



WPBA Great Lakes Classic

Semi Finals

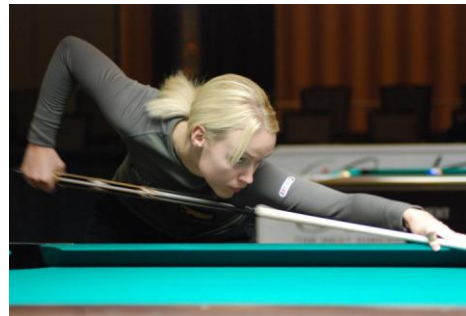
June 21, 2009 – Michigan City, Indiana

Story and Photos by Anne Craig - WPBA

The first Semifinals got underway at 1:00pm Central time, with Tournament Director Steve Tipton warming up the crowd prior to Jasmin Ouschan and Karen Corr matchup to advance to the finals of the 2009 WPBA Great Lakes Classic.



Karen Corr



Jasmin Ouschan

vs

Jasmin won the lag, breaking but failing to pocket a ball on the new Brunswick “Zanzibar” table, a limited edition billiard table worth \$25,000. Karen didn’t have a shot and was forced to push out, handing the option over to Jasmin. Precision pocketing would be crucial as the table was set for very tight pockets.

Right from the start, both players were forced to play safeties on both the one and the two ball, but Jasmin flinched first allowing Karen to begin a run out. The simultaneous “click, click” of camera’s could be heard as Karen navigated through the tough layout but missed the 7 ball, and Jasmin finished off the rack to win the first game. Karen went into game 2 with the break but failed to pocket a ball although she left nothing for Jasmin. Jasmin in turn didn’t leave much for Karen who once again started a battle of wits in safeties. This time Karen blinked first and Jasmin was able to pocket the 1 and continue through the rack. With these extremely tight pockets, both players shifted into safety mode and Jasmin locked Karen up behind the 8 ball for the 4; Karen kicked one rail but missed giving Jasmin ball in hand.

Jasmin handily ran the rack, take a 2 game lead and go into game 3 with the break. To the crowd’s delight, Jasmin made the 9 on the break! Karen broke but failed to pocket a ball, and with a wry smile she sat back down in her chair. Jasmin, play focused, began her run out, but was forced to play a safe on the 3 ball. Karen stepped up and played a beautiful masse shot and made the ball with position on the four to get on the board in this match. Calmly she made her way around the table and ran out and the score was now 1-3.

(Cont’d)

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Jasmin broke in game 5, and after pocketing 2 balls, began her run with the 2 ball; The tight pockets came into play when Jasmin slow rolled the 4, and although it barely touched the side rail about 6" up, it failed to drop, giving Karen a chance at the table. She successfully ran out and the score was now 3-2, Jasmin. Karen would go into game 6 with the break and an opportunity to tie the match up. Karen finally pocketed a ball on her break, and the table layout was wide open, although the key shot would be position from the one (in the side) to the two (down-table opposite angle). Karen went for the 3 rail position but came up short forcing her to play safe. Jasmin fired back with a re-safe of her own. Karen brought out her trusty jump cue, hit the ball leaving Jasmin a jump of her own. The level of play when two competitors leave each other jump safeties is amazing here especially since Jasmin pocketed the jump shot! She followed that up with a tough cut on the 3, but got back into position for the 4 and continued on to finish the rack and retake a 2 game lead, 4-2 and go into the next game with the break.

Although she made a ball, she failed to pocket the one but left Karen with a long, spot shot. She just missed, leaving the one deep in the pocket but Jasmin hooked. Steve called out "10 seconds" but Jasmin had already taken her extension; calmly she kicked at the ball one long rail and hit it dead on as the crowd cheered. She continued with perfect position to run out the rack and go up 5-2.

Jasmin reached the hill first after a tight safety battle in game 8, and went into game 9 with the break advantage. She pocketed a ball and began her run out to get into the finals with the one ball. Position from the 2 to the 3 was long and after making it, had more of an off-angle shot on the 5 than she would have liked. After Steve called "10", Jasmin took her extension and surveyed her shot. Instead of shooting for the right side corner pocket, she chose the other side and missed the ball. Karen wasn't left with an easy shot herself but the ball rattled in, allowing her to continue through the rack. Her position from the 8 to the 9 wasn't perfect though, and she faced a tough cut, but her snooker background gave her the confidence to easily sink the 9. She still faced an uphill battle though, down 3-6 but she would go into the next game with the break.

Karen broke but the crowd groaned as she scratched, allowing Jasmin ball in hand to finish off the match. She beautifully struck the 3, slicing it in the corner pocket and sending the cue ball up-table one rail for position the four. With the 5 in the side, and only the 6 & 9 to pocket thereafter, her place in the finals was assured, defeating Karen Corr 7-3.



Xiaoting Pan

vs.



Kelly Fisher

For Xiaoting Pan, it's been a year since she's made it to a televised match, at the 2008 BCA Generationpool.com 9 Ball Championship's, which she won. But she faces Kelly Fisher, two-time winner last season and the 2008 Player of the Year. Both are vying for their chance to get in the finals of this year's WPBA Great Lakes Classic.

Kelly Fisher won the lag and pocketed the one ball with good position for the 2 and an open layout. Kwikfire wasted no time running out and capturing the first game of this match. Xiaoting stepped up and put all 91lbs of herself into the break but came up dry; Kelly started off with a touchy 1/3 combination and although she made it, she failed to control the 1 ball after contact. Playing for a safety, she instead banked the 1 into the side (not intentional) but was fortunate to leave herself a long but makeable shot on the 2. She pocketed yet another combination, 4/5, and had better control, allowing her to run out and quickly take a 2 game lead, 2-0.

Kelly went into game 3 with the break, but Steve needed to re-rack the balls as she patiently waited. She came up dry though and Xiaoting stepped up to try to post her first game in this match but she was forced to play a safe as there was no open shot for the one, thus starting an exchange of safeties between the two competitors. Xiaoting finally left Kelly with a tough cut shot, but she missed it and Xiaoting came back to the table once again. The one ball was simple by comparison to the 2 ball up-table that barely passed the 7 down the rail but Xiaoting had no problems making the ball and ultimately Xiaoting finished out the rack. The score was now 1-2.

Xiaoting had the break advantage going into game 4; she pocketed a ball but missed the one. Lady Luck was with her as she left Kelly stone cold snookered but Kelly brought out the jump cue and successfully pocketed the ball. The tough layout was still there to contend with however and her safety attempt wasn't to her satisfaction. Xiaoting played a pretty carom 2 to the 4 ball leaving her a touchy long shot on the 2. She had no problem with it allowing her to run out the rest of the rack and tie up the match at 2 all.

Kelly broke, came up dry but didn't leave much for Xiaoting. Xiaoting's effort at a safety came up short and Kelly took advantage by running out and taking back a one game lead, 3-1. Xiaoting came back to the table with the break in game 5, making the one ball. The 5 rolled up and nestled to the 6, which would be cause for concern as she pocketed the 2, 3 & 4. She didn't blink an eye as she played perfect position in the opposite corner for the 5, but overshot her mark a bit on the 6. Using the bridge for at least the 5th time this match, she pocketed the 6. Unfortunately for her, her cue ball got away from her settling less than 2" away from the 7 ball, so she was forced to play safe.

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Kelly's jump cue saw daylight again but the cue ball was just too close to the ball she was jumping over and she fouled giving Xiaoting ball in hand and she easily ran out the 7, 8 & 9 to tie the match up again, 3 all.

Kelly went into game 7 with the break, making two balls and facing a pretty easy layout, she just had to pocket a touchy 2 ball cut. No sweat as she gained good position to the 4 and the crowd knew she'd finish off this game before you could say "Break!" Everyone twittered as the 6 ball teetered before finally falling but she shook it off and regained the one game advantage, 4-3.

Xiaoting's break wasn't working for her and she came up dry in game 8. Kelly didn't make the one ball, but left Xiaoting snookered enough that the one wouldn't drop. She played a nice safety forcing Kelly to jump, which Kelly executed beautifully to snooker Xiaoting right back at her. Xiaoting hit the one ball but did leave Kelly a long, nearly straight in shot, which Kelly had no problem making. Running out to the 8, she overshot her mark a bit but gingerly cut the 8 into the corner, gaining perfect position for the 9 and taking a two game lead, 5-3. With Kelly going into the next game with the break advantage, a break & run would put her on the hill, so she made sure to pocket a ball. The table was wide open leaving the outcome in her capable hands. Her position from the 5 to the 6 gave her pause though, as she fell on the wrong side of the 6 for the next shot on the 8. Using force follow, she tried to come up-table enough to slice the 8 down the rail but came up short. She attempted a very thin cut, but with the pockets at 4.5" in the corner's, this proved to be a poor choice as she missed by a wide margin. Xiaoting stepped up to make the last two balls and she was now within one, down 4-5.

Xiaoting broke and pocketed a ball but the layout was less than ideal with the 3, 6, 7, 8 and 4 all on one side of the table. She slowly picked her way through, and the key shot would be position from the 6 to the 7. The 6 went in the side pocket and although she broke the 7/8 up, her cue ball ended up about 1.5" from the 7. Steve called "10" as Xiaoting contemplated her next move, which caused her to rush a bit and she failed to snooker the cue ball behind the 8 as she'd wanted. Kelly didn't have an open pocket, so she played safe. Xiaoting grabbed her jump cue, gave it a run but fouled and Kelly, with ball in hand, ran out to reach the hill, 6-4.

Kelly broke and although she pocketed the one ball, her cue ball fell directly behind the 7 ball up-table and she was forced to push out. Xiaoting surveyed the mess that was facing her, and gave the option back to Kelly. The 2 ball was on the bottom rail about 10" from the corner pocket, with the 5 in the way. Kelly attempted the combination but the ball hung in the pocket. Xiaoting simply had to keep an eye on the two ball after the 5 dropped. She made the 2/5, leaving herself snookered and forcing a one rail kick shot. She successfully hit the 2, leaving it in front of the 7 ball for Kelly to make a great combination. Unfortunately for Kelly, the 2 ball settled in front of the 3 forcing her to play safe. The crowd oooh'd and aahh'd in appreciation as the cue ball drifted down-table to snuggle up to the 9 while the 2 ball lay near the side rail. Xiaoting kicked one rail and left Kelly no open pocket so yet another safety exchange was the result. Xiaoting blinked first, giving Kelly ball in hand and the opportunity to reach the finals of this event for the 2nd year in a row. She reached the 7 ball but wasn't pleased with what she saw, as the 7 barely cleared the 8 ball. Steadying herself, she pocketed the 7, with shape for the 8 up table and back down for the 9 ball and her place in the finals of the 2009 Great Lakes Classic.

