



Universities Pool Council – Update for the 2020-21 season

October 2020

We wish to update students with the current situation on this season's events in the current climate of Covid-19, as well as general plans going forward. Covid-19 has made a massive impact on all walks of life, and the Universities Pool Council (UPC) wishes all of our students, past and present, the best of health at the current time.

Events for 2020-21

Due to the current limitations as set out by the [Government](#) on 24 September, it is currently not permitted to have any organised indoor team sports which consist of more than six players. While this may change over the next couple of months, we do not see this limitation being relaxed before Christmas. Therefore, it is with sadness that we recently announced the cancellation of the re-arranged Student Home Internationals event from last season, as well the cancellation of this season's BUCS Nine-ball event.

The cancellation of the BUCS Nine-ball event was agreed alongside consultations with BUCS, as well as the Mercure Telford Centre Hotel which had agreed to host the event this season using the GB9 professional facilities. This consultation involved discussions as regards the safety of players in this current climate, taking guidance from other organisational boards in the UK such as the English Partnership for Snooker and Billiards ([EPSB](#)). It is unlikely that that either of these events will be rescheduled for a later date this season.

We still plan to hold the SSI Irish Intervarsities, the BUCS Eight-ball, and the BUCS Snooker events in the second term. The SSI Irish Intervarsities event is scheduled for 5-7 February 2021 February, BUCS Eight-ball has been pencilled in with Vauxhall for the 24-28 February 2021 (play on 25-28), and the BUCS Snooker event is likely to be held 3 to 4 weeks later in March. The UPC will do whatever is in our capacity to run these events that adheres to the guidance from the Government and BUCS, though it looks unlikely we'll be able to run all of these events. We intend to update students after Christmas on these matters. We have yet to consider the Student Home Internationals event and where this will be located, but we will in due course and keep players updated on this.

Advice on the running of university pool and snooker clubs

In this difficult situation, we find it pleasing that many clubs are still running events and sessions this academic year. We have been impressed with the level of detail that some clubs have made to ensure this is still a possibility in these times where almost all pool/snooker leagues are currently postponed.



While the UPC is not the National Governing Body for pool or snooker in the UK, we can provide the following advice to individual clubs running events in pool/snooker halls:

- If any player has symptoms of Covid-19, exclude them from club sessions and do not let them use any of the equipment used by others.
- Ensure face coverings are worn at all times apart from when players are playing a frame.
- Ensure there is the availability of hand sanitiser and its use is encouraged or even mandated.
- Encourage players not to shake hands to limit potential spread.
- You may need to limit the total number of players at sessions, which can be tracked by players requiring to sign-up before sessions.
- You may consider ways to disinfect balls, table, rests, chalk, and/or house cues between different players.
- Ensure measures are in place for potential track and trace if required.
- Ensure the locations are Covid-safe, e.g. one-way systems may be in place, screens may be installed, the tables are configured to adhere to social distancing, etc.

Note this list is not exhaustive and may be subject to further restrictions in different locations.

The English Pool Association (EPA) and the EPSB has produced additional guidance for pool and snooker halls which may be of further assistance to club committees:

EPA - http://www.epa.org.uk/images/constitution/EPA_Covid_Guidelines_240920.pdf

EPSB - <https://www.epsb.co.uk/play/covid-19-guidance/>

Future plans

To end this blog on a positive note, the UPC has been developing plans for growth in the upcoming seasons, particularly on the snooker side. Our recent [affiliation with the EPSB](#) gives us a stronger visibility in the UK and with World Snooker and there are future plans on the table to work with them. Last seasons' event saw record numbers again and it continues to become more professional in experience, such as with the referees on most days and a variation of the 'miss' rule now incorporated into its rules.



Pool also continues to be strong, with both Eight-ball and Nine-ball numbers close to maintaining last season compared to the one before that. We introduced the Individual Trophy to both events, which encouraged players in second teams or below to get further in individual competitions, with the players who have real aspirations of prize money and BUCS points to still compete in the Individual Championship. The general consensus was it provided better value for money for lower ability players and these competitions will remain for future seasons.



While the effects of Covid-19 will no doubt have limited participation in cue sports throughout the UK, the UPC are very hopeful of a strong return to organised University pool and snooker competitions when they are possible to run!

Ben Hubbard

Universities Pool Council Deputy Chair, on behalf of the UPC Board