



The Board Talk

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Southwest Open 2000 -- Totally Awesome!

Story and Photos by George & Donna Wilber

- Record-Breaking Participation and Pot
- Diana Makes History!
- Name Change for National Hall of Fame

Repeaters who have made the Southwest Open a 4th of July tradition for the past nine years, and newcomers who have vowed to make it one of theirs in the future, gathered together at the American Legion Post 73, Del City, Oklahoma, July 2-8.

We're in the "repeater" category. Our introduction was in 1993 -- the 2nd Annual SW Open/9th Board Talk Shufflers' Reunion (the first "reunion" where somebody else did all the work). We were impressed with what we thought then was a pretty healthy pot, the 10 tournament boards, and the participation: nine in the pro-am team event, 20 in the pro singles, 25 teams in the pro-am draw, nine in the beginners/just pretty good category, 43 in the amateur singles, 14 in the beginners/just pretty good singles, nine in the 4-person team (then billed as "George's fun event", added to the agenda to please him), and 13 in the open doubles. That was a substantial improvement over No. 1 in 1992 with eight boards, 80 players, and, comparatively speaking, a very modest prize money pot.

Compare that with the Southwest Open 2000 -- 272 players from 18 states and Canada, competing in 10 events on 31 boards for a share of the big pie!

For the first-timers, rewards in the preliminary round robins had them asking: Would there be money left for the "real" tournament? Yes, indeed! There was even enough to bet on an unscheduled foot race in the Legion parking lot between Rick Gindt of Washington and David Williams Jr. of Texas ("Rick talks, David walks," some unnamed source reported).

184 Players in Four-Person Team Events

There were 23 teams in the Div. I four-person team event and 23 in Div. II -- that's 184 players -- a

far cry from the 36 participating in that "fun event" in 1993!



No. 1 in Div. I was the team of (from right) Johnny Wayne Crawford, Rick Niblett, Lenny Dell and Jeff Womble.

Taking second place honors was Bill Melton's team of Rick Jones, Carlos Guzman and Mike Alvey (no photo available).



Third place finishers (from right) Frank Blade, first-timer Alonzo Cottrell, Fred Washington and Steve Burkett.

Diana Hagen's team of Al Salazar, Brian Walker and Marshall Partlow finished in fourth place.

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SW Open (continued from Page 1)

If these smiling faces of the Div. II top team are any indication, the name "George's fun event" is still appropriate: Mahlon and Linda Nobles, Ann Walker and Jimmy Fernandez.



Taking second place honors were Jack Davis, Gary and Kay Nelson, and Gerald Wood.



Third place went to Tony and Joyce Pelton, Jim Olson and Eddie Brayman.

Fourth place was taken by the team of Brad Lowry, R.U. Underwood, Ruth Atherton and Sherry Fisher. Tied for 5th and 6th were Ray Marshburn, David and Debbie Sexton and Mike Boulanger; Dennis Bird, Linda Ritter, Lenny and Sue Webster.

Diana Hagen Makes History!

Hoosier Butch Thomas calls her the "Texas Tomado." Her Texas friends and fans call her "Queen of the Jungle." By whatever title she is known, Diana Hagen earned her place in history by becoming the first woman to take a singles title in a major tournament. She did so at the SW Open 2000 against a field of 38 of some of the nation's best. Diana had tried to break the mold at last year's North American Championships in Reno and finally settled for third. With an appreciative crowd gathered for the finals at the American Legion Post 73 in Del City, Oklahoma, Diana prevailed over a determined Dan Hitt of Washington.



Always a class act, win or lose, Dan Hitt congratulates Diana Hagen on her victory. Dan was also MVP for the tournament as the total points champion.



Joel Spielman of Nebraska took third place honors.



The great Hall of Famer Bill Melton finished fourth.

Tied for 5th and 6th were Hoosiers Bobby Voorhis and Terry Dowell.

Record 112 Entries in Amateur Singles

No pros or 0's were allowed in this event, so 112 shufflers rated 1, 2, 3 or 4, signed up for a chance at a share of the very sizeable total pot. When the marathon ended, it was a happy and emotional Ray Marshburn from San Antonio who accepted the

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Congratulations to Our Diana Hagen....

"Queen of the Jungle"



***"You've made your mark on the History of Shuffleboard --
and we are proud to call you one of our own!"***

***--Your Friends and Admirers
in the Great State of Texas***

SW Open (continued from Page 22)

first place plaque and the fattest envelope. Being No. 1 in a field of 112 is something to get emotional about!



Carol Guzman (left) took second place honors with Larry Zahm in third.

Dave Ramold finished fourth. Others in the winner's circle were: Larry Brown and Lynn Webster, 5-6; Terry Yingst and Gary Nelson, 7-8; Kevin Tally and Ken Storck, 9-10; Tommy McBurnett and Jack Davis, 11-12.

170 Players in Draw Partner Events

There were 38 teams in the Div. I draw partner and 47 teams in Div. II.



Sponsor Milford Parker with Dan Hitt and John Kosiske, top winners in the Div. I draw partner.



Don Stallsworth and Karl Spickelmier took second.



A happy pair -- Dennis Bird and Bobby Williams -- finished third.



Marty (not Mary!) Shepard and Frank Blade took fourth place.

Others in the money were Al Pease and Ray Miller, Dale Koteris and Frank Monarrez.

Quotes from the SW Open:

"I feel like I'm in Heaven! I'm the happiest person in the world! The money was a bonus; winning it was the real thrill. I still don't think I'm as good as they are." -- Diana Hagen, after her Pro Singles win

"Dan Hitt is a helleva player. I had a commanding lead, then he drew a 1 and went ahead of me." -- Brenda Moore, Texas

"Only in Oklahoma do you come up to pay for a sale and your leg gets licked under the table." -- Karl Spickelmier, California (Editor's Note: Maggie knows a good leg when she sees it!)

"Shuffleboard is sure changing. Before I got knocked out, I had to face five sets of women players!" -- An Old-Timer

"Tell everybody in The World of Shuffleboard that Leonard's 'Dell-ettes' (Alice Patterson, Mary Brown, Judy Edelen, Ruthie Atherton and Olga Vaughn) played great. I was proud of them!" -- Len Dell, Maryland



Sue Webster and Tony Pelton were the big winners in the Div. II draw partner.



Taking second place were Stephanie Seligman and Jimmy Britt.



Gary Thompson and DeeRay Garcia were third.



Sponsor Linda Ritter (center) with 4th place finishers Char Rahn and Susie Halstead.

Other winners were: Linda Nobles and Linda Churchman, Mike Keevil and Morris Moss, 5th and 6th; Eddie Brayman and Jeanine Carmack, Gary Neff and James Cato, 7th and 8th.

174 in Draft Team Event

There were 29 teams in the 6-person draft team event. Ironically, the captains of the top two teams, which ended in a tie, were near the end in the drafting order.



A flip of the coin gave Rick Niblett's team the 1st place plaques: Lynn Webster, Jeff Womble, Tony and Joyce Pelton, Char Rahn.



Sharing top honors was Dan Hitt's team of Gary Neff, Don Hare, Sue Webster, Ron Monville, and Phil Gardner.



Bob Shaw's team of Paul Obermiller, Cliff Goff, Sheryl Shaw, Butch Thomas and Tom Clubb took 3rd. (continued on Page 29)

SW Open (continued from Page 25)

Al Pease's team of Jim (Caveman) Ward, Super Sam Eveland, Glen Ingram, Kathy Keevil, and Russ Miller took fourth place in the draft event.

34 Teams in Div. I Bring Partner

The Texas combo of Billy Mays and Jeff Womble came out ahead of 33 other teams in the Div. I bring partner. Bill Melton and Carlos Guzman took second place honors with Frank Blade and Alonzo Cottrell in third. Brenda Moore and Mike Taylor finished fourth. Dan Hitt and Terry Yingst shared 5th and 6th with Canadians Kabel Bimb and Don Heaton.

43 Entries in 2-Rated Singles, 52 in 3's & 4's

Saturday was a busy day with the bring partner, 2-rated singles, and 3's and 4's singles all going on at the same time. Ron Monville had hoped to play with pro John McDermott in the bring partner, but when John had to return to Michigan, Ron decided to enter the 2-rated singles.



Good decision, as Ron came out ahead of 42 other entries.

Eddie Brayman took second place, Mike Keevil took third, with Wendall Herbison in fourth place. Other winners were: Paul Obermiller and Jack Davis, tied for 5th and 6th; Jim Kosiske and Marshall Partlow, tied for 7th and 8th.

When the other events had wound down on

Saturday evening and many shufflers headed for home, the finals of the 3's and 4's singles was still going on.



The weary warriors finally collected their plaques and envelopes: Lynn Webster, 1st; Lorraine Bingham, 2nd; and James Cato, 3rd.

Others in the money were: Dee Downing, 4th; Randy Martin and Jeanine Carmack, 5th and 6th; Mike Halstead and Mike Coon, 7th and 8th.

A Talented Tournament Team

When SW Open host and director Don Crall (left) learned a day before the tournament that bracketeer Rob Kern could not make the trip from Michigan to Oklahoma, he did not panic. Instead, he called Ron and Sharon Huddleston, who had "retired" after eight years of serving as the key SW Open director and bookkeeper. Ron and Sharon did not turn deaf ears to Don's plight. Instead they (along with Maggie, of course) blended their time-tested talents with those of a seasoned crew they had groomed: Rena and Dave Fleming, Kathy Yingst, Jack Davis, and Johnny Wayne Crawford (plus Jeri Billard as a "sub"). As the classy teachers they are, they pitched in when needed and stepped back when their "students" could handle everything.

Small wonder that Don is proud of this crew who managed to keep events running smoothly on the 31 boards with record participation and monies, and still run round robins! They deserve all the appreciation they received from the "Boss" and the tournament participants.

This team, plus the hospitality of the American Legion Post 73 staff, keeps shufflers coming back year after year to the Southwest Open.