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Congratulations and Commiserations



Our congratulations go to John Higgins, who after having suffered what Her Majesty would describe as an 'Annus Horribilis', has taken the title of World Champion for a fourth time.

Congratulations also go to Mark Williams for regaining his world No1 ranking once again, which surely even he couldn't have predicted a year or so ago.

Commiserations of sorts to Judd Trump, although it has to be said that he was undoubtably the player of the championship and on the kind of form he's shown since the China Open, will continue to climb the rankings.

All in all, a wonderful end to a fantastically positive year for snooker and I for one, am waiting excitedly for the new season to start already!

Enjoy the issue and see you next month.
Donna

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BRAVEHEART

Even in it's 34th year as host to the World Championships, the Crucible Theatre and the players within continued to delight and wow it's visitors as the Mecca of the modern snooker era.

Seating just 980 spectators, there really is a special buzz and aura that surrounds this arena and although there is barely room for the two tables they place inside, no spectator is ever further than the length of a cricket wicket away from the players.



This year's pinnacle event kicked off with the reigning champion, Australia's Neil Robertson being dumped out in the first round by China Open winner and up-and-coming youngster Judd Trump with a 10-8 scoreline.

The 21 year old Bristolian could have clinched the match 10-7, even after Robertson fluked a long red, but after twitching on frame ball, allowed the Aussie to come back at him and take the game to 9-8.

Judd (pic below) kept his composure though and a break of 83 saw him clinch victory in such a manner that saw him play like he'd been a top pro for 20 years.

Other first round ties saw Murphy take a 9-0 lead over qualifier Marcus Campbell before narrowly missing out on the whitewash the following day as Campbell took the opening frame of the session before losing 10-1, Barry Hawkins take out Stephen Maguire in a thrilling 10-9 decider as does Stephen Hendry against Joe Perry.



Perry should have been slightly aggrieved at finding himself 6-3 down after the first session, as a number of flukes heavily contributed to Hendry's lead, but Perry fought valiantly against the seven-times world champion, taking him to a deciding frame which he could have won.

Hendry hinted at announcing his retirement after this year's World Championships, even if he were to win it, but at times showed glimpses of the player who couldn't lose 20 years ago.

The last of the 10-9 scorelines saw Mark Allen beat Matthew Stevens, in a match where Allen seemed to show signs of the demons he's been battling, allowing Stevens to lead the match 9-6.

After battling back to 9 each, Allen's former partner and seven-times ladies world champion Reanne Evans bought their 4 year old daughter Lauren to sit in the front row to watch Daddy.

This seemed to be the inspiration Mark needed and after both players having chances to take the match, it was Allen who came through, although he must have scared young Lauren a little when he shouted in celebration when he knew he'd clinched the frame!

Hendry also said goodbye to The Crucible as he was simply blown away by a devastating display of snooker by the Jester from Leicester.

The turning point of the last 16 match came in the seventh frame with former world champion Hendry among the balls and seemingly poised to move 5-2 ahead.

The Scotsman broke down on 51 due a kick, leaving Selby needing two snookers to tie.

There was little hope for Selby, but Hendry hit a black escaping from one snooker before a later attempt hit the jaw of a middle pocket.

Both men had chances on the colours but when Selby finally potted the blue, pink and black to steal the frame, Hendry could only look on with a wry smile and with a break of 87, Selby levelled the match moments later.

Mark then came into a class of his own and took an 11-4 lead over the Scot, although things could have turned around in the following frame.

Selby required FOUR snookers and although the commentators had written him off, he dug deep and somehow, miraculously won the frame with a 77-76 scoreline.

Selby then took the remaining frame for a ridiculously comfortable 13-4 victory and in the process, became the first man to make six centuries in a single world championship match.

In the Ding V Bingham battle, Stuart carried the lead all the way through this epic match, and lead in the final session 12-9, but Ding refused to give in and admit defeat in this match which would see one of these players reach the quarter finals for the first time in their respective careers.

At 12-12, Bingham was gifted a golden opportunity in which it seemed he couldn't possibly fail to get through to play Selby in the next round, but after a pot ran on an extra 3 inches or so, leaving him out of position and no real shot, he left Ding the chance to score heavily.

A real safety battle commenced and although Bingham played some wonderful safety shots, he couldn't stop Ding from potting a superb green under pressure and ending the Basildon boy's chances for this year.

Hendry will be delighted with this result as it keeps him in the top 16, although Stuart was thoroughly deserving of the place had Hendry announced his retirement.

Ronnie also continued his winning streak with a 13-10 win over Shaun Murphy.

The Rocket knocked in two centuries during the final session, but also made some bizarre mistakes, particularly in the 21st frame when he squandered chances to win 13-8.

Unbelieveably, O'Sullivan missed a dead easy match-ball red to a baulk corner and his opponent cleared with 31.

Murphy briefly rallied, but passed up an opportunity to close to 12-11 and that proved the end of the potter from Sale.

Chigwell's O'Sullivan went through to a repeat of the 2001 Crucible final against John Higgins in the last eight, with a meeting of the two best players of the past decade.

Ding Junhui survived a late charge from Mark Selby to win 13-10 and set up a semi-final battle with Judd Trump on his way to becoming the first Asian player to reach the final of the Betfred.com World Snooker Championship.



Ding was on the ropes when Selby stormed back from 10-6 to 10-10 by firing four breaks over 50, but the Jester missed key balls in the last stages as Ding battled his way to win the last three frames and gone were Mark's hopes of being World Champion when he marries fiancée Vikki Layton at the end of this month in Cancun, Mexico.

Also making the semi-finals for the first time since 2003 was Mark Williams. Mark seemed to move pretty effortlessly into the final four with a 13-5 victory against Mark Allen to set up his match against the winner of O'Sullivan and Higgins.

Onto the semis, and firstly Ding V Trump.

Judd's first session saw him take a 5-3 lead, but this was followed by a 6-2 session defeat as Ding moved into a 9-7 lead.

Judd had been keeping fans updated as to his antics on Twitter throughout the Championships, and during a mid-session interval had tweeted how he 'didn't feel right out there'.

Ding won five consecutive frames and capitalised on Trump's errors but come the Friday evening session, normal service was resumed by Judd and although he lost the first frame of the evening to trail 10-7, Judd then took five of the following 6 frames to lead 12-11 and show the form he had shown throughout the tournament and the final nail-biting session saw Judd come through as a 17-15 winner to make the final on only his second attempt.

The Williams V Higgins match was much the same story, with neither player willing to give much away.

Williams took a 5-3 lead after the first session, then increased his lead to 9-5 before Higgins pinned him back, talking the final two frames of the session to stay in touch with the in-form Welshman who has regained the World No.1 ranking place.

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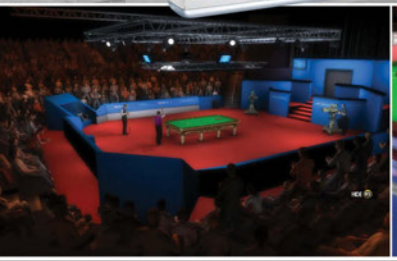
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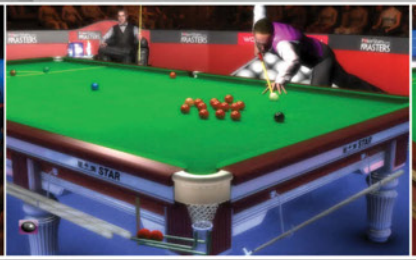
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DARK ENERGY SPORTS

Higgins then turned the match on it's head, taking a 13-11 lead going into the final session and never looking back with a 17-14 victory, despite heckling from a member of the crowd.

After the match, Williams added "I would have loved to have been World Champion, but second prize is World number one, so I can't grumble."

And so with Jan Verhaas presiding, the 2011 Betfred World Championship final between John Higgins and qualifier Judd Trump got underway, tinged with an air of sadness with the news that veteran commentator 'Whispering' Ted Lowe had passed that very morning aged 90.

Ted had worked for the BBC for 50 years before retiring in 1995 and will go down in history as the voice of snooker, often coming out with unforgettable lines such as "Fred Davis, now age 64, is too old to get his leg over so prefers to use his left hand."

Trump, who had started as an 80/1 outsider, stormed into a 10-7 lead after the second session, with seemingly no let up on his attacking style of play and amazing shot ability, though Higgins battled back as he had in his matches against O'Sullivan and Williams, refusing to give in and took a 13-12 lead going into the final session.

The entrance to the final evenings play was nothing short of phenomenal. Both players looked shocked as to the rapturous applause and atmosphere created and even three-times former winner Higgins seemed to be thrown by the volume and intensity of the support for both players.

At 14 all, Higgins looked ready to pull away and did so, taking the following two frames and made 46 in the next before missing a red to a baulk corner.

Trump took his opportunity with a break of 70 to halve the deficit.

Trump had two scoring chances in frame 32 but could only build a 39-0 lead. Higgins made an excellent 50 before missing the last brown with the rest, but got another chance and slotted the brown home to go two up with three to play at 17-15.

In the 33rd, Trump looked certain to pull one back until he missed an easy pink at 60-0. Higgins clawed his way back into the frame, though when Trump potted the last red he trailed by 32 points on the colours.

Amazingly, Higgins potted yellow, green, brown and blue so he needed just one snooker to win, pinning all his hopes one getting the snooker on the pink which he did to perfection and after a brief safety tussle, Higgins fired an inspired double into a middle pocket and added the black to end one of the all-time great tournaments.

It capped a traumatic year for 35-year-old Higgins as this time last year he was provisionally suspended over match-fixing allegations of which he was later absolved and then his father died in February.

"It's an unbelievable moment to win it again," said Higgins.

Higgins heaped praise on Trump, saying he had played the better snooker overall, but the unassuming Englishman didn't see it that way returning the compliment.

"I've come here not expecting to do that well, so to get to the final is a good achievement," stated Trump, who showed he was a dark horse to look out for when he won the China Open last month.

Higgins, who took home a cheque for £250,000 will have his sights on the all-time record of seven crowns held by fellow Scot Stephen Hendry, but has become the first player to win the World Championship in three different decades.









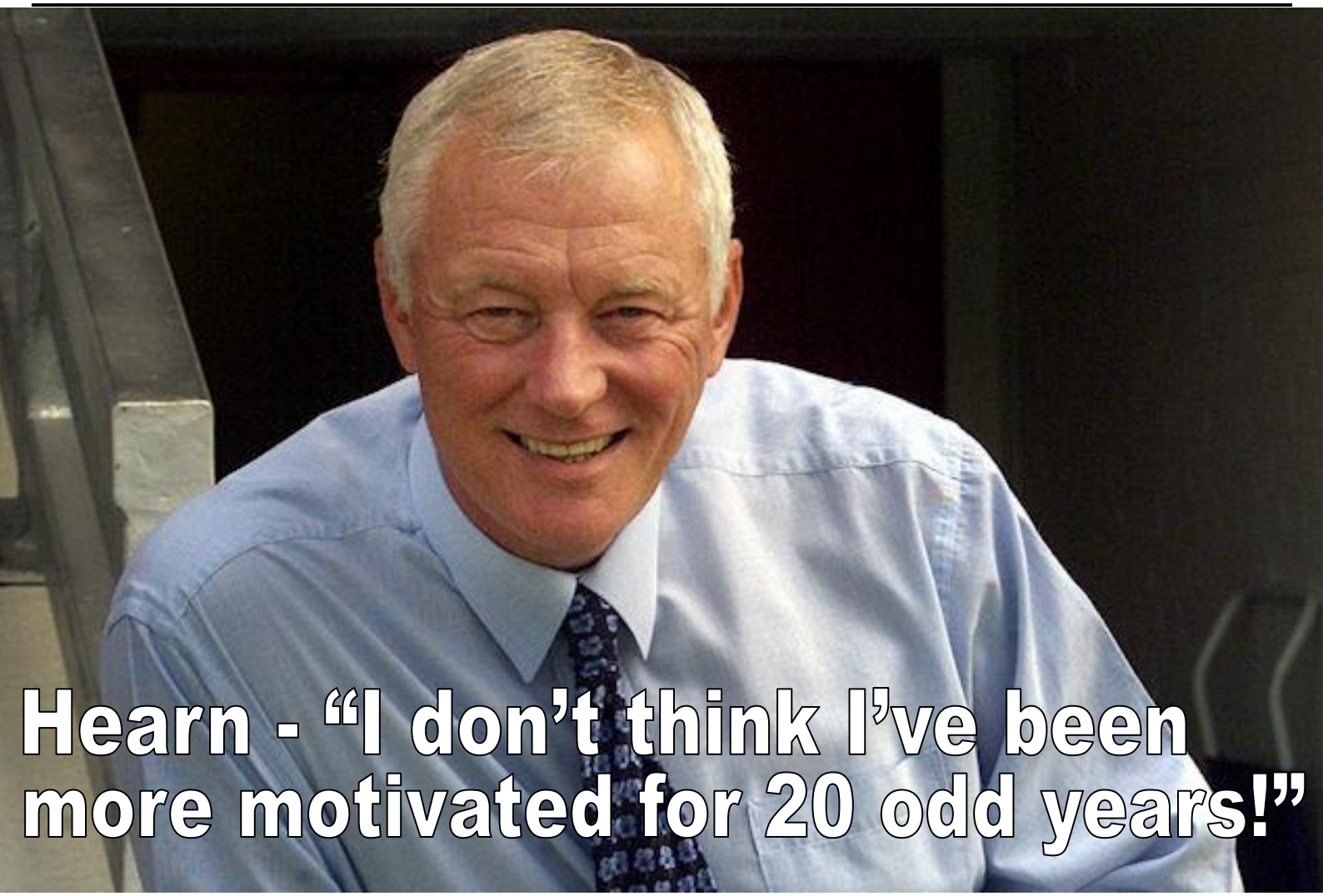
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Hearn - "I don't think I've been more motivated for 20 odd years!"

Barry Hearn, Matchroom Sport's supremo has just completed his first year back within the sport of snooker.

Here, he looks back at the last twelve months and gives his views and opinions on the past, present and his plans for the forthcoming season, which includes Jimmy White gaining an invitation to play Premier League Snooker and every music lover's worst nightmare; the re-release of 'Snooker Loopy'!

"To reflect on the last twelve months firstly, it's been a hugely motivational period for me. I couldn't be more pleased with the way things have gone.

"We started off a year ago with the Higgins case and the problems that caused – we were thrust into the deep end straight away, when it came to questions of integrity and how it can affect our sport.

"It wasn't the nicest start to be perfectly honest with you, but it was something we had to deal with.

"More importantly than that in a way was that we were dealing with an industry of sport that had made virtually no progress, was dormant and the players were becoming dissatisfied with the lack of activity, prize money levels, etc.

"The past 12 months has seen an enormous increase in the number of events and whereas we haven't got every decision right (and I don't think we ever will) we've got most of them right.

I have to say that as you'd expect, I'm taking all the credit!

"I have to also say that I've had a fantastic amount of support from the Board of World Snooker, Jason Ferguson who's bought the WPBSA and the players themselves have responded magnificently to the challenges we've set them.

"The pro -tour events have been wonderfully successful in terms of keeping people occupied in terms of the UK events; on the European pro-tour events it's been even better – it's opening new areas for us and we're beginning to see the next stage of development by taking sport into countries and areas which are not renowned for staging snooker events.

"This is the first year in the history of snooker where there are more events outside of the United Kingdom than there are within and that's a trend that will continue as we continue our global expansion.

"To try and get this into pounds, shillings and pence which is always good to talk about, when we took over a year ago, the prize money was £3.5 million. We undertook to increase this to £4.5 million. The year in which we're just finishing now, that £4.5 million has been comfortably surpassed and we've hit roughly £5 million pounds.

"Because of the plans we're to announce, the prize money for the forthcoming season will be in excess of £6 million.

"World Snooker is a profitable company as well so all in all, it ticks all my boxes, but we will not be becoming complacent.

"We're looking to push on and we have at least half a dozen major interested territories around the world which will be joining us in over and above what we're currently doing.



"South America looks great, China we all know is a massive market for us and we should shortly be announcing Australia as soon as the ink is dry.

"We have serious interest from Scandinavia, India, Japan; even people in the casino world in America quite like the thought of Ding going out there and entertaining the Asian punters, so there is a huge amount of opportunity for us and I think that everyone is going to be really pleased.

"I'm also looking forward to the World Cup in Thailand.

"It's over $700,000 dollars of prize money, sanctioned by the Prime Minister in aid of the king's 84th birthday and so is a hugely prestigious event.

"I went over there for the press conference and whilst the English press are very impressive of course, you were comfortably surpassed in Bangkok! I've never seen anything like it – huge amounts of interest!

"I have really, really enjoyed myself this year. I don't think I've been more motivated in anything I've done for 20 odd years. Someone said it's like finding an old girlfriend you haven't seen in many years and she's still beautiful.

"This sport has got so many places to go; I'm sad that I left it for so long but I'm just pleased that we came back and I'm delighted that for once, finally, this sport is pulling in one direction with a unified force going forward and it's exciting times for me personally.

"The last thing to mention is that it's 25 years since 'Snooker Loopy' so we will be holding auditions for 8 exciting, young, new snooker players who will be our flag bearers going forward, to take part in the Snooker Loopy remix which will be released in the Autumn!

"Now I'm not Simon Cowell, I'm Barry Hearn and this isn't Britain's Got Talent, but we know that Snooker's Got Talent and we need to know whose got the front to front the single!"



WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

Pascal Guillaume is not necessarily a name which you would immediately recognise, but as President of the International Billiards & Snooker Federation, his is a name worth remembering.

Pascal took the time to educate us on the background and current position of the IBSF within the billiard and snooker world.

What is the history of IBSF?

You will find the complete history of the IBSF on our website (www.ibsf.info) and a very informative article about the origin of the sport of snooker.

The IBSF currently organises 6 World Championships: World Men's Snooker Championship, World Ladies Snooker Championship, World Under 21 Snooker Championships, World Masters Snooker Championship and the World Billiards Championships (time limit and 150up) and for the first time in 2011, a World 6Reds Championship.

In 2010, Venezuela, Tanzania and Greece have been accepted as new members and since the beginning of this year, the IBSF has received applications from Guatemala and Luxembourg to join the 86 current country members.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 14)

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What areas of snooker do you oversee?

The IBSF has the responsibility for the promotion and development of non-professional billiards and snooker.

Following the conditions of the Olympic Charter, the IBSF recognizes the IOC 5 rings and 5 regions - Europe, Africa, Asia, Oceania and Americas. Accordingly, the IBSF Constitution has regional representation, with regions able to nominate 2 members to the IBSF Board.

These board members, together with the leadership of the 4 executive board members who are elected by the members during the AGM, are responsible for all the decisions to manage the organisation of the federation and our sport.

What relationship do you have with associations worldwide and the association in the UK, as well as World Snooker?

I confidently believe that the IBSF has excellent relations and communications with all of its members throughout the regions.

The IBSF has always enjoyed a good and close relationship with the WSA/WPBSA. I am personally very pleased to say that the new management team of the WSA/WPBSA under the leadership of Barry Hearn and Jason Ferguson is giving new opportunities to the IBSF to increase our co-operation for the benefit of our sport.



How do you go about promoting players who want to turn professional and join the WSA to play on the circuit?

Due to the agreement between the WSA and the IBSF, the IBSF World U-21 Champion and the IBSF World Champion receive a ticket to play on the WSA Main Tour the following year.

If you view the records of the current top ten professional players, more than 50% of these players have progressed through their success of winning the IBSF World Championship.

Which countries do you see as the ones who will help with the development of cue sports in the next 18 – 24 months?

I would say all countries!

It is a fact that for a few years now and in recognition of the worldwide gain in popularity of our sport, the IBSF members from China, India & Thailand are now always ready to help to organise a World Championship.

However as an International federation, we recognise the importance and fairness of allowing countries from around the World to have the opportunity of proudly staging a World Championships, therefore try to find a good balance between the regions.

In what way do your sponsors help with the development of the IBSF worldwide?

Our sponsors trust and believe in the actions and genuine endeavours of the IBSF and are always ready to help for the promotion of our sport.

With our sponsors offering sponsorship for all of the playing equipment, they are considerably decreasing the total cost of a World Championship for the hosting country.

Many events would be very difficult to stage without such a supportive agreement.

The IBSF has recently created a Development Fund and all the members are allowed to submit a sporting project to obtain a financial help from the IBSF.

What countries would you say are NOT moving forward in terms of billiards & snooker?



All Country Members have their specific situation and therefore you cannot compare for example the situation of one European country with an Asian country or one from the Americas region!

I am sure that all of the countries are ready to try their best, but to be honest the economic equation is unfortunately a negative answer to many initiatives.

As a citizen of France myself, when I tried to organise a World Championship in my own country, we needed a 200,000 Euro budget which was impossible to get under the present economic climate.

Where do you see the IBSF in terms of the industry?

The IBSF is very aware of the need to support our sponsors to the very best of our abilities. For our sport to flourish and prosper in the future, it is essential that all aspects of our sport are profitable, as without doubt success encourages further successes.

This applies to all areas of our industry – whether it is table manufacturers, equipment and cloth suppliers, Billiards & Snooker Clubs, retailers, table fitters and all other people involved in the supply, support and promotion of our sport.

How do you respond to the thoughts that people don't know a lot about the IBSF?

You might be surprised to know of the number of hits received on the IBSF website during a World Championship - we can count them in the millions!

But perhaps the main reason about the fact that the average person/player may not know too much about our federation is that presently we are without the broadcasting of our World Championships on any TV Sport Channels.

This situation could change very soon, as the IBSF is currently in negotiation with Eurosport, who are very interested to broadcast our Championships.



WHITE'S WRITINGS

VISA SHOCKER

I was devastated to end the season not being able to play in the China Open.

BCE had got me a 3 month visa when I went to the GBE '11 exhibition in China in March for their stand. I flew out to Thailand on the 20th for some exhibitions and after finishing the last one, went to the airport to find on check-in that it was a single entry visa.

EVERY visa I've had for the last 20 years has been for multiple entry, so it never even dawned on me to check.

After long discussions, waking people up in China and also in England, the airport allowed me to board and to sort it out with Chinese immigration, as they'd apparently said they'd sort it out and let me in but as I was about to board, the airline refused to let me fly, saying it was at their discretion, not the airports!

I was very unhappy, so caught the first flight back to London but I accept that I was responsible for the situation as I should have checked.

Since then, I've been away to Tenerife with my son and Kellie, so had a chance to chill out and relax.

JUDD'S COME UP TRUMPS

I said last month that I would be cheering Judd on at the Worlds and look what happened!

I found this year's World Championships the most entertaining in years.

I really enjoyed Judd's style of play and am flattered that he's being compared to me.

I'm gutted for him that he didn't win it, but know he will soon enough and I'm pleased for John and his family after the year they've endured.

I also celebrated my birthday on the final day, so spent my time with family and watching the final!

SUMMER LEGENDS!

I'm really looking forward to the Legends tour, which started officially at the Crucible the week prior to the Worlds.

I beat Dennis Taylor in the final and gave my trophy to PC David Rathband, of whom it was a pleasure to play against during the launch.





I play in Redhill on Saturday 7th May and from then onwards it's almost non-stop!

I've started my full-time practice again now in preparation for the new season and I can't wait for it to begin.

PREMIER LEAGUE SNOOKER BECKONS!

I'm really excited and grateful to be back in the Premier League after winning the World Seniors in November.

I can't wait to be back playing on TV and think the matches which could be the most entertaining will be when I play Judd and Ronnie!



JIMMY WHIRLWIND WHITE M.B.E.

The most popular player in the game, who took over Alex Higgins' mantle as the peoples champion. And how his supporters would love to see him capture another major title. Notably the World Championship. He's been runner up six times at the Crucible but firmly believes he is capable of holding the cup aloft.

Jimmy may be one of the games elder statesmen, but showed with his recent victory at the Samsung 6 Red tournament in Bangkok in 2009, that he is still one of the sports leading players and personalities.

His many celebrity fans include Rolling Stones guitarist Ronnie Wood, John Terry, Gino D'Campo, George Hamilton & Dave 'Devilfish' Ulliot. Jimmy also reached the final of "Im A Celebrity, Get Me Out Of Here in 2009.

Championship winner and snooker legend Jimmy "Whirlwind" White, is available for:

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For further information, contact Jimmy's Personal Assistant:
John Callaghan: john@jimmywhirlwindwhite.com
Tel: 07957 147 147 or 07801 147 147



Jimmy White

Nickname: The Whirlwind

DOB: May 2nd 1962

Lives: Surrey

Ranking Victories: 10

Ranking Finals: 23

Non Ranking Victories: 19

Highest Break: 147

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This month, Michaela speaks about her Crisis in China. She discusses the 2011 World Championships and her experiences during her first Legends tour this year.

Read on…

China Crisis!

I decided to utilise my time in London whilst waiting for my flight and travel to one of the London branches of A Suit That Fits to be measured up for my new suit.

Unfortunately, the taxi I'd booked for 2pm didn't arrive until 2.45pm and I missed the Heathrow Express at Paddington by 30 seconds.

I got to the security gate at 4pm and as my flight was at 4.30pm, so they wouldn't let me through.

I was devastated to say the least, as I'd planned every detail of this trip down to the last degree so for that to have happened was very stressful.

When I finally got to China, it didn't disappoint.

As usual, it was absolutely phenomenal. It's a superb venue over there and the crowds are just so fantastic and vocal.

They're also so appreciative in terms of me, which I really take to heart. It's superb that they know who I am and they feel that they've got that sort of relationship with me.

Ali Carter even said to me on the way back that I got a bigger cheer from the crowd than the players did! Of course, this isn't my aim but it's nice to know they appreciate me and the work I do.

"We've added new products to the website – please check out www.michaelatabb.com"

There were some great matches there, and what a result for Judd to come through like he did. He sort of came out from under a rock and has shown what a rising star he is.

2011 World Championships

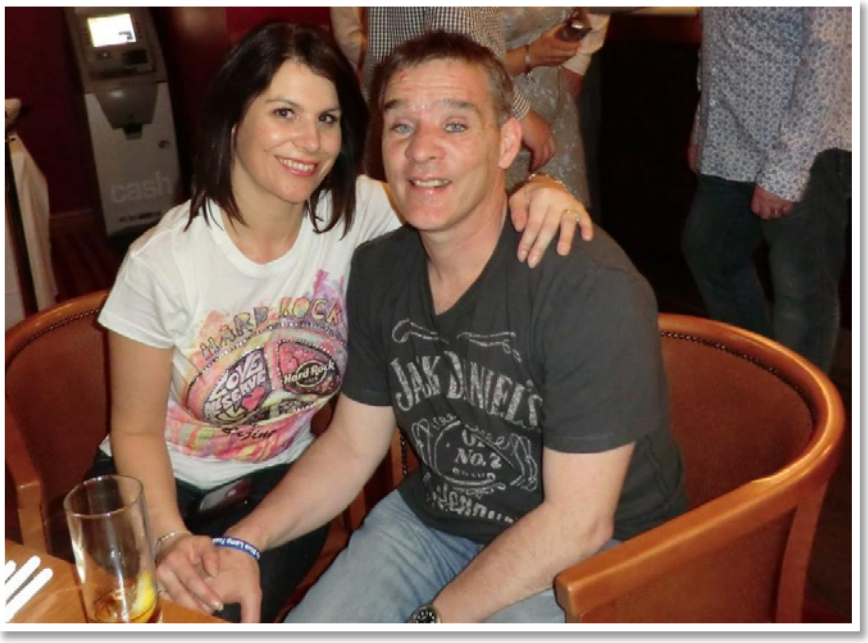
I have to say, the World Championships this year was probably one of the best I've ever been involved in. I think the whole way through there was such a buzz about it and there were some cracking matches, which all adds to the special atmosphere.

The first time that I went out to ref, the crowd I was walking towards started cheering and the other side started booing because I was walking away from them! There's a lot of male testosterone at the Crucible!

I was fortunate enough to referee Judd twice, and the atmosphere within the Crucible during his matches was amazing as they adore what he brings to the table. It's very noticeably different.

There are so many more opportunities now Barry Hearn is involved in that game and you can tell the players who are putting the time and the effort into the game because they're reaping the rewards.

Their play is better, they're sharper on form and they're getting better results in the Crucible.



Look at Stuart Bingham; he had a fantastic run and right down to the very last frame could have been in the quarter-finals which would have been brilliant for him.

So many Legends

My first Legends tour this year was at the Crucible, the week prior to the beginning of the Worlds and it has to be one of the most amazing experiences of my life.

I'm very much a believer in that memories make you who you are and what you can look back on and for me, it was a very emotional time for me to be in the presence of Kirk Stevens in the Crucible.

I spoke to Kirk the following night and he told me when he came into the auditorium, he got a pat on the back and a hug from John Virgo but he was relieved that he didn't want to speak with him because he said he wouldn't have been able to speak – he was THAT emotional with being back.

On that same evening, I was privileged to referee CJ De Mooi who one of my closest snooker friends in his frame and to top the whole night off, PC David Rathband won the auction to play a frame against Jimmy White.

To begin with, we weren't really sure how it was going to happen, but what a guy. An absolutely inspirational man.

We're all really looking forward to our summer Legends tour and know it's going to be a fabulous season.

Sadly, one Legend who won't be joining us as planned at the Brighton leg of the Tour is Ted Lowe.

Ted was going to break off for me in the doubles and I was so looking forward to meeting him for the first time, so it was sad to hear of his passing

That date just won't be the same.

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Reanne in Seventh Heaven!

Reanne Evans has just won her record breaking 7th consecutive World title at the Greene King Ladies World Championships in Bury St Edmunds.

We were lucky enough to grab a few words with Reanne, who explained to us about her unbeaten record and how much it means to her.

"They all mean a lot and at the moment I just want to keep winning, keep beating records and set new ones," says Reanne.

"They're my targets at the moment on the Ladies Tour.

"I've won 88 consecutive matches on the tour now.

"It's always in the back of my mind because I want to try and get to one hundred, but I just play and concentrate on my game.

"I feel the biggest threat to my world title is Maria Catalano.

"She is a very good player, but for some reason never quite makes it all the way.

"I know she can play, as we practice together a lot!"

As a working Mum myself, I find it hard at times to write articles and try to put the magazine together, so I really wanted to know how Reanne manages to juggle being a mum, practice time and attending all the events she does.

"It is hard, but my parents have been a huge help.

"They either have Lauren while I'm away or they come to competitions with me so I can take my daughter with me.

"Other family members also have her and it helps to know that she's with them and she's in good hands.

"I spend a lot of time with my family if they are with me at events and if not, I mingle a little bit with other players. I tend to get on with everyone.

"I have practiced with a few pros and hope to make it more of a regular thing, because they are so good and I can learn a lot from them.

"It can only help my game even if they beat me!

"I practice with Mark Joyce & Michael Holt and have played Ryan Day, Mark Williams and a couple of others."

"Jack Lisowski is definitely one to look out for, although he's already emerging now.

"I just think he is a natural player, a really nice guy and has a very good attitude.

"If I retired tomorrow, then I'd like Maria to take my world crown.

"I'd also like Hannah Jones to win a world title.

"She's a young, natural player and she could then inspire others to play."

For more details on womens snooker go to www.wlbsa.wytech.co.uk



Pride of Pinner

Having started his season strongly, getting to the quarter-finals of the World Open in September, the last 16 of the Shanghai Masters after beating Hendry 5-3 and also managed a 147 whilst involved in an exhibition match in Germany at the beginning of January this year, plus reaching the PTC Grand Final and the last 16 of the World Championships in Blackpool, 'The Pinner Potter' Martin Gould speaks to Editor Donna Evans about his season.

"The start of the season has been a bit different. I'm normally a slow starter but the experience of last year's World Championships helped me to push on a lot.

"I beat Stephen Hendry 5-2 in Shanghai, although I still don't believe I'm at my best yet. There's still a lot more to come from me.

"It felt good to beat Marco in the World Championships again this year and despite being 6-3 down.

"I knew I could come back and win as I just had to put him under pressure.

"I was bit gutted that Neil lost as I wanted another go at him after last year!

"I last played Judd in the PTC final in Dublin. It was a good game which I managed to win and I`ve had few good battles with him.

"Judd has shown what he can do and I take my hat off to him for getting to the final since he beat me in the second round.

"Being awarded Player Of The Month from World Snooker was a bit of surprise, but it's nice to get recognition for what I`ve done this season and it gives me extra drive."

Martin took a four-year break from 2003 until 2007.

"I had a lot of problems in my personal life at that particular time.

"My Mum and Nan passed away within months of each other, so my life took a turn in a new direction and snooker wasn't something I was enjoying or could dedicate time to.

"Also with no sponsor I couldn't afford to play, so rather than putting a lot of pressure on myself to win, I decided to take time away from the table and find a job.

"I've had a lot of setbacks but I always try to find a way to bounce back.

"My goal for next season is to just carry on from this one really; it would be nice to finally reach the Winners circle!"

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- Plate Event



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BAPTO is Booming!

BAPTO pool is something I hadn't heard of in quite a while, so I felt quite foolish when I found out that it has been going from strength to strength in the last few years.

In an attempt to educate both myself and possibly others, I spoke with BAPTO Event Organiser Rob Pearce for a quick Q&A session as to how the organisation works and what events they hold.

How did you get involved in BAPTO?

I first got involved with BAPTO back in 2002 when I was Business Development Manager for A.W.Hainsworth & Sons Ltd.

At the time, I was responsible for developing and marketing Hainsworth pool and snooker cloth; joining BAPTO and sponsoring cloth for their tournament was a natural move for getting Hainsworth more involved within the pool industry.

The doors to organising tournaments really opened when I helped start a business called UK Pub Pool Ltd in 2005.

We presented some radical ideas for improving the tournament by changing the format, adopting Blackball rules, moving to Blackpool and making it self-financing.

The competition had to change if it was to survive and grow. Since then, I have organised the BAPTO event for the past 5 years with the help of Bob Blakeborough, ex-BAPTO Chairman.

This will be my sixth tournament approaching in September. My first BAPTO tournament was their 30th event, so it was a very significant milestone for the organisation and added pressure for me!

Tell me about the BAPTO event you hold.

The annual BAPTO pool challenge weekend is strictly for genuine amateur pub teams only and pays over £11,000 in cash prizes.

We have tight team entry criteria, where all team members must live within 8 miles of the pub they represent. Teams can only have one male 'A' international player but there is no limit to county players and no professionals of any cue sports allowed.

We want this to be a tournament for grass roots pool players, where teams have a chance of winning and not being knockout out by a put-together super team.

Played to the new WPA Blackball rules, which I must say the players love as it makes the game very attacking, we guarantee all teams a minimum 36 frames of pool. Put into groups of four, all teams play a round robin on the Friday. Each match consists of 10 frames with teams winning points for a win or a draw.

The two top scoring teams from each group go into the main knockout and the bottom two teams enter a plate event.

Knockout stages are best of 11 frames and start on the Saturday.

This format gives teams plenty of pool to play and ultimately a great weekend with their friends packed with excitement and entertainment. We want players to play as much pool as possible, after all, who wants to travel 150 miles to play a few frames of pool?

During the weekend, we also have a Men's Trophy, Ladies Trophy and a new Charity Mixed Doubles Trophy.



We like to raise money for local good causes and invite players to nominate their local good cause, rather than big national charities. This has proved popular and last year we raised over £1000.

In 2010, we brought the date of the competition forward to September, so players could enjoy warmer weather and decided to keep the tournament at Lyons Robin Hood for the foreseeable future.

There was a decline in team numbers in 2010 to 81 teams but we are expecting that number to grow this year. Players are fully aware of the new September date and Lyons has made major improvements to their park year on year, which has been welcomed by the players.

Do you have any new events on the horizon?

This year I have the forthcoming Golden 8 Ball event, from 17th to 19th June at the Norbreck Castle Hotel in Blackpool.This is a four player team event, with very little team restrictions and an £11,000 prize fund.

I wanted to create another event in Blackpool as BAPTO are happy to stay in Rhyl and I know many players loved being in Blackpool as it made a great weekend away for them. My event allows professional players and has no limit to international players.

BAPTO are in their 36th year now – what's the secret of such longevity?

BAPTO is the UK's longest running pool competition and a true institution of British pool, with many an entertaining story to tell of previous tournaments and characters.

I think their success lies within a very loyal hardcore following of players, who have attended BAPTO regardless of location, rules, or format; combined with a dedicated BAPTO tournament committee who have a real passion for pool and a drive to keep the tournament going.

It is a big social gathering and you see the same faces year on year. I think the bottom line is the great atmosphere and fun keeps bringing players back and we are trying to build on that.



Over the last few years the 9 ball scene in Britain has grown dramatically.

This is because 9 ball is quicker and more aggressive than any other cuesport, with more players gradually succumbing to its obvious appeal.

In 2008 the GB 9 Ball Tour (GB9) was formed, providing British players with an unrivalled and unprecedented professional American pool tour.

Very soon after its formation GB9 became the toughest and most competitive 9 Ball tour in Europe, if not the world, with elite British players from various cuesports choosing to play on the tour.

http://www.gb9balltour.com/about_tour.htm

NOW

In 2010, GB9 became the first UK based 9 ball pool tour to move to hotel venues and thanks to custom specification made tables provided by SAM Leisure, partnered with Simonis Cloth and Aramith balls, playing conditions are now perfect.

Partnered with the excellent venues which the 4 * Barcelo hotels provide for the tour, this allows optimum tournament conditions, with amazing spectator views throughout the playing arena, creating a truly amazing atmosphere.

Due to the continual growth of 9 ball within Britain, the field size of GB9 has increased year on year.

The 2011 season has a field of 144 players, making each event ultra competitive, with players competing for the considerable £63,5000 prize pool over the course of the 2011 season.

Players from other forms of cuesport are now choosing to turn their hand to 9 ball because of the success of the GB 9 Ball Tour so far, and simply because of the buzz about 9 ball throughout Britain at present.

FUTURE

The tour will continue to grow at the substantial rate it has shown so far, due to exceptional and growing interest in the game alongside some of the finest events for players and spectators, ever seen in Britain.

If you would like to become a part of Britain's fastest growing sports tour there are various ways.

- Reserve Entries

If you would like to let the GB9 know of your interest to play at one of the events join the reserve list

http://www.gb9balltour.com/reserve_list.htm

- Qualifications

Qualifiers are played annually to give new players the opportunity to join the tour to register your interest to play n the qualifiers

http://www.gb9balltour.com/join_the_tour.htm

NEXT EVENT DETAILS

The Paul Medati Trophy

Friday 17th June - Sunday 19th June 2011
Barcelo Daventry Hotel

http://www.gb9balltour.com/event2details.htm

For the latest information on the tour and the events follow us on Facebook & Twitter.

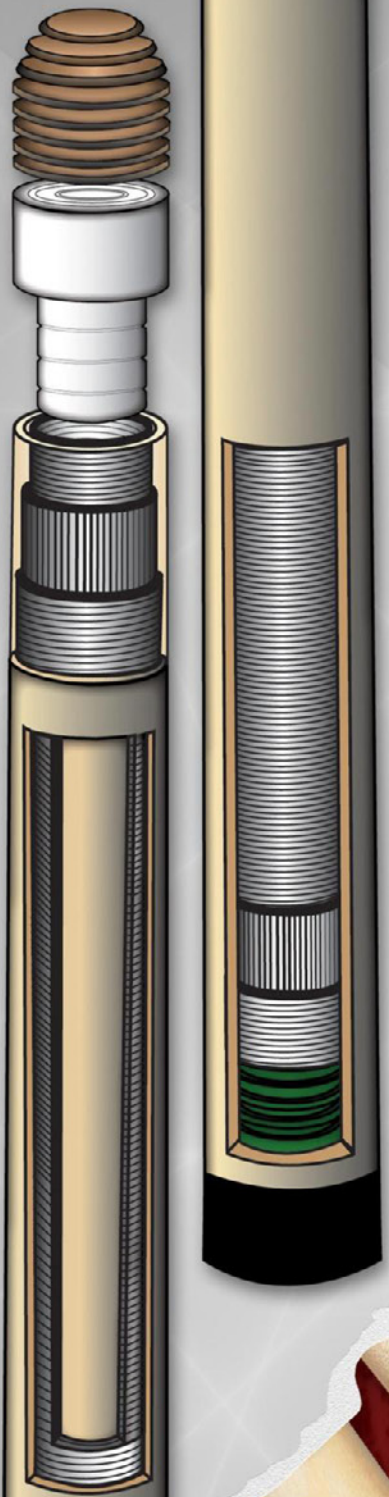
All those interested in becoming a partner of the GB9 or sponsoring cups/tour events, please email james.lawless@gb9balltour.com where we can arrange a bespoke package that suits your needs.



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Another Trent Trophies Triumph!



Gareth Potts

It was business as usual for Staffordshire's Trent Trophies A team as they eased to victory against first time finalists Northwich A in the National Interleague winners event at Vauxhall Holiday Park, Great Yarmouth.

The event begins with the top 96 teams in England divided into groups of three. The winners of each group go on to the knockout stages of the last 32.

One section of the draw caught everyone's attention, which when published was nicknamed 'The Group of Death' – Trent Trophies A, Dawley A and Ipswich A.

All three teams were previous finalists, which meant that two sides who were more than capable of winning the tournament would be eliminated in the group stages!

Dawley and Ipswich met first and seemed to play directly into Trent's hands with a 9-9 draw which was of no real use to either team.

Trent Trophies, managed by Tony Latham and captained by three-times world champion Gareth Potts, went on to destroy the teams 13-5 and 13-5 respectively to take their place into the last 32.

You could argue that Trent had a more favourable draw into the latter stages, managing to bypass Bedfordshire's Meltis Club and Nottingham's Dinnington to take their place into the final 8, whereas Northwich drew Preston South in the last 32, another team who has reached a fair few finals in their time, but Northwich's strength pulled them through with a 10-6 win.

Northwich then faced Trent Trophies B, managing a narrow 10-8 win against the likes of leading players Ryan Cope and Carl Hough.

So onto the quarter-finals and there was certainly no let-up from Trent Trophies as they relentlessly took apart Hammersmith 9-3.

Hammersmith boasts 2010 World Championship junior quarter-finalist Guiseppe D'Imperio, so this match was more a case of Trent's strength and determination as opposed to Hammersmith's weaknesses.

Northwich continued their quest, taking out locals South Norfolk 10-7.

Finally on paper, Trent Trophies had a match on their hands with drawing Nottingham's Sun Valley in the semi-finals, although like those before, could only watch as Trent continued their rampage of the competition, simply brushing them aside with a 10-5 scoreline.

Now, having described a 10-5 semi-final win as having a team 'brushed aside' means that Northwich have totally annihilated Leicester's Midland Railway team 10-1 in one of the most devastating performances in a semi-final in many, many years.

With a final which moves onto three tables instead of the two all teams had played on for every other match in the tournament (barring play-offs and slow play), the match moves very fast and can be difficult to keep up with.

This seemed to be the case for Northwich, as Trent's experience at this stage of the competition came into it's own, virtually killing off the challenge within the first six frames.

Northwich managed to take four frames, but Trent Trophies were simply unstoppable all weekend, running out as 10-4 winners and taking the well deserved spoils.

Trent now continue their domination in this event and although classed as a 'superteam' and scorned upon by many jealous individuals and teams, the reason I believe they do so well is because they really ARE a team who play together on a very regular basis. And it shows.

A brief mention should go to Gareth Potts, who gave his trophy to 10 year old James Coffey, the lad who had helped do the draw which saw Trent Trophies take yet another title and remain the greatest Interleague team in pooling history by some distance.



James Croxton



Wharne, Shone and Kendall

Last 32:
PJ's Stourbridge 10 -2 Glossop

Corn Exchange 10 – 3 Norwich B

Bilston S/League 10 – 5 Rugby Rileys

Sun Valley 10 – 5 Wigan

Dinnington 10 – 6 Brighton A

Trent Trophies A 10 – 6 Meltis Club

Braintree A 10 – 6 Barking Phoenix

Hammersmith A 10 – 2 Panthers

Accrington HIPL 10 – 7 Easington

Midland Railway 10 – 7 CLHPL A

Last 16:
Corn Exchange 10 – 7 PJ's Stourbridge

Sun Valley 10 – 7 Bilston S/League

Trent Trophies A 10 – 4 Dinnington

Hammersmith A 10 – 9 Braintree A

Midland Railway 10 – 5 Accrington HIPL

Leicester 10 – 4 Chesterfield

Northwich A 10 – 8 Trent Trophies B

South Norfolk 10 – 5 Walsall

Quarter-Finals:
Sun Valley 10 – 8 Corn Exchange

Trent Trophies A 10 – 3 Hammersmith A

Midland Railway 10 – 8 Leicester

Northwich A 10 – 7 South Norfolk

Semi-Finals:
Trent Trophies 10 – 5 Sun Valley

Northwich A 10 – 1 Midland Railway

Final:
Trent Trophies A 10 – 4 Northwich A

WORLD SNOOKER & RILEYS LAUNCH NATIONAL SNOOKER WEEK

Free snooker for all at Rileys

World Snooker is teaming up with Rileys Sports Bars to launch the first ever National Snooker Week.

The announcement was made at a press conference held by World Snooker's Barry Hearn and Rileys' Maurice Kelly during the 2011 Betfred.com World Championship at The Crucible in Sheffield.

National Snooker Week will run 25 - 29July 2011, to coincide with the beginning of the school summer holidays, and it aims to get more people of all ages playing the sport.

Barry Hearn, chairman of World Snooker said: "We want to see the next Ronnie O'Sullivans and Stephen Hendrys coming through, and the best way to do that is to get more people into clubs and playing snooker. Rileys is the biggest and best chain of clubs and this is a marvellous way to get people involved. For anyone who loves the game, or anyone who has never played and wants to give it a try, make sure you take advantage of this offer. There has never been a better time to be a snooker player, with more tournaments and prize money going through the roof. There must be a lot of untapped talent out there and, alongside Rileys, we'll find it."

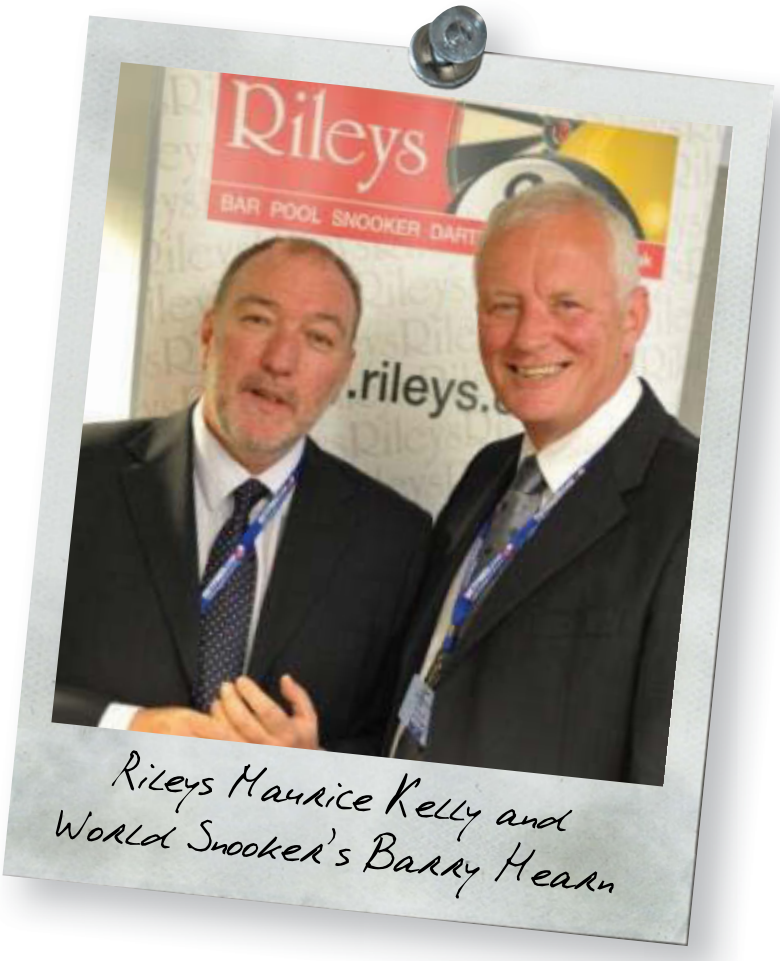
Throughout National Snooker Week Rileys will be offering free membership and free snooker to everyone of all ages before 6pm in any of their 115 Rileys Sports Bars across the UK. There will also be lots of activity planned for the week, including various events and competitions to win.

Maurice Kelly, CEO of Rileys clubs says: "Snooker is evolving and it's great that we're seeing different formats being introduced to broaden the appeal of the sport to a wider audience. The traditional game will always be popular amongst the fans, but the quicker, shorter formats appeal to the more universal sports fan. We've been in talks with Barry for a while about introducing a National Snooker Week, it's a sport that's accessible to everyone and we plan to work with World Snooker to bring the game back into the spotlight!"

Snooker is already growing in popularity amongst the younger population; last year Rileys together with Ronnie O'Sullivan launched the first of their 'Future Stars', a competition for under 16's to find the new star of snooker. This year's competition is even bigger, and the final is planned to take place during National Snooker Week.

Further details and announcements on National Snooker Week to be released.

Visit www.worldsnooker.com or for your nearest Rileys visit www.rileys.co.uk



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Amateur pairs sign up for shot at £10k

Team up with 3 of your mates and get down to your nearest Rileys Darts Zone to be in with a chance of winning a share of £10,000!

The Harrows Darts UK Team Tournament is the biggest 4-man team event in the UK and is being hosted by Rileys Darts Zones. The event is brand new and it comes on the back of the hugely successful Harrows Darts Doubles Tournament which attracted over 1000 entries.

Amateur darts players are invited to enter a 4-man team, with local qualifiers taking place at Rileys Darts Zones across the UK between 28 May – 21 June. The winners of the local qualifiers will go on to compete in the Regional Finals on July 10th with the Grand Final taking place on 6 August.

Robert Pringle, Sales & Marketing Director of Harrows said: "The number of entries for the Doubles Tournament was fantastic. With over 1,000 entries for a new event this demonstrates the huge impact darts has on the sports world today! We expect the UK Team event to be even bigger - although it's a competitive tournament with a lot of money at stake it also involves a social element. The Rileys Darts Zones are great, they've got the facilities and provide the perfect environment for an event such as this."

It's £20 per team to enter a team of 4 plus 2 reserves and anyone interested can register online at www.rileys.co.uk/tournaments or visit a local Rileys for an application form. Closing date for entries is 23 May 2011

The Harrows Darts UK Team Tournament is the second of four major darts tournaments taking place at Rileys Darts Zones in 2011. The £10,000 prize fund is the largest for any amateur darts tournament in the UK.

Rileys Sportsbars have 47 Darts Zones across the UK, with plans to increase this to 100 in 2011. Each has six or eight throwing lanes, championship quality Harrows boards and electronic scoring.

For further information or to enter visit www.rileys.co.uk/tournaments



Harrows Wayne Mardle and Martin Adams

TAI TALKS



Snookered magazine welcomes Tai Chengzhe (right) to the family. Tai will be writing articles each month on the development and issues from China within cue sports. We hope you enjoy.

What the Champions Say...



I'm so glad that Chris left me a chance to write something special for the 1st ever WPA World 9-Ball Beijing Open. The guys from UK did not show their best during the tournament, with only Chris Melling making it into last 16. I believe everybody's OK but a little bit tired. Anyway, the titles went to Asian players again.

This is the first time that a WPA world ranking tournament has been held in Beijing, China. More than 100 players participated in the qualifier tournament, which is impressive even from the qualifier, included in the qualifiers were World champions Wu Chia-Ching and Chao Fong-Pang both played, both qualified and ended up with 5th place.

Beloved by many fans, Yang Ching-Shun managed to get to the last 16. Chang Jun-Lin, another talented young player from Chinese Taipei, former ranked world No.8, played perfect 7 matches against players like Nick Van Den Berg, Chao Fong-Pang, Mark Gray etc. In the final he won 11-10 over the 'Superman' Roberto Gomez from Philippines. Chang changed the way of breaking during the final racks which worked well, and in the end he managed to perform a perfect break-and-run in rack 21.

"I was 5-1 up but then trailing by 2 racks. The only thing I prayed for was a chance to win a single rack when my opponent breaks. Then it happened. I wanted the title badly during the whole tournament."

Yu Ram Cha, the beautiful pride of Korea, picked up her second WPA ranking title in Beijing. Yu Ram has always been playing with great expectations, which brought her a lot more pressure than normal. This time she beat Taiwans Chou Chieh-Yu, 9-6 which was a predictable final score.



"I've been preparing myself, working very hard, and very glad it all turned out to be a great result. Thank the God." said smiling Yu Ram, more than excited and happy. The organiser even invited a Korean translator which made the pretty player more reachable, "I'm going to play in China Open which will happen in June, so I have another month to prepare and to improve. Wish I could give my best performance then."

For more details from Tai go to www.top147.com

See you next month.
Tai

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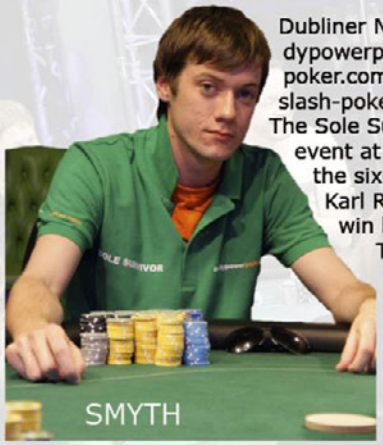
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All the latest from the world of poker in association with Bluff Europe Magazine

Niall Smyth wins PaddyPower.com Irish Open 2011 for €550k



Dubliner Niall Smyth pulled a double whammy by not only winning the paddypowerpoker.com Irish Open for €550,000 but also being the paddypowerpoker.com "Sole Survivor" and netting an extra €100,000 from the bookies-slash-poker room.

The Sole Survivor promotion was available to anyone who qualified for the event at paddypowerpoker.com, with the last qualifier standing taking home the six-figure prize boost. Smyth had his extra €100,000 locked up when Karl Rudwall was eliminated in sixth place, and the Irishman went on to win by defeating Surindar Sunar heads-up.

This marks the first time that the Sole Survivor has also taken home the championship – last year the last remaining qualifier busted in fourth place – and Smyth will certainly be glad he qualified for the event at paddypowerpoker.com instead of any other site. This is also the second time that a Smyth has won the event after Marty Smyth's title in 2007. The latter Smyth made a deep run in this event too; just missing out on the final table along with JP Kelly, Jude Ainsworth and tenth-place finisher Andy Black.

The full final table payouts were as follows:

1.Niall Smyth - €550,000 (plus €100,000 Sole Survivor prize from PaddyPower.com)
2.Surindar Sunar - €290,000
3.Martin Petri - €180,000
4.Seamus Cahill - €145,000
5.Aleksi Savela - €115,000
6.Karl Rudwall - €85,000
7.Rob Taylor - €63,000
8.John Eames - €45,000
9.Niall McCann - €30,000



Free Poker Tracker with Bluff Europe /TIPS Poker Academy

Bluff Europe has teamed up with Paul Zimbler at The International Poker School (TIPS) to bring you a new season of Poker Academies. The next live seminar hits Bluff at the Mint on Sunday, 5th June and concentrates on playing satellites, poker bankroll/ time and money management, dealing with tilt and finding value live and online. We've also teamed up with Poker Tracker this season, which means there'll be a unique opportunity to receive expert tuition on boosting your game through this groundbreaking software. Attendees will also take home a free 60-day trial of Poker Tracker so you can watch your results improve as you play. Getting coached is the fastest way to sharpen your game. It's the detailed discussions and personal, expert-level analysis of your play that takes your game to the next level. Don't miss this opportunity.

Tickets cost £199 and are available at www.bluffeurope.com/pokeracademy.

Devilfish

Following the recent sale of DevilfishPoker.com, Dave Ulliott suddenly finds himself a free agent. Time, then, to reflect on the more important things in life – family, poker and rock n' roll. Bluff Europe chats to a mellowing Devilfish.

Does poker still excite you like it used to?

I've always needed the final table, really, because of the buzz. I love it. That's when the adrenalin kicks in. All the way through the tournament, up to that point, I'm just waking up.

How has the game changed over the last decade, from the point of view of someone who has a been-there-done-that T-shirt?

People go out there now and they win a couple of tournaments and they're, like, third on the cash list. I'm still top of the list in the UK but I had to win loads. I had to go out grafting all over the place. These kids play a couple of high roller events and all of a sudden they're up there because they beat 20 people. The real change is that the money's ridiculous now. But the unfortunate thing is that these young kids put no value on money. I never used to put any value on money and I'm lucky to be where I am now because I could have just easily been broke somewhere. I was just lucky to have met the wife because otherwise I'd probably be in prison, or dead.

You mean you're a free agent?

I've got no sponsorship at the moment. The Weather Lottery guys who bought DevilfishPoker.com assumed they were sponsoring me but they haven't offered me enough money, so I'm open to a sponsorship deal if anyone's listening. I'm still the top money earner in England, and I play all games, unlike most poker players these days. I still get more TV coverage than anybody because I'm a funny guy, and I'm not partying so much now so I'm focused on the game. So if anybody out there wants to grab hold of me quick, now's the time. Where else would you get someone who plays the piano, rocks and rolls and has a sense of humour like mine?

Reading your book, you've always been a fighter. Have you mellowed? Is there anything left to fight for?

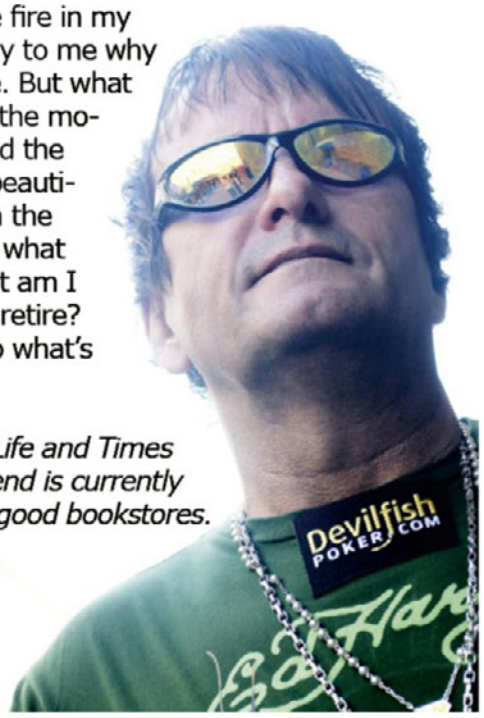
Life is definitely a lot better than it used to be in the sense that I don't have to worry about money any more, although you've always got to worry when you've got seven kids. I want to make sure that they're all set up when something happens to me. Although I do actually seem to be getting younger as I get older (*laughs*).

Are you alluding to your notorious image change? What happened to the dark suits and the slicked-back hair?

The old mafia look? I put the TV on one day and everybody looked like me. They all had the shades and the suits on. And apart from that, my young girlfriend decided that I looked better with my hair like this, so I thought, why not? It's not as scary and it's not a poker look, for definite, but I like it better.

Will you be playing forever? Any thoughts of retiring?

I've still got the fire in my belly. People say to me why don't you retire. But what would I do? At the moment I go round the world, I meet beautiful girls, I sit on the beaches – I do what I want. So what am I going to do if I retire? Same thing. So what's the point?



Devilfish: The Life and Times of a Poker Legend is currently available at all good bookstores.

McDermott Handcrafted Cues

WHY PLAY WITH McDERMOTT?



Since 1975, McDermott has consistently raised the industry standard for what billiard players expect from a high quality pool cue. McDermott uses the latest technology in our state-of-the-art facility, along with the finest materials in the world. In 35 years, McDermott has grown into multiple brands that lead the billiards industry in performance, quality and service.

*Visit **mcdermottcue.com** to learn more.*

INNOVATION AND PERFORMANCE

McDermott is devoted to designing and engineering the best performing pool cues and shafts in the industry. McDermott's G-Core and i-Shafts have set the benchmark for what players expect from a high-performance shaft. Most McDermott G-Series cues come standard with a G-Core or i-Shaft, providing the consumer with the most technically advanced product on the market.

INVOLVEMENT

McDermott continues to be a leader in supporting the billiards industry through tournaments and billiard events. If it's important to billiards, it's important to McDermott. Whether it be live events, online promotions or social networking, McDermott strives to continuously support the sport of billiards. McDermott is active internationally in billiard events and tournaments while sponsoring pro and amateur players of all levels.

QUALITY

McDermott employs some of the finest wood-makers, cue designers and engineers in the world. They utilize a cue construction process that includes over 150 separate procedures. All forearms, handles and sleeves are handcrafted from the finest materials and most exotic woods from around the world. McDermott shafts start from the finest kiln-dried, hand-selected North American hard rock maple and are turned 11 times for stability. The G-Core shaft comes standard with Everest tips and features a triple-layer carbon fiber core technology that stabilizes the front impact area of the shaft promoting increased accuracy. McDermott i-Shafts come standard with McDermott-Kamui™ tips that maintains its shape longer and holds chalk more effectively. The i-Shaft uses triple-layer carbon fiber core technology to promote radial consistency. This stabilizes the shaft to help maintain accuracy at all shot speeds.



Each McDermott cue is individually inspected, rolled and tested for straightness and perfection before leaving the production floor. From tip to bumper, McDermott has inspected it all. McDermott cues feature 5 coats of high-luster urethane and the highest quality Irish linen and premium Italian leather wraps. McDermott's factory-made cues come with a lifetime warranty against defects and warpage, along with a Free Lifetime Maintenance Plan that includes overall cue inspection, tip replacement, shaft, butt and ferrule cleaning, redressing of wrap and weight adjustment.

CUSTOMIZATION

Build it your way! McDermott offers an extensive list of cue options so your cue is custom tailored to your game.

- 20 Exotic wood options
- 19 Irish linen and premium leather wrap options
- 32 Premium paint and stain options
- 27 Exotic inlay materials including rare stones and metals
- Shaft diameter ranging from 11-13.75mm
- Cue weight in 1/2oz increments from 18-21oz
- Premium tip upgrade options
- Custom Wildfire wood carving
- Custom cue transfers
- Personalized engraving



I-SHAFT

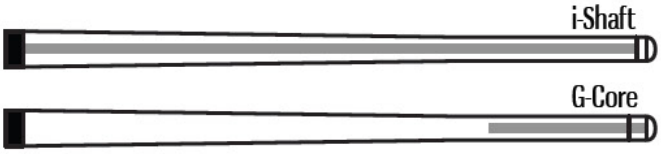
McDermott's Intimidator shafts give players the freedom to change power and spin-rate to maximize the speed and accuracy of their shot. The patented i-Shaft system has identified the variable characteristics required in your game (Power, Control and Feel). Utilizing their proprietary Intimidator Carbon Energy (ICE) technology, they have designed the industry's most radial consistent shaft to help maintain accuracy at all speeds.

RADIAL CONSISTENCY

The G-Core and i-Shaft utilize McDermott's proprietary triple-layer carbon fiber core technology to create the most radial consistent shafts on the market. Radial consistency is the ability to reproduce the same results regardless of the shaft's orientation. This means the shaft will perform the same way on every shot. McDermott's high-performance shafts consistently provide a straighter cue ball path, minimizing the need to compensate for spin and throw. The carbon fiber core's stability, combined with McDermott's tri-core butt construction, give every cue a solid, consistent feel known throughout the industry as a "McDermott Hit."

I-SHAFT OR G-CORE?

McDermott's i-Shaft and G-Core each have their own unique core contruction to implement the triple-layer carbon fiber technology. The G-Core's carbon fiber starts at the tip and extends through the first 7 inches of the shaft. This gives it the accuracy and power benefits of a high-performance shaft, but with the familiar feel of a traditional all-maple shaft. Unlike the G-Core, the i-Shaft's carbon fiber starts at the ferrule and continues through the entire shaft, making it the most radial consistent shaft on the market. This minimizes the inconsistencies experienced with an all-maple shaft. The i-Shaft also uses McDermott's Tenon/Tip Technology in which the ferrule has a tenon that fits inside of the carbon fiber core.



Diagrams show carbon fiber core in i-Shaft and G-Core shafts



I-1 BIG BOY SHAFT

The i-1 Big Boy is the most powerful shaft in the Intimidator series. It uses a 13.25mm impregnated hard leather tip that allows it to hold contact with the cue ball longer. This makes the i-1 Big Boy ideal for breaking and jumping with extreme control.



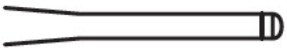
Short Break/Jump Taper
13.25mm





I-2 SHAFT

The i-2 is the most popular shaft in the Intimidator series. Known for its incredible control and consistency, the i-2 is the perfect all-around performance shaft. It is designed for players that want maximum control without sacrificing power and finesse. The i-2 has a 12.75mm tip and comes standard on all McDermott cues $700 and up.



Pro Taper
12.75mm



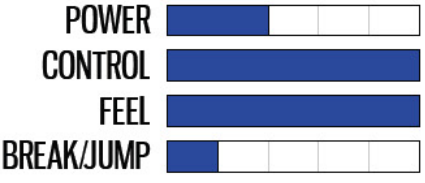


I-3 SHAFT

The i-3 is performance at its highest level. It is designed for incredible spin and finesse. With a 11.75 mm tip, the i-3 is engineered for highly-skilled players who have great control of their stroke mechanics and are looking for more cue ball action.



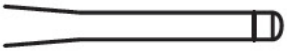
European Taper
11.75mm





G-CORE SHAFT

The G-Core is the perfect blend of technology and classic feel. It has the benefits of carbon fiber core technology with the familiar feel of a traditional maple shaft The G-Core can be customized to any of the popular shaft diameters and comes standard on all McDermott cues $245-$699.



Pro Taper
13mm



Live Cycling: Giro d'Italia – watch every stage of the season's first Grand Tour LIVE on British Eurosport

Monday 9 May
1345-1630 LIVE Stage 3 on British Eurosport
Tuesday 10 May
1345-1630 LIVE Stage 4 on British Eurosport 2
Wednesday 11 May
1345-1630 LIVE Stage 5 on British Eurosport 2
Thursday 12 May
1345-1630 LIVE Stage 6 on British Eurosport
Friday 13 May
1500-1630 LIVE Stage 7 on British Eurosport 2
Saturday 14 May
1330-1630 LIVE Stage 8 on British Eurosport
Sunday 15 May
1445-1630 LIVE Stage 9 on British Eurosport
Tuesday 17 May
1330-1630 LIVE Stage 10 on British Eurosport
Wednesday 18 May
1330-1630 LIVE Stage 11 on British Eurosport
Thursday 19 May
1330-1630 LIVE Stage 12 on British Eurosport
Friday 20 May
1330-1630 LIVE Stage 13 on British Eurosport
Saturday 21 May
1300-1630 LIVE Stage 14 on British Eurosport
Sunday 22 May
1300-1630 LIVE Stage 15 on British Eurosport
Tuesday 24 May
1330-1630 LIVE Stage 16 on British Eurosport
Wednesday 25 May
1330-1630 LIVE Stage 17 on British Eurosport
Thursday 26 May
1330-1630 LIVE Stage 18 on British Eurosport
Friday 27 May
1330-1630 LIVE Stage 19 on British Eurosport
Saturday 28 May
1300-1630 LIVE Stage 20 on British Eurosport
Sunday 29 May
1500-1630 LIVE Stage 21 on British Eurosport

Live MCE British Superbikes – exclusive live coverage on British Eurosport 2

Sunday 15 May
1225-1400 & 1500-1800 LIVE round 3 from Croft
Monday 30 May
1230-1800 LIVE round 4 from Thruxton

SNOOKERED MAGAZINE HAS JOINED EUROSPORT TO GIVE YOU, THE READERS A DETAILED LIST OF SNOOKER COVERAGE ON EUROSPORT EACH MONTH

BRITISH EUROSPORT

British Eurosport is on Sky 410 & Virgin Media 521. British Eurosport 2 is on Sky 411 & Virgin Media 525. Eurosport HD is on Sky 412 & Virgin Media 522.

Additional live multi-table coverage and video on demand available online via the Eurosport Player: www.eurosportplayer.co.uk

Please note that as a live sports broadcaster our schedules are subject to change.

Live French Open Tennis – extensive LIVE coverage of the season's second Grand Slam tournament on British Eurosport & Eurosport HD

Sunday 22 May
1130-2000 LIVE day 1 on British Eurosport 2
0930-1300 & 1630-1945 LIVE day 1 on British Eurosport & Eurosport HD
Monday 23 May
1000-1915 LIVE day 2 on British Eurosport 2
0930-1945 LIVE day 2 on British Eurosport & Eurosport HD
Tuesday 24 May
1000-2000 LIVE day 3 on British Eurosport 2
0930-1330 & 1630-1945 LIVE day 3 on British Eurosport & Eurosport HD
Wednesday 25 May
1000-1945 LIVE day 4 on British Eurosport 2
0930-1330 & 1630-1930 LIVE day 4 on British Eurosport & Eurosport HD
Thursday 26 May
1000-1915 LIVE day 5 on British Eurosport 2
0930-1330 & 1630-1930 LIVE day 5 on British Eurosport & Eurosport HD
Friday 27 May
1000-2000 LIVE day 6 on British Eurosport 2
0930-1330 & 1630-1945 LIVE day 6 on British Eurosport & Eurosport HD
Saturday 28 May
1000-1945 LIVE day 7 on British Eurosport 2
0930-1330 & 1630-1945 LIVE day 7 on British Eurosport & Eurosport HD
Sunday 29 May
1000-1830 LIVE day 8 on British Eurosport 2
0930-1500 & 1630-1945 LIVE day 8 on British Eurosport & Eurosport HD
Monday 30 May
0930-1945 LIVE day 9 on British Eurosport & Eurosport HD
Tuesday 31 May
1230-1845 LIVE quarter-finals on British Eurosport & Eurosport HD
Wednesday 1 June
1230-1830 LIVE quarter-finals on British Eurosport & Eurosport HD
Thursday 2 June
1230-1715 LIVE semi-finals on British Eurosport & Eurosport HD
Friday 3 June
1230-1800 LIVE semi-finals on British Eurosport & Eurosport HD
Saturday 4 June
1330-1615 LIVE women's final on British Eurosport & Eurosport HD
Sunday 5 June
1315-1645 LIVE men's final on British Eurosport & Eurosport HD

White Takes Trophy At Crucible!

On the 9th April 2011, the Crucible Theatre, Sheffield held the launch of the 2011 Snooker Legends tour.

This event featured many greats of the game including Cliff Thorburn, Jimmy White, John Parrott and Dennis Taylor with a special guest appearance from Canadian legend Kirk Stevens, as well as special guests Tony Knowles, Doug Mountjoy and Darts legends John Lowe and Bob Anderson.



The opening match of the evening was Kirk Stevens vs. Jimmy White and although Kirk has been away from the professional circuit for many a year, he can still play!

Kirk made a great half century from nowhere and took the first frame on the blue to take a 1-0 lead.

Jimmy levelled the game with a quality century break in the second frame, taking the match to a black ball decider. Jimmy broke off and left Kirk a chance at the black which he missed and left Jimmy with a simple pot to book his place in the semi-final.

The first semi-final and second game of the evening was between 1980 World Champion Cliff Thorburn and 1985 World Champion Dennis Taylor.

Cliff hardly had a look-in the entire match as the Dennis rolled back the years with his amazing potting, taking the match with a 2-0 victory.

The second semi was between Jimmy White & John Parrott, a repeat of the 1991 World final.

Parrott had only recently arrived, having spent his day at Aintree for the Grand National, though his busy day didn't seem to hinder him as he took the first frame against Jimmy.

Yet again, Jimmy came back though with his second century of the evening to force another black ball decider and yet again it was Jimmy who emerged triumphant from the black ball shootout.

As the match had progressed rather rapidly, Jimmy White offered a frame against the highest bidder in the audience and it was special guest PC David Rathband who won it for £560.



DAVID RATHBAND
WITH JOHN VIRGO

It was an amazing display to see him playing against Jimmy at the Crucible, with help (or possibly hinderance!) from John Virgo. David was having a laugh with all the legends and also the crowd and potted a screamer of a blue into the top corner!

Finally, it was the one frame Legends final shootout between Jimmy 'Whirlwind' White and Dennis Taylor. Dennis played exceptionally well yet again and even took the lead early on, but Jimmy came back and made a good break to seal the victory and finally lift his first trophy at the Crucible Theatre, which he generously gave to PC Rathband.

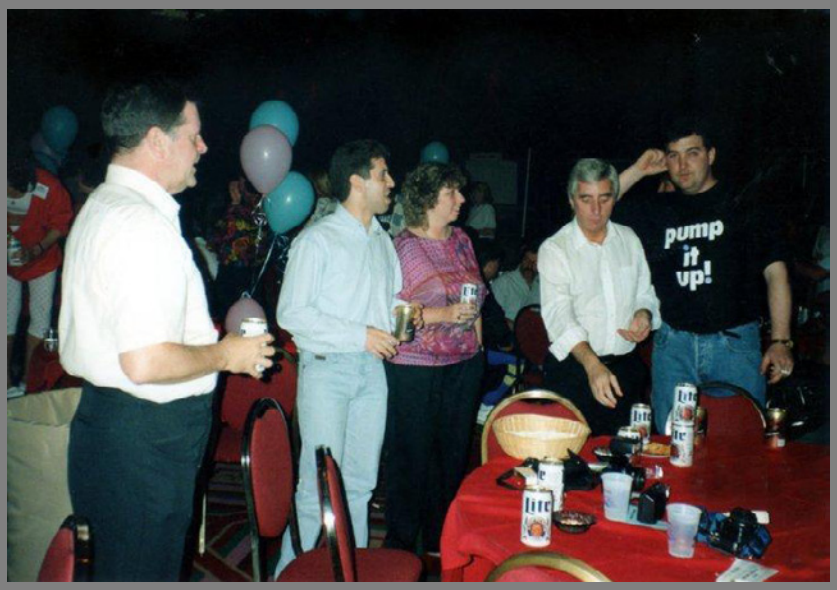
The Snooker Legends tour continues from May until July; for more details and to book tickets, go to www.snookerlegends.co.uk/booking.html

BLAST FROM THE PAST

Snookered's trawl through the picture archives has proved one of the magazine's most popular features.

Some images are easier to identify than others. But we are always happy to receive comments about the photos that may jog your memories.

So here we go with picture one.



'PUMP IT UP!'

Looks it someone already has Al!

Chris Karanikki, Billy Whicher and Alan Dugdale taking it easy with a couple of beers. Are you sure they're Lites?

She hasn't changed a bit!

The woman who helped develop Pool and Snooker right across the male/female divide. Allison Fisher(right) loved a 'wedge' haircut and a bit of Christmas wrapping paper for a bow tie

.

She'll do for us, a lovely lady and a great player.



Pool Legend and die hard West Ham supporter Lee Tucker(right) looking so confident of another victory, (pool that is). Lee still is one of the main men to beat if you want to make a noise on the Legends circuit.



An all round gentleman and good for a laugh as this waistcoat shows, doesn't it! have a patch on the Thunderbirds gear Lee can play in when the mood takes him.



'What are you doing to me?'

Snooker Legend, Ray Reardon looking in a bit of trouble on the pool table from a young man (does anyone know him?).

Ray knew his strengths and this young man was 32 when the game finished, Ray offered him a 'draw!'

DO YOU KNOW THESE PEOPLE?



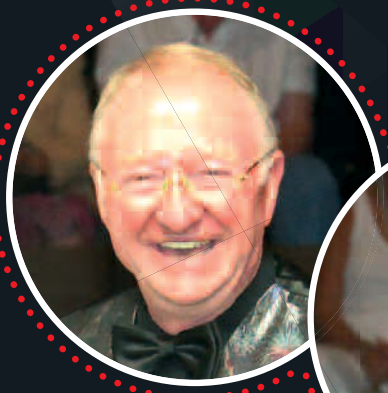
Snookered will give a small spot prize to the person who contacts Chris Haill with the name of these intriguing chaps, Were they an 80's band which never made it or part of the Pool circuit.

Can't wait for your answers, not you Billy!

Jason Francis and Nick George for Premier Stage Productions Ltd proudly present

SNOOKER LEGENDS

2011 TOUR



Dennis Taylor



Jimmy White



John Parrott



Cliff Thorburn



John Virgo

An evening of fun, laughter and of course snooker from some of the greats



Michaela Tabb

30 Date 2011 Tour now on sale. Events this tour include

Saturday 9th April The Crucible Theatre, Sheffield.
Saturday 21st May The Newport Centre, Newport.
Friday 27th May The Waterfront, Belfast. NI.
Sunday 29th May Goffs, Co,Kildare
Monday 20th June The Brighton Centre
Wednesday 6th July Eden Court Inverness
Thursday 7th July A.E.C.C. Aberdeen.

VIP packages available at all events, for full dates and details of how to book tickets go to our wesbite

www.snookerlegends.co.uk

RILEY ENGLAND
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*Player line up subject to change at short notice.

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Patrick Ponders



Patrick Guigui once again reports for Snookered magazine on cue sports across the 'pond'.

Snooker Canada confirms venue for World Under 21 Snooker Championships

Snooker Canada is very excited to announce that it will host this year's snooker championships at the Sheraton Montreal Airport Hotel. The good news is that the hotel is currently being completely refurbished and renovated.

The Sheraton Montreal Airport Hotel sits at the entrance to Montreal's Trudeau International Airport and is 20 minutes from downtown Montreal. The hotel offers convenient access to numerous area attractions including historic Old Montreal, Montreal Museum of Fine Art, Place des Arts and Casino de Montreal.

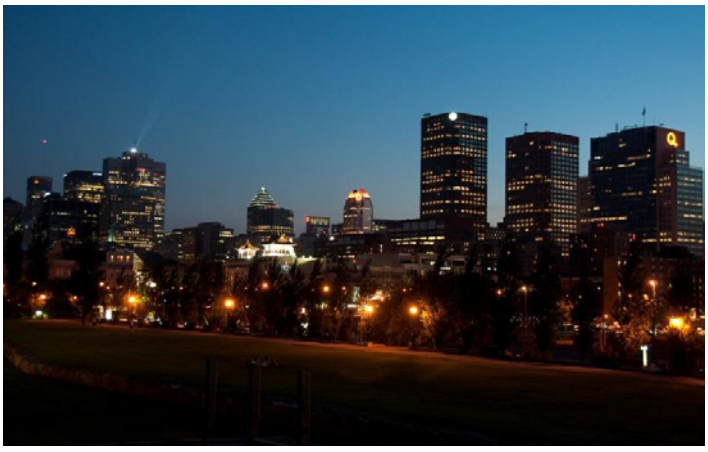
Guests will enjoy the hotel's magnificent open air gardens, indoor/outdoor swimming pool, whirlpool, steam room and sauna. The fully equipped fitness facility will feature the brand's revolutionary new health Sheraton Core Fitness program.

This world class event is sure to create a buzz in Montreal and create more popularity for the game of snooker. Former professional Kirk Stevens will be attending the opening ceremonies of the event, which should prove to be a big treat for all the young international snooker players .

The tournament will last 10 days and will have 10 snooker tables set up for competitive play. The format begins with a round robin stage, and is followed by the nerve racking knock out stage until it eventually reaches the final 2.

A few notable people in the snooker circles will be attending the event as well. The President of Shender, the snooker table sponsor for the IBSF, Mr. Kevin Huang is expected to be in Montreal. There are also rumours of possibly having our own Chris Hail from Snookered Magazine, come down for a few days. Finally, snooker director, Odie Willet plans to help out with the tournament as well.

Montreal has a long history of snooker players and fans that date back over 50 years. This promises a spectator base from all demographics to attend and enjoy watching the future generation of snooker.



You will not need to go very far for comfort and convenience as the hotel's guest rooms are totally renovated and equipped with an oversized work desk, custom-designed ergonomic chair, high-speed Internet, LCD flat panel television, iPod home docking station and the all-white Sheraton Sweet Sleeper® bed.

To make reservations at the Snooker Canada discounted group rate, please visit www.snookercanada.com/hotelreservations

For more information on North American Snooker, visit. www.snookerusa.com or www.snookercanada.com

See you next Month
Patrick



Generation Griffiths

Snookered's top photographer Monique Limbos caught up with Wayne Griffiths, head coach for billiard sports at the Hong Kong Sports Institute at the Greene King Ladies World Championships in Bury St Edmunds.

Wayne, son of 1979 World Snooker champion Terry Griffiths, had travelled to Suffolk with four of his top lady players from the Institute and told us how things were so much different in Asia.

"Prior to working in Hong Kong, I had been working in the family business, the Terry Griffiths Matchroom in South Wales since 2003.

"I wasn't looking for any sort of major life change, but the opportunity presented itself at the beginning of 2010 when I was made aware of the full-time coaching post.

"I had to talk it through with my wife as to whether I even looked at the role as we have 2 young children, but we decided to go for it and within the first 6 months, it's proved to be the right decision.

"Your sport is selected to be an 'elite sport' strictly on your results, so if your sport does well and your athletes do well, you're bought into the institute.

"The Government give you lots of funding, they pay for a head coach and they pay the players a wage so they can commit to the sport full-time.

"In Asia, the ladies are doing very well. In November 2010 Hong Kong won gold in the Asian Games, beating China in final."

We wanted to know Wayne's opinion as to why the ladies game is so far behind that of the men's game.

"We tried hard to get ladies involved in the snooker club we run in South Wales; we had Ladies Month where we gave away free snooker, free coaching, free life membership, etc – but you still couldn't drag ladies in off the street for it and I think it's down to the preconception that the club is male dominated.

"We as a nation need to be more family orientated to get the mothers and sisters coming with their husbands and brothers so they can see the sport for themselves, but the clubs need to play a big part in this and make the environment more welcoming.

"Another reason for few women players is that there's very little incentive.

"Reanne Evans is arguably one of the best lady players ever, but finds it very difficult to get sponsorship, very difficult to make a living and even when she gets a wildcard, it's so difficult to do anything in the men's game.

"Look at it from a young girl's point of view; you look at the sport, see how difficult it is to get to the level of which Reanne is playing and see that even if you get there, you get nothing.

"Not that it should be all about financial incentive of course, but without it, it's very difficult to follow a dream or a sport like this.

"I have a daughter, my Dad's a former World Champion, I make a living from cue sports but in all fairness, would I encourage my daughter to take up snooker at this particular moment? Probably not.

"The problem we have in Hong Kong when we're trying to encourage children to play is that education out there means absolutely everything, so as soon as you try to get a young player to dedicate more time to the sport, it's seen as distracting them from their studies and without the support of the parents it can't work.

"In China, the popularity of the likes of Ding Junhui & Liang Wenbo has made it very popular and they also don't have the same problem in China regarding education.

"They wouldn't necessarily take a child out of school, but if they see a child with very strong potential, then maybe education will play a secondary role.



"Hong Kong is doing well in a lot of sports as a result of the funding that the government is putting into it. There are only 7 million people in HK, so that's only the size of London and they've always competed well in snooker and other sports such as badminton, squash, cycling, there all competative on the world stage, so the model works.

"Of course, governments are putting money into sport all around the world, but maybe not directly to the athletes as they do in Hong Kong.

"One of my goals, however long I may be in Hong Kong, will be to build on the good work already carried out by local coaches and the HKBSCC and to leave a very strong infrastructure at the grass root levels.

"I'd also like to keep my Dad's name going in the sport for as long as I can; it's why I got back into the sport of snooker and back into coaching. I have a 1 year old son, so maybe in the future we can see him following in his grandfather's footsteps and become a second generation World Champion!"

BlackBerry Bold 9900/9930 (aka Bold Touch)

If there was one thing missing from its predecessor the BlackBerry Bold, it was a touchscreen and Research In Motion are making amends with the release of the BlackBerry Bold Touch. Building on the huge success of the Bold, the latest incarnation features a 2.8" VGA touchscreen, 1.2Ghz processor, 5MP camera, 720p HD recording and 8GB of internal storage. Accompanying the touchscreen is BlackBerry's customary QWERTY keyboard which makes e-mails and text messages a doddle, but the big question is will all this be enough to compete with the likes of the Apple iPhone or is this phone destined to be just an upgrade for the corporate user? We'll soon see when it hits the shops later this Summer.



"Now I'd

Each Month you reviews 'must have'

WSC Real 11

Dark Energy Digital know a thing or two when it comes to pool and snooker games and it's WSC Real 11 that looks to raise the bar once more, released in time for this year's Snooker World Championship.

Playing Snooker on an Xbox or Playstation might not be everyone's cup of tea but for those who don't fancy cue out, this is going to be the next best thing with as realistic graphics as we've seen so far. Whilst the players look somewhat 'puppetlike' and the controls almost as tricky as playing with check side in real life, commentary from John Virgo and endorsement by Ronnie O'Sullivan gets you as close to the action as you can get without being at the Crucible!

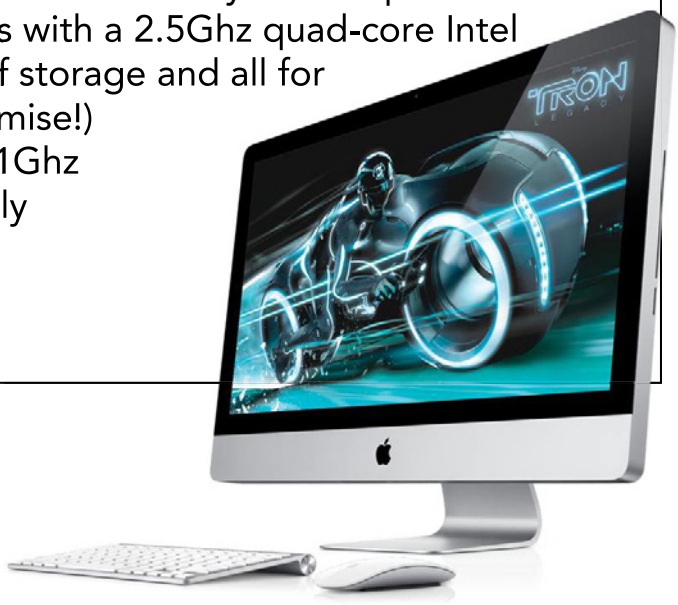
For those who are new to the genre it might be worth getting an older title as there's only so many ways you can improve on the same thing but for the purists it's a worth addition to the collection.

Available for £34.99 on Xbox 360 at www.play.com



Apple iMac

Apple have once again refreshed their line of flagship computers with the iMac now featuring quad-core processors and Thunderbolt technology. Whilst being on the pricier side of home computing, the Californian-based company have come up with the goods once more, adding a Facetime HD camera to the already feature packed all-in-one machines. The entry-level 21.5" model comes with a 2.5Ghz quad-core Intel processor, AMD Radeon hard drive and 500GB of storage and all for a reasonable £999 (this is cheap for an iMac I promise!)
If you've got money to burn, a 27" model with 3.1Ghz processor and 1TB hard drive comes in at a slightly less cheaper £1649.



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Snookered magazine brings and previews of the latest lifestyle products.

LiveProfile

We've seen many a messaging app come and go but LiveProfile seems to have staked their claim at the #1 spot with the first fully featured, cross-platform offering. Available for iPhone, BlackBerry and Android, LiveProfile combines a fast, well designed UI with low battery usage, message delivery receipts and Facebook intergration to wrap all the features of MSN and SMS into one FREE app offering a true real-time alternative to the likes of Ping! and BlackBerry Messenger.

Available in the App Store, Android Market and BlackBerry App World.



Pocket Money

Each month Snookered tipster David Wild teams up with betting exchange www.Betdaq.com to take a look at the best bets in sport. As spring turns to summer, he looks ahead to the FA Cup final and the French Open.



Sweet FA

The tense semi-final between Manchester United and Manchester City seemed to provide the beleaguered FA Cup with a much-needed shot in the arm. There was plenty of interest in that match, both clubs fielded their strongest possible teams and the game itself was played in a good, competitive fashion. I'm pleased for Man City fans that they will get the opportunity to see their boys challenge for silverware in who-knows-how-long and there's no denying with the talent at their disposal, they're in pole position to lift the trophy ahead of Wembley opponents Stoke City.

City are 8/11 on Betdaq, while Tony Pulis' team are available at 4/1. The priority for City remains securing the fourth Champions League place, but a new addition to their trophy cabinet would mean a lot. I think they will have too much, in both defence and attack, for the Potters so advise backing Roberto Mancini's men.

Despite Stoke's five-goal heroics at Wembley in their semi-final, I think this match will be tight. It finished 1-1, but it was goalless until the 81st minute when the sides met in November. I would not be surprised to see a single goal win this for City, and advise taking the 6/1 on offer on Betdaq for a 1-0 win and getting on the HT draw/FT City result at 7/2.



Clay Lords

The second Grand Slam of the tennis season really makes it feel like summer. The climax of the clay court season, the French Open, takes place at Roland Garros and it's not hard to see why Rafael Nadal is odds-on favourite at around 8/15 on Betdaq. The Spaniard has won five out of the last six French Opens and by my calculations he still hasn't reached his peak. I simply can't bet against him, but I'm looking for a bit more of a return. Robin Soderling had a great start to the year, but then lost in the first round in his first clay tournament of the season, the Barcelona Open. Still, his record at Roland Garros is good - he has beaten both Rafa and Roger Federer on the way to two consecutive finals in 2009 and 2010 and is 33/1 with Boylesports this year. He has great each-way potential.

In the women's draw things are bit more open. Caroline Wozniacki looks in good shape, but I'm still not sure she's quite ready to win a major. Experience counts in these big events, so you have to point to Kim Clijsters, but she has a poor record at Roland Garros and age is not on her side. Likewise with 30-year-old defending champ Francesca Schiavone. This could be Vera Zvonereva's time and I think she's a good bet each-way at 8/1.

GOOD LUCK AND SEE YOU NEXT MONTH.



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