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Arthur Robbins

America's Lone Star Kim White-Newsome: A Matter of Integrity



by Suzanne Smith

Anyone who has had the opportunity to meet Kim White-Newsome, aka Lone Star, knows she doesn't mess around. Whether it is as a competitor, as a tournament director, as a board member, as a horseman, or as a wife, Kim always establishes her boundaries upfront and often, to make it clear to anyone that might be thinking they can pull one over on her that that just isn't going to happen. According to Kim her tone is often mistaken for harshness, but I generally feel that Kim is one of the most respectful, honest, and hardworking women in the American pool scene, and anyone who isn't trying to pull a fast one is going to appreciate her straight forward approach to getting things done.

Based out of Houston, Texas, Kim is and has been the house pro at Bogie's Billiards for over 25 years. Kim is also a touring pro for the Women's Professional Billiards Association (WPBA), where she and her husband John are also Board Members, she runs the Lone Star Tour, and she is actively involved in supporting her communities' charity and junior organizations. Simply put, there just isn't anything she is not involved with for pool in the Houston area, so when I approached her for this interview, as you can imagine, I was very excited to have the opportunity to get her story, both old and new, and provide our readers with deep insight into what makes Ms. Lone Star tick.

Kim was born in Houston, Texas, April 17, 1972. She was one of two children adopted by her parents, George Goodwin and Betty Edwards. George was "a real cowboy, carpenter by trade" and Betty was an Executive Assistant nearly all of her life. At only 4 years old, George died suddenly and unexpectedly of a rare bone cancer. I asked Kim if she had any memories of her father and she said she didn't, she was just too young to recall. Betty remarried a few years later to who Kim considers her "dad." John Edwards. John owns a Pest Control company and has been married to Betty for more than 30 years now.

Being the first baby in their family, Kim developed a very close relationship with her maternal grandmother. As a child, Grandma Edwards would take Kim out to the country to visit her great aunts and to a stable just out of town, where Kim developed her love for horses in an equestrian relationship with "Sarge." Grandma even bought Kim her first horse, when she was only 16 years of age. From that moment on, Kim has always owned horses. She still does to this day.

Kim started playing pool in 1988. She was 16 years old and the boy she was dating at the time had a table in his home. "I was captivated by that table, but the boys would never let me play. When my boyfriend and his brothers retired to other activities, I

would hit balls in secrecy. I think that's when I fell in love with pool." Although Kim broke up with the boy, she never broke up with pool. She blossomed into a fierce competitor, taking her lumps at the local pool room. I asked her if there were any players that had a significant influence on her as a player and she recalled "an older black man, a former



70's champion who spent countless hours playing and sharing his knowledge with me." Kim called James "Nana," but to others he was

"99." Kim fondly recalled how much gamble Nana had, that he would play for days straight, she would be glued to her seat watching and learning. After he would win, "He would always throw me a jelly." I had never heard this term before, but essentially when you are sweating the action obviously in favor of one player, you can alter the energy, give them good luck or whatever you want to call it. A "jelly" is a kick back for your support.

Straight out of high school, Kim worked for a couple law firms, but spent her evenings and weekends at the pool room. She became a seasoned gambler in those early years. She recalled that "no matter where I was, practicing or playing tournaments, someone was always asking to play." One of her earlier memories was of a guy asking to play for \$2 a game. He kept pressing the bet and she just kept on winning. She couldn't believe that she won \$300 off of him, in one night. Kim's biggest money game was for 5 or 6 thousand dollars (she put up a thousand of her own money.) She got a call from a friend that wanted to stake her in action against a former Swedish Champion. Kim got the

breaks and the 6 out, it was a race to 6 ahead. Kim told me that “He played better at safeties, than I did at pocketing balls.” She learned a hard lesson that day because she wasn’t always pocketing a ball on the break and whenever she came to the table she could never see the ball. After it was all said and done, Kim was so sick to have lost, she went home and burned the running suit she was wearing at the time. A couple years later, after earning her “touring pro status” with the WPBA, Kim threw in her gambling towel, she just felt it didn’t “fit the profile” of what the WPBA represented. Gambling is actually not permitted in the WPBA by-laws. We discussed the WPBA at length, but those conversations will not be included in this interview.

Kim’s first tournaments were just those small entry weekly events. She couldn’t recall her first experience, but she did remember that she didn’t win. Playing mostly bar table 8 ball, if there was a tourney, she was playing. Her first larger tournament experience was the 1998 BCA National 8 Ball Championships in Las Vegas. She was taking classes at a junior college when the opportunity to play presented itself. She went all in, dropped her courses and flew to Nevada. She bested 437 women to claim her first National Championship Title. She never looked back. Kim started competing on the Hunter Classic Women’s Regional 9-Ball Tour, now the OB Cues 9 Ball Tour, and took the necessary steps to get qualified for the WPBA. Within her first year on tour, Kim finished high enough to earn her “touring pro status” and has been a top ranked WPBA player ever since. Her highest finish on the WPBA is 3rd place and Kim told me that it is her goal to win a WPBA Major (WPBA Masters, WPBA US Open, or WPBA Tour Championships). Kim said her father was disappointed with her decision to quit school and become a professional pool player, until the moment he saw her competing against Allison Fisher on ESPN. From then on, he saved every article and tournament photo, essentially becoming one of Kim’s biggest fans.

Kim’s most recent “big” tournament was the 2013 Women’s World 10 Ball Championships in Manila (early November). Representing the United States is such an honor, Kim was one of five American women to compete in the event, one of four selected to represent her country based on current WPBA rankings. One other woman won a qualifier to earn her spot. I asked Kim to reflect on her experience. Kim told me that the

event was a somber experience and even though she was elated to have defeated former World Champion Ga Young Kim in round robin play, she fell one match short of advancing to the top 32. She told me that she didn’t know that advancing came down to her last match, that whoever won would be the player to move on. She said, “I prefer not knowing the details beforehand, it adds too much pressure. When I found out the next day, only because someone told me, I didn’t ask. Then I really felt sick to my stomach.”

Kim and I discussed winning and losing at length and for Kim, “There is no better feeling than winning, ever.” On the opposite end of the spectrum, there is no more sickening feeling for Kim than losing. She told me that when she used to lose a match that was important to her (all matches were important) she would end up house ridden until the sickness subsided and she wanted to play again. It is that kind of passion that drives Kim to continually compete at an extremely high level. I asked Kim if she had any advice for novice players and this is what she told me: “Preconceived notions can be your worst enemy; what you think, will become (Zen philosophy). For example, prior to executing a shot, the last thought in your mind may be ‘that’s a scratch shot.’ The player then scratches because his negative thought came to fruition. When practicing, players should work on developing a clear, concise, and positive thought process prior to execution.”

On a more personal note, I had the pleasure of meeting Kim back in 2011, when Bogie’s hosted the WPBA Regional Tour Championships. She exudes southern charm, but also demands the respect that she gives to each and every person. She is the kind of person I would always want on my side, both on and off the table. When we talked about personal relationships and people that influenced her life, she wanted to thank her husband John Newsome. She told me: “He supports me in all I do. He’s not only a successful attorney, but a fantastic player as well. I am really lucky.” I would like to personally thank Ms. Lone Star Kim White-Newsome for taking the time out of her very busy schedule to conduct this interview with me. Her next event is the WPBA Masters at Soaring Eagle Casino in Mt Pleasant, Michigan, Feb 5-9, 2014. If you are interested in finding out more information on Kim or the Lone Star Tour, please check out the following websites: <http://www.lonestaroftexas.com/> and <http://www.lonestarbilliardstour.com/> Please send any comments or questions regarding this interview to editor@sneakypetemafia.com.



All photos provided by Kim White-Newsome, Action photo courtesy of Sandro Menzel