



Universities Pool Council

www.upc-pool.org.uk

Annual Report

2009-2010





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EXECUTIVE CHAIR'S INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the second Annual Report of the Universities Pool Council in which you will find details about our activities for the season.

Season 2009-10 saw a consolidation of our partnership with Vauxhall Holiday Park, Great Yarmouth. A second season at this prestigious venue showed an increase in entries with almost 500 students enjoying this weekend of pool in February 2010. This record entry allows us to build on our relationship and hopefully cement Vauxhall Holiday Park as the host for this event for some time to come.

The Nine-ball Championships' continued growth meant that we needed a bigger venue for the event. In the end no such place existed so we have now chosen to run this event in two venues over one weekend. Spanning two pool clubs with impressive facilities and a great host city in Liverpool, we have been able to comfortably accept increased entries and improve the weekend experience for all players.

A new event on the calendar gives players of American Pool disciplines an outlet beyond the UPC Nine-ball Championships. The first European University Sports Association (EUSA) competition was held in Estonia over the summer. Although the time given to organise players was short, we were able to send a UK representation of strong players and will continue to support the event in the future.

I will close my report by thanking all our Board Members who undertake their tasks 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 UK

The Universities Pool Council ran four main competitions in Season 2009-10 as well as trials for three representative sides.

Nine-ball Championships

The Nine-ball Championships were held at two venues in the same weekend for the first time in this season. Riley's, Liverpool (Grand Central and Wavertree) played hosts for the event in early December. The event attracted its biggest ever field and remained the largest nine-ball pool event currently held in the British Isles. Disappointingly, however, there were no entrants from either Scotland or Northern Ireland.

University of York took the Team Championship whilst their second team lost in the final of the Team Trophy to University of Warwick 2nds who held on to their title. Rich Wharton from Anglia Ruskin University (Cambridge) won the Individual Championship and thus became the only player so far to have won the Nine-ball and Eight-ball Individual Championships although no-one has yet managed to complete this feat in the same season.



The event is close to capacity in its current format and some changes may be needed in the near future to enable its continued growth. The challenge for this event is to gain BUCS recognition and increase entrants from the Celtic nations

Eight-ball Championships

The step change in the delivery of this event last season in moving to Vauxhall Holiday Park, Great Yarmouth was further consolidated with an increase in competing teams and players in this season. It was also pleasing to achieve last year's target of increasing Welsh representation at this event with Bangor and

Glamorgan not only participating but competing well and gaining promotion to Championship/Trophy level for Season 2010-11.

In a great feat, Portsmouth won the Team Championship in their first season at Championship/Trophy level after overcoming numerous heart stopping shoot-out victories in the play off rounds. In the final, they beat York who came close to securing the elusive Nine-ball and Eight-ball Team Championship double in the same season. Cardiff 1st won the Team Trophy whilst newcomers Coventry University 1st won the Team Shield. Defending Individual Champion Lee Morris was beaten in the final by an excellent display of pool from Warwick's James Murphy.



Again a number of first teams were promoted from the Team Shield which should make Championship/Trophy level highly competitive in Season 2010-11.

Women's Eight-ball Pool Championships

The event was again hosted by Riley's, Hertford Place in Coventry.

Oxford's dominance in the Team Championship since the event's incarnation was finally broken by a Durham side that only just scraped into the playoff rounds but grew from strength to strength in the later phases. However Oxford did provide the Individual Champion in their first team captain, Conny Meisenberg.



Entries dropped disappointingly for this event this season and an improvement is sought for Season 2010-11 as well as greater representation from the Celtic nations.

Student Eight-ball Pool Home Internationals

This season's event was held at Village Hotel in Cardiff, with the continued practice of staging the event at a hotel venue with all participants also accommodated. Before the event itself, trials were held in Derby, Pettycur Bay and Cardiff for the English, Scottish and Welsh Student teams respectively.

The standard of play was high and the event was refereed by Mel Harley assisted by Yvonne Armitage. England retained the title convincingly beating Scotland in the final.



Again it was disappointing that only four teams were present. Ireland and Northern Ireland Students took the place of the previously separate sides due to player unavailability as the event clashed with an Irish Pool Association event. We hope that the event will return to being a five team event next season and we also expect the event to be strongly branded with the launch of a dedicated logo for the event, a target narrowly missed last season.



EUROPEAN

EUSA Billiards Cup 2010, Tallinn, Estonia

In August 2010, we were delighted to send UK representatives to the inaugural European University Sports Association (EUSA) Billiards Cup, in Tallinn, Estonia, featuring participants from Finland, Norway, Estonia, and the UK competing in American eight-ball, nine-ball and ten-ball double-elimination singles competitions over three tournament days.

Although none of the UK entrants brought back the overall title, they all performed admirably in competitions in which they have little experience of in the UK, with the reigning UPC Nine-ball Individual champion, Rich Wharton (Anglia Ruskin, Cambridge), reaching the ten-ball semi-final, and the reigning UPC Nine-ball Team champions, University of York, claiming the “Best Team Spirit” award after impressing everyone with their enthusiasm and all-round competitiveness.

The overall title went to Terje Hjerpbakk (Soer-Troendelag University College, Norway), with wins in the nine-ball and ten-ball disciplines after an eight-ball semi-final finish. Michael Walsh (University of York) finished as the best placed UK representative in 8th place.

The EUSA Billiards Cup forms part of a long-term strategy of international development for the UPC and UK student pool. As such, discussions continue with the EUSA Organising Committee and the International Development section of BUCS in exploring all options for the future delivery of international competition, and indeed, how the UPC may best expand overseas.

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

The recruitment and retention statistics for Universities Pool Council events for Season 2009-10 (change from 2008-09 in brackets) is produced below:

	Nine-ball	Eight-ball	Women's Eight-ball
Universities	22 (+3)	43 (+6)	11 (0)
Teams	47 (+2)	89 (+12)	12 (-7)
Individual Championship	155 (+1)	406 (+19)	46 (-16)

A few universities have very strong infrastructure and are able to enter team in all events which is testament to the excellent organisational infrastructure in these clubs. In this season, they are Durham, Essex, LSE, Manchester, Oxford and York.

The drop in entries for the Women's Championships was disappointing and we hope that this trend will be reversed in 2010-11. However on a more positive note, it is an excellent achievement to have all universities that participated in the 2008-09 Eight-ball Championships represented again in 2009-10.

Regional Reports

The UPC split the UK into geographical regions with a member of the UPC committee responsible for managing entries from each region.

South-East England & Wales

Season 2009-10 attracted Bangor and Glamorgan to our events for the first time, and both performed admirably on debut by gaining promotion from the Shield at the first attempt.

The uptake for the Women's event (3 universities sending only 1 team each) was minimal and the number of universities with an existing presence in the Eight-ball Championships also competing in the Nine-ball Championships (5 from 12) was disappointing.

For season 2010-11 we shall lose one potential Welsh university when Lampeter merges with Trinity, however we are hopeful that further Welsh support arrives in the form of UWIC and Swansea. In England, we anticipate greater representation from London-based universities, such as UCL and King's, and this is certainly feasible given their known pool communities. Medway and Suffolk are other institutions outside of the capital that are currently also showing promise for the future.



Institution	Nine-ball	Eight-ball	Women's Eight-ball
Wales – Bangor		1 Team	
Wales – Cardiff	3 Teams	3 Teams	
Wales – Glamorgan		2 Teams	
Wales - Trinity St David		1 Team	
England - Canterbury CC		2 Teams	
England – Essex	2 Teams	3 Teams	1 Team
England – Imperial	1 Team	1 Team	
England – Kent		3 Teams	1 Team
England – LSE	3 Teams	2 Teams	1 Team
England – Portsmouth		3 Teams	
England – Reading	3 Teams	3 Teams	
TOTALS	5 Unis; 12 Teams	11 Unis; 24 Teams	3 Unis; 3 Teams

Midlands & Scotland

As in previous years, the Midlands were well represented in UPC events during the 2009-10 season. Anglia Ruskin, Aston, Birmingham, Cambridge, Coventry, UEA, Nottingham, Oxford and Warwick all competed in at least one event.

Warwick were unable to defend their Nine-ball title, but will draw consolation from Jay Murphy's triumph in the Eight-ball Individual Championships. New entrants Coventry captured the Eight-ball Shield title at the first attempt, and we hope to see them back again in the 2010-11 season.

The commitment from Scottish universities to the Eight-ball game was once again impressive, with teams from five separate institutions making the long journey down to Great Yarmouth to challenge for the title. St Andrews and Robert Gordon in particular put in impressive performances, but unfortunately were drawn against each other in the last 16 meaning that Scotland could only get a single representative through the last 8. There were no players from Scottish institutions at the Nine-ball or Women's Eight-ball events this year, an omission that we hope can be avoided in future seasons.

Looking ahead to the 2010-11 season, with a total of 26 institutions to draw from in the Midlands region and another 15 in Scotland, there is certainly room for improvement. In the Eight-ball Championships, Leicester were absent this year but were represented in the Student Home Internationals by Tem Dixon, raising the prospect of a Leicester team entry next season. However, at the same time, we risk losing Anglia Ruskin now that their sole representative in previous years, Rich Wharton, has graduated. Regarding the Women's Eight-ball event, only 2 out of the 41 institutions in the Midlands and Scotland were represented. However, with Oxford's monopoly on the team event finally broken by Durham and Manchester, this should give encouragement to other institutions that they can mount a challenge for the title.



Institution	Nine-ball	Eight-ball	Women's Eight-ball
Scotland – Abertay		3 Teams	
Scotland – Glasgow		1 Team	
Scotland – Robert Gordon		1 Team	
Scotland – St Andrews		2 Teams	
Scotland – Strathclyde		2 Teams	
England – Anglia Ruskin	1 Individual	1 Individual	
England – Aston	3 Teams	2 Teams	
England – Birmingham	2 Teams	1 Team	
England – Cambridge		3 Teams	1 Team
England – Coventry		1 Team	
England – UEA		3 Teams	
England – Nottingham	2 Teams	3 Teams	
England – Oxford	1 Team	3 Teams	3 Teams
England – Warwick	3 Teams	3 Teams	
TOTALS	6 Unis; 11 Teams	14 Unis; 28 Teams	2 Unis; 4 Teams

South-West & North England

A strong sample of South-West and North England universities continued to support UPC events during the 2009-10 season. Using the number of entered teams as a benchmark, it was encouraging to see the development of pool clubs in Lancaster, Plymouth and Salford to complement the sustenance of the setup within Durham, Edge Hill, Leeds and York.

We were encouraged by first-time interest in our events shown by Huddersfield and Manchester Met in this season and were glad to welcome back Keele and Bristol to university pool participation at the Nine-ball Championships and Eight-ball Championships respectively.

The healthy representation from these regions also bred medal success with York University leading the way. Their notable achievements including winning the Nine-ball Championships and finishing as runner-up in the Eight-ball Championships and Trophy.

In common disappointment with other regions in respect of entrants the Women's Eight-ball Championships, the loss of Edge Hill, who had previously entered three teams, was a significant contributory factor in the overall reduction entrants for this event.

In 2010-11, our key aim in these regions is to develop team representation from universities with only individuals entering such as Huddersfield and UWE to gather momentum within their pool fraternity.

Institution	Nine-ball	Eight-ball	Women's Eight-ball
England – Bath	2 Teams	2 Teams	
England – Bristol	3 Teams	1 Team	
England – Exeter		1 Team	
England – Gloucestershire	3 Teams	2 Teams	
England – Plymouth		3 Teams	1 Team
England – UWE		1 Individual	
England – Chester (Chester)		1 Team	
England – Durham	2 Teams	3 Teams	1 Team
England – Edge Hill	3 Teams	3 Teams	
England – Huddersfield	1 Individual		
England – Keele	1 Team		
England – Lancaster		3 Teams	
England – Leeds	2 Teams	2 Teams	
England – Manchester	3 Teams	3 Teams	2 Teams
England – Manchester Met	1 Team	1 Team	
England - Salford		3 Teams	
England – Sheffield		1 Team	
England – York	3 Teams	3 Teams	1 Team
TOTALS	11 Unis; 23 Teams	16 Unis; 35 Teams	4 Unis; 5 Teams

Northern Ireland

Although this is a region with a small catchment of Universities, we recognise the considerable effort and cost for these teams to enter the Eight-ball Championships.

Although Queens, Belfast were unable to replicate their success in this event in 2008-09, they still had an impressive outing in achieving a quarter-final berth and Barry Crossey from Ulster caught the eye on debut by reaching the semi-finals in the Individual Championships.

With the Nine-ball Championships currently being held in Liverpool, we hope that this readily accessible location from Northern Ireland will help to encourage entries from this region into this event.

Institution	Nine-ball	Eight-ball	Women's Eight-ball
Northern Ireland – Queens, Belfast		2 Teams	
Northern Ireland – Ulster		1 Team	
TOTALS		2 Unis; 3 Teams	4 Unis; 5 Teams



COMMERCIAL

Season 2009-10 was a pleasing one from the perspective of brand recognition and exposure.

The UPC website continues to attract more visitors year-on-year, and with its natural progression from a pure reference tool into something more interactive and support-orientated, with recreational elements, we anticipate this trend to accelerate. New sections (awaiting final completion and subsequent launch) which are specifically designed to help clubs become established and be maintained successfully should help drive the student pool body to use the site far more regularly in the periods between tournaments, typically times when the website activity is at its lowest during the year.

The slow-launch of our Facebook and Twitter sites at the end of the season has also opened up a new avenue to gain marketing collateral and exposure and we have high hopes for this project. The fansites can also be used for interactive market research, PR, improved communications and networking, as well as advertising.

Our presence in the virtual world has also been boosted by the continued partnership with the excellent Cuesport TV, who are now very much part of the *Great Yarmouth Experience* for the players attending the Eight-ball Championships. We hope this relationship continues to grow, not only to live streaming of matches at Great Yarmouth but also to the wider UPC calendar, showcasing all of our events to the student community, business partners, and general public.

To further promote our aims and objectives, we now also have a promotional video, and we continue to utilise print and online media such as CueClubInternational and Pro9. Moreover, we have begun dialogue and started to progress a partnership with Snookered e-magazine, a free electronic magazine which is cuesports-orientated but also covers general interest topics.

Although we were unable to secure any agreements on merchandise/equipment stalls at our events in this season for a variety of reasons, discussions are underway with one supplier for future years and we are also in dialogue with BUCS Commercial to develop a practical commercial strategy for each of our events with their support.

The staging in Great Yarmouth of our Eight-ball Championships again brought a considerable revenue stream, in venue sponsorship from Vauxhall Holiday Park, yet still allowing for much further expansion than our previous venues could ever permit. With the status of our Nine-ball Championships as the largest standalone Nine-ball event in the UK, we feel there is enormous commercial potential in this event and with the Eight-ball Championships now bedded in at Great Yarmouth, our future commercial focus may reside in maximising the potential of this event.

The university pool season ended with the somewhat surprising but welcomed staging of the inaugural (non-UPC) EUSA Billiards Cup in August. Although it did not attract the support from across Europe that was intended and proved costly for participants to attend, the event has tremendous potential and as it is aligned to our long-term strategy, we are keen to offer whatever assistance we can to the



organisers. The attendance at the event of UK representatives (coordinated by the UPC) and the realisation that UPC-type bodies do not exist presently in Europe has raised the question of whether a franchising of the UPC may be viable. This interesting concept is currently being explored and developed, to ascertain need, practicality and feasibility.



COMMUNICATIONS

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

We have established a relationship with an exciting new cuesports online magazine [Snookered](#) which we hope will bring additional focus on University cuesports in the mainstream. We continue to distribute our press releases to prominent cuesports websites in the UK such as [Cue Club International](#), [Scottish 8-ball](#) and [Pro9](#).

Over the course of this season, we trialled and refined the use of live online scoring during our event. Although we are aware that a large proportion of our target audience for such a service may be in attendance at our event, the interest generated using the benchmark of internet hits and feedback comments suggest that this exercise is worthwhile to pursue in subsequent events.

The UPC invested in tournament software to provide visual displays of the results as the action unfolded. We are extremely pleased with the professionalism and efficiency of this tailored package and intend to use this in future seasons.

Our key aims for Season 2010-11 include:

- Featuring live scoring at all our events, directly from the UPC website; and
- Launch of full Facebook and Twitter pages to communicate key messages and incentives for participating and alumni students.



EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

The Universities Pool Council continues to enjoy good relationships with our key partners British Universities and Colleges Sport (BUCS), and the Higher Education Snooker and Pool Council (HESPC), organisers of the Irish Snooker and Pool Intervarsities.

We have forged links with the European University Sports Association (EUSA) Billiards Cup organising committee, based primarily in Estonia, who held their inaugural event in August 2010. The future of the event has been discussed, including the possibility of the event being hosted in the UK, and there is hope that our leadership in university pool will inspire further international development in this area.

We have been in discussion with the committee of the GB9 Tour, the main Nine-ball Pool Tour in mainstream pool in the UK in this discipline and have secured the opportunity for the Semi-finalists in our Nine-ball Individual Championship to directly join the Tour without additional qualification.

We engaged Steve Brooker of the English Pool Referees Association to organise the attendance of qualified referees for our Eight-ball Championships.

A key aim for the future remains to gain BUCS recognition for our other events, especially the Nine-ball Championships. We still await the completion of their current review of sports programmes before we are able to pursue this aim.



COMPLIANCE

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

In Season 2009-10 the Committee met twice and disposed eight cases in total, four more than the previous season.

Two cases involved the late withdrawal of teams from the Nine-ball and Eight-ball Championships respectively with notice but following publication of the draw. The outcome in both cases was that a warning was issued as to future conduct.

Another case arising at the Nine-ball Championships involved a team who played their initial matches but then failed to fulfil their remaining fixtures. The Committee was of the opinion that this both affected the integrity of the event and detrimentally impacted other teams and therefore the Committee adjudged that a bond is payable on entry into all UPC domestic events for two seasons.

Two teams at the Eight-ball Championships failed to fulfil a fixture. The outcome for one team was a warning against future conduct as the Committee accepted the team's submission that it was a genuine error on their part. Due to variance of circumstances, a bond was placed on the entries of the other team for two seasons with no submission of defence entered.

A team at the Eight-ball Championships attended with insufficient players and as a consequence, future entries will be subject to payment of a bond.

The two final cases involved the Student Home Internationals. One player failed to complete his matches in the trials and had part of his deposit withheld for failing to fulfil his commitments and potentially impacting the make-up of the representative team.

Another player failed to attend the second day of the event and also failed to fulfil his fixture commitments. As the player effectively took the place of another player who may have committed to both days of play, the whole deposit was withheld and a future nomination will require lodgement of a £100.00 deposit as opposed to the conventional £50.00.



- End of report -