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Running The Table: The Legend Of Kid Delicious, The Last Great American Pool Hustler



Synopsis

From a popular senior writer for Sports Illustrated comes this high-stakes, boys-on-the-road story about the most unlikely of phenoms--a heavyset, bipolar, and endlessly charming pool hustler named Kid Delicious. In most sports the pinnacle is Wheaties-box notoriety. But in the world of pool, notoriety is the last thing a hustler desires. Such is the dilemma that faces one Danny Basavich, an affable, generously proportioned Jewish kid from Jersey, who flounders through high school until he discovers the one thing he excels at--the felt--and hits the road. *Running the Table* spins the outrageous tale of Kid Delicious and his studly--if less talented--set-up man, Bristol Bob. Never was there a more entertaining or mismatched pair of sidekicks, as together they go underground into the flavorfully seamy world of pool to learn the art of the hustle and experience the highs and lows of life on the road. Their four-year odyssey takes them from Podunk pool halls to slick urban billiard rooms across America, as they manage one night to take down as much as \$30,000, only to lose so much the next night that they lack gas money to get home. With every stop, the action gets hotter, the calls get closer, and Delicious's prowess with a cue stick becomes known more and more widely. Ultimately, Delicious sheds his cover once and for all and becomes professional pool's biggest sensation since Minnesota Fats. In a book sure to appeal to fans of *Bringing Down the House* and *Positively Fifth Street*, Wertheim evokes a subculture full of nefarious but loveable characters and illuminates America's fascination with games and gambling. He also paints a lasting portrait of an insanely talented and magnetic hustler, who is literally larger than life. --This text refers to an alternate Audible Audio Edition edition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Jeez, that fat man, look at the way he moves. Like a dancer. And those fingers, them chubby fingers. That stroke, It's like he's playing the violin or something."- Fast Eddie Felson (Paul Newman) marveling at- Minnesota Fats (Jackie Gleason) in "The Hustler"-The above quote is what begins the PROLOGUE of this gripping true story of Danny "Kid Delicious" Basavich. Danny is a 5 foot 9 nine inch 320 pound, charming, bipolar, depressed, suicidal, crowd-pleasing, warm-smiling, ice-breaking, pool-hustling, professional champion, Jewish mensch, from New Jersey, by way of Brooklyn! Danny as a kid would buy candy and treats in bulk, bring them to school and sell them at outrageous markups between classes. He also ran poker games during study hall and football pools on Fridays. He ingeniously figured out that packs of baseball cards that included valuable bonus cards were slightly thicker than the regular packs. Using a micrometer Danny could figure out which packs had the valuable cards in them without opening the pack and would then buy those packs and resell the bonus cards at a huge markup. In summary, before Danny started playing pool he already had the makings of a classic hustler. Due to his girth Danny was teased and bullied unmercifully in high school and dropped out when he was fifteen. Danny became overridden with depression. He would sleep all day and eat unbelievable amounts of food. Then he discovered pool, which probably saved his life and made this writer's dream of a story reality. Danny starts practicing pool in every waking minute of his life and his burgeoning talent gives him a reason to live.

I may not be a pool enthusiast, but there is much to like in *Running the Table: The Legend of Kid Delicious, the Last Great American Pool Hustler* by L. Jon Wertheim. Danny Basavich is the most unlikely of heroes. A native of Manalapan, NJ, Basavich was an over-weight kid who suffered from bipolar disorder. He was repeatedly bullied by other kids, which led to a pattern of switching from school to school. Finally, he dropped out and got his high school diploma through an alternative program before he turned 16. Not having anything to occupy his time, he started hanging out at a local pool hall. The locals liked this amiable kid who had a natural talent for pool. After taking him as far as they were able, they then drove him up to Chicago Billiards in West Haven, CT--considered to be the "finishing school" of pool players. Here, Basavich learned to progress from pool player to a "pool thinker," allowing him to visualize a game of pool like a game of chess and thus, always looking toward future plays. At Chicago Billiards, Basavich met Bristol Bob Begey. Together, they decided to take to the road and try to make a living hustling pool. Much of this book details their

travels together, as well as Basavich's solo road trips. This is a fascinating lifestyle as they traveled all over the country. Sometimes, Basavich would make \$5000 on a set of pool, and then make another \$10-15,000 on side bets. But pool hustlers also tend to be compulsive gamblers, and they could lose the dough just as fast on cards, casino games, and other bets. Wertheim also talks about what makes a good hustler. Often times, Basavich would intentionally lose a game early to win a big pot later on.

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