



THE 2009 WPBA US OPEN 9 BALL CHAMPIONSHIPS

SEMIFINALS #1

Story & Photos by Anne Craig – WPBA



Allison Fisher

VS.



Karen Corr

August 2, 2009: Riverwind Casino, Norman Oklahoma –

The 2009 World Games Gold Medalist and BCA Hall of Fame Inductee, Allison Fisher, hasn't been on TV since the Great Lakes Classic 2008. Karen Corr hasn't won a WPBA title since the 2007 BCA Enjoypool.com 9 Championships and was hungry for the trophy here at the 2009 US Open 9 Ball Championships. These two were so familiar with each other's games, yet the stakes are higher for both at this event.

Allison won the lag and pocketed a ball with shape for the 1 and a wide open table layout. She proceeded to gain shape on the remaining 6 balls on the table to win the opening game of this Semi Finals #1. It was Karen's break in game two and the six ball fell into the corner pocket but the 1 ball came to rest on the bottom rail in the middle with the cue ball near the foot spot. Steve called out "10" as Karen took her extension, deciding on which way she wanted to play safe. She split the difference, sending the one ball to the side rail and the cue ball to the opposite side rail snug behind the 7, locking Allison out. She kicked one long rail beautifully, nicking the one and barely missing scratching, leaving the cue ball hanging in the side pocket. Karen had an open shot, allowing her to focus back on running out. Karen accidentally touched the cue ball, but Allison received ball in hand on the 3. Allison missed the 4 ball as the crowd groaned, and Karen got another chance to run out. She knew she was fortunate to be back at the table and took advantage of Allison's miss, to tie up the match at one all.

It was Allison's break and she 2 balls, but had no open shot on the 1 as it was blocked by the 4. The crowd cheered and applauded as Allison played a fantastic cross bank into the opposite corner pocket with position for the 4. She smiled wryly as her position was a bit straight in but she accepted the tougher side pocket bank on the 5, executing it perfectly. She wasn't out of the woods as she had a long, nearly straight in shot on the 6. She drew the cue ball back, leaving herself a partial back-cut on the 7 and again, steadying her nerves, she played it well, sending the cue ball 3 rails for the 8 in the side and the 9 in the corner to win game 3, up 2-1.

Karen carefully checked the rack before settling in to break. She pocketed 2 balls but the 3, 8 & 9 were clustered near the foot spot. She had an open shot on the 1, sending the cue ball down to the side rail for a carom on the 3/9. The 9 rattled for a moment but finally dropped, tying the match up at 2 apiece.

Semi Finals #1 – US Open 2009 – continued

Allison stepped up and pocketed 2 balls but the layout was tough with a cluster of three balls down table. After making the 1, Allison played a great safety on the 2 forcing Karen to kick at it 2 rails. She neatly skinned the 2 ball, with the cue ball traveling back up table and the chess game began. Karen blinked first, kicking at the 2 but leaving Allison an open shot into the side pocket. Much to her puzzlement, she gained awkward shape on the 7, having to cut it into the left corner pocket at a weird angle. She missed the ball and Karen took advantage of the error, finishing off the last 3 balls to win game 5 and take her first lead of the match, 3-2.

Allison knew she couldn't afford to make more mistakes like that, especially with Karen having the break in game 6! Karen pocketed a ball and the layout was almost a perfect circle of object balls surrounding the cue ball in the middle of the table between the two side pockets! This looked very much like a practice drill, as she made the 1 ball. It was going to be tricky picking her way through this rack. Slowly, each ball fell as she gained momentum culminating with the 9 as the crowd cheered, and Allison looked on quietly. Karen was now up 2 games, 4-2. Allison gave her break everything she had and was rewarded with 3 balls on the break. The layout was wide open and she made quick work of the rack until the 5 ball. Everyone gasped as she missed and she strode back to her chair obviously frustrated. Karen stepped up and made the 5 (which was a thin cut about 6" from the corner pocket) and her cue ball got loose, ending up behind the 9 snookering her for the 6 ball. She kicked one rail and did hit it, but Allison knew she was lucky to be back at the table shooting. Karen mumbled to herself in her chair, while Allison pocketed the 6 in the side, followed by the last two balls to get back within 1 game; down 3-4.

Karen opted to take her 5 minute break before coming back and pocketing a ball on her break. The 8/9 balls were stuck together near the corner pocket but the rest of the table was open. She played a beautiful break out shot from the 3 ball to the 5, knocking the 8 away from the 9 and gaining position on the 5. She nearly snookered herself again after hitting the 8 off of the 6 ball, but in the end she was able to see and pocket the 7 leaving her a long shot on the 8 in the corner. Without batting an eye she made it and finished off the rack to retake a 2 game lead, 5-3.

Allison went into game 9 with the break, making 2 balls. The 6 and 7 balls were sitting w/in 2 inches of each other just below the side pocket, but the rest of the layout was open. Allison went for the 1 into the side but missed, giving Karen the opportunity to get to the hill. After going 3 rails with the cue ball for position on the 4, she played the next 5 balls perfectly to go up 6-3 and with the break advantage in game 10. She made a ball but had a tough cut on the 1 which had landed near the bottom rail. She opted for a safety to which Allison responded with a very poor safety attempt, leaving Karen to play a better safety. Allison kicked one rail behind the 1 (with very little room for error) and the safety battle continued. Karen gave Allison an alley's view of the 1 and Allison made a beautiful bank shot into the rear corner pocket. Unfortunately she had no shot at the 2 and the two competitors began their game of cat and mouse again. Karen took the offensive by making the 2 ball in the rear corner pocket and started picking off the rest of the object balls on the table. She remained calm and focused throughout the rack and ran out to win 7-3 and reach the finals of the WPBA US Open 2009.