

1986 Players of the Year

If the Pool & Billiard Magazine had asked its staff at the outset of 1986 to project their choices for "Player of the Year", the names of Mike Sigel and Jean Balukas may not have come up.

Mike did not participate in any of the pro tour events from January thru April due to his position as Technical Advisor to The Color of Money. Jean did not participate in the first half of the year due to her long recovery from knee surgery.

Yet Mike Sigel and Jean Balukas have been chosen as the 1986 Pool & Billiard Players of the Year by the Pool and Billiard Magazine staff.

The Sigel-Balukas stretch runs to the wire, that earned them the honor, are strikingly similar. Mike Sigel took the title in six major events when he resumed play, including the Glass City Open, Norfolk Spring Open, B.C. Open, Akron Open, and the Sands Regent's Reno Open. Jean swung back into the tour with an amazing five straight titles - the Cleveland Open, California Mixed Open, U.S. Open, Charlotte Fall Classic, and the WPBA Nationals.

Adding to these incredible feats, Mike and Jean are both at the top of the money list for the year with \$44,464 and \$12,500 respectively.

Players of the Year are not chosen solely on title wins, however. Contribution to the sport is another important factor entering into the P & B Mag's staff's votes.

★ Jean Balukas

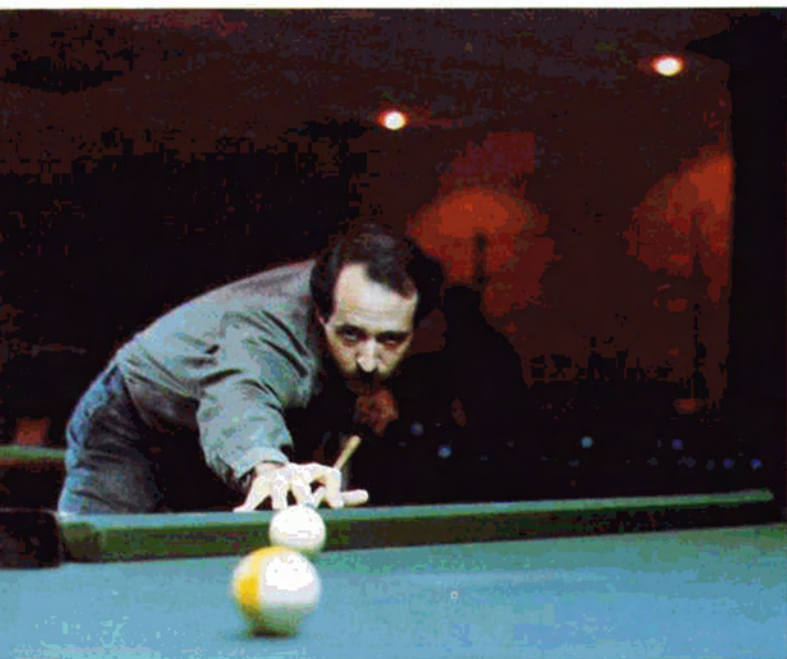


As Technical Advisor to The Color of Money, Mike brought a lot of limelight to the sport with features about him appearing in such prestigious publications as the Washington Post and USA Today.

Jean brought her own brand of media hype to the sport. Unable to compete in the PPPA World 14.1 Championship, Jean, together with her manager Barry Dubow and the well known Steve Mizerak, teamed up in a Challenge of the Sexes promotion that made headlines. Most recently, Jean followed up her WPBA title by competing in the Sands Regent tournament. Astounding her fellow players (all men), and the press, Jean came in the money (25th in a hefty field of 84 top players);

So here's to you Mike and Jean - congratulations on your accomplishments and thank you for your contributions in furthering the growth of pool & billiards.

(NOTE: Players of the Year were voted on by a committee of P & B staff members and writers - Jerry Briesath, Bruce Venzke, Loree Jon Jones, William Henning, Don Feeney, J.A. Stauch, Lee Boyar, Joe Kerr, Jay Helfert and Scott Smith. The runners-up in the voting were Jim Rempe and Loree Jon Jones. The 2nd runners-up were Nick Varner and Peg Ledman.)



★ Mike Sigel

Photos by Al Abert of Keystone Cue & Cushion, Reno, NV