

# 2025 Feeney Cup News

February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2025

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Greg Shearer's American Team Repeats as Champion in the 2025 Feeney Cup Billiards Championship on February 6-8<sup>th</sup>, 2025 at the LaHacienda Rec Center in The Villages, Florida

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Once again, the best of the best gathered to play the biggest billiard event of the year, the Feeney Cup.

Golf has its' Ryder Cup, billiards has its Mosconi Cup (named after world champion Willie Mosconi) and The Villages has its Feeney Cup named after the international snooker champion, villager Don Feeney.

Sponsored by the Parady Financial Group, Inc. the event was hosted by the Villages Billiards Club (VBC) with Wendy Lord serving as Tournament Organizer. Spectators headed into both entrances of the largest billiards room in The Villages, to watch the biggest event of the year.

The event? The annual Feeney Cup Billiards Championship. A prestigious three-day Billiards Tournament between two fierce competitors—the Red American team and the Blue National team, was getting ready to start. With 14 players on each side, it was an all-out battle for bragging rights, and every player had their eye on the prize.

## **Day One – Thursday February 6<sup>th</sup> Round 1**

Day one kicked off with the first six matches. Twelve blue-shirted players from the National Team facing off against twelve red-

shirted men from the American Team.

Round One would be Eight Ball Doubles, with each side playing a race to six racks. Bolstered by a big win by Dave Reisinger/Bob Cornell 6-4 over favored National team, Mike Dunn/Paul Gatto the Red American team won three of the matches and tied one to make the score 3.5 to 2.5 for the 1<sup>st</sup> Round.

## **Day One – Thursday February 6<sup>th</sup> Round 2**

The crowd was excited as the American Red Team went into the afternoon of Day One with momentum on their side.

Steady play by Captain Greg Shearer and his partner Dave Watson, along with partners Jerry Tripp and Steve Strasburger and partners Don Simpson and Don Hunter the American Team jumped ahead by two more points moving the score to 7.5 to 4.5.

## **Day Two - Friday February 7<sup>th</sup> Round 3**

By Day Two, the humidity in the air began to rise. The large crowd, combined with the heat of the Florida sun beating down on the building, turned the room into a subtle, sticky environment.

As the humidity rose, the tables also began to subtly change.

Rails became looser, felt became a bit wetter and players had to adjust.

The American Team seemed to thrive in the heat, though perhaps the oppressive air only sharpened their focus.

Don Simpson and Don Hunter moved their unbeaten streak to three big wins and three other strong American teams, Reisinger / Cornell, Brian Bedford / Steve Luskey and Jeff McCarthy / Joe Conway all won their matches pushing the total after Round Three to 12.0 – 6.0.

## **Day Two - Friday February 7<sup>th</sup> Round 4**

As the late afternoon session (Round 4) started, the American Team really started to “hit on all cylinders.”

They adjusted quickly to the unrelenting conditions, sinking balls with unflappable ease, and by the end of the round had stretched their lead to a comfortable level.

Don Simpson and Don Hunter continued to dominate and won their fourth straight match. Dave Reisinger and Bob Cornell won again, Mark Kynett and Larry Berg had a big win.

Jerry Tripp and partner, Steve Strasburger stepped up and held the strong National Team duo, Mike Dunn and Paul Gatto to a tie to make the score 14.0 – 7.5 at the end of Round 4.

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## February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2025

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### Day Three - Saturday February 8<sup>th</sup> Round 5 – Final Round Singles

Day three arrived and the American Team appeared at ease with their task at hand. Any three wins would end the suspense.

The National Team appeared to be increasing their determination and were getting desperate to make a run on this the third and final day of the tournament. The National Team was matching the American team in the early stages, but any success would require a miracle finish.

The American Team got wins from Simpson, Shearer, Tripp, and Reisinger, while the National Team held ground with wins by Dunn, Caprio and Gatto.

Perennial contender Billy Schmidt pulled out a win for the Nationals but American Team members, Steve Strasburger and Brian Bedford had also posted Singles wins. A late flurry by John Groza and Bruce Faulkner excited the National Team but it was too little, too late and the Red American Team had pulled off a massive win, 23.5 to 14.5.

Players from both teams came together to congratulate each other for a battle well fought and fans left with a sense of respect and admiration for the level of competition and skill shown by both teams.

### Don Feeney Biography

Published by Chuck Palmer (chuck-palmer.com)

*NOTES from the Publisher: Most folks know Don as the "Founding Father" of The Villages Billiards Club. I put together this little bio of him back in 2015 when I was maintaining the VBC website. It's a late night and I was just recalling one of our many chats at Chile's after CEO League. With that in mind, I thought I should resurrect this from my document archives and post it here for safe keeping. Hope it brings a smile to you...*

Born in Juliet, IL on August 7th, 1928, Don was the second of five children of Robert Feeney and Josephine (née Sing). He lived on farms there until 4 years of age, then moved to the small farming town of Channahon, IL where he attended 1st and 2nd grade. Don moved to Joliet in 1936. After graduating Joliet Township H.S. in 1946, he enlisted in the Army, spent 6 weeks of basic training at Fort Knox, then served in Korea for 16 months.

After the Army, Don did factory work, studied at Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago and received his degree from Joliet Junior College in 1951. He was then employed by Commonwealth Electric, the local utility company, until he retired in August of 1983 as a Senior Marketing Engineer.

Don was an amazing player in his early days. Don "Chris" Crisman, owner of Chris's Billiards in Chicago, said, *"To play pool you need the opposite of muscle, you need a delicate touch, a fluid control motion, and a sense of timing. Don has it all. He's the only guy I've ever seen who can play pool in the morning, billiards in the afternoon and snooker in the evening . . . and win at all of them. Each of those games requires different stroke control, different cue control. He adapts to it all."*

His adapting skills were honed early. He began playing pool at the tables in The Hub Bowling Alley in Joliet where he worked as a pin setter when he was 12.

He recalls: *"I wasn't a husky guy, so I had to learn to jump up onto the pin setters with both feet to get the pins to come down. My dad asked me if the work was too hard for me. I told him it was fine because the owner let me shoot pool when I wasn't working."*

Don spent hours during high school watching players at Jones' Pool Hall and Pete's Pool Room in Joliet. By the time he was 20, he could run 100 balls in 14.1 (straight pool).

On October 6th, 1956, he married Audrey Billquist in Joliet and had 4 children (Ann, Chuck, Peggy and Paul) over the next 5 years. In 1960 they built a home near Plainfield, IL then in 1972 moved to Naperville.

# 2025 Feeney Cup News

February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2025

## Don Feeney Biography (continued)

Audrey said: *"When we looked at the house in Naperville, I don't think we even stepped into the kitchen. We went straight downstairs to see if there was going to be room for Don's pool table."* There was — although playing pool was relegated to pastime status for Don while his family was growing up.

Shari J. Stauch, editor of Pool & Billiard magazine, Glendale Heights, said, *"Family always comes first with Don. Of course, his love of the game is unsurpassed. I think he must know about 150,000 ways to aim a ball. And, if you let him, he'll be happy to explain all of them."* His eagerness to explain led to the inevitable — his nickname.

Harold L. Simonsen, publisher of Pool & Billiard magazine, said, *"When I met Don in 1976 at Swank Pool Hall in Glen Ellyn, he was nickname-less. One day he was playing a guy who wasn't good enough to beat him. Don started to do what he usually does in that case. He made a few suggestions to his opponent — politely, you know, explaining in detail. I said, 'Don, you're such a preacher.' He laughed. The name stuck. It suits him. Preachy, but not pushy."*

In 1984 Don played in the World Amateur Snooker Championship, a very prestigious annual tournament involving 2 players from 36 countries and hosted in Ireland. The venue was The Grand Hotel in Malahide near Dublin. In his first match against Tom Finstad from Canada, Don played so well that the four referees told him afterwards *"If the match were to start tomorrow, we would pick you to win!"*

His daughter, Peggy Sorensen, is among those who tell this story about him: *"In 1986, when scenes from the movie 'The Color of Money' were being filmed at Navy Pier and in Chris's Billiards in Chicago, Dad was an extra, playing a pool tournament"*

After moving to The Villages, Don became an instant friend to all the villagers. If he notices someone in need of a little help to get to know the game of billiards and or pool, he is ready to lend a gentle hand and help them learn more about our fascinating game of billiards.

## 2025 Feeney Cup Scoring

### American Team

	<u>Wins</u>	<u>Ties</u>	<u>Points</u>
Don Simpson	5	0	30
Don Hunter	5	0	29
Dave Reisinger	4	1	29
Bob Cornell	3	1	26
Greg Shearer	3	1	25
Brian Bedford	3	1	24
Jerry Tripp	2	2	24
Steve Strasburger	2	2	24
Dave Watson	2	1	22
Steve Luskey	2	1	19
Jeff McCarthy	1	1	13
Joe Conway	1	0	12
Larry Berg	1	0	12
Mark Kynett	1	0	10

Next Year's Captain is **Don Simpson**

### National Team

	<u>Wins</u>	<u>Ties</u>	<u>Points</u>
Mike Dunn	2	2	26
Paul Gatto	2	2	26
Mike Kellough	2	2	25
Barney Stuart	2	1	22
Fred Caprio	1	1	20
Chris Giannakorous	0	1	17
Bruce Faulkner	2	0	16
John Groza	1	1	16
Phil Pulsonetti	1	1	16
Grover Henderson	0	1	15
Billy Schmidt	2	0	15
Dan Sciacchetano	1	0	13
Phil Leduc	0	0	13
Don Yost	0	0	8

- Next Year's Captain is **Mike Dunn**