

## Young Gunz

Written by Deb Egenberger

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### **Local pool players compete in national tournament.**

Taylor Walker was barely tall enough to see the green felt on top of the table when he started hitting pool balls into the pockets.

Now at 16 years old, the high school junior has national tournament experience.

Luke Buesing was about 14 when he first picked up a pool cue.

At 25, Buesing played on the Young Gunz eight-ball team with Walker earlier this month at The Association of Pool national tournament in Charleston, SC.

“It was like walking into a movie,” Walker said of the room with 94 pool tables at the Embassy Suites Event Center. “I’ve never seen anything like it.”

Eight players make up the Young Gunz team. Walker and Buesing are from Gothenburg. The others live in Cozad.

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The team earned the all-expense paid trip to nationals Nov. 8-12 by winning the local league session and then the regional tournament this fall.

“We went undefeated through the regional,” Buesing said of the Young Gunz.



That means the five team members who played each weekly league game and all the regional games in Kearney came out on top in a best-of-five format.

At the national tournament, the team competed in 60 round-robin games of pool to determine its place in one of two single-elimination brackets.

“It was non-stop games for the whole first day,” Walker said.

The top 64 teams competed in the championship bracket and the next 32 made up the “Best of the Rest.”

Young Gunz won three rounds in the “Best of the Rest” before losing in the final to the Top Tappers, a team from Canada. The players split \$1,500.

“I was kinda nervous,” Walker said of the finals.

In the end, Walker lost to his female opponent when he “shanked the eight ball.”

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Buesing said he might have had a few butterflies, “but I figured we were already winners for getting as far as we did.”

Buesing won his final game, also against a woman.

Walker and Buesing both play with a six handicap, which is rated from two to seven with seven the highest.

The Young Gunz team, they said, has four members rated at six so not all of the best pool shooters play at once.

“The total handicap can only be 25,” Buesing said, “so at least one six player has to sit out each match.”

Walker calls Buesing the clutch player.

“He usually pulls out a win for us when we get in a tight spot,” he said.

Buesing disagrees.

“I think we play well as a team,” he said.

Getting second in the “Best of the Rest” at the national tournament has served as motivation for both Gothenburg players and the team.

“I think now that we know what to expect, we’re going to go after it big next year,” Buesing said.

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Other members of the Young Gunz are Susie Thornton, Tim McGuire, Austin Spotanski, Austin Thornton, Tim Ourada and Rock Thornton.