

BRIAN PARKS IS HEADED TO THE U.S. OPEN 9-BALL CHAMPIONSHIPS

December 1, 2009 ~ by Amy C. Encinias, *vbb*



On Sunday, November 8, 2009, Brian Parks of Bakersfield, CA, defeated Joseph Cole of Pelham, AL, 11-10, in the finals of the 2009 U.S. Amateur Championship. The hill-hill battle went back and forth and was, by far, Brian's toughest match in the tournament. With numerous break & runs, neither player made many mistakes at all except for the occasional dry break or scratch on the break. Brian having placed in the top 5 of this tournament in the past more than once, stood strong and finally claimed the Championship title. When asked if Brian gets nervous in the finals of such a championship, he replied, "I don't get nervous. Statistically, I don't fall apart in the Finals; I just tend to break bad."

However, he has improved his break and thinks that may very well be the reason for his win.

Brian is originally from Lake Isabella, CA about 50 miles from Bakersfield. His parents had a pool table in their basement and he started playing when he was 3 years old. He stopped until he was 16 and that was when he began to take the game seriously. Serious enough to get some coaching, play 8 hours a day and began winning championships in 2004. He's been playing in the American Poolplayers Association since 2004 and qualified and won the Singles National Championships in 2005 and 2006. His team has qualified for the Team Championships held at the Riviera Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas almost every year. While Brian is not officially the team captain, he is the one that gives his teammates time-outs and has quite a knack for it. He plays a huge part in their success.

His favorite game is 10-ball because the break doesn't mean everything. "You still have to run out, and the 10-ball makes a big difference". Brian is currently playing with an Ariel Carmeli cue and his favorite pro player right now is Shane Van Boening. When he's not preparing for a big tournament, Brian will hit balls for 2-3 hours here and there. But when it's his day, he practices for at least 4 hours every day (after his day job as an insurance agent) until the tournament begins. Working mainly on drills, one of them consists of picking one shot and executing every possible cue ball position on the table from the same shot. The best advice he's ever been given is to, "Stay in the moment, don't look at the past, don't look at the future. The results are predetermined, just play and find out who wins". This is exactly what Brian does.



Being an extremely approachable person, very humble, always ready to help any fellow player with anything, Brian is the contrary to arrogant and will simply let his cue do any talking for him. Even with the responsibilities of work and a family, Brian wants to play in as many tournaments as he can and work his way up the ranks and ultimately become a top pro. A goal, I believe, is well within reach. He gives considerable thanks to his parents, Gene & Mary Ann Parks, the foundation to his accomplishments throughout the years. And to Mike Francis, owner of Cue Ball Family Billiards in Bakersfield, for all of his support to Brian as well as the APA. Lastly, profound appreciation goes to Brian's fiancée, Sarah, for putting up with a 'pool player'.

In result of his U.S. Amateur Championship win, he will be competing in the 2010 U.S. Open 9-Ball Championships. We will also find Brian competing in the Jay Swanson Memorial in February and I will definitely have money on him when he comes to Vegas to play in the Andy Mercer Memorial at Rum Runner Tropicana. Keep an eye out for him, he's making a serious statement.