

Graduating senior excels at billiards

By TED MCCASLIN
Staff Reporter

He would get a graduation tassel for pool playing if there were such a thing.

Instead, Mark Butt will walk the stage May 9 as both a UNL finance graduate and the fourth-place winner in this year's premier collegiate billiards tournament.

Butt was one of 16 national finalists who competed in the Association of College Unions International Billiards Tournament held on April 17 and 18 in Green Bay, Wis.

In order to compete there, he had to win a tournament at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and a regional tournament at Kansas State University.

"Players that compete at that level represent the best at the collegiate level," said Marv Buysman, recreation manager of the Nebraska Union.

These outstanding players voted to award Butt the Sportsmanship Award for the tournament.

"I try to show respect to my opponents," Butt said.

The players did not know each other going into the Green Bay tournament, so they felt a little intimidated, Butt said.

Several professional billiards players have played in the tournament in previous years, including 19-time World Artistic, Trick and

"I worried more about pool than school."

MARK BUTT
UNL graduate

Fancy Shot Champion Paul Gerni, Buysman said.

Butt's pool-playing prowess didn't begin until 1992, when he played billiards as a resident at Abel Residence Hall.

He picked the sport up quickly, he said.

"It almost became an addiction," he said. "I worried more about pool than school."

Butt sharpened his skill by challenging good local talent.

"For as small as Lincoln is, there are quite a few good players," he said.

Butt said he does not aspire to play billiards professionally.

"It's very tough to make it," he said, even for some of the best players in the region.

However, he plans to continue participating in local tournaments and leagues indefinitely.

Participation in the sport is not limited by age or gender, he said.

"It's been an enjoyment to play, and I will continue to play until I am dead."

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