

Universities Pool Council

PRESS RELEASE

University of Ulster, Coleraine Triumph in BUSA-UPC Eight-Ball Championship

McCluskeys, Derby was treated to an action-packed weekend of pool, as University of Ulster, Coleraine became the second university from Northern Ireland to win the Team Championship defeating University of Gloucestershire in a somewhat one-sided final. The Individual Championship was taken back to Nottingham with an unprecedented third title for Paul Edwards in this event.

The format of the BUSA-UPC Eight-Ball Championship lies in accordance with all BUSA sporting events. Eight groups were contested with the two best placed first teams going forward to compete in the Last 16 of the Championship. The best placed team not qualifying for the Championship goes forward to contest the BUSA-UPC Eight-Ball Trophy with the bottom placed team facing relegation to the BUSA-UPC Eight-Ball Shield in 2007-2008. There was all to play for!

With the groups being seeded based on previous performances at this event, there were few upsets as most of those fancying their chances of contending for the title qualified. In-form Strathclyde 1st sailed through their group to meet holders Essex 1st, supposedly weakened by the graduation of some of their Championship-winning team, who had only scraped through their group. Essex 1st seemed to click into gear though causing a surprise exit for Strathclyde 1st and ending the run of Nottingham 1st in the Quarter-finals, who had hoped to do the "Eight-ball and Nine-Ball Double!" Oxford 1st, unfamiliar with World Rules, made steady progress to the Quarter-finals before Gloucestershire 1st ended their plucky challenge. The team spirit of York 1st, supported by their 2nd and 3rd teams, carried them through the group and they ended the Welsh challenge by dispatching Cardiff 1st in the Quarter Finals. University of Ulster, Coleraine 1st appeared in ominous form as they raced through their group before making short work of the challenge of East Anglia 1st and Glasgow 1st.

Ulster Coleraine 1st continued their ascent with a demolition of York 1st 6-0 in the first Semi Final to the delight of their vocal crowd with Gloucestershire 1st comfortably ensuring that Essex 1st would not retain their crown by winning 6-2 in the other.

In the final, UUC, Coleraine 1st got out of the blocks early and raced into a 5-1 lead with Gloucestershire 1st rueing missed chances. A mini-revival from Gloucestershire kept the glimmer of hope flickering before debutant Aaron Bell held his nerve to dispatch the winning black and complete an Irish/British Double for University of Ulster, Coleraine.

In the BUSA-UPC Trophy, Durham 2nd, famous for their cheeky tableside 'banter', fought their way through to the final with two nerve-racking play-off wins against Birmingham 1st and York 2^{nds}. After the departure of Birmingham 1st, University of West of England 1st were the only 1st team left and they battled through against Queens 2nd and Essex 2nd. The final proved a largely one-sided affair with UWE 1st, captained by the passionate Dann Williams, taking the title back to the southwest.

Unlike the Team Championship, the BUSA-UPC Individual Championship did not completely follow the formbook. A shock early departure for holder and no. 1 seed, Mark McCulloch was supplemented with surprise exits for the fancied Manos Paspatis, Rob Cork and Glenn Spalling. As the big-names fell, the draw opened up for two-time winner Paul Edwards, as he sailed through to the Semi-Finals only dropping one frame. In the other half of the draw, Pritesh Patel, former BUSA Snooker Champion, made steady progress.

In the semi-finals, Patel faced Nick Whitelaw from Central Lancashire who had an excellent tournament on debut but Patel overcame the stern challenge to book his place in the final. Edwards, full of confidence, met the Durham 1st Captain Martin Pratt who harboured his own title ambitions. For the first time, Edwards was put under pressure as it went to a decider but he showed his class by making it through. In the final, Patel from University of Bristol 1st needed to stamp his authority early on but the chances did not fall for him and a relentless Edwards stormed to his third BUSA-UPC Individual Title with a 5-0 whitewash. This unprecedented feat will prove hard to equal due to the large field of competitors and the competition open only to those studying in higher-education.

Attention now switches to the UPC Eight-Ball Womens Championship alongside the BUSA-UPC Home Nations trials that will be contested on the weekend of 23-25 March 2007.

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For further information:

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