

# Universities Pool Council

## PRESS RELEASE

### **Promoted Portsmouth emerge victorious in BUCS-UPC Eight-ball Pool Championships**

Vauxhall Holiday Park, Great Yarmouth was treated to an extravaganza of pool as Portsmouth University emerged triumphant in the BUCS-UPC Eight-ball Team Championship with a dominant performance against University of York in the Team Championship final. The BUCS-UPC Individual Championship, the biggest ever university pool individual event with over 400 entrants, was fiercely contested with James Murphy (Warwick) ending Lee Morris' hopes of retaining his title with a virtuoso performance in the final.

The format of the BUCS-UPC Eight-Ball Championships lies in accordance with all BUCS sporting events. In the Team Championship/Trophy, there were eight groups of five teams 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 challenge for the Team Trophy whilst the bottom placed team facing relegation to the BUCS-UPC Eight-Ball Shield in 2010-2011. There was all to play for!

[CueSport TV](#) were in attendance again to record a selection of team and individual matches. The commentated footage of the event is now available on their website.

### **Championship/Trophy Groups**

With the groups being seeded based on previous performances, there were few upsets as most of those fancying their chances of contending for the title qualified.

Defending champions Queen's University, Belfast 1st arrived on the east coast with the belief that their pre-tournament polishing of the trophy would be for their ongoing benefit. An unblemished performance in the group corroborated their expectations and they were joined in the knockout phase by Leeds 1st. Oxford 2nd got the better of the other two first teams in the group to reach the Trophy relegating UPC ever-presents Strathclyde 1st to next year's Shield in a shock demotion.

Last year's silver medallists University of Durham 1st held hopes of going one better this year but despite remaining unbeaten in the group, progressed in second place. Robert Gordon 1st, buoyed by IPA tourist Marc Fleming, topped the group to keep the Scottish flag flying with Reading 1st securing the Trophy berth.

York 2nd laid down their Trophy credentials by topping Group B with an unbeaten start. Ulster 1st, described by many as not on strong on paper as in

prior years, duly ripped up the 'paper' to progress to the Championship knockout phase alongside other Scottish hopeful St Andrews 1st.

Nottingham 1st dominated Group C without dropping a point, conceding only eight racks in the process. Cardiff 2nd picked up the pieces to qualify for the trophy berth with Plymouth 1st progressing in the second Championship slot.

Manchester 1st, who clearly arrived with high expectations due to their surprise of not being identified as a potential contender in the event preview, supplemented their strong performance in the UPC Nine-ball Championships by topping Group D. Elsewhere, the 1st teams demonstrated their strength in this group and although Cambridge 1st and Cardiff 1st went into the last group game level on points, Cambridge 1st progressed to the Championship after their better result in the last game.

When Portsmouth 1st got through the excitement of their arrival in Great Yarmouth on Thursday, they posted an assured start to their campaign with a 100% win record in their group matches. After their promotion from the Shield last year, it was clear that this team lead by Matt Champ, had aspirations of being the dark horse in the Championship draw. Oxford 1st joined their intervarsity rivals Cambridge in the last 16 of the Championship as the 'car-commercial inspired' Kent University 1st qualified for the quarter-final of the Trophy.

Warwick 1st, displaying their pedigree in this event, qualified for the Championship in top slot of Group G due to a better frame difference than Lancaster 1st. Both teams qualified for the Championship with Edge Hill 1st going forward to the Trophy.

In the final group, York 1st, winners of the recent UPC Nine-ball Championships, started their group in strong fashion but they did not have it all their own way. Manchester 2nd, captained by the passionate Daniel Kendal, upset the apple-cart with an unexpected 6-3 victory against York to secure their Trophy slot with Essex 1st securing their Championship space with a last gasp victory.

### ***Knockout Phase***

### **Championship**

As play commenced on Sunday, pressure in the arena of the Regency Room tangibly increased with the knowledge that any defeat now would lead to the ignition of the team's minibus for the trip home!

With nearly all matches at the Last 16 stage being close affairs, it demonstrated that the race to the Championship title was a wide-open affair. Surprise casualty Warwick 1st fell to Cambridge 1st with Portsmouth 1st requiring a shoot-out to get the better of Leeds 1st. St Andrews 1st progressed in the all Scottish clash with Robert Gordon 1st. As expected Manchester, Durham, Nottingham, York and defending champions Queen's avoided an exit by securing their Last 8 spots.

With a mouth watering quarter-final line up in place, York 1st enhanced their hopes of becoming the first team to do the "double" in a UPC season by

dispatching holders Queen's. Manchester 1st put paid to the challenge of St Andrews and in doing so, ensured only English-based teams remained in the competition. Although they required a play-off to secure victory, last year's silver medallists Durham 1st progressed at the expense of Cambridge with Portsmouth 1st completing the semi-final line-up via yet another shoot-out win.

The two semi-finals proved to be contrasting affairs. In the first semi-final, Portsmouth 1st, developing a reputation as shoot-out specialists, overcame Durham 1st in their third consecutive tie-break, to reach the Championship final in their first year participating at this level. In the other semi-final, the challenge of Manchester 1st ran out of steam as York dominated from start to finish.

In a tense final, Portsmouth 1st and York 1st traded early frames to leave the match nicely poised at 3-2 to Portsmouth. When York captain Mike Walsh let an opportunity slip to tie the match, Portsmouth seized the initiative to take a 5-3 lead. Fittingly, captain Matt Champ showed great composure to break and clear to win the BUCS-UPC Eight-ball Championship for University of Portsmouth. Play up Pompey!

### **Trophy**

In the BUCS-UPC Eight-ball Team Trophy, two 1st teams contested the final in the shape of Reading and Cardiff. Cardiff, who had earlier secured bragging rights by defeating their second team in this competition at the quarter-final stage, proved too strong for Reading 1st in the final to take the Trophy back across the Welsh border.

### **Shield**

The BUCS-UPC Eight-ball Shield provides a platform for new teams to compete alongside current teams that are not of Championship/Trophy status.

Bristol University 1st, who did not participate in the prior season event after previously competing in the Championship, showed their pedigree to reach the BUCS-UPC Eight-ball Shield final. Coventry University 1st, competing in a UPC pool event for the first time, demonstrated the openness of this competition by progressing through to face Bristol.

Coventry were in no mood to let the pressure of the final or cameras faze them as they held their nerve to defeat Bristol to lift the Shield.

Coventry, Bristol and all other Shield quarter-finalists (who include University of Glamorgan and Bangor with notable performances on debut) will be eligible for promotion to the Championship/Trophy in 2010/11.

### **Individual Championship**

In the BUCS-UPC Individual Championship, Lee Morris (West of England) arrived at Great Yarmouth determined to retain his title. Although he made light work of his first opponent when he entered the draw with the other seeds in the Last 128, he certainly was not having it all his own way as the pressures of being the defending champion, and the crowd it attracts, nearly

put paid to his challenge at the Last 64 stage as he required a decider to edge Daniel Bartram (Essex). With this wobble negotiated, Lee raised his game, sending an ominous message to his title rivals.

With over 400 names in the hat at the start of play on Thursday, still being involved at the latter stages on Saturday evening represented a fantastic achievement. In the semi-finals, Lee Morris got the better of the 2007-2008 Individual winner and close friend Rich Wharton (Anglia Ruskin) as the charismatic James Murphy (Warwick) had the edge over Barry Crossey (Ulster) who put in an excellent performance to reach the latter stages at his first attempt.

In the final, James Murphy took control in the early exchanges as Lee Morris struggled to gain a stronghold due to the clinical finishing of his opponent. Although Morris was a slight bookmaker's favourite before the match, Murphy was in no mood to let this opportunity slip and soared to a 5-2 lead. Although it would have taken a brave man to completely write-off Morris' chances, there was an air of inevitability about the outcome due to the way the match has unfolded and James Murphy showed no nerves in dispatching the winning black to hold aloft the BUCS-UPC Individual Championship for the first time.

### **Speed Pool Contest**

In a high-octane addition to the Eight-Ball Championships, University of Leeds, expedited by the tableside support of their talisman Glen Spalling, secured their place as inaugural winners by dispatching Queen's in the final showdown.

### **Next Event**

Attention now switches to the UPC Women's Eight-Ball Championship that will be contested on the weekend of 19-20 March 2010 and the Student Home Internationals Trials on 21 March 2010 (England) and 27 March 2010 (Scotland and Wales).

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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.