



Universities Pool Council

www.upc-pool.org.uk



Annual Report

2008-2009





CONTENTS

	Page
EXECUTIVE CHAIR'S INTRODUCTION	3
COMPETITIONS	4
RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION	7
COMMERCIAL	8
COMMUNICATIONS	10
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS	11
COMPLIANCE	12

EXECUTIVE CHAIR'S INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the first Annual Report of the workings of the Universities Pool Council. In the Annual Report, you will find details about our activities in the season.

Season 2008-2009 was a very exciting one, especially because of our new partnership with Vauxhall Holiday Park, Great Yarmouth. This venue is the home of all major pool events in England and it is testament to how our event has grown that we too can now play at such a prestigious venue. The move provided the capacity for the Eight-ball Pool Championships to be played over one weekend and the cap on entrants to the Individual Championship could also be removed. Consequently, the Eight-ball Pool Championships is now the biggest university cue sports event in the British Isles. Without doubt, this has added greatly to the experience of competitors.

Another first in 2008-2009 was the excellent coverage of the event by [CuesportTV](#) which added great value to the occasion.

The season also saw the end of an era as one of our founder members, Tony Perna, stepped down from his position on the Board. The Universities Pool Council thanks Tony for his work over the past five seasons, wishing him well for the future and he becomes the first Life Member of the Council.

An ending is also a new beginning as we welcome Robert Cork to the Board. Rob has played in every Eight-ball Pool Championship from the very first one and will be a great addition.

As an organisation, our first strategic plan is currently being drafted with the aim of mapping out both the organisation and our goals. Notable achievements in this area already realised this season include the development of the UPC Values (which characterise the work and behaviour of the UPC and its participants) and the UPC Club Handbook, a guidance manual to help university pool clubs develop and continue to function. I will close my report by thanking all our Board Members (who undertake their position on a voluntary basis), Team Managers, venue partners and everyone else that makes the operation of the UPC possible.



Dr Iorwerth Griffiths
Executive Chair

COMPETITIONS

The Universities Pool Council ran four main competitions in season 2008-2009 as well as trials for three representative sides.

Nine-ball Championships

The Nine-ball Championships were held at Riley's, Solihull in mid December. The event attracted its biggest ever field and staked a claim to the title of the largest nine-ball pool event in the British Isles.

University of Ulster became the first team from Northern Ireland to attend the event but entrants from Scotland and Wales continue to disappoint.

University of Warwick continued their strong record in this event by capturing all the silverware on offer – Team Championship, Team Trophy and Matthew Bradley (1st Team) became the Individual Champion.



Solihull is an excellent location both geographically and in terms of the venue itself however we understand that strategic changes planned by Rileys which will restrict the capacity of this venue to host this event in 2009-2010. On this basis, the event will relocate to Liverpool next season.

The challenge for this event is to increase the number of universities participating as well as entrants from the Celtic nations.

Eight-ball Championships

This event continues to be extremely popular and Season 2008-2009 marked a big step up in the delivery of this event. The partnership with Vauxhall Holiday Park, Great Yarmouth enabled all teams to participate in one

weekend event and created a unique “student pool village” atmosphere. The event was played on thirty-six competition standard tables and we were able to fund four fully qualified referees to be in attendance for the duration of the tournament. The coverage provided by Cuesport TV also added value to the event covering some great matches over the weekend.

Queen’s Belfast won the Team Championship for the first time since becoming the inaugural champions back in Season 2003-2004. Unlike the Nine-ball Championships, the other prizes went to different universities. University of Ulster 2nd won the Team Trophy whilst newcomers University of Leeds 1st won the Team Shield. Lee Morris, a Welsh International at Blackball Rules, took the Individual Championship for the University of the West of England.



A number of first teams were promoted from the Team Shield which should make Championship/Trophy level even more competitive in Season 2009-2010. We hope to build on our relationship with Vauxhall Holiday Park and make this venue the home of this event for the foreseeable future. A target however must be the increase in representation from Welsh Universities at this event.

Women’s Eight-ball Pool Championships

The event was again hosted by Riley’s, Hertford Place in Coventry. A first for the event was the presence of a team from Scotland – University of Abertay.

Oxford University’s dominance of this event continued as they won the Team Championship for the fifth time in succession. Oxford University also provided the Individual Champion in Louisa Gill.



The main improvement we strive for is greater representation from the Celtic nations and an overall increase in entries.

Student Eight-ball Pool Home Internationals

This season's event was held at Tara Towers Hotel in Dublin, continuing the practice of staging the event at a hotel venue with all participants accommodated. Before the event itself, trials were held in Derby, Falkirk and Cardiff for the English, Scottish and Welsh Student teams respectively.

The standard of play was high with Ireland and England in particular fielding strong sides. The event was refereed by Mel Harley assisted by Liam Shanley. These two sides duly made the final and England just edged Ireland to hold on to the title.



One disappointing note was the absence of a team representing Northern Ireland Students, this was due to disciplinary issues surrounding the University of Ulster. We hope that the event will return to being a five team event when it visits Cardiff in Season 2009-2010. We also expect the event to be strongly branded with the launch of a dedicated logo for this event.

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

The recruitment and retention statistics for Universities Pool Council events for Season 2008-2009 (2007-2008 in brackets) is reproduced below:

	Nine-ball	Eight-ball	Women's Eight-ball
Universities	19 (+4)	35 (0)	11 (+2)
Teams	45 (+11)	77 (+12)	19 (+3)
Individual Championship	154 (+37)	387 (+195)*	62 (+4)

*Cap of 192 (2007-2008) removed

Although all events recorded growth welcoming some new universities, some universities competing in Season 2007-2008 did not attend in this season. This is detailed below:

Event	New Universities 2008-2009	Universities competing in 2007-2008 who did not enter in 2008-2009
Nine-ball Championships	Kent, LSE, Manchester, Manchester Met, Ulster	Wolverhampton
Eight-ball Championships	Abertay, Exeter, Imperial, Leeds, LSE, Sheffield, Trinity Carmarthen	Birmingham, Keele, Loughborough, Newcastle, Northumbria, Teesside, Wolverhampton
Women's Eight-ball Championships	Abertay, Kent, LSE, Manchester	Durham, Teesside

A few universities have demonstrated very strong infrastructure, being able to enter teams in all events. Specifically, they are:

- Edge Hill;
- Essex;
- Kent;
- LSE;
- Manchester;
- Warwick; and
- York.

We aim to improve recruitment and retention in 2009-2010 and beyond. To improve recruitment, each Board Member will now act as a regional lead which we hope will make a significant difference in this respect. Clubs that are perceived as in danger of going out of existence, universities with clubs but who do not enter our events and large universities who do not enter our



events will be nominated as key targets and also given special attention by their regional lead. To improve retention, we have designed and used feedback forms at events so that participating students can have a direct input to our organisational development.



COMMERCIAL

2008-2009 was a promising year commercially for the UPC, with several exciting partnerships under development and new projects now consistently presenting themselves to help lay foundations for a prosperous future.

The move to Great Yarmouth for our Eight-ball Championships also brought with it a considerable increase in venue sponsorship from Vauxhall Holiday Park, plus scope for much greater future revenue than our previous venues could ever permit. We now have a larger capacity to accept a greater number of tournament entries whilst also benefiting from entry incentivised sponsorship. The growth in entries in the Nine-ball Championships brought a small venue sponsorship from Riley's for the first time this season, which demonstrates the growing commercial attraction of this event.

Although last year's partnership with Billiards Boutique has now concluded, a small sponsorship with Pro9.co.uk was arranged for the Nine-ball Championships and website this season. Indeed, with the Pro9 Shop attending the Nine-ball Championships and ukpool.com attending the Eight-ball Championships, our two largest events were serviced by pool stalls. This further improved the UPC event experience for competitors as well as opening up potential future revenue streams through merchandise and other paraphernalia.

Further support to the events was enabled through a commission-based accommodation promotion for the Nine-ball Championships and Women's Championships. Local authority, charity and miscellaneous sporting body grants was an area tentatively approached this season, however, due to other activity taking precedence, this was not actively pursued to its potential. We are confident however of building on this and submitting applications for all our events in future seasons.

In line with our core aim of maximising participation at our events, our plans for a promotional campus tour are ongoing. A promotional film for this tour (and the UPC in general) has been compiled using specially commissioned footage shot at Essex University and Great Yarmouth by Steve Daking. The proposed promotional tour will allow us to directly market ourselves to the student body, raising revenue both from increased entries and sponsorship.

The UPC website continues to grow with an increasing number of users visiting the site each month and becoming aware of our web presence. With an already high Google Page Rank, the website is now evolving beyond its initial purpose as a simple online resource tool for our competitors and moving more towards a useful interactive tool for students to:

- help shape the UPC;

- 
- seek advice and guidance in respect of participation at our events; and
 - act as a key commercial tool for the UPC.

With our continued focus on the UPC brand, we hope to publish an exciting new logo specifically for the Student Home Internationals in 2009-2010 as part of the aim for gradual branding process for all our events.

With regard to the international virtual world, a relationship is developing with Cuesport TV, helping to communicate our brand to a wider audience. Such coverage will also help to bring in sponsors and improve the UPC event experience for our competitors. Moreover, Cue Club International (formerly uk8ball.com) have also approached the UPC to discuss how best to progress a partnership which should bring with it a number of benefits. With various other organisations approaching us with a view to building a relationship, this is further evidence of how far we have come as an organisation.



COMMUNICATIONS

The Universities Pool Council continues to publish all event previews, reports and participant guidance on our [website](#).

We continue to distribute our press releases to prominent cuesports websites in the UK such as [Cue Club International](#), [Scottish 8-ball](#) and [Pro9](#).

We trialled live scoring with brief text commentary on Cue Club International at the Eight-ball Championships and Student Home Internationals during Season 2008-2009.

The newsletter is now several editions in and continues to develop as an excellent communications tool outside of our regular media. From 2009-2010 onwards, we will look to develop the commercial potential of this document as part of an embedded approach to maximise the commercial potential of all our communication channels.

Our key aims for Season 2009-2010 include:

- Featuring live scoring at all our events, directly from the UPC website;
- Reviewing the social network opportunities presented by the emergence and growth of global websites such as Facebook and Twitter; and
- Reviewing the feasibility of additional features for the UPC website such as blogging and video content.



EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

The Universities Pool Council continues to enjoy good relationships with British Universities and Colleges Sport (BUCS). We would like to thank BUCS, especially Sport Programme Manager Vikki Scott, for their continued help and support.

We also enjoy good relationships with the Higher Education Snooker and Pool Council (HESPC), organisers of the Irish Snooker and Pool Intervarsities. We would like to thank HESPC for organising the Irish teams competing in the Student Eight-ball Pool Home Internationals their involvement in sourcing table engineer Barry Dempsey for the event.

We had little involvement with other organisations during Season 2008-2009 other than Steve Brooker of the English Pool Referees Association who organised the referees for our Eight-ball Pool Championships.

A key aim for the future is to gain BUCS recognition for our other events, especially the Nine-ball Championships. We will work hard to achieve this once BUCS have completed their current review of sports programmes which is currently underway.



COMPLIANCE

The Universities Pool Council Disciplinary Committee deals with issues of compliance.

In Season 2008-2009, the Committee considered four cases in total.

One case involved the late withdrawal of a 2nd team from the Nine-ball Championships with notice but following publication of the draw. The outcome was a warning issued as to future conduct and will remain on file for two seasons.

Three cases involved presentation ceremonies. One team failed to attend their presentation ceremony and were issued with a warning against their future conduct. Another team attended their ceremony but did not stay for the official photographs. No sanction was issued as the regulations at that time did not make it clear that the official photographs were a part of the presentation ceremony although this regulation has subsequently changed. A third case involved disruption of a presentation ceremony. The offending club were fined and had a good behaviour bond placed on future entries for three seasons.

An unfortunate case involved the first ever charge of bringing the Universities Pool Council into disrepute was upheld. The offending club's players made verbal accusations of dishonesty directed at tournament officials. The club were fined and had a good behaviour bond placed on future entries for three seasons. This charge was also laid against a player who made similar allegations on an internet forum. However, no further action was taken as the player disassociated himself from the allegations claiming someone had accessed his account.

Several reports from referees and other teams about unacceptable behaviour throughout the event led one club to face the charge of unsporting conduct but as much of this behaviour was dealt with during the event, no further action was deemed necessary against the club. A warning was issued against future conduct to one player from that club in particular.

A number of charges emanated from the conduct of one club therefore a general sanction was invoked barring the club from entering all domestic events organised by the Council for one season. This sanction was suspended for three seasons after which it will lapse provided there are no further incidents during these seasons.

The Compliance Procedures of the Universities Pool Council will be restructured for Season 2009-2010 and it is anticipated that the new structure will increase the effectiveness of this element of our organisation.



- End of report -