

53rd Missouri 8-Ball Tournament Results
Singles - Sept. 27-28, 2003 at Action Billiards
Team Events – Oct. 4-5, 2003 at Teachers



Hazelwood Kathy Arens and Action Sports Café and Billiards played host to the Missouri 8-Ball All-Star singles tournament. It was the 53rd in the 18-year history of the league. 172 players paid \$12.00 each for a chance to take away part of the \$4,000 payday. $172 \times 12 = \$2,064$. Add the bar sponsor money of \$1,690 = \$3,754. Missouri 8-ball kicked in another \$246 to bring the total payout to \$4,000.

Hernia Operation didn't slow down this Champion

Would you believe that only one of the 16 players that cashed at the last tournament made a return trip? Take a wild guess who it was. A kewpie doll to all that gave the obvious answer. Rich Sager showed no sign of rust in polishing off another title. He had no pain in his...ah..., no rust in his game and no trouble polishing off opponents who thought they might at last have an edge. Silly boys! Sager looked better than ever Sunday going through the field faster than a fox being hunted by hounds.

Knocking off heavyweights the likes of Steady Eddie, Ed Libby, then Steve Baucher before meeting up with Mr. Lucky, Wayne Coder put Rich in the final four. 75-year-old Charles Meredith actually had Sager on the short end before he scratched on the '8' ball. Rich escaped to meet 'C' Joe Branstetter for king of the hill honors. It wasn't even close. Five minutes later Sager was on the waiting list. It would be about an hour before the one loss side eliminated each other running down to the final opponent to meet him.

Joe Branstetter defeated Ryan Huelsman to earn another crack at Sager. Joe would have to beat Rich twice to take the title. Hernia operation or no, it didn't slow down Sager's rapid-fire stroke. Sager can smell a victory like the nose of a bloodhound. Once he gets on radar there's no stopping him. Runout Rich's 45-second table runs are legendary. Once he gets in the zone the fat lady begins warming up. The railbirds know it's all over and so did Joe Branstetter. Joe knows what's coming. Joe can see it and Joe can feel it, but Joe just can't stop it. Once again it was classic Sager. Congratulations Rich on another great championship performance.

Fifteen players cashed in this event that didn't cash in the last one. It's true. You can look it up. And that's great for the tournament. Most folks agree that a race to two is a crapshoot. But hey, all things being equal anyone can win, that's the great thing about the Missouri 8-Ball competitions. "C" rated players have won. "CC" rated players have won. To date only one female has been crowned champion (Julia Gabriel, a skill-level '5' at that time, a '6' now) and another (Rhonda Bartram '6' then and '6' today) finished second, but several other ladies have cashed over the years.

Place	Player	Rank	Winnings	Place	Player	Rank	Winnings
1.	Rich Sager	'A'	\$850.00 & Trophy	9-12.	Wayne Coder	'B'	\$125.00
2.	Joe Branstetter	'C'	600.00 & Trophy	9-12.	Jim Stevens	'B'	125.00
3.	Ryan Huelsman	'BB'	475.00 & Trophy	9-12.	Tony Gregory	'CC'	125.00
4.	Joe Lopez	'C'	375.00	9-12.	Lonnie McGregory	'DD'	125.00
5-6.	Charles Meredith	'CC'	275.00	13-16.	Steve Baucher	'BB'	75.00
5-6.	Chad Stephenson	'C'	275.00	13-16.	John Porter	'CC'	75.00
7-8.	Mike Lehman	'CC'	175.00	13-16.	David Conrey	'C'	75.00
7-8.	Jay Carlton	'B'	175.00	13-16.	John Stoffel	'DD'	75.00
							\$4,000.00

For those of you whom haven't been keeping up, this was Rich Sager's fifth Missouri 8-Ball championship crowning. Remember when he won the last one Sager was out the door and on his way to the boat like a she-bear in heat. Well this time Betty was standing there and the door was blocked. Rich had no alternative but to turn over the winning check. Good on ya Betty. (She allowed him the trophy.) One of the players to tie for the 5-6 spots was Charles Meredith. At the tender age of 75 years eight months, Mr. Meredith is the oldest player ever to finish this high. Kudos Charlie. There is something awfully familiar about one of the guys who tied for 7-8. It's been 15 years since his name appeared in the winner's section. I'll figure it out later.

Those of you whom might remember the TV program The Naked City, at the conclusion of each show the narrator would close by saying "there are a million stories in the Naked City, this has been just one." Well, we may not have a million stories but there are always a few that are worth telling and passing on. And as usual there were a few 'firsts'. You've heard it before, just about the time you think you have seen or heard everything there was to see or hear, something new happens.

This happened in the Tracy Boyce-Jim Stevens All-Star singles match. Tracy Boyce wins the toss to break open the first rack. Tracy makes the '8' on the break. However, the cue ball takes off across the room like an ICBM. Chalk up one win to Jim Stevens without having to stretch his legs. Tracy racks for game two. Jim steps to the table, takes aim and blasts open the rack. The '8' goes into the side pocket for his second win, good for the match. I don't believe I ever heard of a player winning 2-0 by taking only one shot. Both '8' balls made on the break, one by each player, and the match is over, 2-0. But Tracy losing the match by getting only one shot is not a record by any means. How about no shots!

Several years ago Rhonda Bartram was in a match and got the first break. She made the '8' on the snap. Her opponent re-racked for game two. Rhonda Jo stepped to the table, stroked a couple of times and promptly nailed the '8' a second time. Both times she hit the head ball and both '8' balls went into the two far corner pockets. Two wins in no innings. Not only did Rhonda's opponent not get a shot it was his birthday. The least she could have done was to buy the man a drink. The unusual thing about the second '8' going was that it came out of the pack on the right side, and the cue ball after hitting the head ball shot forward pushing the '8' toward the corner pocket. Every ball on the table seemed to pass in front of it and just barely avoided colliding with the '8'. Go figure. It was like the parting of the Red Sea.

Wayne Coder was the beneficiary of a strange one. You would think that this wouldn't happen in 208 years, but it did happen and it took only 208 months. He showed up Saturday to play his matches but his name was never called. Wayne received a bye for round one. His opponent for round two was a no show. Wayne gets a walk to round three. Neither of the two players who were to meet each other for that round were in the house and were both disqualified. Mr. Coder received another free ride to return for Sunday. To date Mr. Lucky, as he is now called, who was scheduled to play Saturday is the only player to make the Sunday shootouts without firing a shot on Saturday.

We try never ever to intentionally knock any of our players or call attention to a rather poor performance because of the many variables that happen or can happen in a game of pool. For instance, many players have won 4 games in a match; we mention that in every report. But we have never mentioned the ones whom have lost 4 games in a match. There was one case in this tournament where a player won 4 games in a match and the following match he lost 4 games. I don't keep that record but right off hand I can't recall anyone ever doing that before. But Mike Roy is a cool guy and I don't think he would mind if we attribute this dubious record to him.

And speaking of dubious records Big Steve Burns (George's) is the first player we can remember to ever lose all 5 games he played. Talk about bad luck! I witnessed three of those games that Steve played. He didn't have a chance in two of them as his opponents ran out the racks. That's part of the variables I was talking about. You can't win a game sitting in your chair, unless you're Jim Stevens or Wayne Coder. Not getting a shot is a drag. Just to let you know Steve, Missouri 8-Ball sympathizes with you.

5-Player Division Results

'Luck of the Draw' would be a most appropriate title for this 53rd Missouri 8-Ball tournament. For many years now several team captains and players have made minor complaints about drawing the same opponents for either the first or second rounds, primarily the first.

As been the case for several years all teams that made the championship tournament have been put into one of four flights. The determining factor being what their highest team point-playing lineup would be.

Example: Flight #1 would be 28-32 points. Flight #2 would be 24-27 points. Flight #3 would be 20-23 points, and Flight #4 would be all teams below 20 points. By the time they got down to the finals one team for Flights 1 & 2 would meet the lone survivor from Flights 3 & 4.

So we decided to try the ole reliable luck of the draw routine. Of course many teams (let's say shooting a 30-point lineup) could still draw an opponent as before, but then again they might draw a team that is playing only a 20-point lineup. What does that do? Easy. Look up the difference of what 10 points will do for the lower level (20-point) teams. The chart says that a 10-point difference calls for a 13 to 6 match. So the 30-point team has to win 13 games while the 20-point team gets 7 games on the wire, therefore only having to win a total of 6 games to take the match.

Where before two teams playing in the same flight would be playing even or at worse give up only one or two games, now they might be faced with the scenario just presented. But that's what team captains and many players have asked for and Missouri 8-Ball is not beyond trying to please. There is no assurance that the new format will stay forever. For now it is in a trial phase.

So, having said all that, let's see how it went. There were four matches scheduled to play Round One, which began at noon Saturday. Hotshots playing 24 points drew Fucifino's, who played 23 points. One point difference plays even. The match went double hill and Hotshots pulled it out 11-10. These two equally strong teams would have been in the same flight using the old format.

Another match showed George's (26 points) playing McDuff's (21 points). The difference of 5 points is an 11-8 match. McDuff's got 3 games on the wire. McDuff's won only 4 games and the stronger George's lineup took the match 11-7. In the old format George's would have been in flight-2 and McDuff's would have been in flight-3 playing teams of the same ranking and skill levels.

Another match had Action Billiards (26 points) against Wagner's (22 points). The difference of 4 points is a 12-9 match. Wagner's received a 3-game head start. Wagner's won 6 games on their own but the much stronger Action Billiards lineup got their 12 for the win. Had the old format been in use Action Billiards would have been in flight-1, Wagner's in flight-3.

The fourth match was JP's Corner (22 points) vs Cactus Inn (13 points). The difference of 9 points calls for an 11-5 match. Cactus Inn received 6 games on the wire in a race to 11. They won 4 games and went down 11-10. Close, yes. But that only counts in horseshoes, hand grenades and slow-close dancing.

There were other factors involved in this match but the bottom line is that once again the strongest team won. JP's Corner would have been in flight-3 and Cactus Inn in flight-4 in the old format.

We could go on about the way the matches were lined up throughout the tournament but we'll take just a few at random. These results were all from the 4 o'clock round and coming from the other side of the coin. The second team out of Cactus Inn (23 points) received 5 games on the wire from a very tough team out of Teacher's (31 points) and one of the favorites to take out this tournament. Sometimes being down 5 games before the first rack is broken can play on a team's mind. Even though Teacher's won actual games played 8-6, the 5 games on the wire gave Cactus Inn the victory, 11-8. Jim Green's (19 points) got 3 on the wire from Fucifino's #2 and squeaked out an 11-10 victory. Rec Room (22 points) got 3 on the wire from Action Billiards (26 points) and exploded for a 12-6 bombing. JP's Corner (25 points) got a 4-game head start from Hazzard's (31 points) and won 11-8. Hotshots (24 points) received 5 games head start from a very tough Planet 8 Ball lineup and eked out a heart pounding 12-11 win.

Back the other way, of the 16 matches scheduled for the 4 o'clock round there were only 5 where the stronger teams (giving up weight) prevailed. JP's Eureka (22 points) got 4 games on the wire from Penalty Box (28 points) and took it to double hill but went down [11-6], 11-10 total. Pat & Roses (23 points) got 4 games from Fucifino's (29 points) but won only one game for an [11-1] clobbering, 11-5 total. On the same note Jennings Station (14 points) received 6 games head start from Brothers (23 points) but managed only a single win for an [11-1] thumping, 11-7 total. Little Gams (22 points) got 3 games on the wire from Hillsboro Billiards (26 points) but managed only 2 wins on their own for a [12-2] crunching, 12-5 total. And finally Mr. T's (18 points) received 5 games head start from Soldiers (25 points) out of Action Billiards. Mr. T's won only 4 games and went down [12-5], 12-9 total.

As mentioned earlier the old format had the lone winner from flights 1 & 2 meeting the last one standing from flights 3 & 4 for the grand finale. Let's take a look at how it turned out from the luck of the draw. At noon Sunday for the final matches Libby's gave 2 games to Jim Green's and beat them 11-8. The 4pm match against Soldiers saw Libby's getting 3 games on the wire. They road it out for a 12-7 victory. Without the spot Libby's was 9-7 playing heads up. That put Libby's into the final two with Fucifino's.

Fucifino's was up against Shenanigans at noon. Shenanigans received 4 games head start and it might as well have been 10. They didn't win a single game. Art's team did all but trap'em, skin'em and lay'em out in the sun to dry. The score officially was 11-4, but in reality it was 11-zip.

The 4pm meeting of Fucifino's and Hillsboro Billiards saw the Johnny Neels' gang getting 2 games on the wire. Once again the stronger team prevailed. Fucifino's won 4 games in round one to take a 4-3 lead and never looked over their shoulder. Hillsboro Billiards chances for repeating faded faster than Gary Glitter. The final was 11-8. This set up the championship match between Fucifino's and Libby's.

This meeting between Fucifino's, who would have come out of flight-1, and Libby's from flight-3 could have ended this way using the other format. With Fucifino's playing 29 points and Libby's offering up only 22, that 7-point difference allowed Libby's a 5-game head start in a race to 12. And then the Buzzette brothers, Tony and Mario, opened the first round by winning the first two games. A 7-0 lead would be hard to overcome by an average team. But there's nothing average about Art Lohnes'.

Remember earlier this afternoon Art's gang steamrolled Shenanigan's 11-nothing. That was then, this is now. Art started it off with their first win and they didn't stop until Fucifino's wrestled the lead away and jumped out in front 8-7. Winning 8 straight games made the playing field a little more level. Libby's won the next two regaining the lead, 9-8. But it was short lived. Fucifino's took the next 4 games closing out the contest 12-9 [12-4].

Is 'luck of the draw' a better format to use or is the original four flights the way to go? Three, four or even five sessions should be allowed before making a final decision. Feedback comes from players every night of the week. Believe me it never stops. Here is a chance to be heard again. Pro or con? We want to know

your thoughts on which format would be better for league championship tournaments. And while you are at it, what do you think about going 'luck of the draw' for the singles tournament? I think I already know that answer. It would be a lopsided landslide.

4-Player Division Results

It's a good thing I'm not a betting man (on a regular basis). But even if I were I would have passed on the two teams that made the 4-player finals, 21 Rock and Pat & Roses. 21 Rock received a forfeit win for round one because their opponent felt that it would have been a wasted trip to show up at a tournament with only three players. Fair enough.

Their second match, against Blarney Stone, netted 21 Rock 6 games on the wire. They parlayed that into a 12-8 win taking advantage of the 'luck of the draw' change. Also fair enough. Their third match, against My Place, allowed them a 3-game head start. Again taking advantage of the new format 21 Rock squeaked out a 10-9 win. That put them into the final two.

Headed toward the winner's circle from the other side of the board was Pat & Roses. Their round one match was against Hazzard's. Giving them 5 games on the wire forced the match into a race to 11. Hazzard's managed only two wins as Pat & Roses put together two 5-game winning streaks taking the contest [11-2], 11-7 officially. Victim #2 was Classic's. Playing heads up Pat & Roses ran away with the match 9-3. Pat & Roses received one game from Fucifino's and needed it. After three draws Fucifino's was up 7-6. They failed to put another 'W' on the page as Pat & Roses ran off the last three games for a tight 9-7 victory. This win put them into the finals against 21 Rock.

This is where it gets interesting. 21 Rock again picked up weight. The 3-games head start brought their total from the tournament to 12 games on the wire, a new record. But that's the way the 'luck of the draw' goes. It's supposed to happen that way. They split the first draw 2-2, giving 21 Rock a 5-2 lead. Pat & Roses take three from the second draw and close in by one, 5-6. A split of draw three gives 21 Rock the edge 8-7 needing only one more game to take home the trophy. John Legens evens the score 8-8 leaving the double hill game to 78-year-old Sam Joseph. To make a long story short, Sam becomes the oldest player in Missouri 8-Ball history to pull off the biggest game of a tournament. And it really couldn't happen to a nicer gentleman. Congrats to Sam Joseph, Pat & Roses and 21 Rock for a great finish.

Oh, I almost forgot, as a special added attraction Pedro Martinez showed up and was waiting on the parking lot to throw Sam to the ground.

Players who won 4 games in a team match

From the 5-player board: Buddy Evans (Planet 8 Ball), Mark Wieland (Little Nikki's), Chris Moore (Hotshots), Steve Martin (My Place), Tony Buzzette (Libby's), Bob Hood (Fucifino's), Mike Fishbeck, Jeff Shelton and Paul Verhulst (Action Billiards), and Mary Stillwell (Classic's). Another first for Mary. From the 4-player board: Phil Joseph and John Legens (Pat & Roses), Darryl Anderson (Fucifino's), Mike Roy and Mike Elder (My Place), and Joe Curlee (Blarney Stone).

Players with 10 or more Wins

	<u>W.</u>	<u>L.</u>	<u>Team</u>
1. Rich Sager	14	2	Fucifino's
2. Tony Buzzette	14	5	Libby's
3. John Legens	12	2	Pat & Roses
4. Phil Joseph	11	2	Pat & Roses
5. Joe Curlee	11	3	
	(5	2)	George's

Consecutive Wins

	<u>Player</u>	<u>CW</u>	<u>Team</u>
1.	Rich Sager	10	Fucifino's
2.	Tony Buzzette	8	Libby's
3.	Phil Joseph	8	Pat & Roses
4.	Elliot Kite	8	Hillsboro Billiards
5.	John Legens	7	Pat & Roses
6.	Steve Martin	7	My Place

	(6	1)	Blarney Stone	7.	Jeff Shelton	7	Action Billiards ***
6.	Johnny Neels	11	3 Hillsboro Billiards	8.	Waddell Whitehead	7	Action Billiards
7.	Nick Lopez	11	7 Libby's	9.	Pat Row	6	Fucifino's
8.	Bob Hood	10	2 Fucifino's	10.	Oscar Wells	6	Brothers
9.	Elliot Kite	10	2 Hillsboro Billiards				
10.	Art Lohnes	10	2 Fucifino's		*** Jeff Shelton was undefeated, 7-0.		
11.	Steve Martin	10	2 My Place				
12.	Pat Row	10	3 Fucifino's				

5-Player Team Results

4-Player Team Results

Pl.	Team	Captain	Winnings	Pl.	Team	Captain	Winnings
1.	Fucifino's	Art Lohnes	\$4,000 & Trophy	1.	Pat & Roses	James Brown	\$1,750
2.	Libby's	Rob Edwards	2,000	2.	21 Rock	Bill Keith	<u>750</u>
3-4.	Soldiers Action Billiards	Sean Randall	1,000				\$2,500
3-4.	Hillsboro Billiards	Johnny Neels	1,000				
							<u>Total Payout</u>
5-8.	Jim Green's	Ray Geisler	500	5-Player Division	\$10,000	36 teams	
5-8.	Rec Room	Sam Starns	500	4-Player Division	2,500	14 teams	
5-8.	Shenanigan's	Larry Foust	500	All- Star Singles	<u>4,000</u>	172 players	
5-8.	Little Nikki's	Roger Pheasant	<u>500</u>		\$16,500		
			\$10,000				

Missouri 8-Ball is in the 18th year of operation. We hope you continue to support our league. Thanks to you it is the biggest local pool league in the St. Louis and surrounding areas. We know there is no possible way to please everyone, as there are a myriad of problems to deal with. We do our best to make this a fun league so everyone can enjoy friendly competition.

Congratulations to all the All-Stars and teams that cashed and to all that gave it their best shot. We appreciate you participating last session and hope to see you again at the next big get together in January 2004.

League Operator – Rusty Brandmeyer

<http://members.tripod.com/missouri8/>

On line and Internet coordinator – Roger Pheasant

<http://free-reference.com/billiards.htm>

And as always – yours truly, Jay L. Carlton

<http://free-reference.com/JaysCorner/>