



THE RED BARON SPEAKS

JULY-AUGUST 2011

by Larry Creakbaum

Del City was again a great trip. If you did not go you missed a good event. I checked back and I reported between 140 and 160 registered payers every year and we hit over 150 this year. The first year I reported was 08 when the financial crunch started. The RVs were back this year but players from the both coast were absent unless you count Arizona as the west coast and one east coast player arrived in time for the 6-person and the doubles.



The boards were good, in my opinion, although they had some wild curves. I was told this was caused by storage in high humidity and they were set up to late to bring the edges down without the possibility of cracking the boards. This made for some interesting games. The speeds were pretty consistent although some boards were faster than others, but I think you have to expect this with 24 boards. The events started close to the scheduled times and ran smoothly.

I am glad to see the KC shootout back on the schedule. I have been informed by a source who does not want to be identified because they are not authorized to comment that they have a five year contract and after 2012 go back to their traditional date of the first week of April. This makes air travel easier without the holiday crunch. Spring break could be an issue with the college bunch taking seats, but only if your flight is going north-south or in the southern part of the country.

The last week end of July was an event at La Piazza in Las Vegas and on Friday the 28th of July, I tried to get a seat on the 6:00 flight to Phoenix. The aircraft was full so I went east to Charlotte which is a USAir hub and plenty of flights to somewhere. After not finding any room on the first flight, I was able to get on the second flight and arrived in Las Vegas about eight hours later than intended. This did not give me time to rest my legs after long walks thru three airports and I did not play very well in the AB draw.

Thirty players entered and twenty four entered the four person draft for six teams in the second event. The next event was a mixed draw which I had never played in this type of event before. Except for yours truly, they managed to get ten quality players of each sex to have ten teams enter. This event brought the most in the sponsor sale.



On Saturday night they played the first round of the add to three doubles which was 2 out of three in the winners bracket and a single 21 point game in the losers. They also had an open doubles that was changed to a round robin since there were only four teams entered. Something told me that even after playing the first round on Saturday it could run late so I did not enter the add to three. Sure enough the winners bracket squared off against the losers bracket somewhere between 6:30 and 7:00 at about ten the losers bracket won which meant to finish they still had a 21 point game to play. I did not realize there were so many things a player could do between shots. Between frames it was duck out the back door for a quick few puffs, after returning it was try to remember what color they shot so the one who scored could walk to the center of the board to mark their points and gather the weights, and then take a sip of soda or something, powder their fingers, then get the weight they missed the first time, and study and empty board for at least a minute and finally deliver a weight.

I had a 1:00 AM flight on Monday morning and after the 2 out of 3 match ended about 10,I went looking for a ride to the airport. I could not find anyone who had not been drinking so I called a cab, took a quick stop in the playing room and some fifteen minutes after the match had ended they threw the first weight in the 21 point game. I got on the one o'clock to Charlotte, made a flight to IND and was home by noon on Monday.

It is summer now and action is a little slow. The next is Labor Day week end there is an event in Indiana, one in Pennsylvania, one in Oklahoma, one in Texas, and the football season starts with a home game. I have not decided what I will do yet.

SEP-OCT 2011

Labor Day has come and gone and I only traveled the 130 miles to Bourbon, IN for a mixed doubles, and a Pro Am and an Open doubles which were played concurrently. I played terrible and I keep thinking "why do I still play the game". Just go and have fun with your friends and make new friends but when the gate gets ready to open I pull out my twenty bucks and enter. Then I think the twenty bucks is small change compared to the gas, hotel room, food and beverages consumed during a two or three day event, especially the gas. If they cut my social security as congress is considering, I will not be able to afford the gas and the rest of the bleeding stops. I just read yesterday they may give us a 3.5 %raise. Maybe there is hope.

The second week of September I traveled to Houghton Lake, MI (more gas) and renewed acquaintances with players who used to come to Indiana but ran out of gas money a long time ago. Some of the players did not even travel a third of the length of



Michigan to attend. They had an AB draw, ABC draw and a handicap doubles. I played in the first two and finished JOTM both times and was too tired to look for a partner in the third event and left early for home.

After a home football week end, I went to Steelville, MO (more gas) which is seventy miles closer than Houghton Lake. They had an ABC draw and a bring partner add to three along with a negative spot, max four. I felt sorry for the two older gentlemen (younger than I) I drew as partners in the ABC as they played their hearts out but I was too heavy.

The first week of October the schedule called for an amateur event at the Bourbon Legion. Also on the schedule the first week was the Purdue-Notre Dame football game. I did not attend either but at my families insistence went to my middle son's wedding that week end.

After a week end with a home football game, I went to a location on Friday for a draw partner and on Saturday an add to one doubles. Everyone was paired up so I watched about two thirds of the event and left.

Next up for my travel is NASC in Reno, NV (fly) which I plan to attend. I would like to propose a mini event be added that could be put in the normal round robin calls which would be a draw partner, double elimination, \$100 entry with a minimum age of 75 years to play. You might be surprised of how many and who is in that group. If an odd number enters we could add the oldest available 74 yearold. Hope to see all off you there.