

# POOL & BILLIARD

MAGAZINE

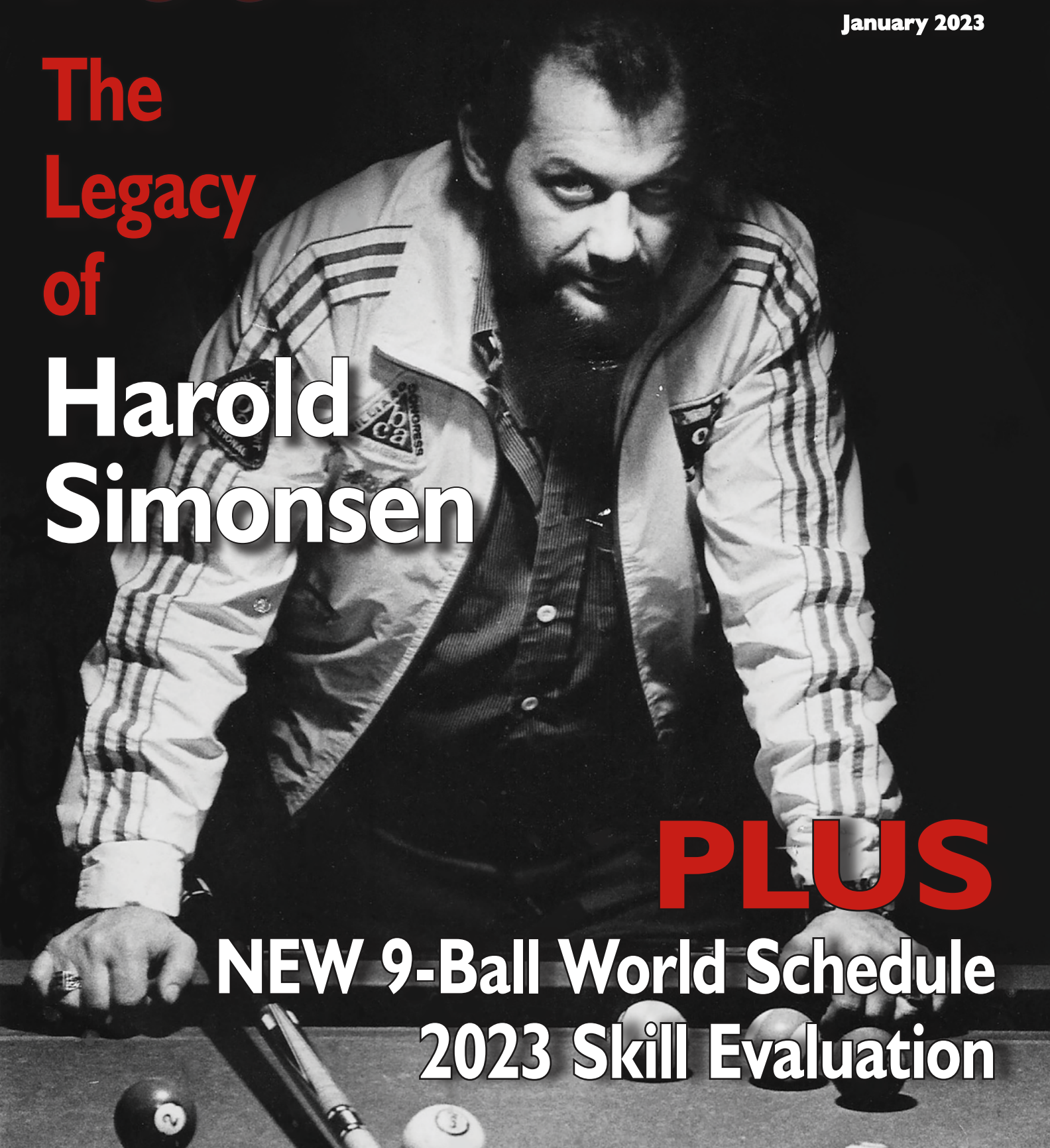
January 2023

The  
Legacy  
of

Harold  
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PLUS

NEW 9-Ball World Schedule  
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# POOL & BILLIARD MAGAZINE

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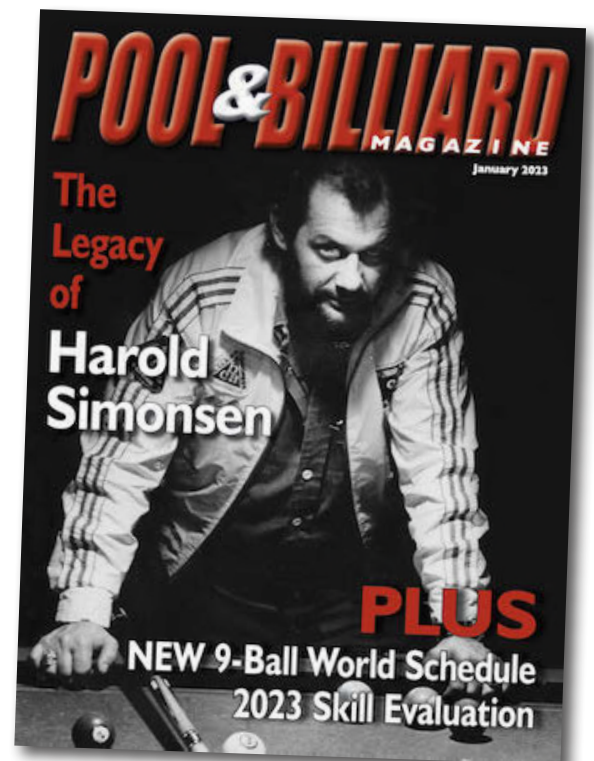
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**SNEAK PEEK**  
**FEBRUARY 2023**  
**PLAYER OF THE YEAR!**

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## Remembering Dad...

Okay, I'm just gonna' lead with it: He'd hate this. All the fuss, all the attention. But when you've done all my dad did in his 81.5 years on this planet, a fuss must be made. And so I'm dedicating this issue to Harold Simonsen, the founder of *Pool & Billiard Magazine* and creator of so much more, that you'll learn a little bit about this month. To be fair to the Players of Year, they'll get their own issue next month; Harold wouldn't want them overshadowed.

I'm going to begin with the brief post I shared on Facebook, the day after his passing, December 26th. On p. 20, you can read about all the amazing things he accomplished in this sport we all love...

***"What we do now echoes in eternity." –Marcus Aurelius***

The world lost one of the good guys yesterday. Harold Simonsen was a father (me and my hubby Jeff, Erik Simonsen and his wife Lori, Kiki Griffis and her hubby Roger, Karin Simonsen Kaltofen and her husband Michael, Ken Simonsen and his wife Wendy, and Johanna Franz and her husband Brian) and (he's smiling at this) to his "fester daughters" Vicki Paski and Ewa Laurance.

He was grandfather to 16 remarkable grands: Megan, Jacob, Nicholas, Jessica, Zachary, Julianna, Michael, Adam, Krysta, Kire, Aetherial, Hannah, Elizabeth, Roger, Sol, and Mia; and 7 great-grandchildren, Neeko, Bella, Giovanni, Evelyn, Jett, Draxel, and Onyx.

And he was a husband, a brother, a son, a friend, a cousin, a veteran, and to be honest, a father to the whole of the women's pro billiard tour at one point.

But beyond all those precious echoes, dad was pure inspiration. He used to say, "If you want a thing done, go out and do it." But he didn't just talk the talk.

His passions led him to create endless echoes: a billiard club (Harold's Pool Parlour); *Pool & Billiard Magazine* w/ yours truly; a racing stable (Had Her Share stables); the WPBA's major market Classic Tour; the early junior billiard programs that became Billiard Education Foundation; a 4-acre garden retreat from an old house and shed; and even after being diagnosed with stage 4 stomach cancer, he helped me and hubby convert unused office space into Main Street Reads, our town bookstore in Summerville.

In short, it seemed there was nothing he couldn't do or create, except (dammit) a cure for the c-word. Even in his last weeks, he'd joke, "I think I'll be fine once I get rid of this little bit of cancer."

And while his health faded, his passions did not. Just a month ago, hubby and I, along with our kids Megan and Jake (and Jake's beautiful wife Tatiana) were able to take dad with us on an incredible "bucket list" trip to South Africa. We spent ten glorious days laughing, joking, eating, and being able to witness and photograph the most amazing wildlife this planet has to offer. A lifetime of memories made for all of us.

We had a wonderful Christmas Eve together and then he slept through most of Christmas. But he was there for it all, the laughter and the homemade ravioli and cookies and all the love, so much love in that room...

The following morning he left us, headed to that great Six Pocket game in the sky (which, yeah, he created). And while he'll be missed by so many, his passion and his influence will indeed echo through all of us in eternity.

Thanks, daddy, for inspiring us all.  
***And now, a very HAPPY NEW YEAR to you and yours, with all best wishes for your health and prosperity. As always, 'til next month, stay safe and shoot straight...***



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## Nine Ball World Ranking Schedule Boasts \$3 Million in Prizes!

The 2023 Nineball World Ranking schedule is provisionally set and will feature a minimum of 30 ranking events globally, including 12 events from Matchroom in ground-breaking news that sees the largest calendar of Nineball events with room to grow!

Ranking events will take place in all four corners of the world thanks to new and existing partnerships as Matchroom Pool continues to offer a transparent, ambitious, and unified plan for Nineball players.

2023 will begin with back-to-back events in the USA with the Turning Stone Classic XXXIV (January 5-8) in Verona, NY followed up by the Diamond Derby City Classic Nineball Division (January 25-28) in Indiana ahead of the first blue ribbon event on the schedule from Matchroom.

The World Pool Championship 2023 is set to take place in Kielce, Poland from February 1-5 as the best 128 players on the Nineball World Rankings go toe-to-toe for a slice of the \$325,000 prize fund and the chance to become champion of the world.

Matchroom's flagship events will be the backbone of 2023 alongside UK broadcast partner Sky Sports.

The World Pool Masters is set to take place from May 6-9 before the UK Open (May 30 to June 4). Spain will look to defend their World Cup of Pool crown June 20 – 25, while Premier League Pool will return as Albin Ouschan guns for the crown for a third straight year. The European Open gets underway at Hotel Esperanto, Fulda in Germany from August 8-13 ahead of the historic US Open Pool Championship at Harrah's Resort,

Atlantic City (September 25-30). As ever, the schedule will build up to the big one, the 2023 Mosconi Cup as the USA look to snatch the trophy back from Europe's hands for the first time since 2019.

For the first time, Matchroom will also launch an additional two new multi-table open events in 2023 including the inaugural Asian Open and the English Open, each boasting a total prize fund of \$200,000, 256 size player fields, and worldwide television exposure.

Two new Junior events will be launched alongside the SVB Junior Open with more details to come in the new year.

Matchroom's commitment to offering opportunities to players worldwide has been underlined with a new strategic partnership with Asian Pool

Promotions as well, which sees the launch of the Nineball Asian Tour. Working with Matchroom, the APP will offer players across Asia and beyond competition for vital ranking points with events in Singapore, Indonesia, Vietnam, the Philippines, Hong Kong-China, Thailand, and Chinese Taipei in 2023.

Six events from EuroTour will feature for the second year with the EPBF's plans including ranking events in Estonia from February 18-20, and St Johann in Austria from April 14-17.

Other stops include Tampere, Finland in May before Slovenia in late July and October. Italy's Treviso will wrap up EuroTour tournaments for 2023. Visit <https://matchroompool.com/schedule/> to see the full schedule of upcoming events!

jan	5-8	Turning Stone Classic XXXIV	USA		jun	T3C	Philippines Open	Philippines	jun	T3C	Chinese Taipei Open	Chinese Taipei	
jan	25-28	Derby City Classic Nineball Division	USA		jun	T3C	Nineball Balkan Tour	T3C	jun	T3C	Dynamic Billard Slovenia Open	Slovenia	
feb	1-5	World Pool Championship	Poland		jul	T3C	Singapore Open	Singapore	aug	T3C	APF Asian Championship	T3C	
feb	18-20	Dynamic Billard Tallin Open	Estonia		aug	T3C	European Open Pool Championship	Germany	aug	T3C	Omega 9-ball Tour	USA	
mar	18-19	Nineball Balkan Tour	T3C		aug	T3C	Turning Stone Classic XXXVIII	USA	sep	T3C	Capital City Classic	USA	
apr	14-17	Dynamic Billard St Johann I.P. Open	Austria		sep	T3C	The Connecticut Open	USA	sep	T3C	US Open Pool Championship	USA	
apr	19-21	PRP Nineball Open	Spain		oct	T3C	Asian Open Pool Championship	T3C	sep	T3C	25-30	US Open Pool Championship	USA
apr	T3C	Indonesia Open	Indonesia		oct	T3C	Dynamic Billard Lasko Open	Slovenia	oct	T3C	21-23	Asian Open Pool Championship	T3C
apr	22-23	First Break Cafe Open	USA		oct	T3C	International Open	USA	nov	T3C	3-6	Dynamic Billard Treviso Open	Italy
may	4-7	World Pool Masters	T3C		nov	T3C	Dynamic Billard Treviso Open	Italy	nov	T3C	20-25	World Cup of Pool	T3C
may	T3C	Premier League Pool	T3C										
may	T3C	Mezz Bucharest Open	Romania										
may	T3C	English Open Pool Championship	UK										
may	T3C	Vietnam Open	Vietnam										
may	27-29	Dynamic Billard Tampere Open	Finland										
jun	30-4	UK Open Pool Championship	UK										
jun	20-25	World Cup of Pool	T3C										

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## Don't Cross Over the Line

by Ewa Mataya Laurance

*Ewa Mataya Laurance has been a top player on the WPBA tour for over twenty years and is one of the sport's most famous personalities. She is in both the BCA and WPBA Hall of Fame, is a former WPA World 9-Ball champion and the reigning women's world trick shot champion, and co-author of the Complete Idiot's Guide to Pool & Billiards with Thomas C. Shaw.*

**I**n pool we're always looking at percentages. Can I make that combination or bank the object ball or should I play safe?

Combination shot decisions are easy if the balls are close together and pretty much in line so I figure it's a high percentage shot and I go for it. If the balls were separated by a foot or two and not really in line then my "make percentage" changes.

I've never heard a player mutter, "The way I'm playing today the two-nine combination is a 47.5% make percentage, but banking the two ball is a 51.8% shot, and I'm a Pisces and the moon is in ..."

Most of us do this without messing with numbers and endless statistics, but the idea is up there rolling around in our heads.

When making a shot we often have a choice on how we get position on the next ball. You can play the percentages here, too, by simply keeping one concept in mind: If you can avoid it, don't cross the line. That means, the line of attack to your next object ball

The next ball – the two ball in the illustration below – can be thought of as being on a line. Draw a mental line from the intended pocket (the side) through the two ball, to the top cushion. That's the line.

If you were to pocket the one ball with a slightly low center ball hit the cue ball will naturally go toward the area

behind the two ball, and if the speed is perfect your position will be perfect.

If a lot of people get out of line and lose games because of that little word.

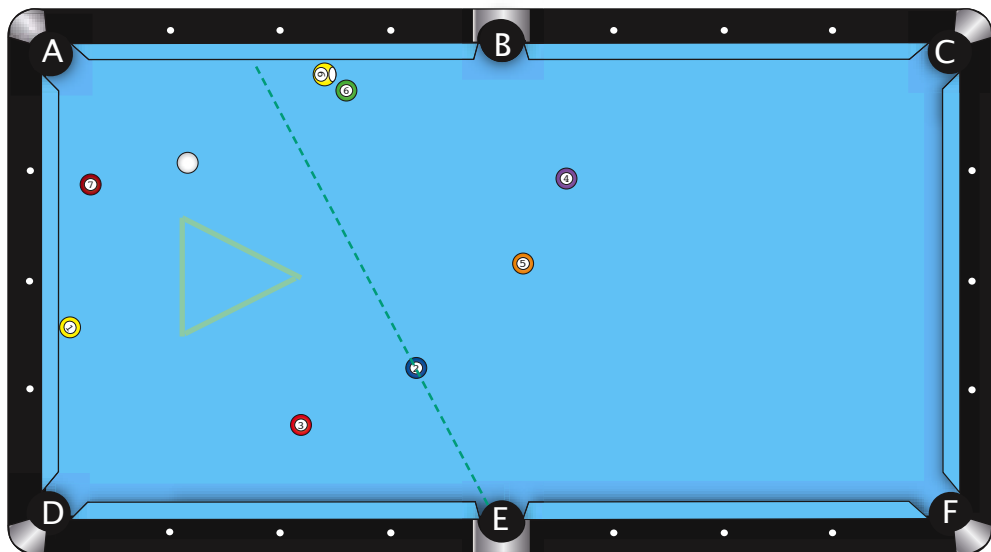
In this illustration it would be better to shoot the one with draw or follow – and a touch of right spin. In the first instance the cue ball will come back to the long rail and bounce toward the two ball, coming into the angle of attack, which is ideal.

In the second instance the cue ball will go forward and come off the closer long rail, away from the angle of attack.

In both cases the cue ball is traveling to its final resting place along a line that is very roughly parallel to the position line you drew from the pocket to the two ball. You don't have to worry near as much about cue ball speed and you're much more likely to have a decent shot on the two than if you had crossed the line. Plus, you now have a natural angle to get on the three without having to send the cue ball a great distance.

Make this example a principle in your game, and then look for opportunities to get shape without crossing the line.

*NOTE: One of the most important people in my life, Harold (Simonsen) was a great friend and a "Godfather" to the WPBA. More memories in the past 40 years than I can possibly recall; I will miss you so much. Thanks for always being you, making us laugh, and teaching us all the meaning of "People do what they want to do."*



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# Official Annual Skills Evaluation Drill

by Dominic Esposito

*The Drill Instructor, Dominic Esposito, is a world-ranked PBA Master Instructor. Be sure and watch "The Clinic" LIVE on facebook.com/thedrillinstructor every Tuesday night 8:00 p.m. EST. Want to see it all? Visit: www.thedrillinstructor.us*

Every year I come to you asking, "If you could increase your playing skills in the next year as much as they increased in the past year would you be happy with that progress?"

Did your playing skills increase in the past twelve months as much as you planned or hoped they would? How do you know if that they did? You can't possibly answer my question if you had no starting basis point, data designed to determine your actual skill building progress.

You now have that chance to affirm and confirm that your next pool year (and each year thereafter) will prove that your pool skills have grown and by how much.

Once again, The Drill Instructor and Pool & Billiard Magazine are proud to officially challenge you with The Happy New Year Annual Playing Skills Evaluation article. It's structured so you can start right now. If this is your first year, you're invited to jump in at any time and get your playing skills evaluation done.

This drill is the official annual evaluation drill. However, you are allowed to use this drill skills evaluation anytime regardless of your game playing preference. However, doing this drill for your annual evaluation will give you year-by-year consistency for determining your true Pro Skill Drills growth.

Use this official Drill Session Record Keeper card shown at right. Copy it, use a

personal journal, or get a complete Practice Record Keeping Journal from the website. What's key is that you write it down.

The setup shown below is drill specific; the Official Playing Skills Evaluation Drill tests several game formats of play. This drill will test a broad range of your ball making, position playing, and complex shot skills including open and close table play, long and short banks, combinations and caroms, jumping, and who knows what else you could need. Evaluate whatever game formats you generally play.

## 8 Ball Players Try 10 Attempts Only:

Alternative A: Only play solids or play only stripes for all 10 drill attempts. Or...

Alternative B: Play the solids five times then switch and play the stripes five times.

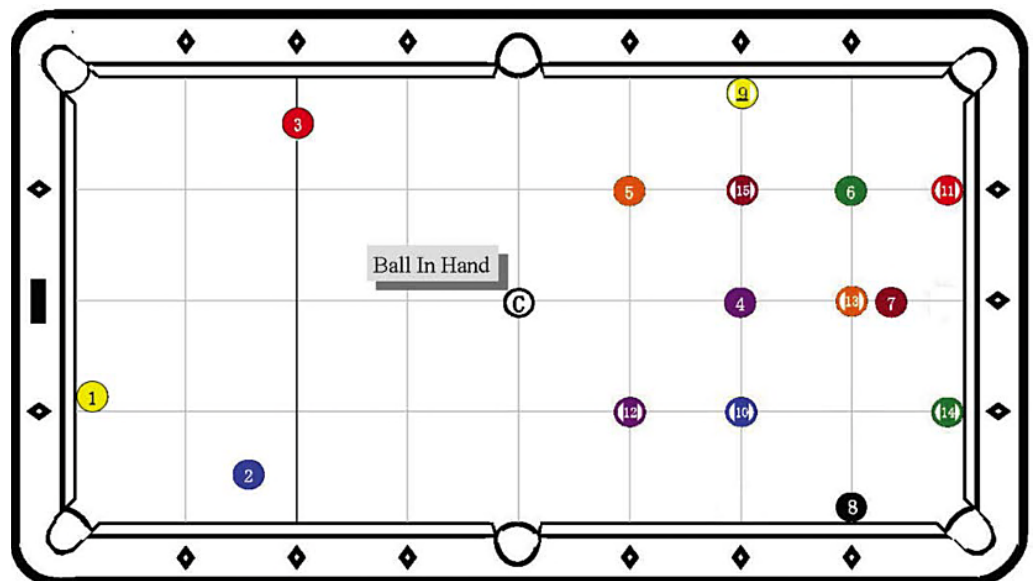
1. Start with ball-In-Hand.
2. Select solids or stripes.
3. Attempt the drill ten full times.
4. Do not miss, but you may hit into other balls.

5. Should you miss a ball, STOP, make a note how many balls you successfully ran before missing.

6. After marking your scores, reset the table and start the next attempt of the 10.

## 9 and 10 Ball Players:

1. Start each rack with ball in hand.
2. Run the rack out completely in the normal Rotation game format of 9 or 10 Ball.



## Drill Session Record Keeper

- Make a *Slash Line* in the box at the start of each attempted drill.
- Change the *Slash Line* it into a **X** each time you successfully complete that drill.

Drill No.	Day or Date	Start Time	End Time	Total Time
↓				
#				
	No. of Success	÷	No. of Attempts	= TDI Success % Shooting Rate
#	#		#	%

## Permission Granted To Duplicate This Page

- Use that specific rotation of the balls as your PSD drill ten times.
- Do Not Miss, but again, you may make legal contact with any other balls.
- Should you miss a ball, STOP THE DRILL. Make a note how many balls you successfully ran before missing.
- After marking your score, re-set the table and start your next attempt out of the ten.

### You must Keep Track of Two Critical Scores.

First, how many times out of 10 attempts did you successfully complete the drill without missing a ball?

Second, add up the total number of balls successfully run for the 10 full attempts. Then, divide them by ten. This is your actual ball-run count and is added onto the end of the Success % Shooting Rate score.

For example, you might end up with finished scores that look like this:

- 8-Ball =  $6/10.5 = 60.5$  PSDR (Pro Skill Drills Ranking) With a .5 Ball Run Average
- 9-Ball =  $5/10.4 = 50.4$  PSDR (Pro Skill Drills Ranking) With a .4 Ball Run Average
- 10-Ball =  $7/10.7 = 70.7$  PSDR (Pro Skill Drills Ranking) With a .7 Ball Run Average

As often as you take this exam, do the same performance exercise to know that you did get better, and by exactly how much. Good luck and a Happy New Year to you and yours!

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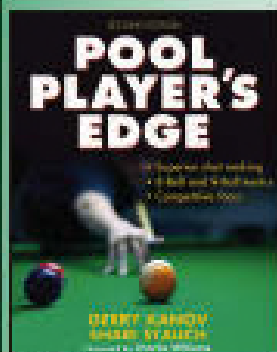
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# Time to Get Our Games Back...

by Tommy Hill and T.J. Hill

*Tommy Hill is a former touring professional player. He played on both the Professional Billiards Tour and the Camel Pro Tour from the late eighties through the nineties. Tommy retired from playing pool and settled down in 2000 when his oldest son TJ was born. Tommy is now an advanced level instructor with the PBLA and still enjoys playing competitively.*

*TJ Hill is an up and coming California pool player. He competes regularly on the Mezz west coast tour and he also competes in other local and regional tournaments. TJ's goals include becoming a touring professional pool player. TJ enjoys sharing his skills and knowledge with others, and in 2019 he became the youngest player to ever become a PBLA instructor..*

**T**he human brain is a magnificent thing. There is a common thought out there that humans only use ten per cent of our brains during our lifetime. This is not true. In fact, most of our brain is active at all times even when we are sleeping or resting and especially when we are playing pool. Let's examine that!

**Tommy:** As an instructor I give a lot of lessons, including lessons on mental toughness. Over the years I have had many players come to me asking me how to overcome the negative thoughts in their heads while in competition and I have always been there to help out the best I could.

I'll tell you what though; until you experience a real mental breakdown within your own game you just really don't know what these players are going through. Meaning, it's almost impossible to help them get over it. I've learned that it's a very hard thing to go through and there are just simply no words or drills, mental or physical, that will magically put an end to it.

Now a confession: I have recently been battling with myself and my own game. Somehow, I have just lost all confidence in myself at the pool table. When it gets down to the last few balls I'm just dogging everything. True, as I am getting older my eyesight has diminished some and I can't see the longer shots as well as I once could. I don't feel that's part of the problem but maybe deep down it is.

**TJ:** Fortunately for me I haven't experienced any problems with my confidence level at the pool table. This month's topic isn't an easy one for me and I will mostly let dad handle this one. I can say though that it has been a couple of years now that dad has been complaining about not being able to see the balls as well. We all know his eyes are getting worse and even though he won't admit it, that has to be affecting him mentally.

If every time you miss a long cut shot

you complain that you can't see the contact point, sooner or later your brain will pick up on that. Missing those shots will become the new norm no matter what your eyes are telling you to do. By complaining so often, missing those shots is what you've trained your brain to do.

**Tommy:** TJ is right and maybe it's time for me to go see the eye doctor again and update my prescription. So enough about me, how about you? Any of you out there having confidence problems while at the table? Afraid your opponent will miss a two or three ball because you don't think you can get out with that many balls on the table anymore? Having a hard time finding the patterns? Or my personal favorite, do you ever hope your opponent hits a ball he/she is kicking at because you're afraid you won't know what to do with ball-in-hand?

No joke. I've worked with players that have had all of these problems. And I'm talking about high skill level players that have lost confidence in their games.

Have you ever heard someone say "I used to play better?" Well I have, many times and I used to laugh. But now I'm here to tell you that I used to play better. I am a 580 Fargo right now and thirty years ago I played well enough to make a living.

So, if you're in the same boat and would like to start playing back up to your true abilities, how can you do that? In my humble opinion I believe we have to begin with an honest assessment of where we were in life when we played at our best, compared to our current situation. As an example, I am 40 pounds heavier than I was back in my twenties. I make a good living now. Back then I had an old Dodge Dakota pickup with a camper shell. I drove myself all over the country to play pool. I slept in the back on an air mattress and ate out of my ice chest. In other words, I was hungry and needed to win. And finally, as we said earlier, my eyesight isn't as good and I'm simply getting older.

None of us can beat father time so

we can't beat getting older but doesn't getting wiser come with getting older? So maybe we can try playing smarter. If you are a bit heavy let's all lose a few pounds.

you've paid to help is proactive enough to kickstart your game again.

TJ: But beware of instructors that say they're experts on the mental game.

out there and they might be great, these are simply the ones we have here at home to use when we need them. Dad will read *Unstoppable* before going to a big tournament. He has been struggling lately with his confidence at the table and he has asked me to bring it back from my house for him to read again. Hopefully it will help and he will start feeling better before we head to Vegas for the BCA in February.

Tommy: There are all kinds of reasons for developing a mental block while playing pool. Problems at work or at home, financial issues, can all impact us. It's very difficult to play at your best when you have bothersome things on your mind. Typically, when that problem is resolved your game goes back to normal.

The first step to playing back to a higher potential again is finding out what the problem is so you can attack it at its core. When you've lost confidence in your abilities that's when you need to step back and analyze what is happening in order to try and fix it. If anyone out there is having this issue, please feel free to email me and we can discuss it. Maybe I can help you find an instructor in your area that can help or maybe I will be able to help you out myself.

Well folks here we are again. Happy New Year to all. This past year was a tough one for sure. Covid, business closings, loss of jobs, gas prices and not being to visit loved ones in the hospital just to name a few could all be a part of struggling to play your best pool.

I hope 2023 is a prosperous year for everyone full of wealth, good health and good times all around. If anyone would like to contact TJ or myself you can drop us an email at [tommytj@aol.com](mailto:tommytj@aol.com) until next month folks stay safe out there and keep that cue ball rollin'...

**Editor's Note:** *Look to mental advice from other sports as well: Inner Tennis is one example of a great book that can apply to our pool games...*



### ***Need to get your best game back? Begin by analyzing the circumstances when and where you played your best!***

If you make a good living quit your darn job, sell the house and go on the road.

Okay, I'm just kidding, do NOT quit your job, but perhaps give yourself new incentives for winning. Make a deal with your spouse that every time you win the weekly tournament they make your favorite meal or something like that. Last, If you feel some of your problems are in your mind you need to seek help from an instructor or coach to get over that. Sometimes just the process of talking it out with someone

Although there are some really good ones out there most are not. There are however a few very good books on the market. My dad has a very extensive library on pool and billiards. Some of the good books that we like and recommend are *Zen Pool* by Max Eberle and *Pleasures of Small Motions* by Bob Fancher. Both *Point the Way* and *I Came to Win* by The Monk are good. And dad's favorite is a book called *Unstoppable* by Anthony Beeler.

I would imagine there are other books

# The Dragon's Lair



## Fond Memories of Harold

by Charlie Williams

A pool icon got his wings on December 26th. Harold Simonsen was the co-founder of this iconic *Pool & Billiard Magazine*, which I grew up reading since I was 12 years old. Later it was an honor to become a writer for the *P&B* team.

Harold also owned a poolroom in Chicago, helped open a bookstore in South Carolina, and was one of the core early leaders in the Women's Professional Billiard Association (WPBA), as well as a supporter of me and my company Dragon Promotions. More importantly, Harold was a great family man who left a legacy of sons, daughters, sixteen grandchildren and seven grandchildren, nearly a small town worth!

My fondest memory of Harold is when I visited him and Shari in their beautiful South Carolina homes, and was "coerced" into a 3-way Chicago bank pool game (Six Pocket, a game Harold created). I

was treated to a home cooked dinner. And the following morning Harold himself

cooked us breakfast (I took a photo as proof), and we sat outside enjoying nature while eating. And yes, he educated me as we discussed pool history and future.

Even when I retired from professional pool, and left the pool industry to go off and work on tennis productions, NFL etc., Harold would always shoot me personal notes of encouragement and congratulations.

If you've been around pool long I'll bet you're a *The Color of Money* fan, so you may already know he was a consultant to the film as well as the tournament director in the final scenes. Pretty cool sharing the screen with Paul Newman and Tom Cruise! He'd always laughed that he didn't get much acting work after that. "I'm kinda' typecast as a tournament director, not much call for that," he'd grin.

Thank you, Harold for making an impact that will forever be noted in the annals of pool history.

*You'll always be in my Hall of Fame...*



*Hanging at Harold's always included a few games of pool and a big breakfast!*

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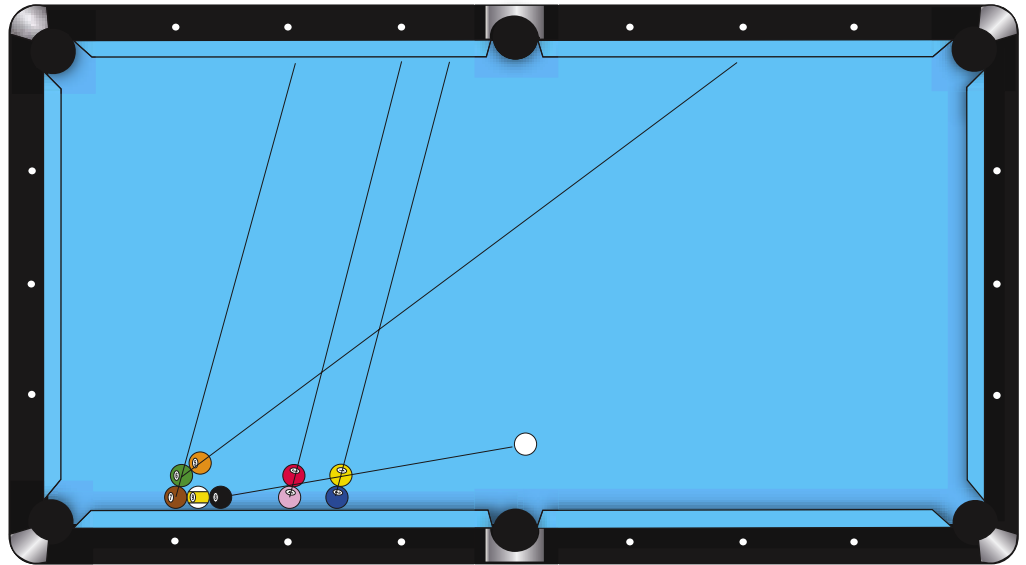
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## Straight From the Book

by Nick Nikolaidis

*Want to see how Nick makes this shot? Log on to: [poolmag.com](http://poolmag.com), OR watch it **HERE** in your Ezine! If you have a shot you'd like Nick to try, send it to us at [shari@www.poolmag.com](mailto:shari@www.poolmag.com).*



**T**rick Shot competitions can be fun and challenging. This month's shot was chosen from a competition for its color, entertainment and challenging aspects. We will be playing 9-Ball in this month's shot. Trick shots have always been a colorful and entertaining part of the sport. Without exception, this is one for your friends at the local bar, pool hall or even your game room at home.

The setup is not difficult, simply follow the diagram and make sure the alignment of balls

is correct as well as contact points between balls. Where you see them touching on the diagram, assure they are frozen on the table.

Strike the cue ball with a follow creating a chain reaction: one-two combo, billiard into the three-four combo, billiard into the five, six and seven, clearing the path for an eight-nine combo. Your biggest challenge will be the follow on the cue ball. The harder you, the less accurate you become. Stay focused.

**Best of luck and Happy New Year!**

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# The Legacy of P&B Four

**B**ack in the early 70s, I remember my dad and grandpa talking about opening a billiard club. Me and my cousins would play chess in the corner and jump up to rack the balls for their long 14.1 games at our home or grandpa's. I thought it was pretty boring, but dad loved everything about the game. Ma used to joke that he'd come home from work and kiss the pool table before any of his family.

I got my first taste of the pro scene a few years later when dad took me to the BCA's U.S. Open in Chicago. I met several top players, including Joe "the Meatman" Balsis, Luther Lassiter, and the incomparable Jean Balukas. But the pool bug hadn't bitten me, not yet, not like dad.

Grandpa passed away before they could open their club. Then, in 1976, an old billiard club in Glen Ellyn, IL was closing and dad scraped up the cash to buy their Brunswick Gold Crowns, table lights and benches. He found a 4,000

sq. ft. space in unincorporated Roselle, and opened Harold's Pool Parlour.

It was a time when no one was opening new businesses, let alone pool halls. Friends suggested he'd survive if he got a liquor license but no, dad wanted to be sure kids could come in and learn to play, too, including his own. With the help of my mother and grandmother, and me and my brother cleaning up on weekends, it survived without liquor, and soon became a popular weekly tournament spot, Harold's "Last Stop" on Sunday nights.

And finally, suddenly, I got it. Here I was taking for granted that I had a front row seat. I got to play and learn from amazing players, including Don "Preacher" Feeny, Dallas West and Gerry Kanov. Yep, having a dad who owned a pool hall was cool.

But dad wanted more for the sport than just being a proprietor. He got together with local club owners to form the Midwest Pool Classic Association. It

organized tournaments and rankings for players and soon other club owners in other states became interested, including John Ogonowski, proprietor of Loree Jon Billiards in New Jersey, Barry Behrman, owner of Q-Master Billiards in Norfolk, VA, and Jerry Briesath with CueNique Billiards in Madison, WI. Rooms from Michigan and Colorado and California soon joined in the fun and what was the MPCA quickly became the NPCA, National Pool Classic Association, spearheaded by room owners wanting to make a difference for the future of pool.

The NPCA decided to hold a national tournament, with dozens of state qualifiers, or players could earn participation points throughout the year in room events to qualify. Dad became NPCA's first president, and urged the board to also conduct a national High School championship (CJ Wiley and Dion Wooley won the first and each went on to pro fame.)

Event producers began to see the potential in doing bigger events and soon it wouldn't have to be up to just room owners to make it happen. Dad could see the NPCA wouldn't need to continue, but what he conjured up in its place was to lead me toward a future I couldn't have imagined.

I walked into the pool room one day to tell dad that (not yet husband) Jeff and I just got tix to fly to Hawaii for a week. But he had news of his own. "We have this big list of players and clubs, and no one's doing a tournament clearinghouse so everyone's dates are getting stepped on. And no one's doing a pro player ranking so events can't be seeded. It's a free-for-all out there."

His proposed solution was to create a newsletter, the *Pool & Billiard Scratch Sheet*, that would offer a player ranking system, as well as assistance to club owners and event



The Simonsens gather around the family table (from left): Erik, Lori, Harold, Karin, Michael Kaltoren (Karin's husband), Shari and Ken. Tribune photo by Chuck Bernier

## The first family of billiards

By Mark Mandernach  
SPECIAL TO THE TRIBUNE

**H**arold Simonsen knew he was on to something one night when he surveyed the crowd at his Harold's Pool Parlour in Roselle. It was a December weekend in 1966, and "The Color of Money" had opened the night before at area movie theaters.

Directed by Martin Scorsese and starring Tom Cruise and Paul Newman, the sequel to "The Hustler" explored the world of billiards tournaments. In the movie, the brash young Cruise had a way of spinning his pool cue through the air.

"Sure enough, I looked out at the tables and a bunch of the guys were already spinning their cues, just the way Tom Cruise did it," said Simonsen, of Bloomington. "I said to myself

that night that I knew billiards was about to really take off. And it made me feel good, because I knew we were in on the ground floor. Pool has had its ups and downs over the years, but we've been on the upswing for several years now."

According to the Billiard & Bowling Institute of America in North Palm Beach, Fla., 37.8 million Americans played billiards at least once in 1992, and 9.4 million people played 25 times or more. The number of participants increased 24 percent from 1988 to 1992. This increased interest in billiards is evidenced locally by the popularity of men's and women's amateur tournaments at clubs such as Harold's Pool

Parlour, Shark City Billiards in Glendale Heights, Billiard Emporium in Schaumburg and the Saturday night tournaments at the Holiday Inn in Elk Grove Village. And helping to promote the game from coast to coast are Simonsen, 52, and his offspring.

"Harold has raised a great family, and they've had a very positive impact on the game over the years," said John Lewis, program director for the Billiard Congress of America (BCA) in Iowa City, Iowa. "They're like America's First Family of Billiards. There's no family quite like the Simonsens involved in our sport. They devote an awful lot of energy to billiards, and they've gotten so many people interest-

ed in playing."

If Simonsen and his brood aren't the nation's unofficial First Family of Billiards, then they're certainly on the ballot. Simonsen opened his pool hall in 1976, but that just scratches the surface of his family's involvement with the sport.

Simonsen is publisher of *Pool & Billiard Magazine*, which is produced out of the company's new offices in Glendale Heights. The publication has evolved over the past decade from a skimpy newsletter into a monthly four-color magazine.

The publishing company, Sports Publications Ltd., also handles publicity for the Women's Professional Billiard Association (WPBA) and its Classic Billiard Tour, including handling media coverage for tournaments, pub-

SEE *POOL*, PAGE 10

# Under Harold Simonsen

by Shari Stauch

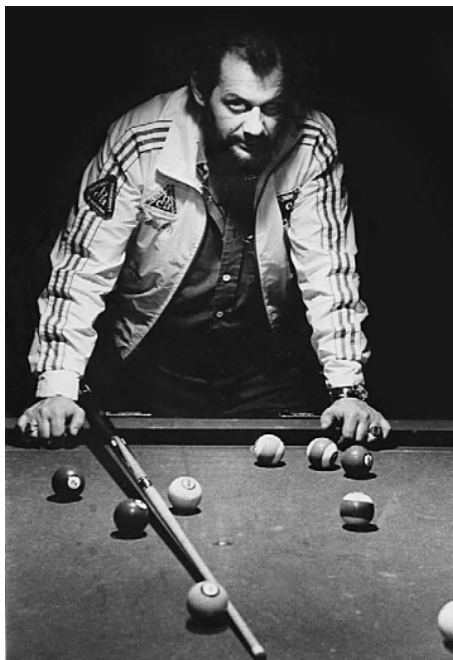
producers to make sure the Toledo Open and the Chatanooga Open (in example) wouldn't be competing for top players on the same weekend.

I told him I'd help when I got back. But of course when I returned, he'd already created the first *Scratch Sheet* on his own, so instead I helped fold and mail them out. That was August, 1983, forty years ago.

The response was lukewarm. Amateurs and fans loved the *Scratch Sheet*, but top players called it the "knock sheet" because having their names published could knock their action. Happily, enough people liked it that some local cue makers wanted to advertise. We opened an account with \$35 and our rented typewriter and threw every ad dollar back in to make it a little bigger and better each month.

The *Scratch Sheet* soon grew into an actual magazine, and the rest of the family began to get involved, too. Harold's oldest son, my brother Erik, initially managed the subscription fulfillment, and later became co-owner of Harold's Pool Parlour. Younger brother Ken finished school and became *Pool & Billiard Magazine's* first art director. (He remains an artist to this day.) One of Harold's twin daughters, Karin, right out of Valparaiso University, took on the duties of *P&B's* first managing editor. Her twin, Kirsten, served as office manager for a short time before she married and started a family with pro player, Roger Griffis. And, Joni, the youngest of us siblings, worked in the office after school. Later, her fiancée Brian became a manager at Harold's, until they married and started raising young'ns of their own.

But the *P&B* family extended far beyond Harold and us six kids. We credited readers and advertisers for its success, along with an expert staff



*This photo appeared in a Chicago newspaper about Harold's Pool Parlour. It was captioned "Like a spider waiting for a fly..." and won a journalism "photo of the year" for the paper!*

along the way, including BCA Hall of Fame notables Ray Martin, Buddy Hall, Dallas West, Jerry Briesath, Ewa Mataya Laurance and Loree Jon Jones (now Brown), along with noted authors Phil Capelle, Gerry Kanov, Jerry Forsyth, and pool's longest running columnist, Bruce Venzke.

Beginning in 1985, *Pool & Billiard Magazine* sponsored and hosted the National 9-Ball Classic tournament, which became the model for the event portrayed in the 1986 movie, *The Color of Money*. When it was announced that the movie was being made, dad and I were invited to meet in downtown Chicago with the producers, Martin Scorsese and his wife Barbara De Fina.

That meeting would change pool, and turn our little magazine into a big business. We were brought on as consultants, first to make notes on the screenplay, then to help source pool equipment and create the final tournament scene design (shot at

Chicago's Navy Pier ballroom) and finally to provide extras for the tournament scenes, among them several local and national pros of the era, and my hubby, Jeff Stauch, refereeing the match between Newman and Cruise.

Martin Scorsese asked Harold if he'd play the movie's tournament director (if you don't blink you'll see me sitting next to him). Years later Harold joked that he'd been typecast as a tournament director and so wasn't being offered more roles.

Pool exploded after the film's release. The night following the movie's premiers in Chicago, Harold's Pool Parlour was filled to capacity, with dozens of new faces all trying to spin their cues like Tom Cruise.

But dad still wanted to see more happen for the pro side of the sport. "Without pros, this sport doesn't grow," he said. "Kids need heroes to look up to."

So he worked with the WPBA and MPBA and I served on the board of the fledgling WPA working to establish a true world championship. By 1990 he'd become president of the PBTA, the Pro Billiards Tour Association, a joint venture of the men's and women's organizations and the BCA, representing industry involvement.

He also decided we should create a TV show about pool, *Pool & Billiard TV Magazine*. We'd fly out to Los Angeles each month with Ewa (co-host) and do a day's taping, rolling in footage from pro events and bringing in players for interviews and instruction. The show aired on Sports Channel and a number of satellite affiliate cable networks and included episodes with several pro players, including BCA Hall of Famers Mike Sigel, Robin Dodson, and Kim Davenport.

Like going to magazine school by publishing a magazine, we got to

# The Legacy of *P&B* Four

go to TV school by producing a TV show. But, fun as it was, it took a lot of time (a LOT!) and wasn't going to have the impact on the pro side of the sport that we all wanted to see.

Likewise, the PBTA wasn't going in a forward motion; players wanted too much, too fast, and no one outside the industry was keen to be involved. Inside the industry, cue and table companies could afford to sponsor an event here or there, but how could we create a more sustainable model?

Enter Harold's best idea of all (IMHO). ESPN wasn't willing to take a gamble on televising a number of women's events when we broke from the PBT, but they agreed to take a gamble on our Nationals, and let us roll in footage from other events from the year. Dad's Classic Tour design was a simple yet elegant solution – twelve events, held in major market cities (to actually get some much-needed free media attention), plus the culminating WPBA Nationals. Four hours of Nationals coverage, with highlights of three of each of the tour stops rolled into each hour.

Best of all, it could be bankrolled by the industry in a co-op format. Each sponsor would be title sponsor of one of the events, presenting sponsor of another, and a banner sponsor with onsite presence in all the remaining events. And they could pay monthly, allowing them to better budget, because we only needed to cover the cost of one event, including purse, production and TV production, each month.

It was brilliant. So brilliant in fact that before we even called then-president of the WPBA, Vicki Paski, to tell her about the idea, I got on the phone with a few advertisers to see if they'd be in. They loved it. Within 48 hours we had all twelve sponsors lined up, including us, and we set about identifying

major markets to host the events, thus also highlighting the amazing billiard clubs around the country.

Veteran pro Peg Ledman became the site coordinator, Vicki got the regional tours together to develop a feeder system much like women's tennis and golf, and we announced 48 player fields that you had to either A) be top ranked to get auto-entry or B) qualify for. Prior to the tour's launch, we seldom filled a women's field of 32. The first year of the tour saw 48 player fields filled with waiting lists all year long.

Each event kicked off with a program for a local charity chosen by the hosting club (more positive press), and newspapers, TV and radio were onsite daily for player interviews. With players Ewa and Loree Jon already garnering lots of press attention, these two especially went the extra mile, getting up at dawn most days to be the face of women's pool. They were soon joined by other top players; Robin Dodson, Vivian Villarreal, Mary Kenniston, Gerda Hofstatter, all garnering more and more



*Dad's other favorite sport...*

press attention. Women's pool went from being a curiosity to quickly being a sport.

ESPN saw it, and saw that men were tuning in. Whatever the time slot, we pulled ratings. So WPBA's televised hours increased, as did purses. Soon iconic players Jeanette Lee and Allison Fisher were making waves, too, followed by more European and then Asian players, making their way to American shores to compete.

Pool was fast becoming the only sport where the women pros were leading the way. It was an exciting time.

*P&B* was proud to sponsor pro players Vicki Paski and Robin Dodson, as well as the juniors once the Billiard Education Foundation was formed, and later pro Roger Griffis. I was a founding member of the BEF, and we took Harold's model of state junior championships/qualifiers culminating in a national championship for an ultimately successful spin.

Between 1993 and 1997, we formed SPL Group to handle Marketing, Media and Public Relations for the WPBA and we put one of our magazine sales guys to work (Mark Haddad). That effort brought in the women's first out-of-industry Tour Sponsor -- Gordon's Gin and Vodka, which resulted in the televised Gordon's Tour.

Somewhere in there Harold also created pool's first website (yeah, we're THAT old!), sponsored ACU-I collegiate events, and various regional tours. I got to work with the WPA and soon the World Confederation of Billiard Sports (WCBS) that earned us special recognition from the International Olympic Committee for our work with billiard governing bodies worldwide to get IOC recognition for the billiard sports, resulting in pool's first-ever medal inclusion in the World Games in Akita, Japan. (You may have seen Jeanette Lee accepting her medal there on her recent ESPN special.)

# Under Harold Simonsen

Continued from p.21

Harold was much happier working behind the scenes, but he was so honored to be awarded the WPBA President's Award in 1995 and the Billiard Congress of America President's Award in 2002. Together, we were inducted into the WPBA's Hall of Fame in 2007.

Dad's innovations and creativity single-handedly contributed tremendous growth to the industry, as well as the emergence of professional players as recognized media celebs. But what he loved most of all was traveling to events on the Classic Tour, taking us all to dinner, and at every event making us do something "local" to know we'd been there and not just staring at the four walls of a ballroom. We snorkeled in Hawaii, saw the La Brea tarpits in L.A., took carriage rides in old Sacramento, and scarfed Italian pastries in Baltimore. No matter where we went, Harold treated every event as an adventure.

Dad's favorite line was, "People do what they want to do." Meaning, we never got to bitch if we didn't like something; we'd chosen to be there. If we chose to make it better, that was on us, too. I think we all worked a little harder, and a little smarter, knowing that.

And now, I'll leave you with just a few of the kind comments from players and industry moguls I've seen over the past week since dad headed to that great pool game in the sky...

*"We lost an icon of the billiard industry this week, Harold Simonsen! Harold was a doer not a talker. And what a fine man he was, generous to a fault and a friend and ally to all he met." – Jay Helfert*

*"A wonderful person, and so instrumental to the world of pool -- such a terrible loss!" – Kerry Hartsfield Impson*

*"Your dad was loved by many and his impact on pool, especially women's, is immeasurable. We were so fortunate*



*Harold loved rescuing dogs - Meet Bacci!*

*to be part of something really special (back in the day) and he helped make that happen." – Darlene Stinson*

*"The pool world is truly sad and heartbroken. So proud to be a part of Harold's harem. So very many great memories and belly laughs with him. Sending you much love and hugs. He was definitely a good one. – Jan McWorter,*

*"The billiard community has lost a true giant. Godspeed Harold." – Cathy Vanover-Whately*

*"Without question one of the best guys ever made. A joy to work for, and as Sherri said, an inspiration in so many ways." – Bruce Venzke, promoter and writer*

*"Pool lost a true "Hall of Famer" – Harold founded the Pool & Billiard Magazine, The National Pool Classic Association, (NPCA), not to make money, but to put pool on the map. He had a passion to promote pool like nobody I've ever known. Harold held the best Sunday night pool tournament ever! I cannot tell you how many pool players would come to that tournament without any money and he would back them in the tournament and not take a dime if they won...Pool, all the players that you helped, and billiard enthusiasts everywhere owe you a huge debt that could never be repaid." – Mark Jarvis*

*"He invested his own money to promote the sport when nobody else would. Truly a pioneer when it came to selflessly promoting*

*the players and the sport." – Cindy Rash*

*"Harold was such a staple with the WPBA and the Classic Tour. He was passionate about women's pool and he helped make it happen for the Women's Professional Billiard Association (WPBA) and the Classic Tour. He was the best and will be greatly missed." – Loree Jon Brown*

*"I wanted to say "sorry for your loss" but it would be better said "sorry for OUR loss" since he was so iconic in the sport we love." –Ranger Gregory*

*"A true gentleman and a legend in our industry, he will be missed." – Fred Cohen*

*"He mastered the art of living and led by singular example, showing us a how much better it was to love - and laugh your way through the wilderness." – Tina Hardt*

*"Harold was definitely one of the good guys who could be considered a grandfather of billiards as a sport. He will be greatly missed..." – Dan Anderson*

*"He was, indeed, one of the good guys. He never blew his own horn, but anyone close to this industry knew the impact he had, particularly on the WPBA and Classic Tour." – Michael Panozzo*

*"All of us at Viking Cues are deeply saddened by this news. There is no one in the world of billiards that Harold's life did not touch... whether they knew it or not." – Chuck Chvala*

*"What a gift your dad was to so many of us in the billiard circle...I remember his warmth, kindness, humor and big smile. And I know my dad always enjoyed their long chats together at tournaments." – Tiffany Nelson*

*"Harold's holds a special place in my heart therefore so does Harold. Thank you for bringing Pool to Hanover Park, all that you did for the game and for getting me started in this game that I still love playing over 40 years later." – Frank Changet*

*"What a guy! He was a truly an amazing man." – Alli Fisher*





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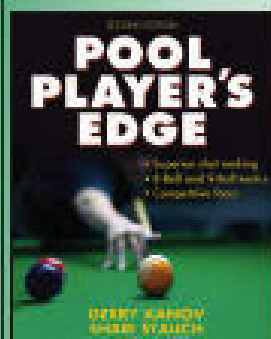
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<p>Nielsen's Billiards 2601 Taylor Ave., Springfield, IL 62703 217-585-1660</p>	<p>National Billiards Academy (614) 975-8337 <a href="mailto:tom@poolclinics.com">tom@poolclinics.com</a> <a href="http://NationalBilliardAcademy.com">NationalBilliardAcademy.com</a></p>
<p>Madsen's Bowling &amp; Billiards PO Box 4556, Lincoln, NE 68504 402-467-3249</p>	<p><b>YOUR ROOM HERE!</b> P&amp;B billiard club subscribers are eligible to have their club listing placed here for an entire year.</p>
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# January's Cool Pool Calendar

*Julian Simonis*  
SIMONIS CLOTH

brought to you by... Authentic. Accurate. Always.

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
 <b>HAPPY NEW YEAR!</b>	<b>1</b> <b>Legendary Player</b> <b>Grady Mathews</b> <b>Born 1943</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> 	<b>4</b> <b>Happy B-Day Pro Player</b> <b>Charlie Williams</b>	<b>5</b> 	<b>6</b> <b>Happy B-Day WPBA Pro</b> <b>Monica Webb</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>9</b> 	<b>10</b> <b>Happy B-Day WPBA Pro</b> <b>Jasmin Ouschan</b>	<b>11</b> <b>Happy B-Day One Pocket Hall of Famer</b> <b>Truman Hogue</b>	<div style="background-color: red; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <b>January 5-8, 2023</b>  <b>Turning Stone Classic</b>  <a href="http://www.joss9balltour.com">www.joss9balltour.com</a> </div>		<b>14</b> 
<b>15</b> <b>Legendary Player</b> <b>Sang Lee</b> <b>Born 1954</b>	<b>16</b> 	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> 	<b>19</b> <b>BCA Hall of Famer</b> <b>Minnesota Fats</b> <b>Born 1913</b>	<b>20</b> <b>BCA Hall of Famer</b> <b>Andrew Ponzi</b> <b>Born 1903</b>	<b>21</b> 
<b>22</b> 	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> <div style="background-color: green; color: white; padding: 10px; transform: rotate(-5deg);">                     Get your...                      TIP of the Day                      VIDEO of the Day                      and                      NEWS of the Day                      at <a href="http://www.PoolMag.com">www.PoolMag.com</a> </div>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> <b>Happy B-Day WPBA Pro</b> <b>Val Finnie</b>	<b>28</b> <div style="background-color: red; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <b>January 20-28, 2023</b>  <b>Derby City Classic</b>  <a href="http://www.derbycityclassic.com">www.derbycityclassic.com</a> </div>
<b>29</b> <b>Happy B-Day WPA Player</b> <b>Dennis Orcullo</b>	<b>30</b> <b>Happy B-Day WPBA Hall of Famer</b> <b>Vivian Villarreal</b>	<b>31</b> 	<h2 style="text-align: center;">January's Pool-O-Scope</h2> <p>Ruled by the One Ball, you possess the desire to be #1, like many of the champions here! Look for New Year's resolutions to include an updated practice routine (see this month's Drill Instructor), lessons from a certified instructor, or joining a league!</p> 			

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