

THE RED BARON SPEAKS

November 2008

I just returned from Reno and again a lot of conversation was had on the rating system. The Bowers system is the best thing we have and will be until all event directors, sponsors, and any one else who runs an event agree to submit pre-described information for assembling. I think the issue was pretty thoroughly covered in the first issues of the Baron. Until then the captains who do the best job of studying the players and drafting are going to win.



The last I heard there were just over 200 players registered which is down slightly, but still as far as I know the largest event in the game. The thing I noticed as I “wheeled” around the casino was the decreased number of casino patrons. The watering hole on the other side of the gaming area from the bottom of the stairs was mostly empty except for shuffleboard patrons. I commented to the cab driver on my way to the airport about the lower crowd and he agreed. The State of Nevada, Reno and the Sands all need to be aware of the financial impact of shuffleboard during that week.

Very little discussion was heard about the boards. My opinion and I have only been playing 50+ years with over 25+ years in large events; the boards were the most uniform I have played. The equipment used to adjust the boards and the knowledge on how to use it seems to be the key. Starting with closely identical boards probably helped. Economically it may not be practical for a two or three board event to have the equipment to adjust the board, but any event over ten boards should be able to. I have no idea where the equipment used comes from or its availability. I did notice a few slow or dead spots which I think was caused by the powder or wax being used, but they were few. Someone noticed when a new bucket was opened the white grains appeared to come to the top during transport and a little mixing helped. I could be mistaken as except for the six person event my inconsistent skill level kept me from playing very much. It seemed to take fewer shots than most boards I played to cause a bare spot on the rails and frequent waxing from the little shakers provided was necessary. The large shakers were commonly used as was fingers from the trough, both of which were against the rules. The small shakers were too small and I think the large cans would have been ok as they were not overly large. I think the penalty was a little harsh so an opponent never called attention to the infraction. Habits start at home and players need to learn at home. When I started playing you were not allowed to wax the rails for even a non-accidental thumb swipe so you learned to block that spot. Needless to say there were lots of arguments with some a little violent over the issue. You soon learned not to go to those establishments to play.

Now is a period of local tournaments with the state championships in MI and IN (and Florida) on Thanksgiving week end. What happened to the plan to have a state championship in every state at that time? Then it is on to the HHO if I have any retirement income left by that time. For you players in Houston I would appreciate a ride from IAH on Thursday night or Friday Morning depending on the airplane load factors at the time. Hope to see you all in Houston.