

Jason Williams wins 3rd Annual Dave Piona Memorial Tournament

By Christina Piona



Vinnie's Bar N Grill in Concord hosted the 3rd Annual Dave Piona Memorial Tournament on August 2, 2009.

Dave Piona was a regular competitor in Vinnie's Friday night 8-ball Open tournament from its inception to the end of his life. It seemed a perfect place to host this event in his honor. Cony and Tina Mendoza brought this event to life in 2007 shortly after Dave passed away. They've been stepping up to the plate promoting and running this event every year, since. They never cease to amaze me and many others with their ability to make this one-day event run smoothly and effortlessly. This year was no exception!

Fifty-six players paid homage to Dave by competing in this double elimination, race to one game on both sides of the board. The game was 8-ball on bar boxes and the competition was fierce. For a twenty dollar bill players had a chance to take home five hundred. In many of the

matches, it was the luck of the coin toss that inevitably made the difference between winning and losing; as so many of the matches were breaks and run-outs! This was the strongest field of players to date with too many names to mention. Players came down from Sacramento and Vacaville/Fairfield areas, up from Daly City, Livermore, and the Greater Bay Area; as well as all over Contra Costa County. A special surprise was having pool legend, Ronnie Allen step up to give it a shot. We had 51 males and 5 women who joined to try their luck in this high skill level of competition.

Holly Robinson ended up on 13th place (\$30) taking top woman honors winning her first two matches and losing next two, one to Jared Williams and other to Chuck Zingalie.



Finishing up in 3rd place was Roger Estelle, who wasn't able to compete in last year's event as he battled two types of cancer at the same time. The fact that he was in attendance is a miracle in of itself but he looked good at the table and definitely made his presence known.

Gary Marcus is a regular competitor at Vinnie's Friday night 8-ball Open tournament. He used his familiarity with the tables and atmosphere to his advantage. He took advantage of every opportunity that his opponents provided him and found himself in the final match

up against Jason Williams. In this true double elimination format, he needed to beat Jason twice to win the title. At a crucial moment, with only one of his solids and his opponents two stripes remaining, all of which were tied up near the corner pocket and the eight ball left on the table, he attempted a shot that didn't quite hit the mark. The results left Jason with two stripes and an 8-ball between him and the title that he coveted. He made those three balls with confidence and took home the dough.

Jason Williams seemingly was weaned on pool. He's been competing since a young age around the Bay Area. He told me early on in the tournament that he's wanted to win it every year but that the last two years he became too emotional because Dave had been a friend. This year was a different story. He seemed more focused and ready to do what he needed to do to reach his goal. He remained undefeated the entire tournament.



Christina Poona, Jason Williams, Randy Piona, Gary Marcus, Cony Mendoza (Diablo Valley Pool League)

On behalf of the Piona Family, thanks go out to Cony and Tina Mendoza for their tireless efforts to have this event and to keep Dave's memory alive; to Jeannie and Parker at Vinnie's for their support, generosity and awesome food; to all the players who take time out from their busy schedules to spend an afternoon with us to remember someone who really had a passion for this game we call pool. He felt honored to be called an ambassador of the sport; my hope is that everyone will always remember that about him.

RESULTS:

(\$750 added by Randy Piona, Christina Piona and Diablo Valley Pool League; \$5 per player from added money paid for BBQ – Total prize fund \$1590):



1st: JASON WILLIAMS \$500



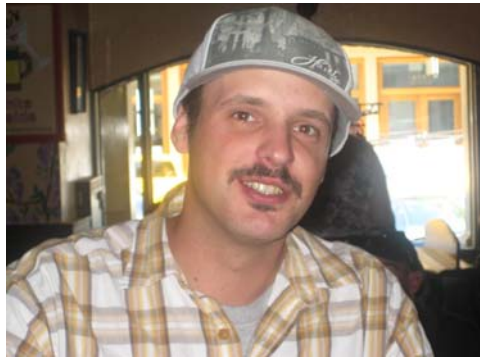
2nd: GARY MARCUS \$300



3rd: ROGER ESTELLE \$170



4th: JARED WILLIAMS \$120



5/6th: JEFF HEATH \$ 80 each



WILL NOWICKI



7/8th: JR BALENBIN

\$ 60 each



JOHN KELLY



9-12th: BILLY DALE

\$ 40 each

RICK CHUDY

GENE MILLER

CHUCK ZINGALIE



