



The Board Talk

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Blue Goose Sweetheart Tourney Breaks Record

The Blue Goose Tavern in Port Orchard, Washington, hosted the 20th Sweetheart Tournament over the 1999 Valentine's weekend and broke all previous records, with 32 teams vying for a share of the \$5,000 pot (\$1,000 added by owner Dee Hudson).

The Sweetheart Tournament is a piece of shuffleboard history in the Great Northwest. In 1979, Clark and Clara Kenny, owners of Larry and Ray's Tavern in Tacoma, Washington, started the tradition. When they sold out, they passed the tournament on to Nancy Hiller, owner of the Acme Tavern in Tacoma. From there, it went to Gene and Vera Brown at the Blue Goose in Port Orchard, now owned by Dee and Larry Hudson.

When Dee and Larry started getting word about the expected turnout, they began to worry about how to accommodate the shufflers on their two in-house boards. That problem was solved when Larry found a shuffleboard for sale in the newspaper, supposedly only two years old, with side boards broken and a score board which allegedly had never worked. The price was right and by Wednesday, the third board was set up and working.



Larry Pearson from Everett, Washington, and Patti Premak of Canada took top honors in the big event.



Last year's winners, Mike and Hazel Thorpe of Seattle took second place honors.

Larry and Patti knew they were in a shuffleboard game when they came up against Mike and Hazel, who took the first match. It went down to the third game in the final match before Larry and Patti were crowned the 1999 Sweetheart Champions.



Third place went to the one and only Rick Gindt of Tacoma and Jackie Anderson from Shelton.

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In fourth place were "Mr. Cool" Chuck Norris of Oregon and his partner, "Dead Eye" Linda Steffenson of Tacoma.



Tied for fifth and were Dan "Hit Man" Hitt and Melody Marine, along with...



Mike Waters of Tuhuya, Washington and local Nancy Johannsen.

Tied for sixth place were Tim Nugent and Sharon McDonnell from Tacoma, and Mel and Jeanette Hohn,

owners of the Fir Cone Tavern in Shelton, Washington.

The preliminary Friday night single elimination draw partner event was won by John Martin of Everett and Jim Rollman from Bremerton. Second place went to Don Mitchell and Dennis Smith of Kelso, with Jim Manders from Sequim and local Dan Keller taking third. "Dan only plays about two times a year," said Dee. "He got everyone's attention wanting to know where he came from."

Dee and Larry thank bracketeer Bill Walker who did an outstanding job of keeping everyone up and ready to play when their turn came, and Lin Walker for her excellent job of handling the food. "She had eight ladies from the Goose cooking and we fed people starting at 2 p.m. on Saturday for a snack. Jerry Rivers from Standwood, Washington, stated: "What a spread you people put on for us shufflers." Larry said this is just a snack; wait until you see the dinner. The players ate at 6 and continued to eat until closing time. Then food was brought out again at noon on Sunday and they ate again until the tournament was finished at 2 a.m. Those girls go all out and no one goes away hungry," said Dee. The Hudsons also thank bartenders Susie, Kennen, Maria and Carolyn, who kept everyone from dying of thirst.

From Gene and Vera Brown, Bill and Lin Walker, Dee and Larry Brown: "We want to send a special thanks to all of the players who came to The Goose to make this an outstanding tournament. You were all great, wonderful people, and such outstanding shuffleboard players. Hope to see you all next year."

The next tournament at the Blue Goose will be an ABC Draw on July 17-18. The third board which was bought for this tournament will be moved to the "sister" location at Port Orchard, the Red Dog Saloon, just up the hill about a mile from the Blue Goose. At next year's Sweetheart Tournament, shufflers may be shuttled back and forth between the two locations. The Hudsons hope to attract some of the young people who now play darts and pool at the Red Dog into a new sport -- shuffleboard! Perhaps there will be some new faces in the New Millennium at The Blue Goose Sweetheart Tournament 2000.

(Editor's Note: The Blue Goose is a member of The Board Talk's national shuffleboard network. It was our pleasure to visit both The Blue Goose and the Red Dog Saloon when we were in Washington for the Board Talk Shufflers' Reunion at the Whistling Oyster in Quilcene in 1994. We fell in love with Port Orchard and spent two days there before our week in Quilcene and we can heartily recommend this entire area as one of the most beautiful and hospitable places in Shuffleboard Land, USA. On your way to or from the Grand Masters Plus on July 27-Aug. 1 at The Whistling Oyster in Quilcene, plan a stop at Port Orchard. And tell them The Board Talk sent you!)