



BELLEVEUE REPORTER

Guys vs. Wixens: Not even close

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Pool Vixen Jessica Olin takes her shot at defeating the Gauntlet in the finale of the sexy pool tournament at The Parlor Billiards & Spins.

Photo courtesy of Mike Shapiro

It was a battle of the sexes (literally) at The Parlor Billiards & Spins on Wednesday, fall and women competed in the ultimate pool tournament for the chance to win the coveted Gauntlet.

The sexes pair off to play a six-round game of The Vixen Gauntlet, a pool competition led by the Parlor's own resident pool masters, The Vixens. The well-versed team of pool savvy women will teach quick pointers and demonstrate trick shots to beginner pool players, teaming up with women to battle the men for the victory.

For Parlor owner Steven Olson, the Gauntlet is all about girl power.

When explaining the rules, Olson spelled it out.

"You just go out there, pick up a pool cue, and beat a guy with it," he joked, adding, "Guys always lose."

Players sign up in the first hour of play and are randomly paired off and placed at one of the eight pool tables. The weekly tradition draws a crowd of roughly 75 plus, usually a quarter of players are of the female persuasion. The Vixens are adorned with red tops and most pool playing skills as they take out the males one by one, cherry-picking their way through the long list of contestants.

To top the scale in the female's favor, the women are allowed a pointer or free shot each game from ransoming Vixens. Men/Vixen female contestants are allowed a pass on their first loss. To win the Gauntlet, the contestant must win six consecutive games in a row. Gauntlet winners walk away with prized T-shirts and bragging rights.

Out of 540 participants who have made a go at the Gauntlet, only six have ever made it through.

The Gauntlet attracts repeat offenders who come to try again and again.

"I have gotten through the Gauntlet zero times," joked Chris Stegel of Shoreline Tennis. "You have to be real lucky throughout the entire night to get six games in a row, really good and lucky at the same time," he said, right before losing to a Vixen in the first round.

Every lady is considered an honorary Vixen on Wednesday night and any female pool contestant to successfully defend the Gauntlet has the chance of becoming a future Parlor Vixen.

Nationally, an estimated 26 percent of professional pool players are women. However, in the state of Washington, that number jumps to around 43 percent.

"A lot of really good female players come out of Washington," Olson explained. "We have a lot of really good female players in the state and we wanted to bring that to the public because it's classically thought that women don't play pool. We want to say, no that's wrong, and basically showcase our Vixens."

Three of the last women pool players to join the pros have come out of Washington.

Dan Louis, a two-time World Champion, is the trainer of the Vixens and the House Pro for the Parlor. He stepped up to the challenge this past Wednesday night to take another shot at the Gauntlet, having come up short in the past.

"It's a good thing because it brings a lot of interest to the sport," Louis said, a pool player for 48 years. "It's a really fun tournament."

The evening kicks off at 8 p.m. and runs until close with drink and food specials along with dancing and live pool competition. Spectators and players can sip on \$6 cocktails specials, including Cosmos, Lemon Drops, Paris apples, and red and white wine. A small plate of chocolate covered strawberries is just \$4 and perfect for the occasion. The Parlor's bar DJ open the doors from the Ultra lounge's beat, both starting at 9:30 p.m.

"We wanted to start a ladies night and the typical thing people do for ladies night is drink specials and no cover. Well we don't have a cover charge to begin with and the Parlor always tries to go the extra distance and do something new and unique," Olson explained. "We wanted to come up with something that was really fun for the girls. I think we've called it."

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Are you a Wixen

(or think you

can beat one)?

Parlor Billiards & Spins

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