



PRESS RELEASE

Team Ireland seeking to defend Student Home Internationals title in Manchester

The weekend of 20-21 April 2012 sees the culmination of the university pool season as the Student Eight-ball Pool Home Internationals descends on The Renaissance in Manchester. Ireland Students will be the team to beat as they attempt to retain their title in the face of fierce competition from their British counterparts.

Ireland Students will travel across the Irish Sea full of belief after their pulsating triumph in 2010/11. Attention is first drawn on their squad sheet to Stephen Dempsey who was the 2007 EEPF Men's European Champion and Brendan Traynor who won the HESPC Irish Pool Intervarsities Individual Championship this season. When coupled with experience of Alan McBennett and Michael Curley, they will certainly be keen to live up to their billing as pre-tournament favourites.

Although arguably this is the most open competition of recent seasons with all teams holding hopes of contention at the business end, England are likely to pose strongest rivalry to Ireland on paper. Their squad includes current BUCS-UPC Individual Champion Rhys Williams and defending Individual Masters champion Will Jerram however they will rely on charismatic team manager, Jon Shapland, to blend such experience with students representing England for the first time such as Thomas Gaughan, Thomas Barrett and Mike Logan.

Northern Ireland will be optimistic of improving on recent performances in this competition. Under the guidance of new Team Manager Pearse Sharratt, Northern Ireland will be represented with a split of players from University of Ulster and Queens University, Belfast. With the SHI experience of players such as Ryan Birt (albeit with different colours in his multi-nation academic path) and Ryan Quinn alongside mainstream international experience from the likes of Conor McDonnell, Northern Ireland will fancy their chances as a potential dark horse for the title.

Scotland Students, who so often feel their chances are written off before the play commences, will not be intending on travelling south of the border to make up the numbers. The team is managed by former Scotland Student international Gary Ferguson and captained for the first time by Derek Dishington. There is a good split of players between the three current strong Scottish pool playing universities of Abertay, St Andrews and Strathclyde with the experienced shoulders of Michael Rodgers and Jamie Gregory expected to be key to their challenge.

With Huw Stapleton taking a one year sabbatical as team manager due to attendance at his honeymoon, Wales Students side return this season with the key aim of delivering the ultimate wedding present! With the bulk of the players coming from Cardiff University and bolstered by players from Glamorgan, team spirit could be pivotal in their quest to embellish some positive performances in this competition in prior years.

The event also features the Student International Masters. There will be no easy games in this individual event and it is interestingly the only occasion where players from Ireland Students meet their British counterparts. The eventual champion will certainly have earned their title battling through the elite field.

The action gets underway with the Student International Masters at 12h30 on Friday 20 April culminating in the final, expected to take place around 14h00 on Saturday 21 April. Team matches will start at 15h30 on Friday and the final will take place at 15h00 on Saturday.

15 April 2012

For further information and full results:
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Notes to editors:

The Universities Pool Council (UPC) is the governing body for pool at higher education level in the United Kingdom. It is recognised by the British Universities and Colleges Sport (BUCS), Scottish University Sport (SUS) and the English Pool Association (EPA).

The UPC organises national nine-ball, eight-ball and women's eight-ball championships for teams and individuals. The UPC also organises the Student Home Internationals representative event.