



Hustler Days: Minnesota Fats, Wimpy Lassiter, Jersey Red, and America's Great Age of Pool

R. A. Dyer

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Minnesota Fats was a brilliant pool player, but he was even better at lying about his past. Wimpy Lassiter, the gentleman hustler, started playing at age seven, and for the rest of his life lived for the rush of victory and high stakes. Violent and determined, Jersey Red made and lost a fortune at the table.

With a passion for the game evident on every page, R.A. DYER takes us through the smoky bars and late nights where a win was just as dangerous as a loss. He captures the game's popularity in the thirties, its dark days in the fifties, and its renaissance and apex in the sixties, fueled by the smashing success of Paul Newman and Jackie Gleason going toe-to-toe in *The Hustler*. It was an era that culminated in the legendary nationally televised tournaments in Little Egypt, Illinois, where Jersey Red and Wimpy Lassiter went at it for hours. And it was an era that ended in perhaps the most dramatic scene in all of pool. Just as Jersey Red beat Wimpy Lassiter in 1969, after a decade of bitter rivalry, the police shut down the tournament. Cameras in tow, they arrested eighty hustlers--including the new champion!

From Fats's first showdown--in Brooklyn, with a Texas-style gunslinger in cowboy boots and revolvers--to world championship clashes, HUSTLER DAYS is a rollicking portrait of one of our national treasures.

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