

Millar/Martin are Blue Goose "Sweethearts"

By Bill Walker

The weekend of Feb. 11-13 brought 26 couples to the Blue Goose in Port Orchard, Washington, for the annual Sweethearts mixed doubles. This \$1000 added tourney has become a premier stop on the Northwest shuffleboard circuit.

Action started on Friday night with 20 teams competing in an open draw contest. Local player Mike Waters of Tahuya and Mike Pond of Garfield, Washington, took the lion's share of the \$10 buy-in pot. They were pushed hard by runners-up Larry "Big Lagger" Pearson and Linda Steffensen. Finishing in a tie for third place were the teams of Dwayne Ryan and Sheri Schrum, and Kenny Beard and Lana Gasper.

Saturday morning, the sponsor sale kicked off at 10:00 with spirited bidding on several of the perennial contenders for the crown, followed by excellent board play as some of the top names in Northwest shuffleboard displayed their talents. Competition was keen right into Sunday evening when a short break in play before the finals provided a bit of levity and relaxation as Canadian Hall of Famer Joannie Millar entertained, singing her now famous Irish ballad to an unsuspecting Rex Harstad and Larry Hudson.

After the break, Joannie and partner John Martin of Everett came out of the loser's bracket to defeat three-time finalists Mike and Hazel Thorpe twice to claim the championship.

Other finishers were: Jim and Michelle Foran, 3rd; Al Pease and recent runner-up in the State women's finals, Junele Schrum, 4th; tied for 5th were Mel and Jeanette John, owners of the Fir Cone Tavern in Shelton, and Tim Nugent and Sharon McDonnell of Tacoma. Tied for 7th were the teams of Gary George and Linda Steffensen, and locals Bill and Linda Walker. Linda showed she has as good an eye for assessing talent as she does for hitting weights, winning the sponsor sale for the champions and both 5th place teams, as well as purchasing herself.

As always in the past, good food provided by Dee, Lin, Vera, Barb, Sharon, Eileen, and served up by Chef John, was enjoyed by participants and observers. It consisted of snacks starting at noon Saturday, followed by a full meal at 6 p.m., followed by plenty of finger food and leftovers all day Sunday.

Conspicuous by his absence was Northwest Shuffleboard Legend Chuck Norris of Portland, Oregon, who is recovering from serious medical problems. We here at this tourney and shufflers

throughout the Northwest wish him a speedy recovery and hope to see him back in competition soon.

(Editor's Note: Watch next month's issue for photos of this event. Shufflers across the U.S.A. join you in wishing Chuck a speedy recovery.)

Another Success at Taz Country!

By Debbie Bowers

Our first tournament of the millennium, held at Taz Country in Pflugerville, Texas (a suburb of Austin) was a great success. On Friday night, Jan. 21, we had 48 entries for our handicap draw. Billy Melton and Don Valk played into the wee hours to take first place over second place team of two of our local players, Mike Taylor and Tony Howard. Third place went to two Houston players, Diana Hagen and Jack Scott. Debra Murphy (a new player from Canyon Lake, Texas) and Tony Fiumara of Austin came in fourth. Tied for fifth and sixth place were Doug Paben and Dale Koterak, and Rene Roberts and Debbie Bowers.

Saturday night's handicap doubles drew 18 teams. This was a very emotional win for two of our favorite players, Mike Taylor and Tom French, who came in first. They both played great all night long, and had one heck of a cheering section. Diana Hagen and Flynt Preston came in second, with Ronnie McMahan and Rick Piefer taking third place.

Sunday's handicap singles drew in eight players, but there were plenty of side games going on during and after. First place went to (I sound like I'm repeating myself) Mike Taylor, with second going to Flynt Preston.

Special thanks to Kim Andrews and Jeri Billard for their help in collecting money. And thanks to Gene and Sarah (owners of Taz) for the food and drink specials. They bought another shuffleboard for us (that makes a total of five boards) and are a great support of shuffleboard.

REMINDER:

Reports, advertising, letters and other contributions must be received by the 15th of each month to appear in the next issue.

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