

ESPN Names “Black Widow” Third Sexiest Athlete

by AMY LONG--Billiards Congress of America

Colorado Springs, CO – ESPN, US Magazine and sports fans from around the world voted Jeanette Lee a.k.a. “The Black Widow” as the third sexiest female athlete in the world, giving new meaning to the phrase “great shape”. If a person is truly judged by the company they keep, then Jeanette Lee has really hit the big time, finishing right behind mega-stars Anna Kournikova (tennis) and Marion Jones (track & field). She finished ahead of other well-known athletes such as Gabby Reece (volleyball) and Nikki McCray (basketball).

Foxy and fast, skillful and seductive, talented and tantalizing are just some of the words that define the world’s sexiest athletes. ESPN and US Magazine unveiled these athletes in an ESPN Original Entertainment special that aired on Sunday, January 27, 2002. The program was hosted by Molly Sims, host of MTV’s House of Style and model for Cover Girl cosmetics.

The candidates hailed from the NBA to the X-Games to Billiards, with a total of 64 men and women nominated for the title of “World’s Sexiest Athlete”. The general public determined each athlete’s fate through an online election at ESPN.com.

The show producers designed the ballots in a NCAA “March Madness” bracket style, with successive rounds of voting for one athlete over another. Voters decided which athletes advanced to the next round, and by process of elimination, chose a winner. The final votes were tallied to create a top ten list for both men and women, all of whom were featured in the “World’s Sexiest Athletes” television program.

The femme fatales were: 10) Lokelani McMichael (triathlon), 9) Gabby Reece (volleyball), 8) Nikki McCray (basketball), 7) Fabiola daSilva (in-line vertical skating), 6) Tamara Jenkins (kayak), 5) Tatiana Gregorieva (pole vault), 4) Amy Acuff (high jump), 3) Jeanette Lee (billiards), 2) Marion Jones (track & field) and 1) Anna Kournikova (tennis). Derek Jeter of the New York Yankees topped the men’s list.

Ms. Lee began playing pool professionally in 1992 and became the number-one player in the world in less than two years. On the special, she said the “action of the balls and the sounds they make” is what attracts her to the sport. This love started when Ms. Lee, at age 18, saw a man play billiards with a sense of grace and calm that made an indelible impression on her. In awe of his technique and skill, she



Photo courtesy of Maxim

made it her goal to be a champion. “If you are willing to try, you can only go up. I want people to watch me play and fall in love [with pool],” said Ms. Lee.

Each athlete was profiled on their particular sport as well as on their favorite pastime or hobby. Ms. Lee displayed her billiard artistry at Pressure, a popular night club and billiard room in New York City, and she demonstrated her artistic talent as a painter at a small gallery in Chelsea (neighborhood in Manhattan), name unknown. The two-hour segment was tastefully produced and focused on each candidate’s athletic and personal accomplishments, rather than solely on physical appearance. Ms. Lee’s strong finish provided great exposure for billiards and will no doubt spark additional interest in both professional and amateur pool.

As actor Jack Palance once said, "Confidence is sexy, don't you think?" Based on the candidates featured on the “World’s Sexiest Athletes”, the world couldn’t agree more.