

= Cowboy Jimmy Moore =

Cowboy Jimmy Moore (September 14 , 1910 ? November 17 , 1999) , born James William Moore , was a world @-@ class American pocket billiards (pool) player originally from Troup County , Georgia , and for most of his life a resident of Albuquerque , New Mexico , best known for his mastery in the game of straight pool (14 @.@ 1 continuous) .

An excellent athlete at various sports , Moore 's many records in billiards include winning the Michigan State Billiard Championship four times , placing second at the World Championship five times competing against the best in the world such as Willie Mosconi , Irving Crane and Luther Lassiter , winning the United States National Pocket Billiards Championship in 1958 , the National Invitation Pocket Billiards Championship in 1965 and the Legends of Pocket Billiards competition in 1984 .

Moore was also known for his straight pool exhibition work , as a formidable road player , and for his unusual pool style , which included both his flamboyant cowboy dress , and his rare form of cueing technique known as a slip stroke . Moore also worked as a technical adviser for billiard @-@ related scenes in television and film in such productions as My Living Doll , and the Jerry Lewis movie The Family Jewels . He is an inductee of the Billiard Congress of America 's Hall of Fame , the International Pocket Billiards Hall of Fame , and the Albuquerque Sports Hall of Fame .

= = Early years = =

James William Moore was born on September 14 , 1910 on a farm located in Troup County , Georgia , just outside the City of Hogansville . He was the son of a Georgia blacksmith , sheriff and streetcar conductor . He began working at a young age , supplementing his family 's income variously as a cotton picker earning 35 cents per 100 pounds , managing a fruit stand , and delivering newspapers . His family moved to Detroit when he was 13 , where other ways of making money presented themselves . Moore ran card games and pursued other games of chance , even pitching pennies . He was very good at such gambling pursuits and was a naturally gifted athlete , attaining a Triple @-@ A level as a baseball player in the minor leagues , once bowled a perfect game , and was a fine golfer .

I was shooting in the ' 70s soon after I took up golf . I thought about trying to become a pro but I figured there wasn 't any money in it . That was true , back then . Same thing for baseball . I was a pretty good pitcher ? I played in the minors for Belle Isle , out of Detroit ? but I didn 't think I could make a living at it .

In 1928 at 18 years of age , Moore took a job as a pinsetter at Car Barns , a local bowling alley , earning six cents a line . True to form , Moore was a quick study , for a time carrying a 233 bowling average . Moore first picked up a cue stick at Car Barns , playing on the single 4 x 8 foot pool table the bowling alley had available . According to Moore he immediately fell in love with the game ; specifically , with the game of straight pool (14 @.@ 1 continuous) , at which he would chiefly compete during his career , though not to the exclusion of all other billiard disciplines ? Moore would become national snooker champion , and would place second at the 1961 First Annual World 's One @-@ Pocket Billiards Tournament in Johnston City , Illinois .

Straight pool was the game of championship pocket billiards competition until approximately the 1980s when it was overtaken by " faster " games such as nine @-@ ball . In the game , a shooter may attempt to pocket any object ball on the table . The object is to reach a set number of points determined by agreement before the game ? typically 150 in professional competition . One point is scored for each ball pocketed in the pocket called and where no foul has transpired . According to Moore , his high run in the game was 236 ball in a row .

Six months after his first introduction to the game , Moore entered and won the 1929 Michigan State billiard championship . He successfully defended that title in the following three years . During the midst of the Great Depression , however , playing pool for trophies was not a luxury Moore could afford , so he took his game on the road .

= = On the road = =

Moore first partnered with hustler cum exhibition player , Ray St. Laurent , a colorful character who staged exhibitions wearing a red cape and mask while billed as " The Red Devil " . Although St. Laurent fostered Moore , they were not equals on the pool table . One winter evening in Canton , Ohio , St. Laurent was losing badly in a thoroughly overmatched gambling session to Ohio road legend , Don Willis , known as the " Cincinnati Kid " , who was considered by many of his colleagues of the time " the deadliest player alive " . The wager was 25 cents a ball ? a not inconsiderable sum at the time ? and Moore was stakehorsing the match . Eventually disgusted by the uneven proceedings , Moore told St. Laurent that he couldn 't win and asked him to step aside and let him have a go . Willis later recalled :

Here was this punk kid sitting there saying , ' I 'll play you some . ' Well , he got out of that overcoat and ran over me in my home poolroom . He never missed a ball .

Moore and Willis became traveling partners following their match , often accompanied on the road by future six @-@ time world champion Luther " Wimpy " Lassiter . Given his skill and prominent road partners , Moore 's name began to be known in the billiard world . In 1940 , the World Pocket Billiards (straight pool) titleholder of that year , Andrew Ponzi , sought out Moore looking for a challenge . At the match ultimately arranged , Moore first beat Ponzi out of \$ 80 playing nine @-@ ball , and then beat him at his own game of choice , straight pool , with Moore scoring 125 points to Ponzi 's 82 .

After Moore 's match with Ponzi , he was hired by Ponzi 's sometime employer , Sylvester Livingston , a pool impresario who hosted exhibitions with a stable of top pool talent including Irving Crane who , like Lassiter , would become a six @-@ time world champion . During 1941 Moore performed 250 exhibitions across the country , earning \$ 5 for matinees , and \$ 7 for evening performances . He lost only one match over the year , and posted straight pool runs of 100 or more in 24 out of the 250 exhibitions .

By that time Moore was recognizable by his cowboy airs . He customarily wore cowboy boots , a white Stetson hat and a string tie , kept his hair in a crew @-@ cut , and was rarely seen without a cigar . He was also known for his unusual form of stroke . Moore employed a slip stroke ? a shooting technique in which a player releases his gripping hand briefly and re @-@ grasps the cue farther back on the butt just before hitting the cue ball . Employing the slip stroke to good effect , Moore was deadly accurate , but could also shoot with great power .

In 1945 , Moore 's purchased a home in Albuquerque , New Mexico , where he would live for the rest of his life with his wife , Julie Chavez , whom he married in 1949 . They had seven children together : sons Jamie , Raymond and Tommy , and daughters Pamela Nathan , Kolma Moore , Emily DiLorenzo and Linda Bates . Soon after moving to Albuquerque , he became co @-@ owner and operator of the U Cue Billiards Hall located in the City . It was said that hustlers avoided going through Albuquerque just to avoid getting into a money game with Moore .

= = Exhibition and competition = =

Though Moore continued playing on the road ? as he would for over 40 years ? he began competing and placing in top @-@ tier tournaments . His tournament career was to be overshadowed by an enduring series of runner @-@ up finishes that would earn him the nickname " pool 's underpaid prince " in such publications as Esquire Magazine . The name that stuck with him for life , however , was Cowboy . According to Moore , he became ' Cowboy ' Jimmy Moore when he appeared at the Commodore Hotel championships in New York City in the 1950s wearing the required tuxedo , but nevertheless sporting cowboy boots and his signature white Stetson hat .

The second @-@ place @-@ saga started in 1951 at the two @-@ week @-@ long , double @-@ elimination , round robin format , World Championship tournament , held that year in Boston . At the competition , Moore was defeated in his last match by Willie Mosconi . His record was seven wins in nine matches , including triumphs over future Billiard Congress of America (BCA) Hall @-@ of @-@ Famers , Irving Crane and Arthur " Babe " Cranfield .

In 1952 he made a strong showing in the same competition , held once more in Boston , running 93 balls against Lassiter , beating him 150 to 25 , but again finishing behind Willie Mosconi , this time sharing second place with Jimmy Caras and Joe Procita . Moore 's match with Mosconi had an ending score of 150 to 58 in 19 innings . Moore competed in the 1953 World Championship in San Francisco , but did not place , losing in his last match to Crane , 150 @-@ 56 in 7 innings .

The following year Moore took second place yet again in the World Championship , held that year in Philadelphia . The 1954 tournament was not sponsored and was unsanctioned by the BCA ; in its absence being organized by Irving Crane . It was denominated by newspapers , such as The New York Times , as the " Unofficial World Pocket Billiard Championship . " In a career highlight in the penultimate match there , Moore was losing 148 to 8 to Irving Crane . When Crane let him back to the table , Moore ran 142 balls and out . Despite this feat , Moore was dispatched to second place by Lassiter , with a final score of 150 to 95 , sharing second place with Crane . The defending champion , Mosconi , did not participate .

Moore 's runner @-@ up streak continued in the 1956 World Championship held at Judice 's Academy in Brooklyn , New York . He clinched second place , to Willie Mosconi 's now almost ubiquitous first , with a 150 to 50 score over Al Coslosky of Philadelphia in 15 innings , a win over Richard Riggie of Baltimore , 150 to 121 , with an inspired run of 107 balls , but a loss to Lassiter , 150 to 70 in 7 innings . That same year Moore played Mosconi at a challenge match in Kinston , North Carolina . It was not Moore 's day as Mosconi posted a career highlight ; a perfect match ? 150 balls in a row in one inning .

In all , Moore came in second at the World Championship five times but never took the crown . He did however win the National Pocket Billiards Championship held in Chicago at Bensinger 's Billiards in 1958 . The tournament was a challenge match , marathon straight pool race to 3 @,@ 000 points between Moore and Luther Lassiter . It was a tight competition , with Lassiter leading at one point 1 @,@ 800 to 1 @,@ 512 . Moore battled back and eventually won with a final score of 3 @,@ 000 to 2 @,@ 634 .

He didn 't think I could beat him , and that made me mad . I had to get mad to win . I was way behind , then I ran 95 , 96 , 97 and 175 , and only missed then when I scratched on the break . Ran right past him .

Moore would eventually have ten second place finishes in world @-@ title competition . Nevertheless , he frequently competed with and beat all of the players whom he so often played second fiddle to in sanctioned tournament play . In fact , later in 1958 , the same year he won the National Pocket Billiards Championship against Lassiter , he roundly defeated Mosconi in a two @-@ day exhibition match in his home town of Albuquerque , with a final score of 500 to 397 . Moore and Mosconi would battle it out many times in unsanctioned but publicized play . In addition to matches previously mentioned , they vied at Albuquerque 's old Chaplin Alley in 1956 ; at the Highland Bowl in 1958 ; and later , in matches in Winston @-@ Salem , North Carolina , Philadelphia , Chicago and Johnston City at the Jansco Brother 's Stardust Open , where Moore would win the prize for " all @-@ around honors " .

It was not until 1965 at the National Invitation Pocket Billiards Championship , seven years after his last first place finish , that he would repeat as champion in a sanctioned tournament . At that contest held at the Riviera Terrace in New York City , along the way to first place and the prize of \$ 4 @,@ 000 , Moore defeated : Onofrio Lauri 150 to 117 ; Joe Balsis 150 to -3 ; Cisero Murphy 150 to 96 ; " Champagne " Edwin Kelly 150 to 83 in 3 innings ; and the ever @-@ present Luther Lassiter , 150 to 41 in 4 innings . The runner up in the tourney was Joe Balsis .

In addition to competition , Moore served as a technical adviser for billiard @-@ related scenes in television and film , including My Living Doll starring Julie Newmar and Robert Cummings in 1964 , and the Jerry Lewis movie The Family Jewels in 1965 .

= = Later life = =

Moore was inducted into the International Pocket Billiards Hall of Fame in 1982 , the Billiard Congress of America 's Hall of Fame in 1994 , and the Albuquerque Sports Hall of Fame in 1998 .

He remained competitive in tournament and match play well into his 70s . In 1984 , at age 74 , Moore won the Legends of Pocket Billiards competition on ESPN . Even in later years he was still deadly on a pool table , running 111 balls three days after his 80th birthday . " Until the traffic accident I had about a year ago , I was still playing my usual speed " Moore said in July 1999 at the age of 89 . However , Moore 's health declined rapidly that same year . He died on November 17 , 1999 of natural causes .