlon Manalo (4th).

HOW WILL THE WOMEN DO?

Fifteen women are counted among the tour's 150 members, including WPBA top-ranked pros Allison Fisher, Karen Corr, Kelly Fisher and Monica Webb. Many prognosticators have taken a wait-and-see attitude towards their play, citing questions about break power and toughness.

“I think they need a year of convincing themselves that they can stomp on the big boys before they will enable themselves to stand atop the fields,” said pool commentator Jerry Forsyth. “I don't think the men have any skill advantage on them.”

WHO STAYS, WHO GOES?

IPT players will be ranked according to prize winnings, and, at the end of the season, the top 100 players will receive tour cards for 2007.

Trudeau has promised that each tour member in 2007 will receive at least \$100,000. If a player's winnings and other IPT-related revenue don't reach \$100,000, the player will receive a check for the difference. So, getting that card is a big deal.

The bottom 50 on the 2006 winnings list will have the chance to compete in a qualifier, which will take place alongside the King of the Hill in December. The field likely will be held to 250 players, according to Andrews. The top 50 finishers will join the tour in 2007.

Reyes starts the season as King of the Hill.



IPT By the Numbers

■ \$8.54 MILLION

Total prize money for 2006 season's five main tour events.

■ 3

Number of Filipinos who finished in the top 4 at the 2005 King of the Hill (Efen Reyes, Francisco Bustamante, Marlon Manalo).

■ 72, 13

Age of oldest tour member, Mike “Spanish Mike” Lebron; Age of youngest tour member, Austin Murphy.

■ 291

Number of qualifier entries for 10 open tour spots. Players paid \$2,000 per entry, in most cases.

■ 28

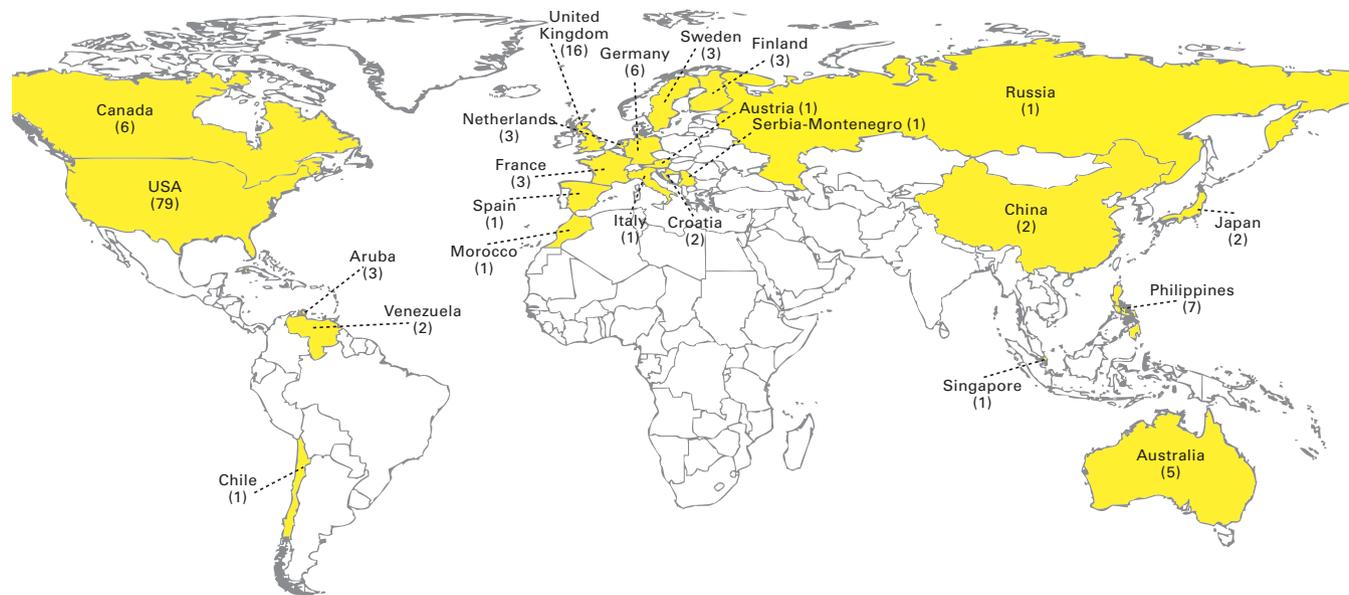
Number of matches the winner of the North American 8-Ball Open Championship will have played, through six round-robin stages and a final.

■ 15

Number of women out of 150 tour members.

WHERE IN THE WORLD?

The 150 tour members in the IPT's inaugural season hail from 23 countries.



WHO IN THE WORLD?

Here they are — the lucky 150 contenders. How many do you even recognize?

- | | | | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|--|
| Roland Acosta • Aruba | Ralph Eckert • Germany | Ed Kelly • USA | Neil Raybone • United Kingdom |
| Dee Adkins • USA | Tyler Edey • Canada | Thomas Kennedy • USA | David Reljic • Australia |
| David Alcaide • Spain | Sarah Ellerby • United Kingdom | Mary Kenniston • USA | Jim Rempe • USA |
| Frank Alvarez • USA | Vincent Facquet • France | Warren Kiamco • Philippines | Efren Reyes • Philippines |
| Ouahbi Amine • Morocco | Niels Feijen • The Netherlands | Andreja Klasovic • Serbia/
Montenegro | James Roberts • USA |
| Darren Appleton • United Kingdom | Kelly Fisher • United Kingdom | John Kutcher • USA | Tony Robles • USA |
| Johnny Archer • USA | Troy Frank • USA | Ewa Laurance • USA | Ike Runnels • USA |
| Chris Bartram • USA | Aaron Franken • Aruba | Mike LeBron • USA | Miyuki Sakai • Japan |
| Daniel Basavich • USA | Bernie Friend • USA | Alex Lely • The Netherlands | Brian Saleh • United Kingdom |
| Yannick Beaufile • France | Jimmy Fusco • USA | Gunnar Leonardo • Aruba | Luc Salvas • Canada |
| George Breedlove • USA | Pete Fusco • USA | Marko Lohtander • Finland | George San Souci • USA |
| Paul Brienza • USA | Leil Gay • USA | John Macias • USA | Stefan Santl • Germany |
| Jackie Broadhurst • USA | Tuan Kiat Goh • Singapore | Mori Manabu • Japan | John Schmidt • USA |
| Charles Bryant • USA | Rafael Gonzalez • Venezuela | Marlon Manalo • Philippines | Larry Schwartz • USA |
| Francisco Bustamante • Philippines | Brian Groce • USA | Ray Martin • USA | Mike Sigel • USA |
| Lou Butera • USA | Mike Gulyassy • USA | Mike Massey • USA | Ralf Souquet • Germany |
| Sal Butera • USA | Buddy Hall • USA | Grady Mathews • USA | Evgeny Stalev • Russia |
| Jerry Calderon • Venezuela | Quinten Hann • Australia | Keith McCready • USA | Tom Storm • Sweden |
| Linda Carter • USA | Philip Harrison • United Kingdom | Robert Mckenna • United Kingdom | Earl Strickland • USA |
| Alejandro Carvajal • Chile | Dennis Hatch • USA | Jason Miller • USA | Helena Thornfeldt • Sweden |
| Wayne Catledge • USA | Mick Hill • United Kingdom | Joe Minici • Australia | Stan Tourangeau • Canada |
| Michael Cernero • USA | Gerda Hofstatter • Austria | Edwin Montal • Canada | Scotty Townsend • USA |
| Marcus Chamat • Sweden | Thorsten Hohmann • Germany | Carl Morris • United Kingdom | Laurent Travers • France |
| Lee Chenman • China | Patrick Holtz • United Kingdom | Rodney Morris • USA | Shane Van Boening • USA |
| Tony Chohan • USA | Allen Hopkins • USA | Austin Murphy • USA | Nick Van den Berg • The
Netherlands |
| Colin Colenso • China | Raj Hundal • United Kingdom | Dennis Orcollo • Philippines | Nick Varner • USA |
| Karen Corr • United Kingdom | Bobby Hunter • USA | Oliver Ortmann • Germany | Howard Vickery • USA |
| Wade Crane • USA | Mika Immonen • Finland | Ronnie O'Sullivan • United Kingdom | Gerry Watson • Canada |
| Aaron Czetli • USA | William Incardona • USA | Gabe Owen • USA | Monica Webb • USA |
| Shannon Daulton • USA | Bernd Jahnke • Germany | Alex Pagulayan • Philippines | Dallas West • USA |
| Kim Davenport • USA | Zlatko Jakulj • Croatia | Jose Parica • Philippines | Jimmy Wetch • USA |
| Mike Davis • USA | Loree Jon Jones • USA | Daryl Peach • United Kingdom | Adam Wheeler • USA |
| Cory Deuel • USA | Jeremy Jones • USA | Fabio Petroni • Italy | Jimmy White • United Kingdom |
| Danny Diliberto • USA | Sammy Jones • USA | Paul Potier • Canada | Charlie Williams • USA |
| John Di Toro • USA | Tammy Jones • USA | Shawn Putnam • USA | John Wims • Australia |
| Robin Dodson • USA | Markus Juva • Finland | Ivica Putnik • Croatia | Johl Younger • Australia |
| Ernesto Dominguez • USA | Ryan Keller • USA | Jim Raney • USA | Michael Zimmerman • USA |
| Max Eberle • USA | | | |

THE BIG WINNERS?

Who will top the IPT's money list at the end of the year? Who are the front-runners and dark horses? Glad you asked.

BD staffers weighted the key qualities of a great

8-ball player and factored in recent performances (including 2005's IPT King of the Hill) to find the five most likely future millionaires. Then we turned to the ultimate expert — the Magic 8-Ball — for its ruling.

TOP DOGS: *BD* Predicts the First Five on the 2006 Money List

PLAYERS	WHY?	SO FAR IN 2006	MAGIC 8-BALL
 Johnny Archer, 37 • USA	"The Scorpion" has been solid this year, and who can argue with six Player of the Year awards? He was the highest-finishing American at King of the Hill (fifth, not counting Sigel), and pool's poster-friendly family man is finally motivated enough to ditch the golf clubs and practice some.	Titles: SML 9-Ball Open, Music City Open; 2ND- EnjoyPool.com Open.	"Outlook good"
 Efren Reyes, 51 • Philippines	We're cheating a little here, because Reyes is guaranteed at least \$100,000 as the reigning King of the Hill. But that's just the point; "The Magician" proved himself the best of the best in 2005. No one has more pool smarts and shots, or experience playing for big money. Post-Lasik surgery, he's been awesome.	Titles: Derby City One-Pocket, San Miguel Asian 9-Ball (Vietnam); 3RD- EnjoyPool.com Open	"Very doubtful."
 Thorsten Hohmann, 27 • Germany	The ultra-consistent "Hitman" has played as well as anyone over the last 18 months, and his world straight-pool title in June showed off his pattern play and rock-solid mental game. He also has an 8-ball title at the 2004 European Pool Championship. His best quality and worst enemy: a perfectionist streak.	Titles: World Straight Pool Championship, Turning Stone Classic; 2ND- UPA Pro Championships.	"Without a doubt."
 Ralf Souquet, 37 • Germany	We bet you didn't know that Ralf has 10 8-ball titles at the European Pool Championships. It's his favorite game. And "The Kaiser" is on a huge roll this year, with several major titles already. With his unflappable mental game in gear, this could be a career-defining year for the nicest guy in pool.	Titles: Derby City 9-Ball, EnjoyPool.com Open, World Pool Masters.	"Better not tell you now."
 Dennis Orcollo, 27 • Philippines	Who? The unheralded Filipino has been tearing up the West Coast circuit, and he cruised undefeated at the mammoth IPT qualifier at Hard Times Billiards (thumping heavyweights Oliver Ortmann, Go Takami, and Roman Hybler). Sporting the typical Filipino qualities (creativity and <i>cojones</i>), he's the real deal.	Titles: Reno Open, U.S. Bar Table 8-Ball Championship, Hard Times Jamboree.	"Signs point to yes."

WATCH OUT: Strong Contenders and Up-and-Comers



Jason Miller • USA

The surprise Master of the Table winner at Derby City this year plays all games well, and he earned his IPT tour card with an undefeated run at the Louisville qualifier. Creative and tough-minded.



Francisco Bustamante • Philippines

With the best break on tour and a third-place finish at King of the Hill, you'd expect Busty to be among the elite. But he hasn't shown his face at any big events this year. What's up?



Nick Van den Berg • Netherlands

He's developed a career of solid finishes in major events, and was runner-up at the 2005 World 8-Ball Championships. Also strong at straight pool, "El Nino" will burst out of the IPT pack.



Marlon Manalo • Philippines

Manalo won his first 17 matches at the King of the Hill before finishing fourth. If he can develop a killer instinct, he'll be the heir to Reyes' throne, if Reyes ever stops winning.



Shane Van Boening • USA

Wiry and wise beyond his years, Van Boening from South Dakota looks and plays like a young Johnny Archer. He's already a three-time VNEA national 8-ball champion.

BLIND-SIDERS: Our Dark Horse Picks



Stan Tourangeau • Canada

Probably the best 8-baller in Canada, Tourangeau has long dominated the annual BCA and VNEA Nationals here in the States. How is he on 9-footers? You play him.



Karen Corr • U.K. (N. Ireland)

She might be a smidge slower than Allison Fisher, but hard-working Corr seems more hungry now. She smoked several big-timers at King of the Hill before her mental game bogged down; she'll be ready for this.



Ike Runnels • USA

The ageless Runnels owns an untold number of national league 8-ball titles, and the reedy body of a 16-year-old "X Games" champ. A great money player, this guy has huge heart.



David Alcaide • Spain

Alcaide went undefeated at the ultra-tough European qualifier with an average score of 10-5. Better at 8-ball than 9-ball, he finally has a venue to show his stuff.



Darren Appleton • U.K.

Ranked No. 1 in the world at English 8-ball, Appleton is already a bit of a legend in England. He snapped off the Grand Master Singles title at this year's BCA Nationals. Also beware his countryman and running-mate Mick Hill.

The Pool Prognosticators

For good measure, we asked some prominent pool insiders to weigh in with their Top 5 picks, and feelings about the rest of the field.

JERRY FORSYTH, JOURNALIST/COMMENTATOR

■ TOP FIVE: Efren Reyes, Johnny Archer, Ralf Souquet, Ronnie O'Sullivan, Marlon Manalo
 ■ COMMENTS: "My 'surprise' is O'Sullivan.



O'SULLIVAN

His reputation as a winner and champion brings a fear factor to the table that, combined with his 'unknown and unfamiliar pool player' quotient, is a powerful brew."

JAY HELFERT, POOL PROMOTER

■ TOP FIVE: Marlon Manalo, Ralf Souquet, Johnny Archer, Thorsten Hohmann, Alex Pagulayan

■ Comments: "As much as I like the top women like Allison Fisher and Karen Corr, they just don't stack up well with the top men yet. Among the "greats," Earl Strickland is too erratic, and Jose Parica has slipped a notch."



PAGULAYAN

BARRY BEHRMAN, U.S. OPEN FOUNDER

■ TOP FIVE: Efren Reyes, Francisco Bustamante, Johnny Archer, Marlon Manalo, Ralf Souquet
 ■ COMMENTS: "Reyes is still the best

player in the world, and Bustamante has the best break. It's tough to pick just five — guys like Shawn Putnam, Jeremy Jones, Cory Deuel and Gabe Owen are right up there."



PUTNAM

MARK GRIFFIN, BCA POOL LEAGUES OWNER

■ TOP FIVE: Dennis Orcollo, Alex Pagulayan, Efren Reyes, Marlon Manalo, Ralf Souquet
 ■ COMMENTS: "Cory Deuel could win it all,

but he can't stay focused for long enough. ... My dark horses are George Breedlove and Jason Miller. Miller is such a terrific banker, and also good at one-pocket. He's going to surprise a lot of people."



DEUEL

SCOTT SMITH, TOURNAMENT DIRECTOR

■ TOP FIVE: Efren Reyes, Johnny Archer, Dennis Orcollo, Niels Feijen, Ralf Souquet
 ■ COMMENTS: "Trust me — Orcollo is for real. Feijen is all business, and Souquet plays 'moving games' as good as anyone."



ORCOLLO

MIKE HOWERTON, AZBILLIARDS.COM

■ TOP 5: Efren Reyes, Marlon Manalo, Johnny Archer, Ralf Souquet, Mika Immonen

■ COMMENTS: "Mika has long thought of pool players as athletes and he takes his conditioning very serious. That is going to be a big help at these large events with multiple matches every day."



IMMONEN

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HOW TO PLAY THE IPT WAY



POCKETS:
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NOBODY SAID IT WOULD BE EASY ...

LET'S GET one thing straight: The IPT isn't hosting a tea party here. The playing conditions will be brutal, and they'll seriously test players in every aspect of the sport.

Here's what stands between tour members and a potential \$500,000 payday:

- **The ruthless schedule:** None of this crap where if you stay in the winners bracket, you only play twice a day. In the round-robin format, competitors will play four to five times a day, with maybe one break. That's eight to 12 solid hours of pool.

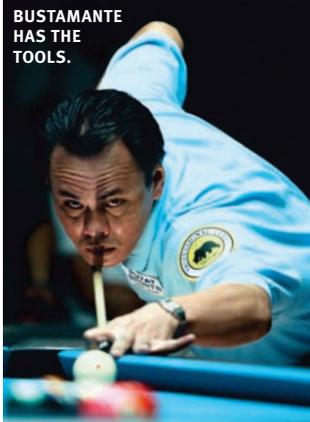
- **Tight tables:** The Diamond IPT Pro-Am tables will

feature pockets that are 4.5 inches wide, maximum.

- **Slow cloth:** The custom-made ungroomed nap cloth from Gorina will be, in essence, "more furry." That means there will be far more friction between the ball and cloth than with slicker worsted cloth. Players need a more powerful stroke, and any spin on the cue ball will disappear after the first rail.

- **Break box:** Pros have become used to breaking from the rail in 9-ball and dropping one or two balls. On the IPT, they'll break from the box at the center of the headstring, and maybe sink a ball 50 percent of the time.

BUSTAMANTE
HAS THE
TOOLS.



WHAT MAKES THE PERFECT PLAYER?

WE ASKED the insiders which qualities were needed to win on the IPT:

- **Strong, controlled break:** Breaking from the box on slow cloth will require a Bustamante-style salvo that can also squat the cue ball. "I think the guys who are able to break the best are going to do the best," said Nick Varner.

- **Physical fitness:** The all-day schedule will favor folks with stamina and strength. Even the slow cloth becomes a factor. "The cloth requires more power, and it will wear most players out over 10 hours," said IPT tour director Deno Andrews.

- **Mental strength:** You can sprint around the table all day, but can you stay focused and make good decisions for 12 hours? "Look at Efren Reyes," said Andrews of the frumpy Filipino. "He's conditioned himself to play that

way. A guy in peak shape might not have the mental game."

- **Strategy:** 8-Ball is about decision-making and execution. One mistake virtually guarantees loss of game, so choosing workable patterns and handling clusters and problem balls are crucial.

- **Cue-ball control:** Players who can pilot the cue ball through 15-ball layouts will dominate. Advantage: Filipinos. "They move the cue ball so much better," said Mike Davis. "Just look at the guys who did well at the King of the Hill — Manalo, Bustamante and Reyes."

- **Pressure-proof:** Who wouldn't get the yips when shooting at an 8 ball for \$500,000? "I think people are going to choke and make mistakes," said Charlie Williams. "It's going to take a little while to get used to the fact that they're playing for so much money."



IMMONEN

FEIJEN

THE ALL-HEALTH CLUB TEAM: IMMONEN AND FEIJEN

SAD TO SAY THAT, although pool likes to consider itself a sport, physical fitness is not a priority for most players. Which is why several prognosticators like the chances of European hunks (and, for pool, hulks) Mika Immonen and Niels Feijen.

Both are world-class pool talents and fairly obsessed with exercise and conditioning. So, to the extent that strength and stamina are prerequisites for IPT suc-

cess, the Fit Finn and Robust Dutchman are serious contenders. (For that matter, German Army vet Thorsten Hohmann is a buff best bet.)

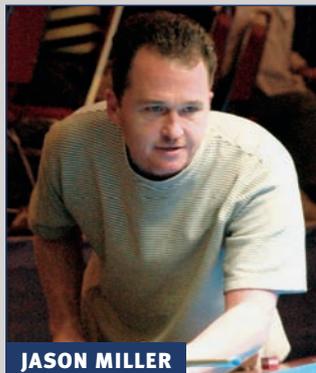
Jerry Forsyth, pool commentator, says of Feijen: "He's such an incredible athlete. If he can develop a bit cockier attitude, a little bit more of that aggressive show-off that you find in the champions, he will earn a spot closer to the top."

BACK TO THE WOODSHED: Here's how some pros are preparing, mentally and physically



AUSTIN MURPHY

"After the BCA junior nationals, my dad and I are going to train every day in the garage, where we have a pool table. We'll practice finding the patterns and the key ball."



JASON MILLER

"I own a sports bar. We have 10 sand volleyball courts, and leagues play every night. I've been trying to put in two or three hours a day on a 9-foot Diamond table, and I've been playing volleyball."



RODNEY MORRIS

"I had two Diamond tables brought into the poolhall [Capone's, Spring Hill, Fla.], and we bought IPT cloth. We're trying to emulate the playing conditions. And I've been running every day and doing push-ups. I've lost 15 pounds so far."



NICK VARNER

"I had a big problem with my contacts [at King of the Hill], so I had Lasik eye surgery. Also, at the same time, my wife was going to a local health club, so I made an appointment and had them develop a workout program for me, for strength and stamina."

KEVIN TRUDEAU'S MASTER PLAN

The IPT's controversial founder sheds light on his business model, which reportedly has the tour running in the black already.

PPOOL HAD SEEN so many shysters over the years that even when a multimillionaire started heaving giant stacks of money at the game, some industry insiders couldn't contain their skepticism.

No way, they said. What's the catch? Why pool? Where's the return? This has to be a trick, or some kind of tax write-off, or *something*.

It didn't help that the multimillionaire in question was media mogul and informal pitchman Kevin Trudeau, who in 2004 had agreed to a \$2 million settlement with the Federal Trade Commission over allegedly false advertising claims.

Was he a con man or pool's rich uncle? Well, on the eve of the history-making inaugural International Pool Tour season, Trudeau is still with us and has made good on many of his seemingly pie-in-the-sky promises.

Under the IPT banner, Trudeau staged a high-profile challenge match in August 2005 between Hall-of-Famers Mike Sigel and Loree Jon Jones which aired on Fox Sports and local stations around the country. In December, the IPT staged the King of the Hill Invitational, which ran as a five-part series on Outdoor Living Network this summer. Trudeau also has established the infrastructure that will make the IPT run in 2006 and (hopefully) beyond, with major TV contracts, dozens of employees, and a full line of IPT merchandise.

"We've done more for pool than anyone before us," Trudeau said in late June. "We're on a major network [OLN], the one that broadcasts the National Hockey League. It's a huge first step."

The IPT's 2006 season promises to cost Trudeau at least \$13.5 million, including \$8.54 million in prize money. In Trudeau's world, that might be chicken scratch, but the skeptics are still out there. It doesn't make sense, they say. How will it work?

Trudeau provided *BD* with an overview of the IPT business model, although he warned that curve balls could be coming. He declined to disclose financial details, but the basics of the model help explain how the tour could be profitable and also benefit Trudeau's other business interests.

IT'S ALL ABOUT BROADCASTING

According to Trudeau, the key to the whole enterprise is media, such as TV and Internet. The IPT needs to get events on the air and seen by as many people as possible.

Why? Because broadcasting provides several advertising vehicles for the IPT, its branded merchandise and Trudeau's many other business interests. It also pro-

vides revenue from companies that buy commercial time or advertising signage in the event arenas.

"The whole tour is about advertising revenue," Trudeau said. "Once you have TV contracts, it's automatically profitable."

Let's take a typical scenario. Let's say that Trudeau (i.e., the IPT) has a program or series of events he would like to broadcast. He approaches a TV network, and the network agrees to pay a licensing fee to broadcast the show. Trudeau also can negotiate for low-cost ads for IPT-related products — such as IPT pool accessories, its Web site and instructional videos — or any of Trudeau's other business interests, such as the "Natural Cures" book and its Web site. In fact, NaturalCures.com has been the IPT's biggest sponsor to date.

The IPT also has opportunities to share in the revenue from advertising that the network sells, Trudeau said. And the tour can sell arena signage, worth millions due to TV exposure.

The IPT receives revenue through its licensed products, such as IPT tables manufactured by Diamond Billiard Products, and IPT cloth by Gorina. Terms of the IPT's contracts with its manufacturers are confidential. But, again, TV helps generate profit: Because these products are used during IPT events, they're receiving free media exposure.

"Now when a guy walks in a billiard store and sees an IPT product, he goes, 'I know that,'" Trudeau said. "It's a lay-up." Trudeau expects IPT-branded products to be available at retailers by year's end.

To date, the most significant TV deal for the 2006 season is with the Eurosport and British Eurosport networks, which will air live broadcasts from all IPT events. Together, the networks reach more than 250 million people. Trudeau also anticipates coverage in the U.S., Asia and Canada.

CHANGE IS INEVITABLE

Here's a curve ball: This business dynamic could change. Trudeau insists that the IPT is still a work in progress, and he anticipates taking whatever opportunities that he can muster or that present themselves.

"For example, I'm in negotiations now for a 24-hour billiard network," he said. "I'm also in discussions for broadcasting nothing on TV and just streaming it online live so that people have to subscribe as a pay-per-view event. There are a bunch of things we are looking at — trying to determine which is the most feasible way to be profitable."

One dependable source of revenue so far has been the tour's sizeable qualifier entry fees. For example, when 10 spots opened up on the 2006 tour roster, IPT officials scheduled five qualifiers and charged each player \$2,000 per qualifier to compete. The five qualifiers together logged 291 entrants. (Many were repeat competitors, and some at early events received breaks on later entry fees.)

A few major expenses for the 2006 season are easy to discern. There's \$8.54 million in prize money, and each event will cost about \$1 million to stage (the King of the Hill event and the 2007 qualifier, held simultaneously, count as a single event). That's \$13.5 million. Trudeau wouldn't reveal such operational costs as employee salaries and benefits.

For the record, Trudeau said, the IPT is already operating at a profit.

"We're ahead of where I thought we would be," he said. "Our intention is to have a 2007 season, and 2008 and 2009 and so on. There is nothing right now that I can see or can imagine that would stop us."

Making tour membership exclusive?

When the IPT was founded, one of its selling points to players was that they could compete on any other tour and in any other event. "They have no restrictions," Trudeau said. That could change after this season.

Trudeau told *BD* in early July that he was pondering making IPT membership exclusive in 2007 and exerting some control over when and where members play. Some exceptions could be made, Trudeau theorized, such as for promoters who use IPT equipment or have arrangements with the IPT.

Trudeau contended that some tour members no

longer wished to play in events that didn't conform to IPT playing conditions, and that the IPT's 2007 schedule couldn't help but conflict with other events. He also was concerned with protecting his investment.

"It may not make sense for me to brand these guys and make them stars and then have other promoters profit from that," he said.

Trudeau pledged to discuss the matter with the players before making a decision in late 2006.

"There are a lot of options," he said. "At the end of the year, we'll reevaluate the situation."

