



www.upc-pool.org.uk

PRESS RELEASE

TITLE: York triumph at last at UPC Nine-ball Championship

Riley's Wavertree and Grand Central in Liverpool were treated to an extravaganza of pool in the recent UPC Nine-ball Championships, as University of York overcame University of Manchester to win their first University team title. Rich Wharton from Anglia Ruskin (Cambridge) created history by winning the Individual Championship and thereby becoming the first student to have won the Individual Championship in two separate University cue sport disciplines. With over 150 students participating, this event continues to boast the title of the biggest annual nine-ball event in the UK.

The team event used a format where the two highest placed 1st teams in each of the six groups progressed to the Championship play-offs with the best placed team not qualifying for the Championship going forward to the Trophy play-offs. Retaining the existing double-elimination formula in the groups, there was all to play for!

Championship/Trophy Groups

Last year's Champions Warwick 1st, with only one change in personnel from their title-winning team, made light work of their group to progress to the Championship play-offs with Imperial 1st. York 2nd, hoping to go one better than their Trophy silver medal last season, made an assured start by beating Keele 1st and Imperial 1st on their way to booking their Trophy play-off slot.

Warwick's opponents last year, Essex 1st, brought totally changed personnel to the tournament hoping to go one better this year but were eliminated after defeats to Manchester 1st and Leeds 2nd, who secured their Trophy play-off place as group winners. Manchester 1st progressed to the Championship play-off alongside Reading 1st.

York 1st, captained by Mike Walsh, outlined their Championship credentials by winning Group B without using their 'second life'. Cardiff 1st got the better of Oxford 1st in the one-loss section final, securing their Championship play-off berth in the process with Oxford 1st going forward to the Trophy play-off.

Edge Hill 1st ensured there was local interest when the business end of the Championship began on Sunday as they progressed as winners of their group with Bristol 1st captained by Merlin "Spotted White" Levine-Fisher also progressing. Defending Trophy Champions Warwick 2nd faced York 3rd in the one-loss final in

their group with a Trophy play-off place at stake. York 3rd were unable to repeat their feat of their opening group game victory against the same opponents with Warwick 2nd moving forward to the single elimination knockout phase.

Manchester 2nd, demonstrating a growth in strength and community within their pool club over the course of the weekend, won their group to reach the Trophy play-off. Leeds 1st and Bath 1st secured their Championship berths as the two highest placed 1st teams in their group.

Nottingham 1st, who have an established pedigree in this discipline, posted an assured group performance by progressing without losing a set. They were joined in the Championship play-off by Aston 1st with Bristol 2nd getting the better of Essex 2nd to go forward to the Trophy play-off.

Championship/Trophy Playoffs

Following their respective strong group performances, it was no surprise to see that Warwick 2nd and York 2nd were the two teams contesting the Trophy final for the second year running. Tom Wilson (York) struck the first blow by taking the opening set with a whitewash but Warwick were not ready to lie down and surrender their title. In the battle of the captains on the adjacent table, Warwick's Daniel Turner got the better of York's Andrew Myhill in a see-saw match to tie the match sets at 1-1. All attention switched to the third table with the match now dependent on the outcome of the set between Matt Robson (York) and Terence Cattrell (Warwick). With the set tied at 3-3, Terence claimed a pivotal rack to hand Warwick the initiative. When Matt failed to complete his run-out to take the match to the decider, Terence stepped in to hold his nerve to sink the 9-ball and ensure that Warwick retained the Trophy.

As we reached the business end of the Championship play-offs, it was still hard to predict a winner. Attention was instantly drawn to the seeds, with Essex 1st the only seed to fall at the group stage, but with additional challenges from the likes of Manchester, Reading and York the bookmaker's book was far from closed!

York 1st, so often disappointed as the nearly men in the UPC team events, stepped up to the plate to dispatch Aston 1st but almost fell to Reading 1st with York's Luke Fleet battling back from 0-3 down to win the deciding set 5-3 enabling them to reach their first UPC team final.

On the other side of the draw, drama unfolded at the semi final stage. Defending champions Warwick 1st, who had got the better of Bristol 1st, met Manchester 1st, who had secured their place at the expense of Leeds 1st and then Nottingham 1st.

In a classic encounter, Warwick 1st took the initiative with captain Jay Murphy securing the first set 5-2. As the match drew to a conclusion, Warwick 1st led Manchester 1st 4-3 on each of their respective tables with the knowledge that one more rack out of four would secure their final berth. When last year's Individual Champion Matt Bradley (Warwick) missed a routine 9-ball to take the match, a monumental shift in momentum ensued. Jonathon O'Gorman from Manchester 1st

capitalised by running out the set deciding rack, albeit with a fortuitous 3-9 combo, to divert all attention to the final table where Nick Clayton from Manchester 1st had just tied his set against Andrew Hulme to take the set and match into a deciding rack. After some tense opening exchanges in the decider, Andrew took control by hooking Nick. When Nick kicked the 6-ball down the long rail, landing plum on the 7-ball in the process, Warwick 1st's heads dropped. Nick duly held his nerve by running out to book their slot against York 1st in the final and send the defending champions crashing out.

York started the Championship final by taking the initiative as Luke Fleet, Mike Walsh and Fotis Demousis sailed into leads against their Manchester opponents. By the time Luke completed his set to put York one set from victory, Sanup Mistry and Jonathon O'Gorman (Manchester) had gained a foothold in both their matches to revitalise the vocal Manchester support. York, however, were not to be disappointed as they moved up a gear with the passionate Fotis Demousis sinking the winning 9-ball to give York their first ever UPC Nine-ball Championship.

Individual Championship

The UPC Individual Championship had a wide-open field of competitors eager to take the crown of Warwick's Matthew Bradley. The curse of the defending champion struck as Tom Wilson from York ended Matthew's defence at the first hurdle to ensure that the engravers would have a new name to add to the trophy.

With arguably the strongest field of entrants that have ever competed in the UPC Nine-ball Championship, individual-only entrants Kevin Lau (Huddersfield) and Rich Wharton (Anglia Ruskin) were joined in the semi-finals by Mike Walsh and Luke Fleet, who were part of the Championship winning York 1st team.

Rich Wharton, aiming to add to his UPC Eight-ball Individual Championship title in 2007-08, will thank the pool gods for a touch of fortune during his progression through his quarter-final but there was no luck involved in the semi-final as he got the better of Mike Walsh in the deciding rack to book his final berth. Luke Fleet, who consistently competes at the business end of UPC Individual Championships, used his experience to get the better of Kevin Lau in a one-sided affair.

In the final, Wharton took the early initiative to lead 3-1 as Fleet struggled to gain a foothold. As an assured cueist with a mainstream pool pedigree, Wharton was not in the mood to give an easy opportunity for Fleet to establish his rhythm and continued to dominate by winning the next two racks to win the UPC Nine-ball Individual Championship, creating University pool history in the process.

Next Event

Attention now switches to the BUCS-UPC Eight-Ball Championships that will be contested on the weekend of 25-28 February 2010 at Vauxhall Holiday Park, Great Yarmouth.

For further information:

Dr. Iorwerth Griffiths

Email: universitiespoolcouncil@yahoo.co.uk

Website: <http://www.upc-pool.org.uk>

Notes to editors:

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

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