

# Shorty

This last January, when the Pool & Billiard Magazine made its All-Star Player picks for 1985, they bestowed the Senior's Category honor upon Larry Johnson. During 1985 Johnson had won the highest purse ever paid in a Senior Division event by taking this title at the Resorts International Casino sponsored tournament in Atlantic City, New Jersey.

But the name Larry Johnson in itself probably doesn't ring a bell with a lot of today's young whipper-snappers and to tell ya' the truth, it usually didn't get a second look back in pool's olden days either.

However, if you were to mention the name "Boston Shorty", then anyone that knew anything about pool would know who you were talking about.

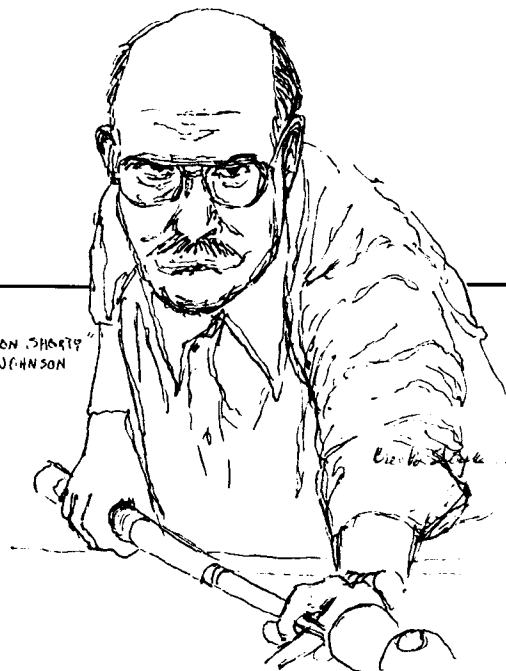
Shorty (5'2") is now 57 years old and still playing with the best of them. He has always been a strong 3-cushion competitor but is equally at home on the pool table, playing 9-ball or one-pocket.

His pool career started in his native town of Cambridge, Massachusetts at the tender age of 14. That's when Lawrence Henry Johnson III got a job in the local bowling-pool establishment as a pin-poy. Back in the days before hi-tech, automatic bowling pin spotters, setting pins was a good way for the teenagers to pick up extra cash. When I did it the pay was about 10 cents a line. If you got good and worked at least two lanes at once, you could have several dollars in your pocket at the end of the day.

Well as the story goes, Shorty used to spend his spare time, about three hours a day, in the pool room area practicing the game he fell in love with. By the time he was fifteen, he knew he was going to devote his life to the cue games.

In 1949, Larry returned to Cambridge after his tour of duty with the U.S. Army and made several attempts at a 9:00 to 5:00 civilian life. But the call of the tables was too strong and Boston Shorty was soon out on the road playing pool.

"BOSTON SHORTY"  
LARRY JOHNSON



In 1961 "Boston Shorty" established himself with pool's all-time greats by his performance at Jansco's Hustler's Tournament in Johnson City, Illinois. Getting to the event was a story in itself. As it goes, the only thing separating Shorty from the tournament was money. In an interview about 15 years ago, Shorty related this version of the incident.

"I go into this pool hall in Detroit called the 'Dungeon' and meet this guy who called himself 'Cross Eyed Jessie' who says he'll back me in nine-ball. He does; and boy, I beat everyone in the place and then Jessie tells me that he'll back my trip to Jansco's tournament.

"We made some kind of financial arrangement and I more than held my own at the event and Cross-Eyed Jessie got back a pretty good return on his money".

Several years later at Jansco's, Shorty came back and won the One-Pocket title. That was the year that Harold Worst took both the 9-Ball and Straight Pool titles.

Larry "Boston Shorty" Johnson was born and raised only a stones throw from Harvard University, but he chose pool school instead. He has attained a position as one of the greatest respected individuals in his chosen profession and a true legend in his own time. An enviable goal for many a Harvard graduate. ▲