

Universities Pool Council

Universities Pool Council summer 2025 update blog

Introduction from Ben

We've just come back off another very successful season for university cue sports! This has included post-pandemic record numbers for the BUCS-UPC Eight-ball Pool Championships, and the re-introduction of our Student Home Internationals event at the amazing Ultimate Pool Arena!

The future is looking bright with us continuing to establish longer-term relationship with our venues and partners. This is particularly the case with the Northern Snooker Centre in Leeds, where our continued strong relationship running the BUCS-UPC Nine-Ball Championships has helped us re-negotiate the possibility of the BUCS-UPC Snooker Championships being held there.

We do acknowledge this past season was not always straight forward, particularly for BUCS Snooker which went through proposed regulation changes that were not universally liked, and it was difficult to attend for some with the distance between venues. This re-iterates the importance of these close relationships with the venues, where both of us as staff and you as players can all do our bit to maintain this. There will no doubt be unexpected difficulties ahead, but hopefully we can continue to navigate these and put on the best events possible for you as players.

While there have been no changes at UPC Board level from last season, I do wish to welcome a few new UPC regional co-ordinators. These regional co-ordinators help us link us on the UPC Board with individual clubs, useful to ensure all entries are submitted on time. Regional coordinators provide a talent pool for those to potentially be on the UPC Board in the future, with regionals not participating at BUCS-UPC Eight-ball Pool Championships getting the opportunity to staff at the event. We welcome Heather Jacques (South West), Aimee Benn (North West), and Om Goswamy (London & South East) as regionals from the 2025-26 season onwards.

This blog post outlines the confirmed calendar for next year, as well as some of the changes we have made for next season's competitions.



Schedule and venues for the 2025-2026 season

Please see below for a list of the dates and venues confirmed:

BUCS-UPC Nine-Ball Pool Championships: Saturday 22nd to Tuesday 25th November 2025 @ the Northern Snooker Centre in Leeds

UPC Irish Intervarsities Pool Championships: Friday 6th to Sunday 8th February 2026 @ Antrim Sports Club in Antrim, Northern Ireland

BUCS-UPC Eight-Ball Pool Championships: Saturday 28th February to Tuesday 3rd March 2026, jointly held in the three venues of Plaza Snooker & Pool Club in Stoke, Longton Snooker & Pool Club also in Stoke, and Players Pool & Snooker Lounge in Newcastle-under-Lyme

BUCS-UPC Snooker Championships: Thursday 12th to Sunday 15th March 2026 @ the Northern Snooker Centre in Leeds

UPC Student Home Internationals: Saturday 4th to Sunday 5th July 2026 @ Bolton

I am pleased to be announcing this full schedule before the academic year has started this season. It has been difficult in recent years to finalise dates and venues for some of our events, particularly for the BUCS Snooker event, and we are glad this has been achieved quickly this season.

It should be noted we are aware there are only nine days between the BUCS Eight-ball Pool Championships ending and the BUCS Snooker Championships starting. This decision is largely out of our hands as our eight-ball venues had a strong preference for that weekend over our preferred option of the weekend before, and the snooker event could not be any later due to some university term dates. We hope this is not a significant issue for most and the notice given should mitigate this.

Regarding venues, some venues expressed concern last season on outside food and drink being brought into the venue and some of their facilities being left in a dirty state. Let me be clear, there will be no tolerance to these issues this season. This type of behaviour affects our relationships with our venues, and if it is affected significantly, they may choose to not host us in the future which damages our future events and worsens the experience for future players. Anyone seen not respecting the venues will be sanctioned, which could include being banned from the venue and therefore the competition, and/or us informing their universities and BUCS.

Social media update and the new UPC Instagram page

The UPC now has an Instagram page! Please follow if you have an Instagram account at [Universities Pool Council \(@studentpoolandsnooker\) • Instagram photos and videos](#). This page will be for our engagement friendly content such as photographs, alerts for important information, community engagement etc. We've already introduced our new regional co-ordinators, so please give this page a follow if you an Instagram account!

Our Facebook page will remain the primary social media for important information such as announcements, statements, entry and event details, blog posts etc which can be found at [Universities Pool Council | Facebook](#).

Eligibility at women's events

For all of our events currently hosted in England, we use the [BUCS individual eligibility criteria](#) to ensure all players are eligible to compete. We are obliged to follow the BUCS eligibility criteria to run BUCS affiliated events.

There have been recent changes in mainstream pool at both county and international level where instead of being split by Men's and Women's categories there are now Open and Women's categories instead. The National Governing body for England, the English Pool Association (EPA), has made this change to their categories.

We contacted BUCS for advice regarding our event following this change in the mainstream. They stated without ambiguity that we must follow the criteria of the National Governing body as regard this eligibility policy for entering women's events. We also feel that it is to the benefit of the community for our competitions to be part of the BUCS sports program.

Therefore, from next season the BUCS-UPC Eight-Ball Pool Championships will consist of Open and Women's categories. In alignment with the EPA's position, transgender women will not be eligible for the Women's individual and team competitions but will be eligible for the Open individual and team competitions, where this position is clearly stated in EPA's press release [here](#).

The EPA's position that the Open category is "open to all regardless of sex" means that individuals assigned female at birth are eligible for either Open or Women's categories.

A further decision we have taken in agreement with BUCS is that whilst individuals assigned female at birth are eligible for either Open or Women's categories, they cannot enter a mix of these at the same Championships. For example, an individual will not be permitted to enter both the Women's Individual competition and the Open Individual and/or Team competition at the same Championships.

We have decided to keep this eligibility criteria for women's events the same for our two non-BUCS events for consistency. Note that women entering the open category may apply to be part of the Student Home Internationals women's teams, but their record in the 2025-26 BUCS-UPC Eight-Ball Pool Championships will not be considered as the records are not a like-for-like comparison with others who have applied.

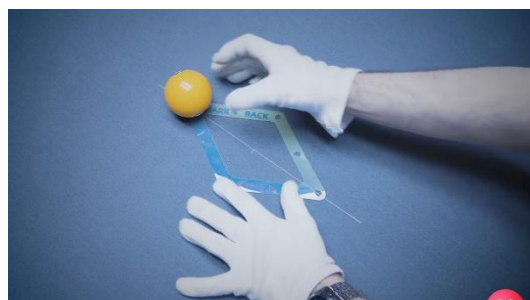
Nine-ball breaking changes

There have been a couple of changes as regards breaking for the BUCS-UPC Nine-Ball Championships that are worth considering if you are entering the event.

Firstly, the WPA ruleset has been revised in June 2025 where the significant change for the break is the fact we will now be 'racking high' rather than 'racking low' as per the last few seasons. This means that the nine-ball will now go on the foot spot rather than the one-ball, where the foot spot is the point where the two lines going between the bottom corner pocket and the opposite middle pocket intersect. Please make sure you adopt this change when practising from now on.

Secondly, we have decided to use breaking templates going forward at our nine-ball event. Also known as 'magic racks', these are templates that the balls sit on for the purposes of the break and are used to ensure all balls are racked tightly, see [here](#) for examples of these. The reason for doing this is to avoid accusations of players racking in a certain way to encourage golden breaks. This will mean that players will be obliged to use a breaking template at the Championships.

We are therefore delighted to welcome **Shark Rack** into our list of UPC's partners! Players need not worry about buying any templates for the event as the UPC will provide a Shark Rack to be used for every match played. If players wish to test out these templates before the competition, they can be bought at the following link: <https://ebay.us/m/ecYyKl>.



Other notable regulation changes

- It is our intention to have eight-group formats if the team limit cap is achieved for both the BUCS Nine-Ball and BUCS Snooker Team Championships. However, if entry numbers mean that less than three institution first teams are in every group, only the top ranked first team in each group will now qualify for the Team Championship. If this is the case, then an extra qualifier per group will enter the Team Trophy to ensure the same number of overall qualifiers into the knockout stages remain. We have done this to avoid groups where previously there was two Team Championship qualifiers for groups only containing two institution first teams. It is our hope that every BUCS event will have at least 24 institution first teams so that the top two in each group will still both qualify for Team Championship.
- We had occasions of non-compliance with regards to the Team Details Forms last season. There will now be a separate deadline of the Sunday @ 23:59 after the BUCS Play entry deadline for the submission of Team Details Forms to the UPC Tournament Director for BUCS events. Any institutions participating in the team competition that fail to provide the Team Details Forms to this deadline will be liable for a £20 surcharge, payable at the event before play begins. There will also be larger sanctions for those not respecting the venues, such as those bringing in outside food and drink, and the surcharge for not attending the representatives briefing before play begins is being raised to £20.
- We have made changes to the submission of reasonable adjustments as this was inconsistently being implemented in previous seasons. Reasonable adjustments can be applied for to the event Tournament Director to relax certain event regulations, such as where a player cannot adhere to the dress code say for medical reasons. Firstly, we will be asking BUCS to make it mandatory to state if reasonable adjustments are required when players enter on BUCS Play. Players requesting exemptions must then e-mail the Tournament Director at the earliest possible occasion before each separate UPC event. Exemptions for medical reasons will require proof this adjustment is required. Those applying for reasonable adjustments and not letting the UPC know before a week prior to the event may have their request refused.