

## The AMATEUR CHAMPIONS of ENGLISH BILLIARDS

### Orme & Sons British Championship

Orme & Sons introduced the first national Championship for amateur players presenting a silver cup valued at £100, which would become the property of the player who held it for three consecutive years or won it six times. The first competition attracted 44 competitors who were drawn to compete at three locations. These were, London (which involved all competitors residing south of Warwickshire); Manchester, for players north of this county, or Ireland; and Dumfries, which was the venue for the Scottish entrants. The winners from the three sections played the closing rounds at Orme & Sons showrooms in Blackfriars Street, Manchester.

1888 Mar. H. A. O. Lonsdale bt Joseph Tither 500 - 356

After the initial contest to decide the champion in 1888, the competition reverted to a challenge basis, the winner being required to defend his title within three months of receiving a challenge.

1888 Dec. A. P. Gaskell bt H. A. O. Lonsdale 1500 - 1349

Mr. Rackets (Boston) was the next challenger for the title, but owing to illness was forced to concede the match, which was awarded to Gaskell.

1889 Mar. A. P. Gaskell - declared Champion.

1889 Jul. A. P. Gaskell bt E. W. Alabone 1500 - 1278

1890 Jan. A. P. Gaskell bt S. H. Fry 1500 - 1395

Three challenges were received for the next championship, and they played off for the right to meet Gaskell. From this date multiple challenges were common.

1890 May A. P. Gaskell bt N. Defries 1500 - 805

1890 Oct. W. D. Courtney bt A. P. Gaskell 1500 - 1141

1891 Jan. W. D. Courtney bt A. P. Gaskell 1500 - 971

1891 Apr. A. P. Gaskell bt W. D. Courtney 1500 - 1188

In defeating Courtney, Gaskell made a championship record break of 277 and by this sixth victory, took possession of the first Championship cup. Orme & Sons immediately announced their intention to supply another cup for the same value. Gaskell subsequently resigned the title in favour of Courtney, but early in 1892 Courtney considered that he would have insufficient time to defend the Championship and so he also resigned.

1892 Mar. Arthur Wisdom bt "Osbourne" 1500 - 1094

With no defending champion, invitations were made for an open tournament played on a "round-robin" principle at Orme & Son's Showrooms, Soho Square. The tournament commenced on 21st March 1892 with the following players taking part: J. A. Pennycook (Scotland), Arthur Wisdom (Southsea), Harry Hunter ("Hazard" - Manchester) and "Osbourne" (London). Arthur Wisdom took the title with wins against all his opponents, the deciding tie being against Osbourne

### The Billiard Association Championship

The Billiard Association introduced their Championship which was officially titled "The Amateur Championship of Great Britain". The trophy would be retained by any player who won it four times in succession, six times in all, or held it for three consecutive years.

#### Billiard Association : All-in Championship

1892 May Sam Christey bt Sidney Fry 1500 - 928

Christey was never again challenged to defend his title and the trophy became his property after three years. The dominance of Christie at the "All-in" game was soon recognised by the Billiard Association who now established a "Spot-barred" championship which allowed only one pot from the red spot.

#### Billiard Association : Spot-barred Championship

1893 Jan. A. H. Vahid bt Sam Christey 1500 - 1395

Vahid, after taking part in the last Orme & Son tournament in March, relinquished his amateur status and resigned his title as Billiard Association "Spot-barred" champion.

#### Orme & Sons : British Championship

1893 Feb. Arthur Wisdom bt Mr. Buxton 1500 - 852

After this contest Orme & Son's decided to leave the matter of the Amateur Championship in the hands of the Billiard Association. A contest was now arranged to decide who would take possession of the Orme & Sons championship cup.

1893 Mar. Sidney Fry bt Arthur Wisdom 1500 - 1239

Sidney Fry and A. Vahid, being the challengers, played a game of 1,000 up to decide who would play Wisdom. Fry won this match comfortably by 398 points. As Wisdom had already won the title twice, special condition were applied to the final. In order to take the trophy Fry must first defeat Wisdom in a match of best of three 1,000 up and then a further game of 1,500 up would decide the owner of the cup. Fry defeated Wisdom in the best of three match by 11 points and 315 points respectively. On 16th March 1893 Fry then won the 1,500 up game by 261 points to take the title and the trophy

#### Billiard Association : Spot-barred Championship

With no defending champion, an open competition was arranged which had seven entries. The heats were 1,000 up and the final 1,500 up played on a knockout basis.

1894 May H. Mitchell bt A. Vinson 1500 - 1464

1894 Dec. W. T. Maughan bt H. Mitchell 1500 - 1202

1896 Mar. S. H. Fry bt W. T. Maughan 1500 - 1430

### Billiard Association Championship

After a lapse of several years the contest was again held under the revised rules of billiards, which had abolished the spot and push strokes.

1899 Mar. Arthur Wisdom bt Sidney Fry 1500 - 1297

1900 Mar. Sidney Fry bt Arthur Wisdom 1500 - 1428

By his absence on a tour of Australia, Sidney Fry was deemed to have resigned his title and ten entrants now competed for the championship.

1901 Feb. Sam Christey bt W. S. Jones 1500 - 1305

1902 Feb. Albert Good bt Sam Christey 2000 - 1689

1902 Oct. Albert Good bt A. J. Browne 2000 - 1669

1903 Mar. Arthur Wisdom bt Albert Good 2000 - 1783

Due to a family bereavement, Arthur Wisdom did not defend the title and seven players competed to find a new champion.

1903 Dec. Sam Christey bt Charles V. Diehl 2000 - 1314

After his victory, Christey resigned the title amid questions about his amateur status. Eleven players entered a competition to find a new champion.

1904 Mar. Walter Lovejoy bt Albert Good 2000 - 1733

### United Kingdom Championship

In 1905 the Billiard Association threw the Amateur Championship open to the whole Kingdom. Separate qualifying competitions were held initially in Ireland, and subsequently Scotland and Wales.

1905 Mar. Albert Good bt Geo. Heginbottom 2000 - 1739

1906 Mar. Ernest Breed bt Albert Good 2000 - 1620

Ernest Breed subsequently resigned the title to become a professional player.

1907 Mar. Harry Virr bt Jack Nugent 2000 - 1986

1908 Mar. Harry Virr bt Geo. Heginbottom 2000 - 1841

1909 Maj. H. L. Fleming bt Harry Virr 2000 - 1501

1910 H. A. O. Lonsdale bt Major Fleming 2000 - 1882

The policy of the champion being allowed to defend the his title on home territory was discontinued, and the BA&CC informed Lonsdale that he must now defend his title in Dublin amongst the pool of national winners. Lonsdale, who had sacrificed many days from his busy schedule to win the 1910 title in Scotland, was less than pleased at this decision and declined to compete in the 1911 event.

1911 Mar. Harry Virr bt Major Fleming 3000 - 2716

1912 Mar. Harry Virr bt Major Fleming 3000 - 2993

1913 Mar. Harry Virr bt Jack Nugent 3000 - 1956

1914 Feb. Harry Virr bt Jack Nugent 3000 - 1962

### Amateur Championship of English Billiards

In December 1914, Harry Virr announced that he would not be defending his title. The competition now changed to allow entries from recognised champions of the commonwealth counties, becoming the "Championship of English Billiards"

1915 Albert Good bt Geo. Heginbottom 2000 - 1444

1916 Sydney Fry bt Geo. Heginbottom 2000 - 1417

1917 J. Graham-Symes bt Sydney Fry 2000 - 1540

1918 J. Graham-Symes bt "Osbourne" 2000 - 1121

1919 Sidney Fry bt J. Graham-Symes 2000 - 1729

1920 Sidney Fry bt Willie Marshall 3000 - 2488

Fry made the proposal to the Billiard Association that the Champion should play through the competition in subsequent years. He voluntarily did this for the 1920 event. Prior to this date, the draw for the championship had always been "arranged" to effectively seed the better players. The newly formed BA&CC rejected this principle and from this date a random draw was made.

1921 Feb. Sidney Fry bt J. Graham-Symes 3000 - 2591

The 1921 event saw the first official overseas challenger when New Zealand enter their amateur champion, J. R. Hooper.

1922 J. Graham-Symes bt William McLeod 3000 - 2661

1923 William McLeod bt J. Graham-Symes 3000 - 2867

1924 Mar. William McLeod bt J. Graham-Symes 3000 - 2862

In 1924, for the first time, preliminary qualifying competitions were held at regional centres. Qualifying matches were reduced from 2,000 to 1,000 up.

1925 Sidney Fry bt Willie Marshall 3000 - 2778

As an experiment in 1925, the new "Janus" cotton cloth was used for all championship matches.

### English Amateur Championship

The competition for 1926, excluded entries by Scottish, Irish or Colonial players and consequently the event became the "English Amateur Billiards Championship". Composition balls were also used for the first time, replacing ivory, and the woollen cloth was reintroduced.

1926 Mar. Joe Earlam bt Cecil M. Helyer 3000 - 1751  
 1927 Feb. Laurie Steeples bt Horace Coles 3000 - 2449

*With amateur play beginning to specialise on red-ball play, the rules were changed to restrict consecutive hazards to a maximum of 25. At 18 years of age, Steeples became the youngest holder of the championship.*

1928 Feb. Arthur Wardle bt Albert Good 3000 - 2189

*Wardle made two Amateur Championship records by averaging 55 points during a session, and compiling two breaks of over 200 (239 and 266) in a single day's play.*

1929 Horace Coles bt Sydney Lee 3000 - 2215

*During the 1929 competition Maurice Boggin made an amateur record break of 349. Coles also set up new records in one of his matches, by making six century breaks in a single heat of 2,000 up, and compiling two breaks of over 200 (205 and 220 unfinished) in a single session. His average of 83 for this session was also an amateur record.*

1930 Laurie Steeples bt Horace Coles 3000 - 2462

*In 1930, previous champions were exempt from playing in the qualifying rounds. However the entry of Arthur Wardle was refused due to questions about his amateur status. Laurie Steeples set a new amateur record with a break of 354 also making a record sessional average of 83.5 His match average of 34.0 in the final, was also a championship record.*

1931 Sydney Lee bt Maurice Boggin 3793 - 3134

*From 1931 the final match was contested over 12 hours play rather than a fixed number of points. Laurie Steeples set up a record by making 65 consecutive cannons, the previous best in an amateur championship game having been 41 by F. W. Wood.*

1932 Sydney Lee bt Frank Edwards 4674 - 3508

1933 Sydney Lee bt Horace Coles 4458 - 3237

1934 Sydney Lee bt Frank Edwards 3929 - 3509

1935 Horace Coles bt Maurice Boggin 3707 - 3272

1936 Joe Thompson bt Herbert Beetham 3179 - 3149

1937 Kingsley Kennerley bt Joe Thompson 4703 - 3633

1938 Kingsley Kennerley bt Joe Thompson 4714 - 3925

1939 Kingsley Kennerley bt Arthur Spencer 4423 - 3264

1940 Kingsley Kennerley bt Arthur Spencer 3931 - 3749

1941-45 No contests.

1946 Mendel Showman bt Herbert Beetham 3077 - 2539

1947 Joe Thompson bt Arthur Hibbert 4104 - 3185

1948 Joe Thompson bt Harold Terry 5202 - 2816

1949 Frank Edwards bt Joe Tregoning 4813 - 3297

1950 Frank Edwards bt Joe Tregoning 4968 - 3385

1951 Frank Edwards bt Joe Tregoning 5015 - 3791

1952 Leslie Driffield bt Herbert Beetham 2894 - 2793

1953 Leslie Driffield bt Frank Edwards 4136 - 3016

1954 Leslie Driffield bt Frank Edwards 4165 - 3030

1955 Frank Edwards bt Alf Nolan 4194 - 3206

1956 Frank Edwards bt Leslie Driffield 3395 - 3327

1957 Leslie Driffield bt Frank Edwards 4464 - 2894

1958 Leslie Driffield bt Jack Wright 4483 - 2587

1959 Leslie Driffield bt Herbert Beetham 4968 - 3385

1960 Herbert Beetham bt Reg Wright 3426 - 2289

1961 Herbert Beetham bt Reg Wright 4060 - 2043

1962 Leslie Driffield bt Herbert Beetham 3412 - 2993

1963 Herbert Beetham bt Norman Dagley 4052 - 2759

1964 Alf Nolan bt Leslie Driffield 3455 - 2188

1965 Norman Dagley bt Alf Nolan 2983 - 2757

1966 Norman Dagley bt Alf Nolan 3018 - 2555

1967 Leslie Driffield bt Clive Everton 3395 - 2328

1968 Mark Wildman bt Clive Everton 2652 - 2540

1969 Jack Karnehm bt Mark Wildman 3722 - 2881

1970 Norman Dagley bt Alf Nolan 4467 - 2372

*In 1971 the duration of the final was reduced to 10 hours.*

1971 Norman Dagley bt W. J. Dennison 3672 - 2019

1972 Norman Dagley bt Alf Nolan 3115 - 2469

1973 Norman Dagley bt Clive Everton 2804 - 1976

1974 Norman Dagley bt Alf Nolan 2961 - 2677

1975 Norman Dagley bt Bob Close 2917 - 2693

1976 Bob Close bt Clive Everton 2413 - 2194

1977 Bob Close bt Herbert Beetham 2951 - 2031

1978 Norman Dagley bt Bob Close 4611 - 2309

1979 Norman Dagley bt Ken Shirley 3311 - 1549

1980 Norman Dagley bt Clive Everton 2825 - 2172

1981 Norman Dagley bt Bob Close 3805 - 2190

1982 Norman Dagley bt Bob Close 4208 - 2169

1983 Norman Dagley bt Bob Close 3503 - 1586

1984 Norman Dagley bt Bob Close 3412 - 1757

*After establishing a record 15 wins in the Championship, Norman Dagley joined the professional ranks.*

1985 Bob Close bt Ken Shirley 2493 - 2060

*Moving to a new format, the championship was contested as best of five games of 300 up.*

1986 Ken Shirley bt Mike Russell 3 - 1

1987 Dave Edwards bt Peter Gilchrist 2427 - 2224

1988 Peter Gilchrist bt Dave Edwards 3379 - 1954

1989 No contest

1990 Martin Goodwill bt Peter Shelley 2371 - 1337

1991 Martin Goodwill bt Stephen Crosland 2357 - 1380

1992 David Causier bt Dennis Watson 3259 - 2072

### EABA Championship

*Following the collapse of the B&SCC the Championship was continued by the English Amateur Billiards Association, which was formed for that purpose.*

1993 David Causier bt Martin Goodwill 1179 - 1028

1994 Martin Goodwill bt David Causier 1227 - 1105

### EASB Championship

*In 1994, EASB decided to run a rival Championship. This attracted few entries and the experiment was not repeated.*

1994 Peter Sheehan bt Brian Harvey 2019 - 1631

### EABA Championship

*A truce was declared between the EABA and EASB, and the competition reverted to a single championship controlled by the EABA*

1995 David Causier bt Chris Shutt 1783 - 1568

1996 Chris Shutt bt Terry Ward 1609 - 938

1997 Paul Bennett bt Terry Ward 1013 - 897

1998 Paul Bennett bt Neal Rewhorn 1312 - 696

1999 Apr Lee Lagan bt Phillip Welham 1658 - 963

2000 Apr Phillip Welham bt Peter Shelley 1157 - 930

2001 Mar Lee Lagan bt Darren Kell 1536 - 864

2002 Mar Lee Lagan bt Stephen Crosland 1445 - 1102