



Dear Players

As 2019 begins, I would like to start by wishing each and everyone all the very best for a most successful upcoming year, together with good wishes for a Happy, Healthy & Prosperous New Year.

Some of you would have already noticed that our calendar is beginning to fill, and I'm sure you're aware of some new events, which makes it sound like a most exciting year ahead. The 10-Ball World Championship has been revived courtesy of the Predator Group, an organisation that has been a great supporter for many years, especially for many players. Their involvement may also lead to another one or two events.

As you all know, the new US Open is on the calendar which will be offering a big increase in prize money over previous events. This is only possible because of the involvement of Matchroom Sports. Matchroom are very keen about their involvement in Pool, and have been great supporters of the WPA for many years which has been greatly appreciated. Following the outstanding success of the Mosconi Cup in London last month, crowds of 2,500 every night in the Alexandra Palace, Matchroom have offered a 50% increase in the prize money for this year's Mosconi Cup at the Mandalay Bay Hotel in Las Vegas, same venue as the US Open. They are also looking at possibly holding another new event, but nothing is confirmed at this stage. The World Pool Masters and World Cup of Pool are also back on the calendar.

Pat Fleming is to continue with his US International Open 9-Ball Championship, and he also is interested in staging a second event, but nothing confirmed at this stage. As you know, Pat took over the running of the US Open from Barry Behrman who had held that event for more than 40 years, until it was sold by the family to Matchroom. That's when Pat decided to continue at the same venue and period of the year, and started the US International. Pat runs a great tournament and has the respect of everyone, particularly the players. Long may he continue.

Qatar will again host the men's 9-Ball World Championship in December, another long-standing and loyal supporter of our sport. Before they took over the world championship, they used to host the Qatar Open. The prize money offered by Qatar is quite high by pool standards, as you must consider the money is paid tax-free.



Russia has also confirmed the Kremlin Cup, and Japan will again host their All Japan Open, the longest running event in pool.

China will again host the China Open (men & women), and hopefully there may be another new event played there this year. They will also host the women's 9-Ball World Championship.

As we all know, there is always speculation about pool getting into the Olympic Games. The latest I can tell you about this is the following. The WCBS is holding an exhibition tournament in Paris on 11th and 12th March this year, called the World Team Trophy. It will consist of 8 teams, 4 men and 4 women played in their own division. Each team will have 3 players, a pool player, a carom player and a snooker player. France as the host will have a full team of French players, and the other 6 teams will be comprised of players from 18 different countries. In November last year, we have a Press Conference inside the Eiffel Tower to launch this event. It was very well received, with 35 or more media personnel in attendance. We had three world champion players there representing each discipline, Jasmin Ouschan for pool, plus Florian Kohler the great trick shot artist who treated everyone to a spectacular show on the table that had been taken up the Tower for the occasion.

At the March event we expect some official from the IOC to attend and this will give them the opportunity to witness first hand what billiard sports would have to offer an Olympic Games. We of course hope to impress them enough that we will get included onto the programme for the 2024 Paris Olympic Games.

And the final bit of news is something that we at the WPA are very excited about. The WPA will be holding its own ranking event for the first time. This will be known as the WPA Players Championship and will be staged in Las Vegas just prior to the US Open in April.

Details on website: <https://wpapool.com/wpa-players-championship/>

We look to seeing that it may be possible that we can do this in other venues as well, in Europe and Asia to begin, but first of all have to see how everything goes with our inaugural event. We especially chose these dates (12-19 April) so that it may also benefit players, especially international players, who were going to attend the US Open. Here you will be able to arrive earlier than you normally would for an event, have an event to play in that will give you good match practice, earn some money to help offset your costs, and of course another bonus of earning some ranking points to help you climb upwards on the world rankings list.



Yes, we understand that playing in a poolroom is not ideal, but we don't have enough budget to hire a hotel/casino ballroom unless we were to use the prize money to pay for it. I'm sure I know which option you would prefer on whether to spend the money on a venue, or having good prize money and play in a pool room. This is of course no ordinary poolroom, I'm sure most of you are familiar with Griff's Bar & Billiards in Vegas. It is a very well appointed venue, and features top quality Diamond tables with nice tight pockets. We also have the assistance of CSI for the producing of the event. As you know, CSI are very professional and produce a number of quality events each year.

Anyway, good luck to all, we wish you all the very best for great success during the coming season. I look forward to seeing you all somewhere.

Regards

Ian Anderson  
WPA President