

“The Coty Harlan Season: (an Ordinary Story?)”

By
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Basically, what we have here is just an ordinary story. This ordinary story is about an ordinary guy named Coty Harlan. This ordinary guy named Coty Harlan plays ordinary 8-ball on an ordinary pool team out of an ordinary South St. Louis bar. This ordinary bar happens to be called G.E.D. (which is short for “Git’er’done”). One of the finer talking points about G.E.D. is that they have a great fish tank. This great fish tank runs the full 25-foot length of the bar and is much bigger and longer than every other fish tank in that part of town. It was rumored that at one time this great fish tank occupied a school of piranha. And one night after closing hours while the cleanup man was cleaning the bottom of the tank, he slipped and fell in. He wasn’t missed for a couple of days. Everyone thought he just went walk-about as he was prone to do, until some cleary-eyed customer spotted what looked like a shirt sleeve floating under some seaweed over in the corner. Well, you can imagine the consternation this caused. Piranha in the fish tank, a floating shirt sleeve, and a missing cleanup man! A fast meeting was assembled. A resolution was called for, seconded and voted on. The ‘yeas’ won out that it was time to 86 the piranha before the piranha 86’ed another cleanup man. I mean, cleanup people are hard to come by. Did I mention this ordinary bar has a neat bar mistress named ‘Gabby’, but other than that, it’s basically – ordinary.

But something happened from September 14, 2009 thru January 15, 2010. That something put G.E.D. on the map and made Missouri 8 Ball history. Because what a G.E.D. player did this session was not ordinary. In fact it was extra-ordinary. Extraordinary, if you will. And I will tell you what that something is right after I order another Root Beer.

Enter Coty Harlan

Okay, I’m back. Thanks for waiting. To continue: It is not ordinary to see a player, any player, win 43 games in a row. As Paul Harvey would say: “And this is ‘The Rest of the Story’.”

When it comes to awarding Top Player titles, this is one of the few times it’s possible the Missouri 8 Ball Pool League officials could have mailed out the Trophy to a player long before the season ended. It is by far, if not the best performance in M0-8’s twenty-five-year history, certainly has to be right up at the top. I mean, how many 46-1 sessions have there been? None. That’s how many. Zippo. Nada.

Only three players have turned in perfect scores in the past but they were like, 22-0, 23-0. No one, that’s no one, has ever turned in the kind of season Coty Harlan just had. Think about it, 46-wins and *only* one loss. That’s incredible. As Charlie C would say, ‘Awesome, dude; totally awesome!’

Awesome indeed; and the play-by-play goes like this: The 72nd M0-8 session ran from September 14, 2009 thru January 15th, 2010. Three weeks into the campaign Alex Brown (G.E.D. #2) and Coty Harlan (G.E.D. #1) were 10-0. Andrew Feeler (G.E.D. #2) was 10-1; Curt Wisely (Wedge #2) 8-1, and Bob Jones (Pardella Club #3) is 7-1. Ladies and gentlemen, we have what they call in the business ‘a contest.’

The 4th week Coty turned in a 4-win performance as his competitors lost at least one game. As the season was still young, at this point his 14-0 wasn’t a lot to overcome. But as the weeks came and the weeks went Coty Harlan continued his assault on this division like Stormin’ Norman continued his assault against Saddam Hussein’s Red Cap Brigade, by charging forward piling up wins after more wins. Most of Coty’s opponents were going down faster than Barry Soetoro’s popularity on HealthCare. It was just a matter of time before more opponents would fall by the wayside.

By the 7th week Coty’s 21-0 1.000 was still ahead but barely as three players behind him was hanging tough with .857, .818, and .789 percentages. Percentage wise it was still up for grabs. Then the 8th week opened up a little breathing room. But Harlan’s 24-0 was still only 4-1/2 games ahead of Curt Wisely’s 19-4 .826. One bad week for Coty and one good week for Curt would wipe out the lead. Trying to open up distance from Curt was like Jeff Gordon trying to open daylight from Jimmy Johnson at Daytona.

However, the gap did widen substantially the 9th week when Coty shot a 5-win match that raised his totals to 29-0. By this time he had already surpassed all known M0-8 records for consecutive wins in a season. Jumping ahead to the 12th week he embarrassed the field even further by adding another 4-win night. His amazing totals continued to gain as fast as Tiger Woods' sponsors continued to fade. Now at 38-0, Coty was like a runaway boxcar. Even Jamaica's Usain Bolt's 9.69 couldn't keep up with him.

And he wasn't through. The 13th week produced yet another 3-win night as Harlan moved up to 41-0. Knowing the season was running out with only three weeks to go, it was obvious that if rivals stood a modicum of a chance to take the Top Player title away from Harlan something had to be done and quick. That's when it happened. Outside sources say word on the street was that a bounty had been offered and when Coty Harlan comes up missing the 14th week, well there was speculation something was amiss. Shortly thereafter an explanation was given that Coty simply had to work overtime and couldn't meet that week's commitment. And the latest 'fish tank' rumors proved to be unfounded.

But then, was someone within the division trying to be more creative? Because another rumor began to circulate that a couple unsavory characters had been seen driving around Lemay (particularly Wachtel Ave.) after dark in block-long Black or Navy Blue Lincoln Continental automobiles with Illinois tags. This led to speculation... that indeed... possibly outside talent was brought in to hinder Coty's progress and collect on the bounty.

(When I heard that I was shocked. Totally SHOCKED to hear that only a 'couple' unsavory characters were seen around Lemay)

Of course nothing come of it and Coty was back in action the 15th week. Harlan wins his first two games. With those two wins his winning streak advanced to 43. Then it ended. It came to an abrupt halt by a Mary's Blue Ribbons player.

There was nothing sensational about it; just an ordinary game of '8' ball that went against him. It happens. It's been written many times that all good things come to an end. It was just a matter of time.

Harlan finished the season by winning his last three games. The 16-week schedule produced a fantastic 46-1 .979 record. As mentioned earlier, there have been players go undefeated for a session, but this is the first time we have witnessed a winning streak as jim-dandy as this. It might happen again, sometime; some year. But 'til then, smart money says 43 in a row will last quit awhile. Congratulations to Coty Harlan for having one incredible season, exhibiting superb shooting... and evading Bounty Hunters. Come to think about it... this wasn't just another *ordinary* story.

Beat this if you can:

I.Q. Jones says: "Talk about a runaway for **Top Player!** All due respects to the fabulous work of the many upstanding citizens of division 103, but to happen in December for **Coty Harlan** *not* to win the title he would have had to break both wrists? Go into a coma? Defect to a Martian moon? OK, maybe all of the above. And he'd still probably win this thing. Actually, after doing the math, Coty could have lost his next seven games and still finish at .852, or .002 ahead of his nearest rival."

So who was the nearest rival?

Cunning Curt Wisely was hanging tough ready to take over should Harlan go on a 1-15 Rams type losing streak. But as they say in books, '34-6 .850 any other time was a winner.' We at the M0-8 office feel your pain Curt, and we still say great shooting. Better luck next season.

Jumpin' Joe Lombardozzi throws in a couple facts: "It won't be easy to break either of the two new records Coty Harlan set this season. First, by having an outstanding 43-game winning streak, and second, having the most wins with only one loss, 46. Congratulations, Coty."