

Julia Peace Gabriel  
A Great Teammate, a Solid Winner,  
Wonderful Friend  
By Jay L. Carlton

You want tough? You want mean? You want ornery? You want a kick in the ribs when you're down? You want someone that will scare opponents half to death but King Kong is up climbing the Empire State Building? And Count Dracula winged his way home to Transylvania? And Mad Max is back hanging out at Thunderdome? And Michael Vick will be out of action for several months?

Meet Julia Gabriel

On second thought, maybe you don't want to meet Julia Gabriel; not across a pool table anyway. A word of warning... especially to you guys: If you let her petite and shy demeanor fool you... go get a rope... find a tall oak tree... have someone slap the horse from beneath you and save yourself embarrassment. This 110-pound southpaw has beaten up more 200-pound guys than Mohammad Ali, The Rock and Rambo combined.

She's smooth... she's supernatural... she's Annie Oakley in jeans and a tank-top. She's little miss sure shot with a Jerry Terbrock 19-and a half ounce cue that's reliable as a heat-seeking missile. Julia has made more '8' balls and '9' balls disappear than Blackstone has pulled rabbits out of a hat. Merlin would be envious of her magic... magic that's won her many tournaments, both pro and amateur. The present Top Player Award from the 66th Missouri 8 Ball Pool League is another chapter in a long list of accomplishments.

While climbing the ranks and being among Missouri 8 Ball's Top Player list for many years (not just the female list), Julia has also managed to climb into the heads of opponents. Men don't want to face her. One guy said he'd rather walk through a den of hungry lions with pork chops and steaks just-a dripping all over him. Another said he'd rather parade through hell in a gasoline G-string.

They feel that guys facing guys is no problem... even if it's Sager or Libby or Quinn or Ragusa or Ayers or Mountain Man or Vaughn or Neels or Jake or Remick or Williams or Jolliffe or, just name someone. But say 'Julia' and it's, "Oh my God! Not *her* again!" That's all that's required, just 'Julia'. It's like saying Cher, or Madonna, or Dolly, or Marilyn. There's only *one* Julia.

The schedule might say your next meeting is two-weeks away and most guys will be like, "Aw, man, we gotta face that Julia again; I better get all the wins I can before then."

One Pirates Cove player, who wishes to remain anonymous, says, "It's like she has five balls in the pockets already." Another from Clubhouse said, "When we get to Classics I'll let you know if my shooting eye has cleared up. Lately it's been a little blurry." They know that facing her will bring their won/loss percentage down faster than Roger Clemens' popularity.

Julia's the gal in the middle of a Classic's offense that gets by on guts, grit and plenty of gung-ho. And would you believe her middle name is "Peace?" Honest-no joke! Julia Peace Gabriel's parents were a product of the hippie movement of the '60's and as peace movers and shakers thought that appropriate for their daughter's middle name. And Ms Gabriel really is a serene and peaceful person; except when it comes to pool, a game she took up at an early age. She's familiar with a pool table as Heifetz was to his violin. The music may be different but the results are the same. Ssss-weeeeet!

You want offense? You want defense? You want team leadership? You want added stability to a lineup from a 'team' player that recognizes and executes all facets of the game and knows safety play is as important as running racks?

### Meet Julia Gabriel

Only she doesn't play 'a' safety now and then. I've seen her play six in a row in a match against Ed Libby, and pulled it off. Find the jugular and go for it. I'm not saying that's her motto... but it sure seems to fit her style of play. When she gets the call, no one is happier than her teammates. Her success may be more about hard work and determination than magic, but she is a wizard when it comes to putting 'W's on the board.

You want confidence with a capital 'C'? You want an '8' on the break? You want a sense of humor?

### Meet Julia Gabriel

How about the night at Action Billiards as she was preparing for her league match! Andy Hurwitz happened to be passing her table and stopped to say hello. Joking around Julia casually mentioned to Andy that she could make the '8' on the break right then and there, and that "you should watch and maybe learn something." And then bestowed upon him an inveigling tease. Andy snapped at the implausible offer with a very confident, "Bet \$50."

"You got action," snapped Julia just as fast with as much confidence. And just so he would get a closer look, SNAP, right into the right corner pocket where he was standing. Talk about control? "It was sooo great!" she said. "I simply said, 'see, I told ya'. And I quickly walked to my screaming teammates that witnessed the event for five super high fives!"

I'm not saying that was the fastest \$50 Andy ever lost, but I'm thinking it'll be one bet he'll never forget.

Those of us who know Ms Gabriel are aware of her great sense of humor and ready wit. One night Julia drew the same player, Jerry Smith, three times. He really wasn't upset so much as she began running rack after rack. But he thought it slightly impolite that she also was immersed with a crossword puzzle. In the middle of the third game her opponent said, "I really didn't mind so much she was running every table; in fact, I was admiring her run-out patterns. With only three balls left I thought it strange she called her coach up to the table. It turned out it really wasn't for assistance at all. It had nothing to do with game situation; but rather to ask about a 5-letter word meaning 'loser'.

"That was tacky enough but when one of *my* teammates yelled out, 'Smith', that was way too much."

It's just another chapter in the life and pool-playing times of Ms Gabriel. There's just no end. It's nice to hear and see nice things about nice people. Don't get me wrong, there's nothing nice about a girl that wants to break your head off and then hand it back to you balanced on the end of her break stick.

Like the time this guy from McDuff's intoned, "My chances are just as good as hers. I've been watching her. I know all about her moves." And then was clever enough to leave her hooked on the '8'.

The '8' was sitting in plain sight, like a blimp on a football field. You could see it but couldn't get near it.

After checking all angles and finding no clear route to the '8', the southpaw pulled out a jump cue, aimed, measured, and klunk - the cue ball slammed into the green felt, up off the slate, over the opponent's six ball and on to the '8' with precise timing. The '8' flew into the called corner pocket for the win.

The guy slid down in his chair like an old sock on a bony leg. When Julia walked over to shake hands the guy had a pained look on his face like he was handing over his right lung. There was no need to hide from embarrassment. You're just one of 37 opponents Julia destroyed this season. Look it up.

You want a great two-player teammate race to the wire?

Check out the Julia and Wayne Show

What kept Julia's game turned on and tuned up this past season were her teammates; and one in particular: Wayne Turner. They were (good) victims of circumstance. More luck than design. And they compliment each other. Having Wayne constantly pushing her toward the finish line week after week in

the race for All-Star Top Player honors was really a plus. It helped to keep her vigilant, cognizant, and totally focused on every match she played.

Up front the real race didn't begin until the 8th week. Julia was on her way up the ladder and moved into second place with an 18-4 record just percentage points out of first. Then Wayne burst onto the sheet. He was constantly running just one or two games off the pace, but once he caught up not only did he make the Top Player list, he jumped to the front of the pack.

From that point on it was no longer an open division race for Top Player. It was obvious this was working into a two-horse race between two thoroughbreds, a Philly and a Stallion.

It was Mizzou-Kansas all over again, but without a marching band on the field.

When facing Classic's dynamic duo of Julia Gabriel and Wayne Turner one word comes to mind. No, it's not 'loser.' The word is: Relax! That's all you got to look forward to. Should the planets be out of whack and the luck of the draw happened to put you up against one of the two hottest shooters in the division, order another drink, light up a Camel, pick a comfortable chair and 'relax'.

There have been and still are many dynamic duos in past years: John Ragusa & Rick May, Rich Sager & Bo Hader, Jack & Johnny Neels, Jack Mayer & Greg Martin, Rhonda Bartram & Misuk Cooper, Bob Schneider & Jeff Ayers, Fat Bill & Gene Burgin, Rusty Brandmeyer & C.J. Wiley, Vic Jenkerson & Blackie LeSieur, Joe & Dave Branstetter, Arkansas Bob & Little Rock Scott, Frank & Jesse James, Abbott & Costello, Batman & Robin; the list is endless. But for a 16-week season not many pairs of teammates put up numbers and overwhelmed a division as Julia and Wayne just did. They put more W's on the board than the New York Mets did their first six years in the National League. Check it out: Counting playoff matches Julia 37 and Wayne 30 = 67. The most wins the Mets recorded in one of those six years were 66 in 1966; and they played 162 games.

Actually, the best way to deal with Julia and Wayne is not deal with them at all. In the immortal words of Tony Soprano, "When those guys from other mobs move in on your territory, whack'em and stack'em." Of course if the pills roll out the wrong way, what's the magic word? You got it... 'relax'. It only hurts for a few minutes.