



THE 2009 WPBA US OPEN 9 BALL CHAMPIONSHIPS

THE FINALS

Story & Photos by Anne Craig – WPBA



VS.



August 2, 20089: Riverwind Casino, Norman Oklahoma –

After a long week of intense competition, the finals of the 2009 WPBA US Open featured two players who haven't won a WPBA Title in several years. Karen Corr, who's reached the TV rounds more than a handful of times since her last win in early 2007, defeated Allison Fisher in Semi Finals #1. Meanwhile Ga Young Kim was looking for her first win since 2007. It's interesting to note that these two have played each other twice before in a WPBA US Open Championships, with a record of 1-1. This would be the tiebreaker!

Ga Young won the lag and immediately showed her strength by successfully jumping to make the 1. She proceeded to run out to the 3 ball, but missed the combination to the 5 ball. Karen played a similar combination, and then ran out to win the first game of the finals match. Karen broke in game two, pocketing a ball but was left with nothing but the option to play safe which she did so, beautifully. Ga Young's masse shot fell short of the mark and Karen took ball in hand, running out to the 6 ball where she missed shape. She played a safety but it didn't prevent Ga Young from pocketing the ball and running out to tie up the match 1 all.

Ga Young broke and to the crowd's delight, she pocketed four balls! She even had shape on the first object ball, the 2, and easily ran out the remaining four balls to take a 2-1 lead. Karen came up dry on her break, but the layout she left was tricky. Ga Young made a nice 1/8 combination, then pocketed the 1 with shape onto the 2. She came up short on the 4 ball, but with her excellent shot making ability, she was able to compensate, making the 4, 5 and back into line on the 6. She continued pocketing all balls and took game 4, up 3-1.

Ga Young broke and ran out to the 9 ball. She left herself very poorly on the ball, with both the cue ball and the 9 lined up with the center spot on the bottom rail. But she stretched out over the table and made a great cut shot into the corner to take a 4-1 lead.

It was Karen's turn to break and she knew she had to make something happen, and fast. She pocketed 2 balls but to her chagrin, had no open shot on the 1 so was forced to push out. As she debated which way she would go, she took her extension. She finally made her choice, and Ga Young gave Karen the option back quickly.

Final Match – 2009 US Open - continued

Karen missed the tough side pocket cut, but so did Ga Young! Karen finally had an open shot and she steadied her nerves as she nailed the straight in 1 ball. Leaving herself elevated over the 7 for the 5 ball didn't faze her and she gained good position on the 6, to the 7 and finally the 8 to post her second game of the match, still down 2-4.

Game 7 saw Ga Young break but fail to pocket a ball. Karen was left with a tough 1 ball cut which she hung in the pocket, giving Ga Young another chance at the table. The layout was less than ideal though and Ga Young played safe. Karen could see the ball and did hit it, but left Ga Young with a tough but makeable shot. Ga Young continued on to the 4 ball but had no real shot as she nearly scratched off the 3. She missed the 4, giving Karen an open pocket and she took advantage by running out to get back within one game, down 3-4. Karen went into game 8 with the break and a chance to tie the match and she pocketed one ball on her break. Shape from the 1 to the two was touchy as she left an angle that would run the cue ball into the 9/6 balls that were near each other by the foot spot. She played it perfectly, neatly nudging the 9 out of the way, stopping her cue ball but had no open shot for the 3. She played a great safe instead, hiding the cue ball behind the 9, forcing Ga Young to break out her jump cue. She struck the 3, sending the cue ball far up table and leaving Karen with no open shot and she had to kick one rail. She played it softly but didn't get a good result, leaving Ga Young with a routine cut shot. She ran out to the 6 where an easy 6/9 carom presented itself and she had no problem making it, taking back a 2 game lead, up 5-3.

Ga Young had the break advantage in game 9 and although she made 2 balls, had no open shot on the 1 which ended up by the corner pocket. She tried a soft one rail kick to sink the ball but it didn't go. Karen had nearly the same kind of shot but farther away than Ga Young's, and made it easily with shape on the 2. She nearly jawed the ball but it did drop in and Karen continued through the rack. The key shot in the match was the 7 ball which was tied up with the 8 but it was set up for an easy combination. She hit it perfectly with excellent position back onto the 7, then to the 9 and got back to within one game, down 4-5. Karen broke but came up dry. Ga Young's position off of the 1 was poor and she snookered herself for the 3. She missed the ball entirely giving Karen ball in hand and she looked to run out to tie up the match yet again. It was down to the 9 ball with a simple spot shot angle and the crowd applauded as she made the ball. We were now at 5 all!

Ga Young broke in game 11, made a ball but was forced to push out. Karen made the ball and continued to run out with a wide open table. Everyone gasped as Karen miscued on the 5 ball as she was trying to apply severe draw on the cue ball. Ga Young took advantage of the error and ran out to reach the hill first, 6-5. Karen broke in game 12 and although she made a ball, she was forced to play a safe on the 1. She left Ga Young with a long, straight in shot nearly corner to corner but Ga Young fired it in with her cue jacked up. Her cue ball landed short of the mark though, but the crowd cheered as she kicked 2 rails, nicked the 2 and sent the cue ball up table which snookered Karen behind the 6. Karen went airborne with her jump cue, nearly banking it in the bottom corner pocket but instead the 2 ball crawled up by the side pocket giving Ga Young an open shot. She made the ball, coming around 2 rails for position on the 4, needing only the remaining 5 balls to win her first title in 2 years. She kept her composure and ran out to take the title of the 2009 US Open 9 Ball Championships. With this win, Ga Young earns the WPBA's #1 ranking for the current season while Karen moves into the #2 position.

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Final Match – 2009 WPBA US Open - continued

The WPBA would like to thank our friends at the Riverwind Casino for their hospitality; we look forward to another great year in 2010! To our APA League Operators; Judy Duncan, Ezra & Adrienne Davis, who arranged for our Shot Clock volunteers, fantastic job as always! The fans kept our energy up the entire tournament even late into the night and the player's appreciated it. To our sponsors; The American Poolplayers Association, Aramith Balls, Brunswick Billiards, Cuetec Cues, Mueller Recreational Products, Pooldawg.com and Simonis, Inc., thank you for your continued support of Women's Billiards and of the WPBA. The Semi's and the Finals are scheduled to air on ESPN starting September 13th, check your local listings or www.wpba.com for updated information.

Look for free, live web streaming from our next stop – The WPBA Colorado Classic at the Sky Ute Casino in Ignacio, CO – September 16 – 20th, 2009. See you there!