

Frisco Eddie's Revenge

*A series by Balboa Ron Schweikert
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(Editor's Note: Back in 1985, Balboa Ron delighted readers with a series of short stories about a shuffler named Frisco Eddie. After recovering from two major hip surgeries, Ron is back at his typewriter with a "Frisco Eddie....The Return" series. Because we have so many new subscribers since 1985 who missed the original "Revenge" series, we decided to publish those before we start "The Return" series. In November, we published Part I; in December, Part II. And here's the conclusion of Frisco Eddie's Revenge. Enjoy!)

Frisco Eddie had been waiting for some time to play the "high rollers" now that his game had improved appreciably. His "someday" wish had become a reality as he was about to begin a money game with "Big Al" from the East Coast.

As the board was being waxed, Eddie reflected on some of the things he must make himself aware of during this session. He had been taught well. (Watch for Al to "dry off" the corners with the outside heel of his hand when he shoots. If he does, start springling some wax and wake them up for the cross-shot lags. No "palming" of the weights on the lags; the moisture on the bottom of the weight could slow it down by a foot or more. Any moisture, i.e., "spit" on the outside "hitting" surface of the weight will make it "run," especially if a small amount of wax was added to that surface. Don't let him get away with "nudging" or "bumping" the board when he shoots if I have a hanger up.)

There were a hundred other things flashing through Eddie's mind as the quarters went into the slot. The board was waxed and ready to go. "How much would you like to start for, Eddie?" asked Big Al. "We came a long way and me and Two-Hanger are splitting the action." "How about a hundred a game for now," Eddie replied. "O.K. call the toss," said Al. (Eddie recalled that out of thousands of coin-toss decisions, heads came up with a very slight edge.) "Heads," said Eddie. Heads it was. The game was on.

Big Al began by "testing" the right-cross lag shot which was his favorite. Eddie stuck on the deep deuce. "You are improving, kid. Hope you can keep it up all night because one of us will leave here broke," said Big Al. "Don't worry about the horse, man, just load the wagon," Eddie replied.

As the game progressed, Big Al and Two-Hanger Fred realized they were now involved with a formidable opponent. Eddie was "sticking," he was "lagging," his "short-weight" game was where it belonged, and he had a

good "expanded-hand" shot, in addition to his normal "jersey" game.

As the clock ticked on through the night, Eddie progressed consistently toward the winner's circle. He was actually beating the "Big Man." Big Al had tried every trick he knew, to no avail. It was now nine in the morning. Frisco Eddie had them stuck for \$4,000.

"How much do you guys want to play for this game?" Eddie asked. "How about a thousand?" said Two-Hanger Fred. "How much of that is guts?" Eddie replied. (He knew they were close to being broke.) "What the hell do you mean by that?" said Two-Hanger. "O.K., then," said Eddie. "You won't mind putting the bet on the table so we can all see where we stand."

Big Al and Two-Hanger had a conference; they had \$200 between them. "We'll just play for \$200 then," said Big Al as he placed the money up. "O.K., let's get it on then," said Eddie. (He remembered how these men worked -- "never give a sucker a break.") He would have to win and "clean them out" now, or God only knew what would happen next. The game was on and Eddie was shaky. He had never been in a marathon game before.

As the game progressed, the score was 11 to 14 in Big Al's favor, with two of Al's red weights blocking Eddie's right-hand lag. (Now or never, thought Eddie.) Big Al made a snide remark and then coughed loudly just as Eddie was releasing his final left-hand lag. Even with this distraction, the weight felt good and was on track. Eddie held his breath as the weight settled into a very deep three left cross. However, it was still spinning from the jersey lag. When the spinning had finally stopped (it seemed like an eternity to Eddie), the weight had gently edged its way another half-inch forward -- into a four!

Eddie had one it! He had "busted" them! Eddie had faithful watchers and after the excitement had died down, Eddie walked over to Big Al's table. He told them to hang onto the \$400 which had been put up for "travelling expenses." As they were leaving the bar, Big Al turned to Eddie and said, "You must know, Eddie, that we -- or someone else like us -- will be seeing you again real soon. You're into the game now, kid -- and we won't let you go." "I'm sure of that," Eddie replied. "Take it easy."

The sky was beginning to cloud up as Frisco Eddie left the Blue Moon Lounge after his first "real" session. "Someday" was glorious, thought Eddie. Then, remembering Al's final words, he wondered, is a life full of "somedays" what I really want?

***Next month: "Frisco Eddie's
Revenge.... The Return" -- Don't
miss it!***
