

# derby city stories

LOUISVILLE'S NINE-DAY POOL JAMBOREE INSPIRES A LOT OF  
WOOFING, HOWLING AND GABBING AMONG ITS THOUSANDS OF  
PLAYERS AND FANS. EVERYONE HAS A TALE TO TELL.

**O**nce upon a time, in a land far away from anything predictable or routine, where money was known to mystically disappear or multiply, an army of pool players with cues in their sheaths descended upon the Executive West Hotel. Among them was a magical man, who could perform unearthly feats with a leather-tipped stick. His name was Sir Efren Reyes.

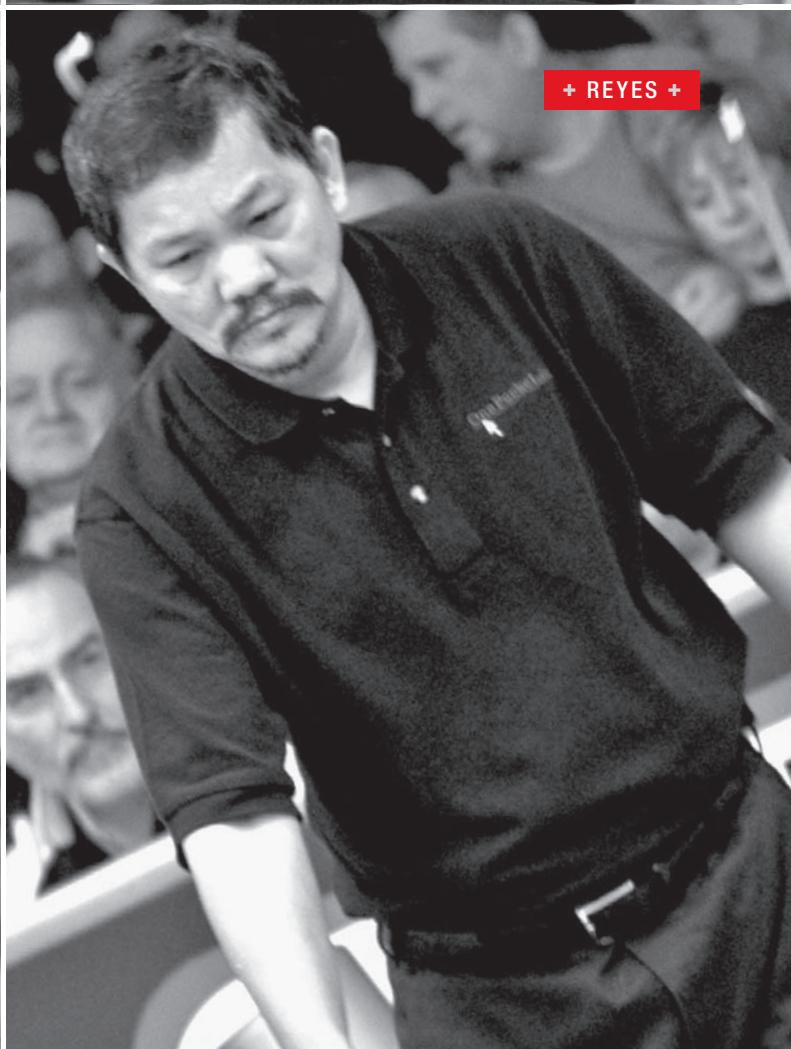
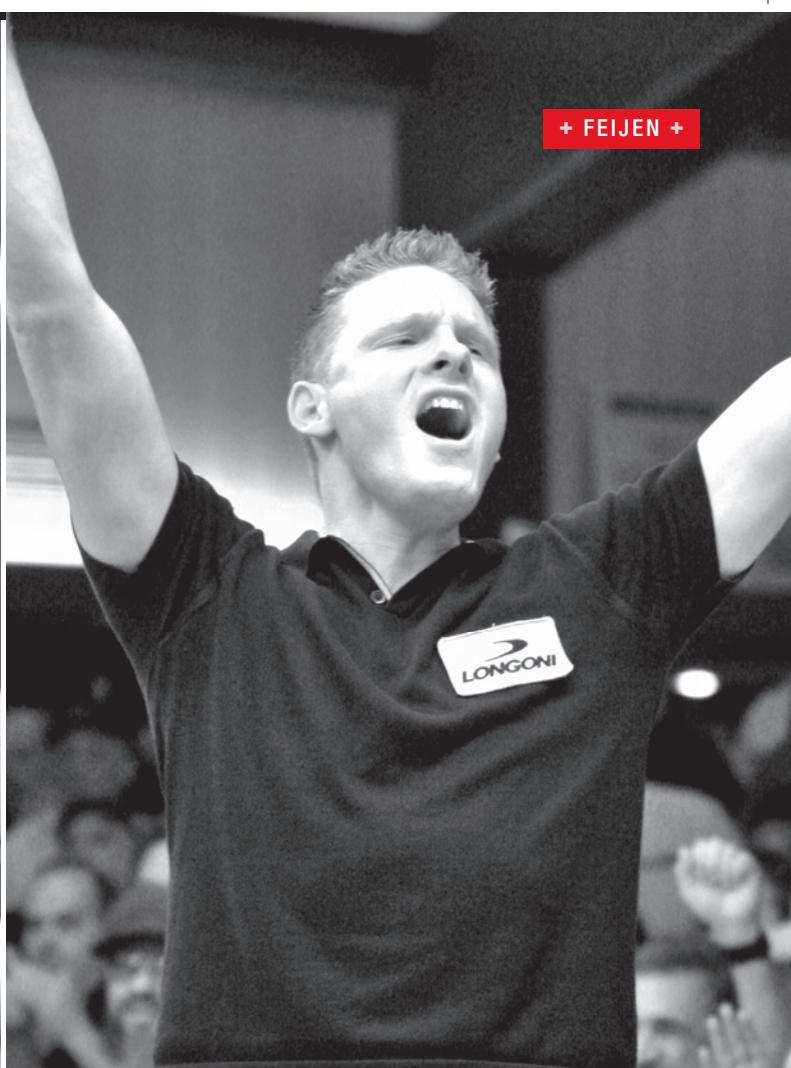
Okay, so maybe this story is a little over-the-top — no pool player has actually been knighted. As a whole, however, pool players are well known for their fanciful story-telling skills. The high stakes, bad breaks, and action, action, action of the ninth annual Derby City Classic will surely be the source of many stories to be told and embellished upon for years to come. "If you can experience all of the Derby City, I didn't do my job," said tournament founder Greg Sullivan of Diamond Billiard Products. "I want everyone to leave here with a story."

## 24:9 Pool

For 24 hours a day, Jun. 4-13, thousands of people took part in the year's biggest pool jamboree, be it playing, sweating, betting, aiding or abetting. This year, even with increased entry fees, each of the three main divisions boasted 400 entrants or more, and the Executive West Hotel in Louisville, Ky., once again became Cueville, Ky.

It takes a lot to host this many players and fans for nine days. A lot of staff, a lot of security, a lot of patience, and a lot of chili.

Amy Faulkenstein, director of catering services at the Executive West, said that the





**For nine straight days, the action at Derby City runs full tilt.**

MASON KING

concession stand was open 18 hours a day and required a staff of nine. After nine days, Faulkenstein estimated that they had gone through 3,000 hot dogs, 10,000 soft drinks, and 200 gallons of chili.

The waitresses at the Derbyshire dining room were all models of patience and Southern hospitality while attending to the every whim of sleep-deprived players. "We had one gentleman come in, and he must have been *on* something," said veteran waitress Lois, with some hesitation. "He wanted aluminum foil. I don't know what he was planning on doing with it, but he was adamant about getting some aluminum foil. For his own safety, we called security."

According to Susan, a room inspector, pool players are not the best guests in terms of tidiness. "I wouldn't call it tidy," she laughed, noting that some rooms seem to house many more than two guests. "But they're nowhere near as bad as the dog show crowd," she said, explaining that the Louisville Kennel Club hosts a show in March, and it's one of the largest in the country.

## Master Class

Produced by Diamond Billiard Products, the Derby offers an annual \$20,000 prize

to the player with the best cumulative finish in the three main divisions, otherwise known as the Master of the Table.

To some, it's also known as Efren Reyes' de facto appearance fee.

Prior to the 2007 Derby, the 52-year-old pool wizard from the Philippines had pocketed the award in three of his four appearances at the event — just another feat

a trail to the banks final, after finishing 49th, 13th and 63rd in the division his three previous years. Assuming that Reyes would again dominate the one-pocket division, no one doubted that Reyes again would be dubbed the "Master."

"No practice," Reyes said of his sudden skill in banking. "I got lucky."

A likely story. But not lucky enough.

Stevie Moore slipped past Reyes in the hill-hill match for the title (see opposite page).

One-pocket came next, and Reyes was on his home turf.

"I know I have easy game here in one-pocket," he said, pointing to giant placards positioned around the room with pictures of past champions. "Look, it's all me."

Reyes had won the one-pocket division in each of his last four attempts. This year would be no different. Reyes beat his friend and former protege Francisco Bustamante twice in a row in less than an hour total: 40 minutes in the first, 15 in the second. Even in the final against Cliff Joyner, who won the one-pocket event in the Efren-less 2002, it wasn't much of a contest. Joyner put up a fight in the first game, as the two competitors herded the rack from corner



**Reyes reigned in one-pocket, winning his fifth title in five years.**

with which Reyes makes the astounding seem a bit pedestrian.

There was suspense in 2006, when banks division-winner Jason Miller finished high enough in 9-ball to swipe the title. No such luck this year. Reyes blazed

to corner like sheepdogs. Reyes finally found his opening and took the first game. Despite a brief resurgence from Joyner, Reyes quickly closed out the final, 3-1.

Veteran road player Danny DiLiberto provided commentary for online coverage of the one-pocket matches and for AccuStats Video Productions. He said that behind the scenes, the crew silently hoped for a miraculous upset. It wasn't to be.

"There was no competitive one-pocket match [with Reyes]," DiLiberto said. "He just rolled over everybody. Efren's performance, even though he's done it many times before, it amazes me every time."

## Bad draw

The 9-ball event yielded 400 participants this year, ranging from defending champion Ralf Souquet to players who couldn't even be considered short-stops. More like right field.

Dexter Gondo, of Brookfield, Ill., made the trip down to Louisville with friends from his regular poolhall, Chris' Billiards. He didn't expect much of his chances in the 9-ball event, and was soon shocked to find himself playing Souquet, BD's Player of the Year for 2006.

But before he knew it, Gondo was up, 3-1. "I had a lead; it was unbelievable," he said. "I couldn't handle the pressure though." When the gravity of the situation hit Gondo, he said his composure and his game quickly crumbled and he gave Souquet the match. Still, as a civil engineer by day, Gondo won't soon forget the experience.

"To be ahead of a world champion is exciting. It was a lot of fun. It made my trip. I got a nice little story to tell my friends," he said.

## Cloud 9-ball

For at least a day or so, Bobby Pickle was a full-fledged folk hero. Strangers walked up to him and said things like, "I don't know how you did that," and "That was funny, good and entertaining."

Bobby Pickle had just beaten Reyes.

"Man, I was just like in a cloud," the 47-year-old former road player said. "I said to myself, 'Forget all the people, forget the TV, forget the cameras, just relax. Just act like I'm in a room with one other guy. Just void everything else.'"

Pickle, now the house pro at JOB Billiards in Nashville, Tenn., drew Reyes in Round 4 of the 9-ball division for a match that took place just minutes after Reyes' title victory in the one-pocket division.

Interviewed by a film crew before walking into the TV table arena, Pickle dead-

## 9-ball banks

**STEVIE MOORE** had never played in a bank tournament before. It's a good thing no one told him he didn't know what he was doing. Or that you're not supposed to be able to beat Efren Reyes twice in one event.

That scream you heard on Jan. 8 was Moore winning the first event he had ever entered at the Derby City Classic, right after nailing a two-rail bank to dash Reyes' hopes for his first 9-ball bank title.

"I couldn't believe it myself," said the 33-year-old shooter. "A friend of mine said, 'Man, I've never seen you be so emotional.' And I don't think I've ever been so emotional about winning a tournament. But it was awesome for me."

The longtime road player only recently decided to go legit and settle into a more mainstream means of earning a living. One of the many International Pool Tour qualifiers (ranked No. 42) who now finds himself without a tour to play on, Moore currently tends bar at the Mr. Cues poolroom in Atlanta.

Moore and three friends cobbled together the money to send him to the Classic. Within four days of entering the 9-ball banks tournament — along with 468 other players — Moore found himself in the final three with Derby City marathon men Reyes and Rodolfo Luat.

"There's a little intimidation factor there, but I try not to let it bother me," Moore said of playing the two toughest Filipinos in the field.

In Round 12, Luat drew the bye, leaving Moore to barbecue Reyes, 3-0, in the race-to-3 format. Reyes utilized his buy-back option, setting up another three-man round. The Filipino pool gods smiled on Reyes this time, giving "Bata" the bye while Moore lagged with Luat. The contest went hill-hill,

with Luat building a 4-1 lead in the deciding game. But from there he fired blanks, missing three match-winners while Moore surpassed him for the victory, 5-4 (3-2).

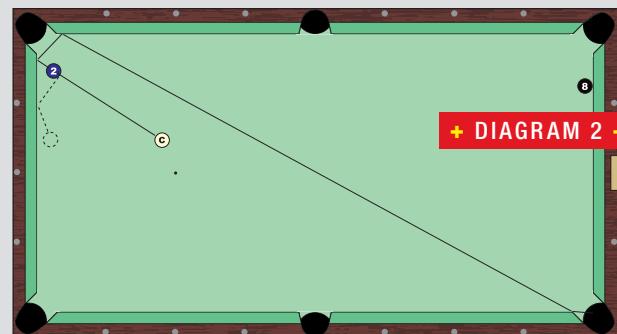
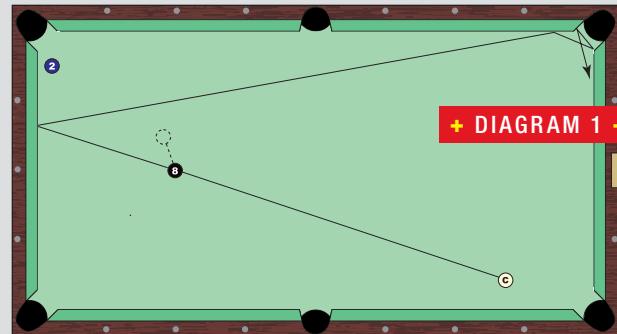
In the final, Reyes and Moore went toe-to-toe and arrived at the hill-hill set. Moore worked his way to a 4-3 lead, but surrendered the table to Reyes. Left with the 8 on the foot spot and the 2 hanging in the right-foot corner, Reyes opted for the table-length-and-back cross-corner shot on the 8 (Diagram 1). With more muscle than needed, Reyes zipped the 8 ball back up table, where it bobbed in the pocket. Moore sized up the two-rail bank on the 2 (Diagram 2) and stroked softly enough to slip the ball in after it brushed the pocket point.

Suddenly \$10,000 richer, Moore let out a yell. But the Derby newbie soon learned one of the tournament's principal lessons: You're never done playing.

"It wasn't 10 or 15 minutes, and I had to play in one-pocket," he said. "I was so amped. I should have beat the guy. I made a few mistakes, but I was so amped I didn't give a crap. I was like, 'Screw it.' Then Luat put me out of the one-pocket the next day."



First-timer Moore showed Reyes the door.



## straight pool

"I'VE WATCHED several of them play, and they don't play their patterns very well, but this guy, he's probably the best one so far," said George Rood, a 92-year-old Ohio native, as he watched Mika Immonen methodically run through rack after rack of balls at the second annual Derby City Straight Pool Challenge. Rood has played straight pool for 75 years with a high run of 282, and has competed against some of the game's legends, like Luther "Wimpy" Lassiter. He nodded with approval as "the fella from Finland" went on to win the Challenge with a high run of 160.

"He plays the game very properly," Rood said.

*Billiards Digest's* own Bob Jewett sponsored the event and, for the second year in a row, contributed \$10,000 in prize money from his own pocket. The format remained the same: 14.1 straight pool, man vs. table. In preliminary rounds, players paid \$100 for four tries on each of three different days. Prizes of \$300, \$200 and \$100 were awarded each day to the players who made the three highest runs. The eight players with the highest runs overall advanced to the final. Diamond Billiards also added the incentive of a \$1,000 bonus for any player who reached 200 or more.

Each preliminary round saw runs of more than 100 (Johnny Archer broke 100 every day), but no one was able to pierce the 200 mark. Mike Davis came the closest, with a surprising 151 in day two of the prelims, after posting only a 14 the day prior. "It wasn't a textbook run," Davis said. "I still don't have the patterns down like a lot of the really great straight pool players, but I came with the tough shots and I just happened to get some good breaks and kept it going for a while." Plus, he said, he went to bed early the night before, instead of staying up to watch Efren Reyes gamble.

The eight contenders in the final were Davis, Ralf Souquet (137 in the prelims), Johnny Archer (129), Mika Immonen (127), John Schmidt (97), Dennis Orcollo (93), Danny Harriman (85), and Charlie Williams (85).

Each finalist had five attempts to post the

highest run, with a \$1,000 bonus for highest run overall. The bar was set low initially, with Souquet (15), Orcollo (28), defending champion Harriman (50), and John "Mr. 400" Schmidt (71) turning in unimpressive runs.

Wearing jeans and a white undershirt,



Immonen went old-school in straight pool.

Immonen played like the tuxedo-donning legends of decades past. In just his second attempt, he reached 160, just barely overcutting a shot to end the run. In the end, his closest rival was Schmidt's 71.

Jewett explained the low runs as a result of the extremely tight pockets and excess wear on the balls. "One of the scenes the spectating public was treated to was two champions [Charlie Williams and John Schmidt] sitting on the floor cross-legged, waxing the balls, because the balls have to be clean to go into the pockets properly," Jewett said.

Immonen grew up playing straight pool in Europe, and his well-honed pattern play and light touch helped him earn \$3,500 in prize money at the Challenge.

"My stroke is nice and smooth and it's soft. I'm able to finesse the balls in and that makes the pockets bigger. I'm not blasting the rack open either. I'm playing straight pool kind of old-school style," he said.

Rood would have to agree. — A.Q.

panned, "Well, I'm about to play the best player in the world." But he was able to stay grounded, even when Reyes reached the hill first, 6-5.

With Reyes flagging a bit after seven straight days of tournament action and gambling, Pickle was able to stymie the Filipino with defense and win the match.

"I'll remember this and cherish it for the rest of my life," Pickle said.

### The Kid

"Hey Landon, can I have some money?" asked a middle-aged man of young Landon Shuffett, who just received his first Derby City Classic embossed check, made out for \$250.

"I'll give you five," he said, offering to slap his hand.

At age 12, Shuffett has been a Derby City regular for five years. In his first three years, the tiny terror from Greensburg, Ky., performed exhibitions. He has competed in the tournament for the last three years, and this was his first year to place in the money. As usual, Shuffett attracted crowds of onlookers.

"I really don't like the attention. If I was just back in the corner, I might prefer it that way, instead of being the center of attention," he said. Even so, he still managed to make it in the money among a world-class field of 400.

Ironically, in a field that large, Shuffett somehow drew another youngin', 15-year-old Nick Tafoya, in the first round of the 9-ball event. "That first match was my toughest. He had me down 5-1 and I came back to beat him, 7-5," Shuffett said.

Shuffett had to skip school to compete in this year's Derby, but his dad, Stan, made sure he attended to his homework up in the hotel room to keep up. And as for spending his first Derby City payday, Landon may join the world of cell phone users. "It's a big might," Landon said, looking hopefully at his father.



Shuffett, 12, drew a crowd against Hall.

## hustlers' paradise

### DARREN APPLETON

looks like he could really use some sleep. Even his hair looks tired. The tough-as-nails 8-ball from England is often compared to a bulldog, but right now he looks like a mutt that wandered through a car wash.

Both weary and wired, Appleton has discovered in his first trip to the Derby City Classic that it's possible to play for 24 hours a day for nine days straight — as long as your money holds out. Derby City is a classic event, in that it embraces both kinds of billiard action — tournament and after-hours gambling — and many players in turn have embraced the opportunity to drink gallons of energy drinks and deprive themselves of sleep while they bet thousands of dollars.

"I've never experienced anything like this," says the stocky

Appleton, sounding a bit awestruck, like a grade-schooler on his first trip to Toys R Us. "You're thinking, like, 'Shall I just play in the tournament, or shall I just play money matches?' ... I got to the fifth round of the one-pocket [division], but I had to scratch because I slept in. I played a money match the night before — 8-ball, 10-ahead — that lasted 11 hours. We had \$5,000 each on the game, but there was maybe another \$20,000 on the match on the side.

"I lost, but it was a very good match. It was ... what day is it now? Thursday? I think it was Tuesday. No, it was Monday."

That's a common phenomenon at Derby City — people losing track of time. Heck, it might as well be 1967. One of the few differences between the Derby City Classic and the famed 1960s

Hustler Jamborees in nearby Johnston City, Ill., is that those guys wore suits, instead of ball caps, blue jeans and "Hustlin USA" t-shirts.

They're all on vivid display in the hotel's Derbyshire room, the nerve center of most of the major action. On this Thursday night, there's a typically chaotic scene, like one might imagine in a Chinese fish market. It's packed. It's humid with body heat. It smells like guys who haven't taken a shower in six days.

A large group has gathered around the table closest to the door, yammering loudly to hammer out the next matchup. Thousands of dollars go up on the table light, in full view of a uniformed Louisville policeman, who appears content that peace has been maintained.

Shane Van Boening skirts the edges of the room, on the prowl for a game. His "rube from South Dakota" look — complete with boyish face and slouchy demeanor — is just about useless here. After watching the 23-year-old wiry wonder bludgeon almost all competition this week, nobody wants any part of him.

"I think this is the last year I'm going to get action," says Van Boening, who was Appleton's opponent in Monday's 11-hour 8-ball match. "I'm trying to play every night, trying to get a game. This is my second year at Derby City. Last year I played the tournament. This year, I'm here for the action. ... I just like to get in action and take people's money."

But being well known doesn't necessarily prohibit you from action.

"Little John" Macias, a Derby City favorite and the subject of a profile in *Sports Illustrated* last year, has landed a game of 4-ahead one-pocket for \$2,000. Or maybe it's \$4,000. Or 5-ahead. It depends on whom you ask. The railbirds seldom get it right, even when they have side bets. Even the players aren't always sure.

Van Boening wanders back into the main tournament room around 1 a.m. and pulls up a chair as Appleton hooks up with semipro Chris Bartrum of Columbus, Ohio, for a \$20,000 9-ball match, 11-ahead. It's an intriguing pairing: Neither player has done particularly well in high-stakes action so far this year, and both players are clearly better than their performances indicate.

Bankrolls the size of small cantaloupes appear, and a messy stack

of bills takes its place on the light. Across the room, up-for-anything pros Cory Deuel, Mika Immonen and Stalev are enrapt by a bizarre challenge placed by 73-year-old Robert Ortiz of Patterson, N.J.

— playing finger-pool style, going three rails before contact, sink an entire rack of balls in the corner pocket in 150 tries or less.

Stalev, no stranger to odd games of skill, accomplishes the task in 140 tries. Ortiz bests him with 130. One-pocket ace Scott Frost walks up in the middle of the run and watches with his mouth agape as someone explains the game. Frost sputters, "How do you do THAT?" (If you've surprised Scott Frost, you know you have a unique proposition.)

A few hours later, Appleton beats Bartrum in their \$20,000 set of 9-ball. The defeat caps

Bartrum's worst year at the Derby City Classic.

"I think this is the first year I've come out a loser here," he says, bemoaning in particular some poorly calculated games against Filipino money-game king Dennis Orcollo. "I've lost a lot of matches."

Ironically, Bartrum will walk away with one big prize: The "St. Louis" Louis Roberts Action and Entertainment Award, determined by Derby attendees and online pool forum posters.

"Bartrum was in high-profile action every day of the nine-day pool & billiard jamboree ... showing the world that the Americans still have gamble in them," wrote A&E Award administrator Fred Agnir.

As odd as it seems, in an industry bent on fostering a goody-two-shoes image, the most popular tournament of the year values gambling so highly that it offers an award for the most ardent money player.

Derby City Classic founder Greg Sullivan offers no apologies.

"There are a lot of action matches, and I'm real proud of that," Sullivan said. "Skill is skill. ... I don't see it as gambling. Really, gambling is just a way of keeping score for pool players. When you're playing cards, or playing the lottery, or betting on a horse, you can't protect yourself. I think a person should darn well bet on themselves."

Of course, you have to know when to stop. Or when to change games. At 1:40 a.m., as Bartrum and Appleton kicked off their match, Derby City tournament director Scott Smith announced over the public address system: "There's an open seat in the poker game." — M.K.

Ortiz went three rails ...



MASON KING

... while Appleton (left) beat Bartrum.



## Big bonus

The Derby City Classic has hit a ceiling in terms of growth, even after moving some minor events to a nearby hotel. Derby founder Sullivan actually tried to curb participation this year, increasing entry fees in an effort to remain in the same venue and raise the level of competition.

"For the first time, it's cheaper to buy the weekly pass than it is to buy your entry

fee into the bank [pool tournament]. Still, people play. It's exciting," he said.

Compared to 2006's 474-player field in banks, 426 in one-pocket and 451 in 9-ball, this year saw a slip in entries, with 469 in banks, 416 in one-pocket, and 400 in 9-ball.

But there's no ceiling on prize money yet. Sullivan and his partners added five \$1,000 prizes for groups historically underrepresented at the Derby: women, under 16, under 21, over 62, and over 70. The player in

each group to place highest in the all-around rankings would win the extra grand.

"No one in these five groups has ever won an event here, or been the challenger," Sullivan said. "Now if you're over 70, you don't have to beat Efren Reyes. It's just a gesture to get you to play and have the chance to pay for your expenses."

## Heavy toll

Buddy Hall, the 61-year-old Hall of Famer, lost his 9-ball match in Round 4 and didn't intend to use his buy-back option.

"I'm 151 pounds overweight and I'm almost 62, and you have to play every round, for nine days. [Derby City] is pretty tough for somebody like me," he said.

A member of Hall's loyal following of fans decided to put up the money to put Hall back in the running. Hall handily beat 12-year-old Shuffett after the youngster tied it up at 3-3, and then faced an opponent he had a history with much longer than



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## 9-ring circus

Beyond the three main divisions at Derby City, there were plenty of opportunities to reap rewards in competition:

### + ALL-AROUND TITLES +

Master of the Table: Efren Reyes, \$20,000  
2nd Place: Rodolfo Luat, \$3,000  
3rd Place: Francisco Bustamante, \$2,000  
Under 16: Nick Tafoya, \$1,000  
Under 21: Ryan Stone, \$1,000  
Women: Bora Jung, \$1,000  
Over 62: Wade Crane, \$1,000  
Over 70: Don Steele, \$1,000

### + \$18,000 BANK RING GAME I +

1. Jason Miller, \$12,000  
2. Truman Hogue, \$6,000

### + \$18,000 BANK RING GAME II +

1. Shannon Daulton, \$12,000  
2. Danny Harriman, \$6,000

### + MINI TOURNAMENTS: +

9-Ball: Rafael Martinez, \$1,000  
9-Ball Bank: John Grim, \$1,000  
One Pocket: Ike Runnels, \$1,000

### + THE \$10,000 STRAIGHT POOL CHALLENGE: +

Mika Immonen: \$3,500  
John Schmidt: \$2,850

### + USBA 3-CUSHION QUALIFIERS +

Danny Kolacz, Fred Lamers, Israel Jamil

For finishers in the 9-ball, 9-ball banks and one-pocket divisions, see pg. 73.

## 9-ball

**THE DERBY** City Classic might not be the best place to take your girlfriend. If you do, she'd better be really into pool, pool players and pool-room grub, and winning some matches to impress her wouldn't hurt.

So, Niels Feijen is fortunate on several counts.

The 29-year-old Dutch pool stud is in a long-term relationship with the equally blond Katrine Jensen, one of Denmark's best female pool pros. And not only is she pool-positive, she's an excellent cornerman.

Katrine, 29, played nursemaid in Louisville when Feijen was struck with a case of stomach flu. She cheered him on as he recovered in time to make a run at the 9-ball title, and retrieved water and other refreshments when necessary. When Feijen reached the final day undefeated, Katrine would check on the progress of other matches and report back while Feijen meditated in their hotel room. And when Feijen lost his first set against Rodolfo Luat in the final, Katrine supplied the reality check.

"I went to wash my hands during the break and went up to Katrine, and she said, 'You have to change something. You have to let him know that you are the boss at the table now,' which was actually true. I just went back there and just started playing ball for ball. Give it your best on every shot there is," Feijen said.

Katrine planted the victory smooch on Feijen after he sank a 2-9 combo to ice the title in a hill-hill second-set thriller with Luat.

"I think I just lost 20 kilos," the sweat-soaked Feijen said, under the scorching lights of the TV table. "It's time for a beer."

Ten minutes later, the Bonnie & Clyde of Derby City flopped into armchairs in the hall outside the hotel's Boozseller bar with a Foster's lager and Bud Light.

Both needed a breather, because Feijen's first major title in many months wasn't as easy as it could have been.

With the 400-player field whittled to five in Round 12, Feijen, the only undefeated player remaining, lucked out by drawing the bye in the odd-numbered quintet. After Francisco Bustamante beat Johnny Archer, 7-5, and Gabe Owen conceded to Luat after fouling at the tail end of a 7-1 drubbing, tournament director Scott Smith had the three remaining players flip coins to see who would miss Round 13. Feijen shot his hands to the ceiling — he again won the right to sit out.

"[Expletive] you," Bustamante ribbed Smith. "C'est la vie."



Feijen stewed, while Katrine (inset) assessed his mood.

SAW GRAY

Against Luat, Bustamante quickly took a 5-1 lead. Then his opponent put on a clinic in defensive play, and Bustamante left several open shots after flubbing his own safeties. At 6-6, Luat nailed a bank on the 1 that led to his winning runout.

Meanwhile, Feijen meditated a bit, and then played cards and noshed on some dessert with Katrine. What he didn't do was spend any significant time practicing, which might have given Luat an edge at the beginning of the first match. Already warm and in stroke, Luat raced to a 5-2 lead on the strength of crafty safety play and cool-headed escapes. He carted off the first match, 7-3, forcing Feijen to exhaust his buy-back option.

"It's really nerve-wracking," Katrine said from her seat in the audience. "I know he can do it. ... Luat is playing really well as well, and he's hitting all his safeties, and he has a little bit of luck. So we'll see."

In the back of his mind, Feijen replayed nagging memories of recent EuroTour defeats.

"I was in the semifinals in four out of seven events, and I lost in three semifinals — two of them hill-hill — and once in the final," he said. "In the back of your mind, it starts to nibble a little bit. ... It's really a mental game then."

After Katrine's pep talk at the break, Feijen seemed sharper and more assertive in the second set. A solidly built fitness nut, he looked like a coiled sprinter at the starting block whenever he sized up a shot. And whenever he botched a shot, he let out his frustration, slamming his cue butt on the tiled floor. At 5-4, he really attacked the tile after missing a shot on the 4 and then

scratching to boot. From her seat in the audience, Katrine kept her doe eyes glued on Feijen, trying to assess his mood.

Feijen won a safety battle in the 11th rack, taking a 6-5 lead. In the next game, he and Luat nipped at the 3 ball until it yielded a go-ahead shot for Luat. At hill-hill, Luat gave away the match by whiffing on a one-rail kick at the 2 ball. Feijen lined up the combo for the win.

With the weight of his expectations lifted, Feijen hoisted his cardboard check for \$16,800. Back outside the Boozseller, Katrine handed him a cell phone so he could accept congratulations from friends.

Asked whom he typically would call after winning a major title, Feijen looked over to Katrine and said, "She's already here." — M.K.

Landon's lifetime — Reyes.

"I beat Efren a lot of times in a row," Hall said. "... At that time I was playing a lot of pool, my weight was down, I was in good shape and I played good. A lot of times the Filipinos would come over, and there were five or six tournaments when I beat every one of them."

Hall proved he still had mojo, knocking



Even Reyes had his limits.

Despite the lackluster finish in 9-ball, Reyes still was a lock for Master of the Table. There wasn't much left to do but go

upstairs, change clothes, and come back down to sweat Bustamante's next match.

After eight days and nights, the balls began to blur as Reyes finally surrendered to his heavy eyelids. Sitting upright in a chair in the tournament room, with his head thrown back and his hand draped over his face, Reyes looked like a toddler who had fallen asleep mid-nose rub. And as fans crept up and snapped photos of the napping champion, Reyes fell deeper into his snooze, content with a long week's work.

**The End.**