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August 28, 2006
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Life is like a Game of Pool

Women's Professional Billiards Association player Laura Smith returns to the University Memorial Center Connection to teach pool lessons to CU-Boulder students at the Connection, located on the first floor of the University Memorial Center. When she visits the UMC Connection, students line up for the challenge of playing a game of pool with her and to learn new skills from a champion.

Laura began playing pool as a college student at the University of Illinois, and she has played professionally since 1980. The game was not competitively structured as it is today; anyone who could afford the entry fee was considered a professional. Today players have to qualify for tournaments. Maintaining an invitation to compete requires finishing in the top half of the 64-player professional tournaments. Laura is ranked 28th in the nation, finishing in the top four places on numerous occasions. She has not missed competing in a tournament in the past 10 years. Highlights of her career have been playing billiard Hall-of-Famer Jean Balukus and winning, and knocking out the number-one ranked Alison Fischer at the US Open two and a half years ago.

Her strategy at pool is the same as her approach to life. She goes into each match and each life experience with an inner peace. “You have to live in the moment. That’s the great thing about pool; a lot of it has been about my inner journey. You can’t always choose the limitations and challenges you have to tackle in life; you just have to work hard to get past them. This is why pool has been such a great teacher for me.”

Many of her views on pool parallel her views on life, and she offers the comparison as advice for CU students. “Like life, pool is an ageless game that you try to perfect. You have to have fun with it, while it’s a great avenue to learn more about yourself.”

Laura will teach lessons at the Connection over the next several months to beginners and intermediates, focusing on pool fundamentals and some special topics, such as shot strategy for her favorite games, eight ball and nine ball. She will also schedule private lessons for groups of 6 or less. There is a fee for the lessons.

In addition, Laura will be present at the Connection’s September 19th Free Texas Hold’em Poker Tournament, so students can have the experience of playing a billiards champion for free.

Laura enjoys the pool environment today. The seedy pool hall image of the 1940’s and 1950’s is mostly gone around campuses. She feels the setting of the UMC Connection really plays to the trends of today’s college students, where they can meet new people, make friends, relax and enjoy their free time. “Pool a great teacher socially, plus it’s a great life-long sport, whether you are playing competitively, for fun, or just trying to learn something new.”

For more information with a list of the lesson dates and times, visit

www.colorado.edu/umc/fun/connectionevents.html

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