



The Board Talk

Published monthly by George & Donna Wilber
503 E. Sheridan Rd., Lansing, MI 48906 Phone: 517-371-2538 or 517-484-4976

Vol. 16, No. 2

February 1999

Shuffleboarders Thaw at Houston Holiday Open! *By Don Meehan*



The icy, wintry weather that had gripped most of the country prior to Christmas subsided, at least in the Houston area, to allow erstwhile shuffleboarders from eight states and all over Texas to convene at the Hilton Southwest for some serious shuffleboard and some not-so-serious Holiday partying! This year, 14 boards filled the Grand Ballroom, with full service bar and juke box "at the ready"! The hotel offered deluxe rooms, with breakfast buffet included, for \$49.95 and this year, Jack and Johnny added a free visit to the Hospitality Suite for any shuffleboard player or good-looking woman still standing after 2 a.m.

As promised, organizers Jack Scott and Johnny Ballard had "something for everyone" at the 3rd Annual Houston Holiday Open. Of the nearly 150 players who registered, 78 players were rated 3, 4 or 5. In 10 events held over five days, the casual, average players not only got to intermingle with top-notch pros, but were able to learn from and compete with them in events like the A-B-C Draw and the Bring 4-Person Team. And, guess what? Everybody seemed to have a good time!

On Saturday, Dec. 26, the tournament kicked off with two draw events. In the A-B (Pro-Am), the Dallas metroplex was "Boss" with David Williams of Ft. Worth and Lee Duncan of Dallas topping the field. Brother Bobby Williams and Mahlon Nobles from Arlington claimed second. Locals Diana Hagen and Marshall Partlow placed third, while locals Sylvia Martinez and Ann Walker finished fourth.

In the amateur division, the team of locals "Super Dave" Ramold and Pete Worsnop took first place. Local John Little teamed with Dallasite Jeff Womble for second; locals Wayne Hammond and Jeff Clark claimed third, while locals Lee Stout and Perla Scott came in fourth.

Day Two featured the ABC draw event, in which players of varying skill levels are paired on a three-person team. "A" players face off against "A" players, "B"s against "B"s, and "C"s against "C"s in a single game, double elimination format.

Bob Lewis from Arizona, Tony Pelton from Arkansas, and local Perla Scott claimed first place. Johnny Ballard, Nebraskan Terry Roberts and Morris

Moss of Dallas took second. Pat Gainey from Austin teamed with locals Dave Ramold and Danny Norris to place third. Hall of Famer Glen Davidson from Oklahoma, Troy Thornton of Clear Lake, Texas, and local David Andrews claimed fourth place. Fifth and sixth places were shared by the teams of Eddie Woods of Ft. Worth, Jim McGee of Clear Lake and local Lynette Ammermann; Dallasite Bobby Wright and locals Tre Cameron and Clay Moore.

On Day Three, the four-person team events were held. The Pro Division (min. 5 points) saw the team of David Williams, Eddie Woods and Dallasites Gary Nelson and Key Nelson, battle into the wee hours

(continued on Page 22)

**Inside: Colorado, Texas, NSHF
Inductions....Pages 10, 24**

**Houston Holiday Open Participants
Reach Out to Fellow Shuffler...Page20**

MOTHER'S SPRING FLING, CORPUS CHRISTI, MARCH 20-22

The 3rd Annual Spring Fling Tournament at Mother's Pizza, 12135 Leopard St., Corpus Christi, Texas, is scheduled for March 20-22.

Events include an A/B handicap draw partner on Friday, March 20, 7:30 p.m., \$20 per player, single elimination. Saturday at 1 p.m. will be a 4-person draft team, handicapped event, \$25 per player. Team selection will begin at 11:30 a.m., sale at noon, free buffet at 12:30. Sunday at 1 p.m. will be the handicapped singles event, double elimination, with sale at 12:30 p.m. A registration fee of \$5 will be charged for the weekend.

For further information, contact Mother's Pizza, 512-241-8500, or Neil Garvin, 512-854-3732.

Mother's is a B.Y.O.B. establishment.

More Notebook (cont. from Page 7)

Harvey Kidd auction, you are witnessing a cross between Will Rogers and Robin Williams. His quick wit is really a hard act to follow. As both a player and a friend, Harvey is: "The best I ever saw!" We also got the treat of seeing Rod Cameron, along with Little Ray, inducted into the National Shuffleboard Hall of Fame. Everyone who knows Rod agrees he is one of the best strategy players around and, in his day, one of the very best shooters as well. And, yes, they are both truly legends.

We were disappointed to hear another legend, Darrol Nelson, would not be able to make the tournament. It seems he had a motorcycle accident just a few days prior to the tournament and hurt his shoulder. Of course, we all said: "Hey, we would have let him play anyway...right, guys?" But, knowing Darrol, playing at his very best is the only option and that's what makes him who he is. Glad to hear it was not serious. See you next year, Darrol.

There was another surprise announcement, but on a sadder note. We Houston players gather on weekends at Danny's Sports Bar on Westheimer and a regular there is Bopper. We all saw him at the tournament on Monday and he was said to have commented that he was having a good time and was waiting all year to come to the Open this year. We had all noticed him limping for some time; yet, he never would elaborate. Nothing would have kept Bopper away from the game, but something did. Bopper knew all along that he was going to have his leg amputated the next day. He never asked for help or sympathy from anyone. Another Houston player, Jimmy Britt, found out and told us all the next day before the

auction. More than \$1200 was collected that will be used to help Bopper get an artificial leg. Jimmy Britt also donated a \$1700 handicap bathroom. Thanks to the warm hearts of those who knew him and, more so, those who never even met him, he may get to play the game he loves.

One of the most encouraging things I saw at this event was the new blood being pumped into the sport. Last year, I saw a large number of new faces, mostly 3 and 4 rated players, and they were here again, along with more new players -- which is exactly what this sport needs. I saw a number of pros like Glen Davidson, Steve Burkett and Diana Hagen spend time practicing and showing amateurs the secret skills of the game. Glen spent over an hour with me practicing just free-hand shots. These people all genuinely enjoy watching the game flourish and seeing someone they have worked with place in an event.

All of the partying, poker, and puck winners were caught on camera by Gene Peach and were transferred to the net for your viewing by tapping into www.shuffleboard.net Check it out. Hey, you don't want to miss a glimpse of Steve Burkett dancing (without a beer in his hand). Beam me up, Scottie! Boy, shuffleboard has really gone uptown. Also the Bowers' ratings and upcoming game event dates are on the net as well.

Thanks to all the West Coast and East Coast players who made the long ride to let us enjoy their company and see their fine playing skills. See you next year and bring your dancing shoes and you better know the Macarena if you're gonna keep up with Lilly Kidd!

Nancy Rice, Conroe, Texas

Seldom, if ever, have we had a better "sideline" view of a major tournament than yours, Nancy, and we thank you, as we know our readers will. Please pass a message along to Bopper. George lost his right leg when he hopped a freight train at the age of 12. With his artificial leg, he played basketball, football and baseball all through high school and beyond, and is still playing shuffleboard at the age of near-70. We salute the Houston Holiday Open participants who repented to his need and join them in encouraging him to "go for it; you may be better than ever!"

Glen's View of the Houston Holiday Open

Rod Cameron and "Little" Ray Hartness are now in the National Shuffleboard Hall of Fame. Outstanding achievement awards went to Joe Spratt for 50 years of dedicated service and Ron and Debbie Bowers for
(continued on Page 23)

Houston Holiday Open

(continued from Page 1)

before agreeing to a 60-40 split with locals Johnny Ballard, Diana Hagen, Tom Milan and Kim Andrews. Third place honors went to Bill Melton and Steve Burkett of Oklahoma along with Tony Pelton and Jeff Womble.

Event Five (4-person, min. 10 pts.) was claimed by locals Sylvia Martinez, Ann Walker, "Super Dave" Ramold and Danny Norris. Terry Roberts, Frank Mako from Washington, Morris Moss of Dallas and local Clay Moore took second, while the Clear Lake contingent of Mike McGinty, Joe Petty, Jim McGee and Beverly Perry came in third.

Day Four's events Six and Seven featured "bring partner" matches. The Pro Division (min. 0 pts.) was conquered by the local team of Diana Hagen and Flynt Preston. Second place went to Johnny Ballard and Bob Lewis, while third place honors were bestowed on Ron Huddleston of Oklahoma and Tony Pelton.

The bring partner (min. 5 pts.) event was a local affair as Dave Ramold paired with Ann Walker to take first place, followed by Tom Milan and Doug Paben in second, and Del Ammermann and Danny Norris placing third.

On Day Five, the singles events took center stage. The pro field was bested by Rick Niblett of Maryland, followed by Glen Davidson in second, and Bill Melton in third. Sylvia Martinez is the reigning queen of the HHO 2's only division. She bested Eddie Guy of Dallas in a play-off for first place. Harvey Walden of Tennessee claimed third, while Austinite Ron Bowers took fourth.

There were 40 entries in the 3-4-5 category. The handicap was established by requirements that 3's paid a \$30 entry fee, the 4's \$20 and the 5's paid \$10; no points were given. Jeff Womble won a spirited play-off with local Bob Lee to claim first place honors. Don Roper of Dallas was third; Dave Ramold took fourth. Linda French of Austin shared 5th and 6th place with David Hamilton of Clear Lake, while 7th and 8th was shared by locals Danny Norris and Doug Paben.

Happy New Year Wrap-Up

Rumors that auctioneer Harvey Kidd has been offered a late night TV talk show turned out to be false. Nevertheless, he continues to keep the audience grinning with his droll comments about some of our more "colorful" contestants!

Brian Walker and Bill Rice continue to amaze onlookers with their speed and skill on the bracket boards. With help from a small but dedicated group of volunteers, boards were made available every evening for round robins and side games. Many thanks are due to the Houston Shuffleboard

Community and loyal sponsors for making this event possible (more about sponsors and volunteers next month).

Of course, no Houston Holiday Open would be complete without a rousing New Year's Eve party, a chance to recall memories of the recent day's events, a chance to toast a glass of "bubbly" to friends new and old, a chance to "get down" on the dance floor and do the Macarena (or some semblance thereof) and one last chance to play some "board" in 1998!

And that's exactly what happened as a strong contingent of out-of-town visitors and members of the Houston Shuffleboard Community gathered to ring in the New Year.

Happy New Year, Y'all!

Shuffleboard Legends Honored

On Sunday, Dec. 27, at the Houston Holiday Open, the day's activities commenced with an induction ceremony for the National and Texas Shuffleboard Halls of Fame. Master of Ceremonies Brian Walker and NSHF President Glen Davidson acquainted the audiences with the "Hall" and the new inductees, Rod Cameron and Ray Hartness (National), Harvey Kidd (Texas), and Joe Spratt who received a special award for "60 Years of Dedication to Shuffleboard." Harvey and Joe provided brief testimonials and Rod Cameron shared a heartfelt reminiscence of his good friend and fellow inductee, Ray Hartness.

Incidentally, Joe Spratt, 83 years young, confided that he lacked 11 years of "shuffleboard dedication" to match the number on his plaque. That's simple, Joe. Just hang around at least another 11 years and fill out your term. The people around Houston who know him are pretty darn sure he will!

Internet Attracts Shuffleboarders to Houston Holiday Open!

In what is certainly a sign of the times and the wave of the future, the Internet is playing a role in attracting new tournament players to the game. Local Houston player Eugene Peach has established a Web site to disseminate shuffleboard news. The McDugles and the Woods of Huntsville, Texas, are an example of folks who had no knowledge of the tournament, but were able to access the information while "browsing" the Web. The two couples were able to drive down to Houston for the 4-person team event at the Houston Holiday Open. While they didn't finish in the money, they had fun and got a round of applause from the friendly crowd when it was announced that this was their "first time."

For all you "hackers" out there, Eugene's web site is www.shuffleboard.net.

(Editor's Note: Thanks for the reports, Don. Photos will be in the next issue of The Board Talk. In the meantime, you can view them on Eugene's web site.)