

THE ROAD TO NATIONALS

October 4, 2009 by Amy C. Encinias



Actually, it was the road to Tucson, AZ. to compete in the APA Singles Regional Qualifier for Nationals 2010 to be held at The Riviera. Fuel prices, hotel rates, taking off work, saying good-bye to beloved pets that hate to see you leave....what are we doing? Are we on drugs or do we love pool this much?

Rob, Benny and I got on the road Friday afternoon to begin the 7 hour drive, determined to make it worth it. Staying focused, envisioning ourselves winning, and thinking only of what's relevant....victory.

Saturday morning, 8:00 am, it was Benny's 30th birthday and the tournament was underway in a place that looked much like the Las Vegas Cue Club. Broken down into seeded skill level brackets, only 1 winner from each bracket will find themselves winning a spot to compete in Nationals (8-ball 6-7's offered 2 spots). Fellow Las Vegas players were there such as Scott & Tina Moden, Chris Madden, Chris Erickson, Dan McInerney and Jason McGuire. My first 8-ball match was



in the skill 4's only bracket. I played well up until the point of actually winning a game. I gave all 3 games to my opponent and found myself on the one-loss side of a single-modified format within 30 minutes. Rob was playing quite well in his 8-ball 6-7's bracket and trucking along the winner's side. Tina drew a couple of strong 4's and just couldn't get past them. Chris Madden was playing well, but unfortunately it came down to two Las Vegas players having to play each other and Rob was the victor. Not monitoring my progress on the board, I was unaware that I had worked my way back around the one-loss side when I was called to play my last match in the final round! It was SO close, going hill-



hill, but I got it. Rob won in his bracket too! In 9-ball, Benny was struggling as the only skill level 9 in the 6,7,8,9 bracket having to give 29 points to a 6, Benny got knocked out taking 3rd place. Scott Moden played awesome and went undefeated in 9-ball and became the 3rd person from Las Vegas to take home a plaque. There was almost a fourth Las Vegas winner, but Jason McGuire fell short in his 9-ball final match and took Runner-Up.

After 13 hours of playing pool our backs were sore, our feet hurt and we had barely eaten anything. Having finished what we came to do, we were back on the road. Rob and Benny fell asleep immediately. I was exhausted, but I just wanted to get home. It took so much focus, stamina and determination to drive back to Las Vegas in the middle of the night...more than winning a tournament requires! The extent to which one goes to play pool intrigues me. Needless to say, the trip was worth it.



Rob Hatley - 1st Place
8-Ball 6-7's



Amy Encinias - 1st Place
8-Ball 4's



Scott Moden - 1st Place
9-Ball 6,7,8 & 9's



Jason McGuire - Runner-
Up
9-Ball 4-5's