

Wing Shots

+ QUOTABLE +

"It's easier to get cockroaches out of the woodwork than old pool players."

DOC REED, OWNER OF BONAPART'S RETREAT, ON REPEAT CUSTOMERS (SEE PG. 53)

CRUEL SUMMER

Pool pros weather a three-month dry spell with few major events.

PITY THE poor 1999 Pontiac Sunfire owned by Mike Davis. Nearly every weekend, pool pro Davis drives it up and down the East Coast as he attempts to cash in regional tour events.

From Aug. 25 to Sept. 30, he played in seven different states, where the rewards ranged from \$3,500 on Sept. 9 at the Seminole Florida Pro Tour stop in Jacksonville, Fla., to \$50 on Sept. 30 at the Blaze 9-Ball Tour stop in West Hempstead, N.Y. Fifty bucks — hard to fill up your Sunfire with that kind of money.

Davis has always prided himself on his tough road schedule, but this summer he didn't have much of a choice. Major tournaments with significant prize funds were as scarce as teeth on chickens.

"Summer's always slow, and it was particularly bad this year," Davis said. "For big events, there hasn't been much this year."

Between June 24 and Sept. 30, players on the men's circuit could enter a grand total of one pool event in the U.S. with more than \$10,000 in added prize money that didn't require an invite from promoters — the Joss Northeast 9-Ball Tour's Turning Stone Classic IX, with \$25,000 in added money.

As for events with invited fields, only two others surpassed the \$10,000-added mark: the Predator World 14.1 Straight Pool Championship with \$20,000 added and a 64-player field, and the International Challenge of Champions with a \$50,000 winner-take-all purse for its eight-player field.

It's always been tough to make a living as a pool pro, but this stretch on the tournament calendar has been as dry as a Death Valley creek bed. So, players must find other avenues to make ends meet.

Regional tours have been able to tide

some over until action picked up in the fall. Shannon Daulton took it a step further this year and created a year-round regional tour — The Great Southern Billiard Tour.

"This gives everybody a place to play and keep pool alive," said Daulton, who now works four or five days a week on managing the tour. "We need more events, good



JUSTIN COLLETT

Van Boening, right, and Deuel went head-to-head.

solid events that pay a decent amount of money where players can make a living."

Daulton scheduled more than a dozen events in the inaugural season, primarily in South Carolina, North Carolina, Georgia and Tennessee. The tour is drawing an average of 50 players per event, and each stop promises at least \$1,000 for the winner.

Outside of tours, gambling has always been an option for pool players. Shane Van Boening and Corey Deuel put a modern spin on matching up, agreeing to compete in a two-day, 10-ball challenge match for \$10,000 broadcast live over the Internet.

Produced and promoted by fledgling Web site www.theactionreport.com, The First Action Challenge was streamed live via Internet on Sept. 14-15 from a poolroom in Sioux Falls, S.D.

"We can't do tournaments; we don't



THE BLACK WIDOW ANSWERS YOUR QUESTIONS ABOUT POOL LIFE, LOVE AND ETIQUETTE.

(Q) I play sets for \$20 here and there. There is one guy at my poolhall whom I usually beat and then he says he'll pay me later. Is there a set rule for this kind of thing? I want to show him your answer to let him know how it's supposed to be done.

D. Patterson; Portland, Ore.

(A) I think he very well knows how it's supposed to be done. And frankly, it's on you not to play a guy who hasn't paid you the first time. At first I go on the honor system, but when he breaks that code, then it's "put the money up first" every time. If you gamble with him when he doesn't have the money, then having to remind him is the price you pay for that \$20 greed. You don't need to show your buddy my answer, you're the one making the decision to play him.

(Q) The owner of my local poolroom refuses to go nonsmoking. He says he'll lose all his business; I think he'll get more business from people like me. Why do we have to suffer just because some people have no respect for their own health?

D. Lee; San Francisco, Calif.

(A) Some things in life just aren't fair, and all you can do is make your own choices. Many poolrooms across America that have chosen to go to nonsmoking have lost some business; it's a valid point. They gain a healthier lifestyle and tons of happy nonsmokers. But lots of smokers also drink, and, therefore, the rooms lose money. You're just gonna have to decide how important it is to you.

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WAND WORKSHOP

Custom Cuemakers Reveal the Secrets Behind Their Work

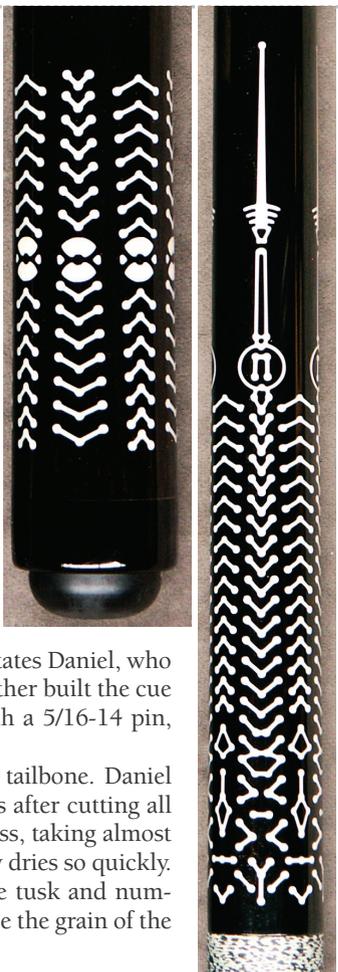
THIS MONTH'S CUEMAKER PRATHER CUE

THE INSPIRATION for the appropriately named "Boney" came from Daniel Prather Jr.'s fondness for runes and mythical geometric stylings. This 1995 collaboration between brothers Jeff and Daniel Prather was originally presented at that December's "Gallery of American Cue Art" in Los Angeles. The African ebony and elephant ivory cue is one of the 18 "Dream Cues" built between 1995 and 1999 by the Prathers.

"The 'Dream Cues' started with a dream our dad had about a cue he wanted to build, called 'Patchwork,' with stitching all around the cue with different colored patches on it," explained Daniel. "A couple of years later [1995] when we started building cues for the Gallery show, it seemed like the perfect thing to describe what we were creating."

There were a lot of challenges in translating the design, which began as a T-Rex dinosaur, into the intricate inlays. "The drawing file may look fantastic on paper but be impossible to wrap around the cue," states Daniel, who was responsible for the design and inlay work. Jeff Prather built the cue with a flat-faced Linen Base Phenolic (LBF) joint with a 5/16-14 pin, and finished it.

The center of the butt features a cross-section of a tailbone. Daniel painstakingly glued in the tiny inlays in small sections after cutting all the female pockets. It was a very labor-intensive process, taking almost a week, partially complicated by the fact that the epoxy dries so quickly. He had cut the ivory bones following the grain of the tusk and numbered the pieces so that if you look carefully you can see the grain of the ivory runs continuously through the design.



PHOTOS & TEXT BY MARTYNE S. BAGHMIEN, CHALKERS.COM, COURTESY THE ROGERS COLLECTION & HUGH TIERNAN

CUE & EH?



LUKE RICHES

RICHES IS THE POINT MAN FOR MATCHROOM SPORT'S HIGH-PROFILE INTERNATIONAL POOL EVENTS, INCLUDING THE MOSCONI CUP AND WORLD POOL CHAMPIONSHIP.

+ Why five players per team at the Mosconi Cup this year instead of six?

Last year, we thought that the format didn't really justify that many players on a team. One guy might play in only a doubles match that day, and that's it. We want to have the players get more involved. If you play just one game a day, you're still a part of it, but the idea is to really get them out there and involved, which is why we reduced the number on each side.

+ Johnny Archer, Rodney Morris and Earl Strickland are already in for the Americans. What about the last two?

The other two guys will be from the UPA rankings. Right now, it looks like Shane Van Boening and Corey Deuel. So unless they are total nightmares at the U.S. Open, they will most likely retain their ranking, and it will probably be those two.

+ Why are you going to winner-breaks this year at the World Pool Championship in Manila?

Last year, we had alternate breaks through the whole event. We just thought it was good for the game that we have the winner break. Last year, Ronnie Alcano got a lead of six or seven games, and you knew because it was alternate breaks that he would win. But the year before that, Kuo Po-cheng was up 16-12, missed a shot, and didn't get back to the table again. ... It also favors the better players. It's not always good to help the lesser players by making it alternate breaks.

+ Do you think the WPC will stay in Asia?

Right now, it looks like we might have it in Asia in 2008. There is a lot more interest there, more money, and greater ratings. If that continues, we'll continue to hold it out there. ... We're expecting a really big crowd in Manila. Compared to the States, it's a mainstream sport. It's in the national consciousness.

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Nov. 4: 2:30, 3:30 and 4:30 p.m. ESPN

2005 WOMEN'S TRICK SHOTS

Nov. 4: 5:30 p.m. ESPN

ON ESPN CLASSIC ...

Nov. 1: '97 WPBA Nationals 10 a.m.
Nov. 2: '98 WPBA Nationals 10 a.m.
Nov. 3: '98 WPBA Nationals 11 a.m.
Nov. 4: '99 T'ment of Champions 1 p.m.
Nov. 4: '99 T'ment of Champions 2 p.m.
Nov. 4: '03 T'ment of Champions 3 p.m.
Nov. 4: '03 T'ment of Champions 4 p.m.
Nov. 4: '04 Women's Trick Shots 5 p.m.
Nov. 4: '04 Women's Trick Shots 6 p.m.
Nov. 4: '04 Women's Trick Shots 7 p.m.

Nov. 6: '98 WPBA Nationals 10 a.m.
Nov. 7: '98 WPBA Classic Tour 10 a.m.
Nov. 8: '99 WPBA Classic Tour 10 a.m.
Nov. 9: '99 WPBA Classic Tour 10 a.m.
Nov. 10: '99 WPBA Classic Tour 11 a.m.
Nov. 13: '99 WPBA Classic Tour 10 a.m.
Nov. 14: '99 WPBA Classic Tour 10 a.m.
Nov. 15: '99 WPBA Classic Tour 10 a.m.
Nov. 16: '99 WPBA Classic Tour 10 a.m.
Nov. 17: '99 WPBA Classic Tour 11 a.m.
Nov. 20: '99 WPBA Classic Tour 10 a.m.
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Nov. 22: '99 WPBA Classic Tour 10 a.m.
Nov. 23: '99 WPBA Classic Tour 10 a.m.
Nov. 24: '99 WPBA Classic Tour 11 a.m.
Nov. 26: '99 WPBA Classic Tour 10 a.m.

BD IN BRIEF

▶ CANADIAN TOUR HITS THE BIG TIME

Now in its third season, the Canadian 9-Ball Tour is showing signs of healthy growth as it climbs among the top regional tours in North America.

The tour jumps from six to eight events this year, and added prize money will rise from \$5,000 to \$10,000 for each event. Tour organizers have opened the fields to international players, so expect to see much tougher competition this year.

In something of a coup for a billiard tour, organizers have secured sponsorship support from two businesses outside the industry: Chapters Indigo Bookstores, the largest retail chain of bookstores in Canada, and Cineplex Entertainment, Canada's largest theatre exhibition company.

"Hopefully, other corporate entities will recognize the untapped benefits that being associated with cue sports offers,

and billiards can take the step to the next level," said Jim Wych, tour founder and promoter.

▶ BIG CHANGES FOR CUE ART GROUP

The Academy of American Cue Art has selected cuemaker Bill Stroud as its new president and embarked on ambitious plans to promote the group and its central focus.

With new board members Will Prout, Dick Abbott and Tony Martino, the AACA has started working toward providing cue-appraisal services and creating a cue museum, cue-buying guide and a new Web site, according to an AACA release.

The museum will debut with a traveling exhibit at the 2008 BCA Expo in Charlotte, N.C. The ACA also is taking over planning for the annual International Cue Collectors Show, a task formerly handled privately by Stroud.

numbers

GAME

\$6.5 million

The greatest amount spent developing a new poolhall on this year's list of top new rooms (see pg. 45).

\$5,000

The least amount spent for a room on the list.

9

Total number of shots taken by the Canadian team in their semifinal loss to Finland, 9-0, at the World Cup of Pool (see pg. 62).

4

Number of matches won by the top four seeded teams at the World Cup of Pool (U.S., Philippines, Germany and Taiwan).

1

Number of non-invitational pool tournaments held between June 24 and Sept. 30 that had a prize fund with more than \$10,000-added.

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CRUEL SUMMER

-continued-

18 have the money,” said site co-creator Justin Collett. “With [the Action Challenge], it’s something that we can wrap our hands around.”

Deuel and Van Boening each put up \$10,000 for the race-to-100 match, Collett said. Van Boening got hot on the first day, taking a 47-30 lead. He coasted to victory on the second day, 100-70.

Some of pool’s biggest names have shifted their efforts to enterprises with more reliable returns.

As *BD* reported in August, Johnny Archer and Kim Davenport have cut back on their playing schedules and invested in a 20,000-square-foot poolroom in Marietta, Ga. Rodney Morris has been trying to break into the beverage business, developing a sports-endurance drink called “Extreme Focus” and new brand of tequila named “Hawaiian Gold.”

Charlie Bryant hopes to transition out of the tournament circuit and work full time in pool coaching. To that end, he has been writing an instruction book, tentatively titled “On the Hill: Powerful Techniques from a Pool Professional.”

Bryant spent much of the summer months developing a business plan for publishing the book and a set of companion DVDs, and seeking financing.

Several factors have contributed to the relative dearth of big-money events this summer. Some are coincidental. For example, the U.S. Open 9-Ball Championship traditionally was scheduled in early September, but promoter Barry Behrman moved it to mid-October this year.

Other promoters have dropped events. The Sands Regency Reno Hotel traditionally has hosted the Reno Open in both June and December, but this year decided to drop the June event for the foreseeable future. Player participation had dropped, and organizers feared conflicts with International Pool Tour events, said Mick McMillan, casino marketing director.

Pool pro Charlie Williams and his Dragon Promotions firm once could be counted on for staging about a half-dozen major domestic events a year. However, Williams has found a lucrative market for pool in Korea, and has focused most of

his energies there for the last two years.

“Korea is really where the potential is for our company and where we think it is for pool,” Williams said.

Some players questioned the viability of the United States Professional Pool Players Association, which still sanctions pro tournaments but currently has no concrete plans to produce future events.

Frank Alvarez, UPA president, told *BD* that the group has refined its business plan and is pursuing major investors as well as potential advertisers. In the ideal situation, the UPA would be able to provide added support to the tournaments that it sanctions, such as aggressive publicity, and also stage an annual slate of its own events.



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