

THE POOL PAPERS

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With this slogan, Heyball or better Joy Ltd., is pointing most likely to their and perhaps our Olympic dream!

We must cut it down, what this slogan “Heyball unites the World”, really suppose to mean! Not everyone has background knowledge, but if you’re interested, I’ll try to cut it down my way and from my point of view. It might disturb the Heyball party a bit...

Isn't it confusing nowadays? All those Federations like WCBS, WPA, UMB, IBSF, WST, WNT, EPBF, ACBS, BCA, APA, VNEA, TPA and so many more! All those sports, games, disciplines and variants, like: Pool-Billiard, Snooker, Carom, Heyball, Pyramid, Birelli, Kaisa, Blackball, English Billiards, South American Billiards, 3 Cushion, Balkline, nineball, 8-Ball, 9-Ball, 10-Ball, 5 Pins, ... and so many more! Some want to make it to the Olympics; some others don't care about another tournament every 4 years. Some see the fame and the funding money coming with Olympic recognition, some see all the restrictions (Doping, penalties, bannings, red cards, ...) and over-regulations coming with it. And I'm on both sides, too!

If it's about the Olympic recognition and participation, the WCBS (World Confederation of Billiard Sports) comes into the game! The WCBS was founded to speak with one voice directly to the IOC (international Olympic Committee), rather than Pool (WPA), Snooker (IBSF) and Carom (UMB) separately, as each one tried it separately decades before. The IOC obviously was wondering how many kinds of billiards exist, especially since every one of them was convinced to be the real, the true,

correct, original and shortly just the Kings discipline of all Billiard games. Which one should they choose, since IOC really would



have been interested in getting Billiards into the Olympics? So, the IOC returned this problem to all of them and told them to come back with one voice and one decision.

Therefore, they started the initiative to bring the UMB (Union Mondiale de Billard), the IBSF (International Billiards & Snooker

Federation) and the WPA (World Pool-Billiard Association) on one round table. And they did with success! They founded the WCBS as mentioned above and started to talk to the IOC again. The IOC probably was enlightened to see them coming back but wasn't amused when they proposed three disciplines (Pool, Snooker, Carom) to them, rather than just one, called Billiard. Then they went into all those details, Confederations must deal with in such situations. The IOC had some requests and our WCBS must come back with proofed statistics, records and evidence in how many nations billiards they play, if there are national organizations everywhere, official championships and so on. So, the WCBS must come back to the WPA, UMB and IBSF with those requests and they must bring those requests back to their individual continental federations and they must bring those requests back to their national federations and so on. Can you imagine? All those requests need to come back with valid numbers the other way, too! It took them many years, but finally they received their recognition by the IOC and were getting parked into the World Games (The games were all the "recognized" Sports are parked until they get somehow their green light to be in the Olympics). That's a partial success, as

some nations already get quite some funding from their national governments. Some more, some less. And certainly, can expect more, once they're in the Olympics! Besides pride and fame for the athletes, it's about fundings for all the national federations and associations. Serious aspect, to build the Sport from the ground!

In the meanwhile, quite a lot of other kinds of Billiards suddenly wanted to join the party and wanted to jump on this train to the Olympics. How about Russian Pyramid Billiards? Italian Birelli? Finland's Kaisa? British Blackball? And so many more, especially since even more billiard variants can be found in South America and Africa. I can only assume here, that the WCBS wasn't really motivated to extend their "bond of three" up to multiple billiards, as they could imagine what the IOC would tell them, since they spoke about one discipline only in the beginning. Some of those billiards (with pockets) knocked on the door of the WPA or tried their luck with the UMB, when they didn't have any pockets. And then it happened that Blackball billiards, became a member of the WPA! That might be later interesting for us. In the meanwhile, something happened in China! Billiards of all kinds (Pool, Snooker, Carom) became very popular! And some instinctively smart business owner (Joy Ltd.), thought why not

coming up with their own Chinese Billiards? I can only imagine again, when they thought, how about a mix of all those Billiards?

I still imagine a company board meeting, arguing about complex details, such as "Snooker? Very popular on TV! Pool? Very much spread out in the World! Let's mix it!" And so it happened that they made a 9'foot table (like Pool), with English pockets (like Snooker), using original Pool Balls to play 8-Ball Pool, on a cloth similar to Snooker and so on. And Carom? Well, when they miss and the ball drops into another pocket over some rails, it still counts. They can hit rails a lot. Here we go, we got Chinese Pool due to this complex research and development.

And somehow it gained even increased popularity, at least in China (for some reason).

Later, they changed the name from Chinese Pool, into "Heyball". Probably also after some complex board meeting. Or just because "8-ball" sounds in its Chinese pronunciation just like "Heyball", doesn't it? But anyhow, they also wanted – like all the other billiard games – to become Olympic. Therefore, they contacted WCBS and then the WPA – or the other way around! The WPA may have kept them on hold somehow, but then it happened that the WPA had some serious (and costly) problems with a big



nineball promoter. The WPA was with its back standing on the wall, so to speak. What an opportunity for Heyball (Joy Ltd.) to give the WPA some backup, some

sponsoring! For these couple million dollars sponsoring, the WPA just had to push Heyball inside their own structure. With the sponsoring, the WPA supported continental championships, and the continentals encouraged all their national members to have national championships not in Pool-Billiard only, but also in Heyball now. Within a year or two, they had Heyball championships around the globe by using the WPA structure.

Just some fact that the IHPA (International Heyball Association. Most likely initiated by the owner of Joy Ltd.) will tell invited IOC secretaries directly. And look, I have nothing against Heyball! It's just another Billiards that wants to join the Olympic party! I really admire their strategy! They are smart, clever and really know when, where and who to support. Anyhow, the WPA was thankful (why not the other way around?), convinced somehow the WCBS about Heyball and suddenly it happened that Heyball became the 4th discipline in the World Games! What a success and so far, they didn't take anything away from any other billiards discipline. So far...

But then a friend of mine was able to win some WPA secretary for an interview. Just a bit of evidence. From there it seemed to be clear what's next on their agenda. Maybe not

officially, but some ways will be found. On the next opportunity they wanted to go back from 4 to 3 disciplines at the World Games again. Snooker, Carom and Pool, just as it was before. But original (American) Pool-Billiard should be replaced by Chinese Pool! That's Heyball and the WPA will probably even vote to do so!



Now the fun is over, isn't it?

But that's not enough! On the next talks within WCBS and the IOC, they wanted to

fulfill the IOC's wish to have one discipline only and therefore raise the chance to bring Billiards into the Olympics! The WPA secretary was pretty good to convince the WPA board to see Heyball as the consequent development of Pool! Which is completely wrong and I will explain why further on. But if you have a look at the actual WPA board, there's no real advocate of original (American) Pool-Billiard! Someone from South Africa with blackball roots, someone from the US (more BCA businessman, rather than a Pool enthusiast) and some others no one close to original (American) Pool-Billiard!

The US representative insisted on establishing a more sport-oriented organization inside the more business orientated BCA. He calls it "USA Cue Sports"! I don't know if this is his idea to enlarge it to "Cue Sports" rather than "Pool", but do you think it's smart coming from the only "Pool" representative of the board? I think it's sad rather than smart.

But also, the secretary already mentioned is supposed to be on the side of original Pool-Billiard! On the other hand, this WPA secretary saw now the golden opportunity to make history and becoming the man who made billiards Olympic! His name would be secured in history books. Understandable?

He is also on the WCBS-Board, he knows that it would be harder to convince Snooker and Carom to push **Heyball as the perfect one and only discipline for the Olympics!** I just can imagine that he talked to some other representative of the IOC about it first and already got some positive signals. Telling Carom, Snooker (and probably original Pool-Billiard) representatives, that if they got Heyball only into the Olympics, that all the other kinds of Billiards still would profit from it! Still getting governmental fundings, still would grow and so on. He is brilliant at talking. And we are talking about WCBS board talks only.

But we may should know now, what the slogan “Heyball unites the World” really supposed to mean! I’m still not sure if the UMB and IBSF board members are aware of what’s going on. Certainly not the average player! This might be due to the natural structure of our federation likes. Players or athletes aren’t real members! Regional federations are members of national federations. Those are members of continental federations. Those are members of the World federation. Those are members of the WCBS. Transparency? We can watch tournaments with live streams all over the world, but have you ever seen a live stream from some federations board meeting? From the WCBS, the WPA, UMB or others? Okay,

it wouldn’t be very thrilling... Ever tried to comment on a WPA post on Instagram? No way! Player representative board? More selected rather than elected! But there’s one or two things, no one from the above is thinking about...



POOL is unique! POOL isn’t Chinese Pool! POOL isn’t Heyball!

It drives me crazy, that no one seems to understand what “Pool-Billiard” really is! It’s not coming from “Pocket Billiards”! It’s a form of, but fundamentally different to Pocket Billiards with traditional “English” Pockets! Pool comes from American betting parlors (mid 1850’s!) when they called the

pot of all betting’s “Pool”! The Prize Pool! And they put Billiard Tables into those parlors, so the clients can play billiards while waiting for the outcome of their betting’s. Those billiard tables were called “Pool-tables” and “Pool-Billiard”! Furthermore, originally those Pool tables had traditionally (“American”) developed pockets, patented by Michael Phelan in 1857! They have straight entrances compared to round entrances in English pockets. It was like a little late declaration of independence in billiards 81 years after 1776.

Therefore, Billiard tables in American betting parlors were called “pool tables”, therefore “Pool” is “Pool-Billiard”! How about another extremely important difference that makes Pool-Billiard unique, compared to Pocket Billiards?

It’s correct, that playing on Pocket-Billiard tables with “English” pockets, requires great accuracy. “English” pockets can be found traditionally on Snooker tables but also on Blackball, English Pool, French Pool and now also on Heyball tables! English pockets on Chinese Billiard tables? Pretty strange when thinking about the Chinese English history anyways...

Sometimes players and fans of those “Pocket-Billiard” games look pitiful on (American) “Pool-Billiard”! Especially when they see pool players still miss such big

bucket pockets! This thinking has essential lack of knowledge! “We” (the pro players of Pool!) don’t miss, because we can’t shoot with accuracy! We miss mostly, because we need (or try to) to “cheat” the pocket on its far left or right side to get a different cueball position! If we need to pocket the ball only – it would be easy!!! To pocket only is easy! Except for beginners naturally. Pocketing might be the main art on English pockets, but not in Pool!

In Pool, we have an additional dimension to take into consideration! In Pool we don’t need to pocket the balls only, but we need to decide which part is better to get a better positioning of the cueball. On English pockets you don’t have this dimension! They still need to play position, but without taking our unique dimension into account. That makes Pool unique and different!

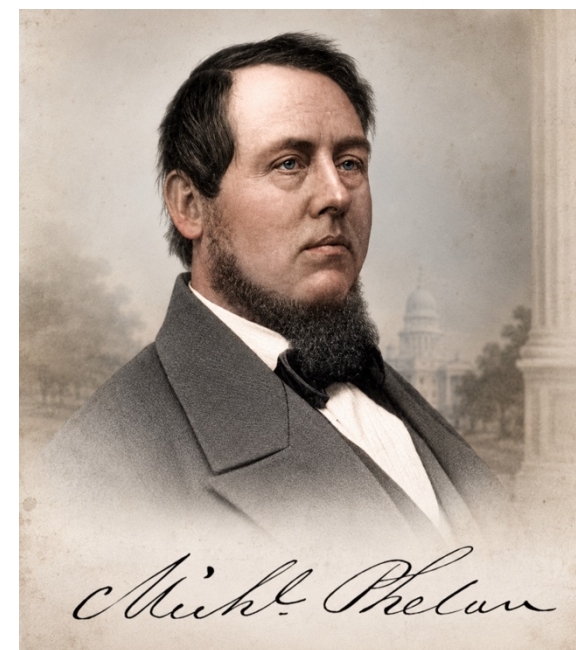
And now my main concern: Pool-Billiard (American Pool), has no real advocate in the world right now! The WPA suppose to be the natural advocate of pool, as they name themselves “World Pool-Billiard Association” and not “World Pocket Billiard Association” and they start their whole existence on Pool-Billiard in 1987! WPA took Blackball, Pyramid and Heyball under their wings. But that’s not Pool!

Furthermore, they get massive backup and support from the increasingly powerful Heyball. Nothing against Heyball! They do everything right! I admire their strategy and effectiveness! They advocate their game! That’s correct and rightful! But who is the advocate of American Pool? Of Pool-Billiard? Pure Pool-Billiard? We don’t have any!!! It’s time for me to run in circles and just scream! The WPA is supposed to be and certainly still thinks that they are the rightful advocate of Pool, but they don’t act like it, do they? I wish they would! Who can be the advocate? Natural Pool table producers? Mostly in China now. Founding a new governing body federation for original Pool-Billiard? Good luck with that! How, about Pool cloth and balls? Maybe a chance! Big promoters like Matchroom? It would make sense in a way, but they’re advised mostly by players, who have their ground on English pockets. They still think the smaller the pockets, the more of a man they are, aren’t they?

Keep the pockets regular (like 2 ball sizes *114mm) but go back to the original Pool table size of 10’foot tables (1891-1949)! It would make sense for a professional player’s circuit! It doesn’t mean that everyone must buy a new table size! 10’ foot isn’t an official Pool table size inside the WPA. They can keep 9- and 8-foot tables for their amateur

(important!) championships! Therefore, it would make even more sense to go for it in a professional circuit only.

All my words so far, but how about a few more facts with the help of Chat GBT before we can close it out with my own words again at the end:



Terminological Foundation: “Pool” vs. “Pocket Billiards”

The central starting point is the definition of the term “Pool” in relation to “Pocket Billiards.”

- “Pocket Billiards” technically describes all cue sports played on tables with pockets.
- “Pool,” however, does not originate from this technical category, but from American gambling culture (“betting pool”).

This means the term “Pool” is therefore historically and culturally derived, not conceived as a neutral umbrella term for all pocket billiard disciplines. This leads to the conclusion: Pool is not inherently synonymous with Pocket Billiards but originally describes a specific playing culture within that broader category.

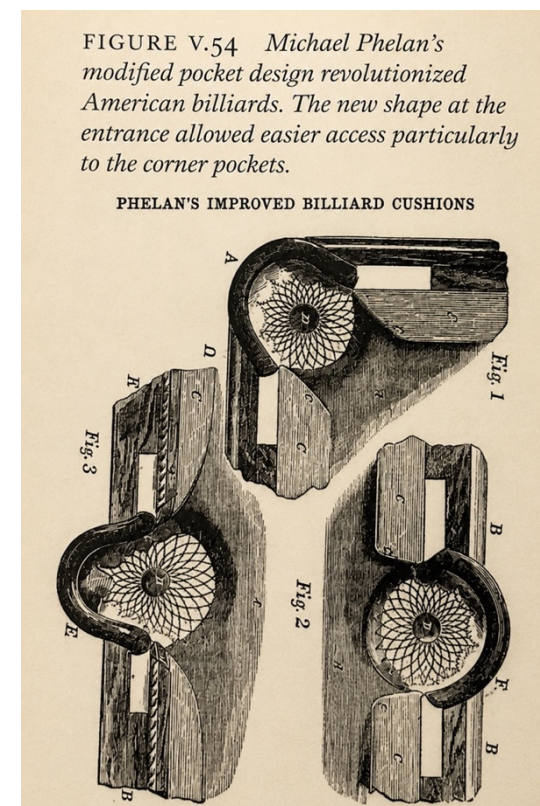
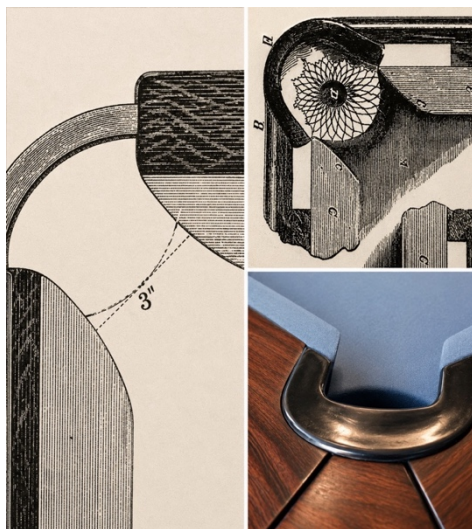
Historical and Technical Foundation in (American) Pool-Billiard:

1857 – Phelan A key anchor point is the year 1857: The patent for American billiard pockets (Michael Phelan) establishes a distinct geometric foundation. He got help to realize those pockets by the Billiard table

manufacturer Collender.... (later “Brunswick, Balke & Collender” and then just “Brunswick”). These pockets differ significantly from English or snooker-style pockets (rounder entry, tighter design, but also smaller balls). American pockets enable different styles of play and decision-making frameworks and therefore have another additional dimension!

Note: The pockets are not merely a detail, but a defining element of American Pool!

Sporting and Technical Distinction, a core aspect lies in the difference in game logic:



In Snooker/English pool, the pocket is passive: the ball must fall precisely. In American pool, the pocket is actively playable: The use of left/right pocket sides, the intentional angle control and the strategic choice of entry point. This leads to: Larger pockets do not automatically mean lower difficulty! This means the challenge shifts: It's less purely about precision but more about decision-making, geometry, and control! At the elite level: In pool, errors

often arise not from a lack of accuracy, but from incorrect decisions in how the pocket is used.

Identity of American Pool, of original Pool-Billiards

From these three dimensions emerges a clear definition: American Pool is the combination of

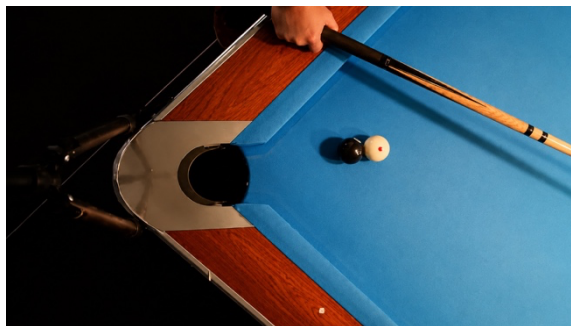
- cultural origin (USA / betting pool)
- technical foundation (Phelan pockets)
- sporting logic (active use of pockets)

Thus, American Pool is not merely a variation of Pocket Billiards, but an independent discipline with a distinct identity.

Role and Claim of the WPA (World Pool-Billiard Association)

- historically emerged from the context of American Pool.
- carries the term “Pool” in its name today, it can be observed that the term “Pool” is increasingly extended to additional disciplines.
- including variants with differing technical and cultural foundations. This leads to the

central question: What—or who—is represented by “Pool”? A specific discipline, or a collective umbrella term?



Strengths of the Argument

1. Multidimensional foundation Combines history, technology, and sport logic—avoids one-dimensional reasoning.
2. Concrete historical anchor (1857) Provides an objective reference point rather than pure opinion.
3. Technical differentiation factor (pocket logic) Particularly strong, as it is directly derived from gameplay and is intuitively understandable.
4. Identity-based narrative rather than opposition Reduces conflict potential and appears constructive.

5. Strategically compatible Enables discussion at federation level without escalation.

6. Separation of critique and opponent framing No attack on Heyball → increases credibility.

With my own words and at the end, we can say that 3 billiards are representative enough to the Olympics. Also, rightful as they started the process decades ago. Second as we have original Pool-Billiards with its unique selling point (usability of pocket tolerances), Carom (without Pockets) and Snooker (with English pockets). Heyball isn't needed here, right? What would their unique selling point be? The WCBS did a lot of good things and so much work due to the initiative of themselves and the WPA! But it makes me sad to realize that it almost looks now as if our original Pool-Billiard will be betrayed in favor of Chinese Heyball. Perhaps some aren't even aware of it!

Heyball certainly is very aware of what they are doing. Especially when I see the latest news, when they invite several pool players (even youth players from Europe) for the “Golden 9 Duya” in June in Peking. Duya is the new competitor of Joy Ltd., as they're also producing Heyball tables since 2023! Strangely they call their tables “pool tables”.

Heyball tables aren't Pool tables, even if they wish. Those are the main players in this business. Interesting is the slogan from Duya: "The Terminator of old-fashioned pool tables"! Maybe they aimed at old-fashioned Joy Ltd. Heyball tables or perhaps a real declaration towards our original Pool-Billiard?

Anyhow an event where they play now even 9-Ball on Heyball tables. They basically sneak another game away from original Pool-Billiard. Some WPA secretary would probably call it natural development. Unbelievable!

But one point was clear from the beginning. To have one discipline only would suit the IOC best and therefore will raise the chances to make it finally Olympic. We can still fulfill that without betraying one discipline in favor of the other. At the end there would be just one set of medals for the sport of Billiards! And Billiards will be played in up to 3 variants! If two athletes must compete each other. One comes from Pool-Billiard and the other one from Snooker, they play one set in each of their (chosen) games. Pool in a race to 9. Snooker in a race to 5 (just as an example and hopefully even more games). If the score is 1-1 after each set, the final decision will be made in Carom 3-Cushion Billiards.

Carom vs Pool, then decide on Snooker and so on. Think about the long-term effects.

Players can stick to their main game and competitions, but for the Olympics – every 4 years only – they need to put some time also into the other variants. Isn't that a real unification of the sport? Rather than the initiative of Heyball? Excuse me! The WCBS is actually planning – as far as I know – to propose a team event. Like Germany vs. USA or China vs. Egypt. With players from each discipline. I wouldn't mind that either. Not my topic. My topic is the missing of a real advocate for our original Pool-Billiard. Thank you for reading it that far.

And you can be sure, I was angry! Very angry against this WPA and their officials and their "Supporters"! But I thought later, why exactly? They are just humans like all of us.

They most likely had good intentions and if things aren't going the way I would like to wish for, that's part of everyone's life! I shouldn't take myself too important. Just lean back and watch, like everyone else. I'll do that! But first I should fulfill my duty and explain a few things here, not every one of the involved and powerful people took into consideration about this real-World Stage and historic topic!



Hopefully the slogan will change soon into
“WCBS unites the World!”

Ralph Eckert
Berlin 22nd of April 2026.