

Frisco Eddie's Revenge: The Return

A series by Balboa Ron Schweikert

(In the last episode, after Tacoma Tim and Lil had lost to Indiana and Wrapper at Gee Bee's, near Tacoma/Seattle, Lil set up a challenge involving her protegee, Frisco Eddie, who was nervous but excited about this opportunity.)

Eddie had made his challenge. Now he awaited the response from the Wrapper and Indiana Joe. After a short conflagration, the Wrapper said: "How about we just let you walk this thing for \$200 an end." Eddie glanced over at Lil momentarily, then said: "I'm into that, but how about I shoot a few practice weights first -- and oh, by the way, Lil will be handling the money."

Indiana said: "That'll be just fine, my man," and walked over to Lil and said: "If I remember right, you always like to put up the stake first, right?" She replied: "Yup. Here's our \$400." She placed the money on the bar and Indiana motioned to the Wrapper, who then matched their wager. Lil placed an ashtray over the money.

Eddie had been practicing with his weights while all this was going on. When he had tried out both ends of the table, he asked the Wrapper if he minded if he used four of his own weights. He said he thought "that would be fine," and even let Eddie choose which color he wanted. He chose blue.

After the quarters were in and the board was freshly waxed, the action began. The first few frames were basically weight-for-weight. However, Indiana was out-lagging Eddie and, as the game progressed, it began to look bleak.

The game ended with Indiana lagging a 3, which made it 15 to 11 overall. Eddie went over to Lil and Tim, looking for some advice. In the meantime, the Wrapper had picked up their money, leaving \$400 behind for the next game. Lil had time to confer with Eddie while the board was being prepared for the next game.

Lil wasn't excited about the outcome of the game. She told Eddie: "I expected things to work out this way, Champ. You didn't have the feel for the lag yet, and you haven't nailed down the drift. You can beat these guys. I've got a few side-betters on the line here, too, so just settle down and go to work, Babe."

Eddie felt better after that conversation and his next game improved, but he still lost 13 to 15. Indiana and the Wrapper were starting to get pretty cocky now and were filled with self-confidence. That was what Lil was waiting for! She not only "jacked up" the game bet to \$400 an end, but she and Tim also loaded up on some side bets as well.

Then Eddie came alive. About the middle of the third game, he got that feeling that all pros get when they're

"on." He knew he could not only stick every weight, but that he could slide, and place the weights just about wherever he wanted them. In addition to that, his lag was really warming up. It felt like his fingers almost extended clear to the 3 zone, and he could place the weights there at will. What a sensation!

He won the third game by a close margin (as per Lil's instructions). They set the bet for the next game at \$500 an end. Lil and Tim had all kinds of side action as well, so this game was important. Eddie won.

Indiana Joe and the Wrapper went into conference then. They didn't want to break up the doubles, but Eddie had been able to manipulate the hammer, so he had somewhat of an edge there. He had done this through arranging things to where Indiana didn't get the lag. This was accomplished by making sure he would get only a deep 3 or 4 (or off the board) against the Wrapper, when the Wrapper had left a 1 on his last shot of that frame. He felt he could afford to give up a 1 if he had to, as opposed to fighting Indiana's lag. So they decided that the best strategy would be for Indiana to play Eddie singles. They were also in agreement that they should raise the "anti" and take care of this young upstart once and for all!

The Wrapper came over to Lil then and made a proposition. They would put Indiana up in singles against Eddie....for \$1500. Lil told him: "Well, now, Wrapper my man, we're going to have to think this one over a bit." She then motioned to Eddie and Tim and drew them aside. She was smiling as she said: "Well, boys....we've arrived. They've got us -- right where we want them. Let it all hang out now, Champ -- this guy belongs to you!"

The excitement level in GeeBee's Bar was peaked out now. Everybody wanted in the action -- one way or another! Indiana had asked for, and got, the board sprayed for this game. The wax went on then -- and they were off.

Eddie (and Lil) had spotted one weakness in Indiana's game. It was his right rail from the window side of the bar. The game was tight. Both of them were sticking perfectly, making combinations, and lagging 3's almost every time. The score was now 14 to 13, in Eddie's favor, and Indiana's hammer. Eddie knew he had to make him shoot that right rail. The board was clean for Eddie's third weight. He placed it a little right of center, about two feet short of the 1 line.

Indiana made what may have been a mistake at that point. He tried to "go" on the weight, but stuck right on instead. This was the set-up Eddie was waiting for. He shot a left-hand cross -- which just skimmed by Indiana's weight on its right side. The weight ended up a deep

deuce, about two inches off the right rail.

The ball was in the man from Indiana's court now. Should he shoot the right rail, or follow Eddie's left cross shot? He had to stick this one or the game would be tied-up 14 all -- with Eddie's hammer! He sized it up with his right hand. He bent down and sized it up again. The hammer weight was shifted to his left hand now.

The tension was peaked throughout the room. There was a lot of money at stake. You could hear a pin drop in that place right then! Indiana slowly sprinkled some wax on the left rail. He got set for the shot, and then made his release. The shot felt good, it looked good, and it....

--TO BE CONTINUED NEXT MONTH--

NSHF (continued from Page 2)

As this is written, I am at Blinky's in Santa Clara waiting for my partner, Darrol Nelson. I haven't played with Darrol for a few years and it will indeed be a pleasure and a thrill to play a tournament with him again.

Bill Melton dethroned Darrol at Vegas to win the singles. I think in '94 at Reno was the last time Bill beat Darrol. So, at 61-1/2 years young, Bill Melton proved he is a champ by sticking a deep one at 14-14 after Darrol lagged two 4's to tie at 14 all. Quite a game for all to see -- two of the great champions of the game of table shuffleboard.

Thanks to Diana Hagen, Johnny Ballard, and all the crew at Houston for their donation to the National Shuffleboard Hall of Fame. The word is that the Houston tourney was a great one and is expected to be even better next year. So we'll all try to head them that-a-way. See you all then. I've been waiting to beat ole Howard a long time, so get ready, Howard. I'm a coming to get ya!

I stopped off at Visalia and stayed a couple days with Bobby and Charlene Goldsmith and had a very nice visit. Bobby showed me around with a ride on his golf cart and showed me his collection of antique Cadillacs -- over 30 ranging from 1937 to 1977. We also got to play Steve and Wes at Mr. G's and they took advantage of a couple of old men, beating us unmercifully -- but we do have a plan for revenge.

It was good to hear from Jim Wolf, my partner in the A-B Draw at Harvey's in Maryland at the Mickey Mickens Memorial. It's always good to hear from someone you've helped along the way. Hope to see you again, Jim. It was a great experience for me, too.

We didn't get to have our NSHF meeting at the Vegas tourney. It's now set for the Southwest Open '97 in Del City, Oklahoma. Bob Hunt has promised to be there and Jim Foran, hopefully all will be there.

Thanks to Triple Crown for the donation of one set of weights for the Hall of Fame. Madge won them and donated them back to the Hall of Fame.

National Shuffleboard Hall of Fame

By Louise Freer, Secretary

Congratulations to the Houston Holiday Open organizers Jack Scott, Johnny Ballard, and Diana Hagen for the success of their tournament this past December.

It is my belief that this is to be lauded for several reasons -- the first being, of course, that the organizers made a very nice donation out of some of the sponsor money they collected. It is my hope that other tournaments will follow suit and have it become "standard practice" for tournaments to show support of the National Shuffleboard Hall of Fame. If a tournament organizer needs ideas for NSHF (or wants to offer them, too), they can contact any of the Board members.

Another reason the organizers should be commended is for how the events were organized. Using handicaps, etc., and arranging the schedule of events so that all levels of players were kept busy benefits us all. It encourages the growth and perpetuation of the game of shuffleboard.

Thanks again to Jack, Johnny, and Diana, as well as the many tournament sponsors for their generous donation to the NSHF. Thanks also for their vision and for setting an example of how to do things so that EVERYONE benefits, including the NSHF and the FUTURE.

Next month: an update on the NSHF status and progress.

News From The Dixie Belle....

The five hardest words for me to write: news from the Dixie Belle -- this time especially hard since I write with mixed emotions. I am sure most of you already know that Wes and Eileen have sold the Dixie Belle, but to those of you who didn't, it is official. On Feb. 13, the new owners took over.

Wes and Eileen are two of the finest people I know. Before they took over the Dixie Belle, they were well known and respected around town. Wes, of course, was a "Party Animal" from way back, but with a quiet (yes, I know; hard to believe), serious side that made him a successful business man and a fine father. Eileen (who Wes insists is the "meanest woman in captivity") is patient, kind, takes time to listen, and is determined enough to see a project through whether it be tough or not. Together they made the Dixie Belle a relaxing, at times exciting, always entertaining, place to visit.

Wes had the courage to go with a new idea. New to all of the old Dixie Belle regime, that was shuffleboard. "Oh, no," some said. "Those rough necks," others said. Wes

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