



BEF Press Release – Dateline: Moscow, Russia – November 3, 2018 10:00PM

Virgin Island's Mahkeal Parris Captures WPA World Junior 9-Ball Championship Title



Over 60 junior pool players representing 27 countries and 5 continents converged on Moscow, Russia from 10/30 to 11/3 to participate in the 2018 WPA World Junior 9-Ball Championships. North America was well represented in this prestigious battle for world junior cue sport supremacy. Thirteen athletes (11 from USA and 2 from Canada) qualified via respective BEF/CBSA qualifying events. In addition, 23 companions, parents, and coaches including team leaders, Tom Riccobene, Tom “Dr. Cue” Rossman, and Roy Pastor, made this historic trip to encourage and support the youthful competitors.

Players from the United States in the Girl's division were April Larson, Aryana Lynch, Michelle Jiang, Tiana Jiang, and Vivian Liu. Players in the Boy's Under 19 division were Jordan Burden and Thomas Haas from the US, plus Dean Cuillerier from Canada. USA players Austin Summers, Joey Tate, Matthew Wiseley, and Mahkeal Parris, plus Haydar Cappel from Canada, represented the Boy's Under 17 division.



Arriving players registered on October 30th and attended a player's meeting led by Tom Riccobene to go over event guidelines, rules, and much more. Tom and “Dr. Cue” also gave a short pep talk to all players to encourage them and calm any jitters they might have in such a prestigious event. In the evening a group leader

Tom “Dr. Cue” Rossman, Haydar Cappel, Tiana Jiang, Jordan Burden, Vivian Liu, Dean Cuillerier, Thomas Haas, Michelle Jiang, Austin Summers, Aryana Lynch, Mahkeal Parris, April Larson, Joey Tate, Matthew Wiseley, Tom Riccobene, Roy Pastor

meeting was held by Gre Leenders, Secretary General of the WPA (World Pool Billiard Association) to cover event regulations and answer any questions.

On October 31st Leenders welcomed everyone at the player procession / opening ceremony and declared the event officially open. Players began scheduled practice sessions and competitive matches shortly after the ceremonies were over. In addition, group / individual photos of the players / coaches were taken.

Initial rounds of competition began on 8 beautiful Dynamic 9-foot tables made in Germany. Mahkeal Parris and Austin Summers posted first round wins, while Joey Tate, Matthew Wiseley, and Haydar Cappo battled brilliantly but came up short as Germany, Iran, and Norway players performed flawlessly. April Larson, Michelle Jiang, and Vivian Liu were victorious in the second round with Aryana Lynch and Tiana Jiang experiencing their first loss against Sweden and Ukraine players respectively. Jordan Burden and Dean Cuillerier were defeated in the third round by Hong Kong and Poland players, but showed tremendous passion and resolve for future matches. Parris and Summers continued their winning ways in round four with a nail-biting score of 7 – 6 for each player. Round five girls action revealed April Larson and Michelle Jiang winning, while Vivian Liu was bested by Sweden. A final round of the day showcased Thomas Haas experiencing his first loss to a strong Poland player. North America finished the day winning 9 out of 18 matches.

Closed practice sessions and arena competition continued the next day with Haas and Burden winning matches in the first round, while Cuillerier played with the heart of a champion against a victorious Russia player. The following six matches revealed disappointing defeats for Tate, Cappo, T.Jiang, Lynch, Wiseley and Parris despite determined drive and passion evident in each match. Summers and Liu raced to victory over Slovakia and Korea, with Burden besting Belarus and Bosnia / Herzegovina over Haas. North America finished the day with an excellent showing against the best junior players in the world with a 45.2% win-loss percentage.

The third day of competition started with Larson, M. Jiang, and Summers undefeated and Liu, Parris, and Burden with one loss each. Excitement filled the air as Liu made a valiant comeback but fell short on the final score against Korea. M. Jiang and Larson experienced hard fought losses to Taiwan and Sweden respectively. Parris stunned the top Iranian player with an impressive victory while Burden exhibited burning focus in an exciting seesaw battle against a determined player from Costa Rica. Larson handily defeated a Ukrainian star player to make the “final 4”! M. Jiang continued her brilliant play in a loss against a Korean champion player.



USA athletes Mahkeal Parris and Austin Summers played each other as a result of the redraw format for the “final 8” players. After an early lead, Summers encountered an awesome winning display of flawless position and shooting accuracy by Parris, moving him to the “final 4”!

April Larson finished in a third place tie after the eventual champion, Chia-Hua Chen from Taiwan, registered the match victory against her.

A special moment in billiard history continued as Parris registered an amazing six game wins in a row after being behind against Slovakia by a score of 5 games to 1. Parris played brilliantly with strategic safeties and crystal clear thinking for perfect position play...resulting in a magnetic victory score of 9 - 7, earning him a spot in the final match against Norway. After a rousing response from all in attendance, Parris was honored with photo requests with family, friends, and fellow players from many countries. North America completed the day with total match wins to date of 18 out of a possible 41 and a 43.9% win-loss percentage.



After preparing the arena for the 3 final championship matches, the stage was set for three of the greatest youth matches ever witnessed. Chen made a remarkable laser-focused comeback scoring a 9 – 5 win against a persistent Seo Seo from Korea. A determined Parris from the Virgin Islands (USA) nearly duplicated his semi-final performance by registering an early match score deficit of 1 – 4 against the solid style of Emil Gangfløt from Norway; however, Parris caught a gear with brilliant strategy and precision shooting to take home the gold by a final score of 9 – 6. The arena went wild in full support of Parris’s incredible comeback victory.

The third match of the day pitted Kin Ling Yip against Robbie James Joaquin Capito, both from Hong Kong for the Boy’s under 19-division crown. After an early back and forth battle for table supremacy Yip pulled away to reach the hill with 10 games. Capito showed great poise and burning focus and tied the score at 10 – 10. Yip won the final game in a cool, calm, and collected manner to travel to the champion circle.

An awards ceremony was conducted shortly after the final match with huge gold trophy cups and medals presented to Taiwan’s Chen, USA’s Parris, and Hong Kong’s Yip. USA’s April Larson received a beautiful medal for her excellent performance and 3rd place tie. Austin Summers tied for 5th place with 3 other international players. Michelle Jiang and Vivian Liu finished in ties for 5th and 7th respectively, along with other international stars of our sport.



Anyone wanting to view the guaranteed excitement in the semi-final and final matches can go to the following link for the respective videos, plus much more information on this magnetic event:

<https://wpapool.com/2018-world-junior-9-ball-championships/>

The skills, demeanors, and images of North America's 13 athletes were showcased at the highest level throughout the event and demonstrated bonded spirits in this prestigious, sanctioned, and recognized event under the WPA banner (with the BCA as the official North American integer within the WPA worldwide continental structure).

The "heart of a champion" was demonstrated by each player athlete in so many ways both "on and off" the table. A special thanks to the parents, companions, and guests traveling with and supporting the youthful competitors! In addition, thank you to Pechauer Cues for fundraising support and Jam Up Apparel for the creative and appealing USA jerseys. Thanks also to Roy Pastor for his valued input, photos, coaching, and special assistance prior to, during, and after the event. May each of you experience the special victory realized in the hearts of so many people involved in the journey taken within the expanding and treasured junior movement across the globe.



Glenn Parris (Father), Mahkeal Parris, Debra Parris (Mother) with Leona Edwards and Mahkeals Coach- Jerome Anthony

Written by: Billiard Education Foundation (BEF) Trustee / Coach Tom "Dr. Cue" Rossman with editing and approval by Tom Riccobene (BEF President / Coach, North American WPA World Championships Group Leader)

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