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## THE 2008 WPBA US OPEN 9 BALL CHAMPIONSHIPS

ALLISON FISHER DEFENDS HER TITLE BUT WILL HAVE TO DO IT THE HARD WAY!



By Anne Craig - WPBA

August 1, 2008 – Norman, Oklahoma: The WPBA's first major of the year began Thursday at the Riverwind Casino in earnest as 64 of the top players from around the world compete for the title of the US Open Champion. Mid-afternoon saw a major upset in the first round winner's bracket as Pilipino player and Qualifier, Iris Ranola, defeated the #1 ranked and seeded player, Allison Fisher, who is also trying to defend her title. Iris played well the entire match, keeping up with Allison in an exciting hill-hill competition. Allison and Iris traded balls in the final game and Allison looked to

have the advantage after Iris missed a 4 ball but Allison got awkward position on the 6, with her cue stick elevated over the 8 ball and a 3 rail position shot back down table to the 7. She rattled the 6 in and out of the pocket, leaving Iris a runout. Iris, showing her nerves, ended up almost straight in on the 8, with HER cue elevated over the 9 and missed the ball. Allison was left with a 3 rail "round the table" position shot - she drew her ball too much and went off 1 rail with the cue-ball into the opposing pocket and scratched! Allison faces something she hasn't in recent memory – a 10:00am round, ironically versus the aforementioned Sarah Rousey. Meanwhile, Iris defeated Alaska's Aileen Dimmick in her 2<sup>nd</sup> round, and now faces the always tough Helena Thornfeldt in a feature match-up tonight.

The second upset of the day came much later, when in the 2<sup>nd</sup> round Caroline Pao defeated the #7 seeded young gun, Anna Kostanian, drubbing her 9-4. Both players have been having a great 2008 season, with Anna moving up quickly in the ranks after 3 top 5 finishes in a row. Caroline will play against Monica Webb, who has been relatively quiet this year so far and, like everyone else on the winner's side, would like to take advantage of Allison's lack of presence there.

Asian invitee Yu Ram Cha, who had had an excellent tournament at the WPBA Great Lakes Classic, looks to make another move at this US Open after defeating Jennifer Chen and Kim Jones in her first 2 rounds.

There were quite a few hill-hill matches in the 2<sup>nd</sup> round including Vivian Villarreal versus Sueyen Rhee, Sarah Ellerby vs. Pam Cimarelli (formerly Pam Treadway), Kim Shaw vs. Gerda Hofstatter and Julie Kelly versus Liz Ford. All of the first-mentioned players went on to the 3<sup>rd</sup> round but had to really work for it!

Due to the fact that the WPBA will be taping all four Quarterfinal match-ups on Saturday, we're on an accelerated schedule and 8 players were eliminated Thursday night. Some interesting matches to look out for include Jennifer Chen versus Val Finnie, Laura Smith vs. Janet Atwell, Ewa Laurance vs. Cathy Metzinger and of course Allison Fisher versus Sarah Rousey. The WPBA welcomes back veteran players Ramona Biddle and Vicki Paski and acknowledges the 2007 APA Ladies' Division Amateur 9 Ball Champion, Tina Larsen. Tina, who has one several qualifiers for this season, found the field tough and was one of the players who were eliminated last night.

Stay tuned for updates from today's action!