

About Winning

So, let's say you go to a competition, you walk in the door, and you are handed a trophy and declared the winner. You ask yourself, "what the heck is this", I haven't done anything yet. Is this what winning's all about? Of course not. Winning is an accomplishment, a measure of achievement. There is little satisfaction in being called a winner without some effort. We are raised to be good at something, anything, no matter how simple or insignificant. We like to be successful, and if we can be recognized for that success, so much the better. Let's look at playing pool and see what winning really is.

"Grand Champion" the winningest winner of them all. In any competition, there can only be one. Is everyone else a loser? Not so fast! All of the rest of the field, from 2nd place down to the very last person has been successful to greater or lesser extents. These achievements, along the way, make them winners in their own right. Granted, they don't receive the biggest (or even any) trophy, but some real accomplishments have been realized. None of them would have gotten as far as they did without some successes along the way.

Winning is incremental. Little accomplishments (victories) compound to bigger ones. Just making a shot produces satisfaction. Better yet, how about getting shape or running the table? Everyone's level of success is relative. Not everyone can be Willy Mosconi. Every skill level evolves through accomplishments, challenges and sometimes recognizing unsolvable difficulties. Some get stuck with what abilities they have and never progress. However, they are satisfied with what skills they have and consider these accomplishments a win for themselves.

Are you stuck? Are more achievements in your future? Don't give up trying. Accomplishments take perseverance. Learn by doing. Compete, watch, ask questions – learn, practice. Everybody knows something, let them tell you. Try it yourself. Get that cue ball moving where it needs to go. Realize that not every shot is necessarily worth making, and playing safe can be just as good. More games are won by playing a good safe rather than making a tough shot. Better to play smart than being a hero.

Ok, so now you're playing a game of 9 ball. Your opponent is shooting his ass off. He's making all kinds of trick shots (3 rail banks, jump shots, masse's, caroms, combinations), but wait, he just hung the 9 ball in the corner. You can't believe it. It's your turn and you sink the 9. The question is, who's the winner and why. Obviously, you've won the game. It's a satisfying victory, but it's kind of hollow. You really can't brag about beating such a good player, can you? On the other hand, your opponent just had the time of his life, demonstrating and experiencing every skill he has. This game will probably go down as his best ever, even with the loss. In this experience he feels like the winner of the challenge.

Winning is not a final outcome or a number; it's the satisfaction of overcoming the task at hand. Whether it's just making a shot or walking away with the trophy, the joy and satisfaction of succeeding adds up to the feeling of winning. Enjoy it in all cases, just for fun.

Have fun!

I hope this is helpful,

Mike Ezyk