

# THE MOLSON CUP

Story and Photos by Eric Barbeau

**H**istory. That's what the 350 spectators witnessed in Montreal in February, gathered together for the Molson Cup 10 Ball Championship.

The Molson Room, on a cold Saturday night. Fourth game of the Molson Cup. Only eight finalists are still competing. Luc "Machine Gun" Salvas is playing Gaston Leblanc. The best of eleven match is tied at 7. Gaston Leblanc is on the break. He sinks the 10 three times in a row -yes, on the break!- and takes a serious option on the match...

He sets in for what could be the final break of the match. Bang...! Almost makes it again, the 10 rolling inches away from the corner pocket.

Salvas steps to the table, sinks the 10 on a combination... and saves the game. The crowd is almost standing. Electricity... Will Salvas, trailing 10-8, be able to take it away?

Using Leblanc's breaking spot, on the left of the table, he settles in, makes three consecutive 10-ball breaks and runs away with victory, to everyone's

astonishment. Imagine: 6 (almost seven) consecutive sinking of the 10 on the break, in one match. What are the odds of such a thing happening?

The next morning, as the tournament went on, people were still talking about that series of breaks. Was the table crooked? The balls badly racked? "No," said the organizers. "Leblanc just happened to find "THE" breaking spot", said one official. Racking was perfect. Perhaps referee Roland Doiron should get a special award for the way he racked those games.

For the semis, Salvas was playing young prodigy Patrick Adam. The 22 year old from Trois-Rivières, Québec was impressive in his first game. Could the players find the breaking spot again on the second day of the tournament? They did...

Each one sinking the 10 on a couple of breaks. But Adam, seemingly perfect, ran away with victory. Final score 11-10. He could have won 11-6 had he not missed two easy shots during the match. Close. But Machine Gun can sure put a lot pressure on a young player.

Nevertheless Patrick Adam went on to beat Claude Bernatchez in the final. 11-10 again. Bernatchez, who had been coasting through Chris Orme and Dany Hewitt, hit a surprisingly confident kid in the final. "After I beat Salvas, I was on my way," young Adam later explained.

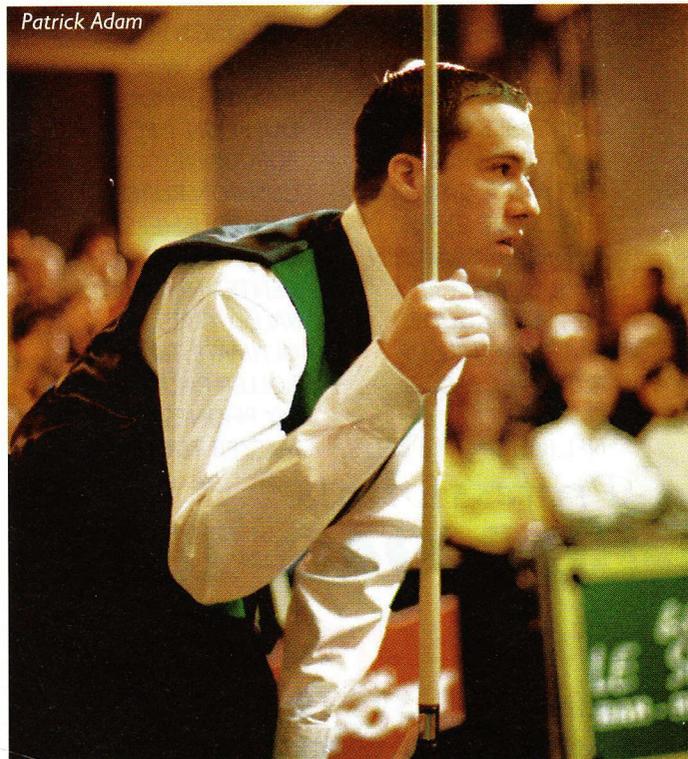
Then, in a bonus game, Patrick Adam, 2002 champ, and richer by \$10,000 (CAD), played Alain Martel (2001 champ), another legend of the Canadian pool circuit. No contest. He passed Martel easily for another \$5,000. Ironically, Martel was one of Adam's early mentors. An incredible weekend for this young father of a one year old boy.

And an excellent weekend for the fans as well. Imagine out of eight games that weekend, six finished by a score of 11-10. Good show.

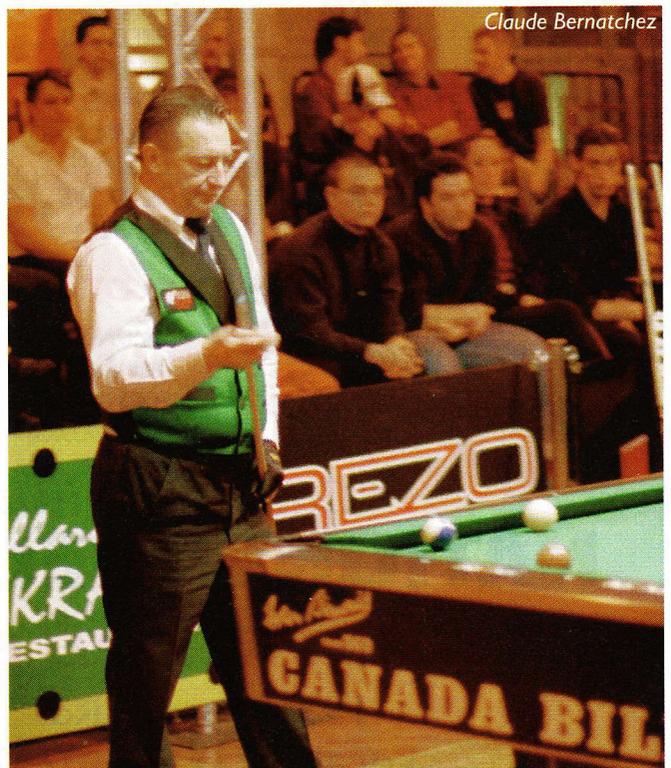
This third edition of the Molson Cup will be broadcast on *Réseau des Sports* (French Canadian ESPN), during the fall.

## Final Results:

1 Patrick Adam	\$15,000
2 Claude Bernatchez	\$ 5,000
3/4 Luc Salvas	\$ 2,000
Danny Hewitt	\$ 2,000
5/8 Gaston LeBlanc	\$ 1,500
Rodney Cuillerier	\$ 1,500
Martin Daigle	\$ 1,500
Chris Orme	\$ 1,500



Patrick Adam



Claude Bernatchez