

World Snooker Championship 2017 FAQ

Written by Warren Pilkington, 14th April 2017. Will be updated as the tournament progresses where possible.

Tournament

What is the World Snooker Championship?

The World Snooker Championship traditionally takes place in April and early May over a 17 day period with the final day being on the May Bank Holiday Monday. This year's tournament starts Saturday 15th April and finishes Monday 1st May 2017.

Who is the defending champion?

Mark Selby is the defending champion, who defeated Ding Junhui 18-14. It was Mark's second World Championship title, having previously won it in 2014.

Where is the tournament held?

The tournament is held at the Crucible Theatre in Sheffield, and has been since 1977. It is often referred to as "the home of snooker" by fans, commentators and players alike. This year it's the 40th anniversary of the tournament being held there (although of course it will be the 41st actual tournament)

Why The Crucible Theatre?

When promoter Mike Watterson's wife saw a play at this intimate theatre in the round, she recommended it to him as an ideal venue. The closeness of the crowd to the stage (notably with two tables) and the 980 seated capacity gives it that special aura.

What is the Crucible Curse?

Since the World Championship has been held at the Crucible Theatre, no first time World Champion has gone on to win the championship the following year. This is known as the Crucible Curse.

The closest anyone has come to breaking the Curse was Joe Johnson, who after winning in 1986 against Steve Davis lost to Steve Davis in the 1987 final 18-14.

Who qualifies for the tournament automatically?

The top 16 ranked players at the final event ranking cut off (the China Open) will qualify. You can keep an eye on this page for the provisional rankings – the top 16 go to the Crucible:

<http://www.wpbsa.com/rankings/latest-provisional-seedings/>

If the defending champion was outside the top 16 they would qualify as defending champion, and would also be a situation where it wouldn't automatically be the top 16. However the defending champion is Mark Selby, by far and away world number one, so this does not apply.

How do the remaining players qualify?

As of 2015 and onwards, the qualification has been opened up to 128 players, and this can include any former champion who wishes to try to qualify, even if they are outside the top 128 in the world. There will be three qualifying rounds (all rounds best of 19 frames, first to 10) which will then leave 16 players left to qualify.

Where and when are the qualifying rounds held?

The qualifying rounds are held at the Ponds Forge Sports Centre, located in the centre of Sheffield, between 5th and 12th April.

How does the draw work?

For the qualifying rounds: in the first round normally a player ranked between 17 and 80 will play a player ranked 81 to 144. The remaining two rounds will narrow this down to 16.

The qualifying draw is available here:

http://www.worldsnooker.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/World_Championship_2017_Qualifiers_Draw.pdf

For the final stages: the first round will see the 16 automatic qualifiers against 16 who have fought through the qualifying rounds. This draw is done after the qualifying rounds have completed and is a random draw (16 automatic qualifiers in one bag, the remaining 16 in the other.) The draw is scheduled normally for two days before the start of the tournament, ie: Thursday 13th April 2017.

The draw for the final stages is available here (minus the qualifiers):

<http://www.worldsnooker.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Click-here-for-the-draw.pdf>

What dates and formats are the rounds in the tournament?

First round (best of 19 frames – first to 10) - Saturday 15th to Thursday 20th April

Second round (best of 25 frames – first to 13) – Thursday 20th April to Monday 24th April

Quarter final (best of 25 frames – first to 13) – Tuesday 25th and Wednesday 26th April

Semi-final (best of 33 frames – first to 17) – Thursday 27th April to Saturday 29th April

Final (best of 35 frames – first to 18) – Sunday 30th April and Monday 1st May

A two table set up is in play up to and including the quarter finals, the semi-finals onward is one table.

The format for the final stages is here:

<http://www.worldsnooker.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Click-here-for-the-format.pdf>

So which is table one and which is table two?

Table one is the right hand table as you look on the television – table two the left. Table one houses the number one seed and the top half of the draw, table two houses the number two seed and the bottom half of the draw.

What dates and times are the sessions?

For most of the tournament, there are three session times each day: 10am, 2.30pm and 7pm. The exceptions to this are Thursday 20th April, Monday 24th April and Thursday 27th April (1pm and 7pm sessions) and both days of the final, Sunday 30th April and Monday 1st May (2pm and 7pm sessions)

It's worth noting that in recent years the evening sessions of the final have been played at 7pm instead of 8pm. This is due to many late night finishes of the final itself and thus otherwise frustrating television audiences who may have gone to bed before the final concluded.

How many frames are played in each session?

Based on a potential maximum number of frames played per round, the split is like this:

First round: 9 in first session, 10 in second session

Second round and quarter final: 8 in first session, 8 in second session, 9 in third session

Semi-final: 8 in first session, 8 in second session, 8 in third session, 9 in fourth session

Final: 8 in first session, 9 in second session, 8 in third session, 10 in fourth session

In reality the final session of each round may have less than the allotted maximum number of frames. On rare occasions a second round or quarter final match has been completed without a final session being required (one player has to win 13-3 or better)

I want to see a certain player. When do I need to watch?

More becomes clear once the draw is made. About the only constant between every year of the tournament is that the defending champion and number 1 seed plays Table 1 on the first day at the 10am and 7pm sessions. So for this year, that's Mark Selby.

World Snooker will also usually publicise the order of play on their website (as well as draw sheets once the draw is made) which will give you a good idea of who is on when.

So for the first round, who will I see when?

The first round order of play for the top 16 breaks down as below – the qualifiers will be drawn at random against them accordingly. Note * means to a finish:

Saturday 15th April

10am - Table 1: Mark Selby v Fergal O'Brien, Table 2: Anthony McGill v Stephen Maguire

2.30pm - Table 1: Ronnie O'Sullivan v Gary Wilson, Table 2: Kyren Wilson v David Grace

7pm - Table 1: Mark Selby v Fergal O'Brien *, Table 2: Anthony McGill v Stephen Maguire *

Sunday 16th April

10am - Table 1: Shaun Murphy v Yan Bingtao, Table 2: Kyren Wilson v David Grace *

2.30pm - Table 1: Ronnie O'Sullivan v Gary Wilson *, Table 2: Stuart Bingham v Peter Ebdon

7pm - Table 1: Marco Fu v Luca Brecel, Table 2: Mark Allen v Jimmy Robertson

Monday 17th April

10am - Table 1: Ding Junhui v Zhou Yeulong, Table 2: Stuart Bingham v Peter Ebdon *

2.30pm - Table 1: Shaun Murphy v Yan Bingtao *, Table 2: John Higgins v Martin Gould

7pm - Table 1: Marco Fu v Luca Brecel *, Table 2: Mark Allen v Jimmy Robertson *

Tuesday 18th April

10am - Table 1: Liang Wenbo v Stuart Carrington, Table 2: John Higgins v Martin Gould *

2.30pm - Table 1: Ding Junhui v Zhou Yeulong *, Table 2: Judd Trump v Rory McLeod

7pm - Table 1: Liang Wenbo v Stuart Carrington *, Table 2: Ali Carter v Graeme Dott

Wednesday 19th April

10am - Table 1: Ryan Day v Xiao Goudong, Table 2: Judd Trump v Rory McLeod *

2.30pm - Table 1: Neil Robertson v Noppon Saengkham, Table 2: Ali Carter v Graeme Dott *

7pm - Table 1: Ryan Day v Xiao Guodong *, Table 2: Barry Hawkins v Tom Ford

Thursday 20th April

1pm - Table 1: Neil Robertson v Noppon Saengkham *

7pm - Table 2: Barry Hawkins v Tom Ford *

How does the prize money break down?

If a Top 16 seeded player is eliminated in the first round, he still receives the prize money, but this does not count towards the prize money world rankings. The prize money for the 2017 tournament is as follows.

Qualifying round one: No money awarded

Qualifying round two: £8,000

Qualifying round three: £12,000

First round (last 32): £16,000

Second round (last 16): £25,000

Quarter finals: £37,500

Semi finals: £75,000

Runner up: £160,000

Winner: £375,000

Who is refereeing the World Snooker Championship?

The referees will most likely be Paul Collier, Olivier Marteel, Brendan Moore, Jan Verhaas, Colin Humphries, Terry Camilleri, Marcel Eckardt and Zheng Weili. Jan Verhaas is refereeing the final this year.

How likely will we see a maximum 147 break at this year's championship?

Seeing a maximum 147 break at the Crucible is the Holy Grail. In the forty years that the championship has been held at the Crucible, there have been only ten maximum breaks, so statistically that's around a 25% chance of it happening.

Add that to the fact that there's only ever been six players who have made a maximum break there and you start to realise how special that is.

It's also worth noting that if Ding Junhui were to make a 147 break, he would become the first player to achieve a 147 break in all three Triple Crown events (UK Championship, Masters and World Championship). Ding made a 147 at the 2007 Masters and the 2008 UK Championship, so has been on this cusp of this achievement for some time.

So when were and who compiled the previous maximum 147 breaks?

Cliff Thorburn (1983, v Terry Griffiths, Table One, first ever at the Crucible)
Jimmy White (1992, v Tony Drago, Table One, longest period between maximums)
Stephen Hendry (1995, v Jimmy White, semi-final, only time ever on a one table setup)
Ronnie O'Sullivan (1997, v Mick Price, Table One, fastest ever maximum of 5 minutes 20 seconds)
Ronnie O'Sullivan (2003, v Marco Fu, Table Two, went on to lose the match)
Mark Williams (2005, v Robert Milkins, Table Two, to clinch the match)
Ronnie O'Sullivan (2008, v Mark Williams, Table One, to clinch the match)
Ali Carter (2008, v Peter Ebdon, Table Two, first time two maximums in major ranking tournament)
Stephen Hendry (2009, v Shaun Murphy, Table Two, went on to lose the match)
Stephen Hendry (2012, v Stuart Bingham, Table One, first time a maximum on the first day's play)

Only Ronnie O'Sullivan and Stephen Hendry (three each) have made more than one maximum 147 at the Crucible. Every single player who has made a maximum 147 at the Crucible has been at least a finalist twice or better. Only Jimmy White and Ali Carter have failed to win the title.

Watching On Television

How do I watch the World Snooker Championship in the UK?

If you are a UK based viewer, you have four options:

Freeview: via BBC2, BBC1 and BBC Red Button (Red Button+ for Smart TVs)

Satellite and cable: as Freeview plus Eurosport 1 and Eurosport 2

Smart / connected TVs: via the BBC Sport app

Internet: via the BBC Sport website

How come the BBC broadcasts sometimes only show one table?

Mainly because of a cut back in the BBC Red Button broadcasts. On Freeview there used to be two BBC Red Button broadcast channels so you could have both tables on those channels. What tends to happen now is if one of the tables is being shown live on BBC2, the red button will show the other table.

If there's only red button coverage for Freeview viewers, one table is normally chosen, and if that match finishes early, coverage then switches to the remaining table if play is still ongoing.

If you are a Freeview only viewer, it may be well worth seeing if your television is a Smart TV with the BBC sport app, and even some Freeview set top boxes (such as the trusty Humax HDR-FOX T2) have that same app.

Who will be presenting and commentating on BBC and Eurosport?

BBC's main presenter is Hazel Irvine, universally praised by most fans for doing a very good job. Their backup presenter is Jason Mohammad. Normally they will have the likes of John Parrott, Stephen Hendry, Ken Doherty and Steve Davis in the studio (for the earlier rounds this is within the Winter Gardens in the centre of Sheffield)

BBC's commentary team normally consists of (as well as Parrott, Hendry, Doherty and Davis above) Willie Thorne, John Virgo, Terry Griffiths and Dennis Taylor.

Eurosport's commentary team includes Neal Foulds, Dave Hendon, Mike Hallett, Philip Studd and Joe Johnson. Foulds and Hendon are often very highly regarded as excellent commentators.

What's the BBC snooker theme?

The current theme is a revision of the classic theme "Drag Racer", remixed by Timo Baker of T Minus 50. The original "Drag Racer", by the Doug Wood Band, is the iconic (and some would also say "proper") snooker theme, and is still often heard in between frames on the BBC Red Button.

If you're after the original "Drag Racer" on CD you can get it on the compilation album The Great Sporting Experience, which has thirty original sports themes from TV and radio. It also has Rugby Special, London Marathon, both versions of Match of the Day, Ski Sunday, Darts, Wimbledon and Superstars, so it's a pretty essential purchase if you're a fan. You can buy via Amazon here - <http://www.amazon.co.uk/Great-Sporting-Experience-Various-Artists/dp/B000026KKW>

Who are those people I always see on the telly every year?

Ah, the regulars. These are generally season ticket holders who go to every single session of the World Championship. They're normally in the same seat for most if not all of the tournament and are usually mentioned during commentary from time to time. The two most well known ones are:

Brian Wright – he is recognisable for his various Coventry City retro football shirts. He also is a fanatical England football supporter and takes a toy Shrek with an England shirt everywhere (aka Rooney Shrek.) During the middle Saturday of the 2012 tournament he proposed live on the Crucible floor to his girlfriend Lisa (she did say yes thankfully!)

David Jackson – he comes all the way from Australia to watch the snooker and has done for almost twenty years. He's mainly front row on Table Two and normally has another regular sat with him. The Sheffield Star did a piece on him in 2014 - <http://www.thestar.co.uk/features/aussie-david-is-sheffield-snooker-loopy-1-6597340>

Watching Live At The Crucible Theatre

How do I get tickets?

Tickets are normally available from three different outlets:

The Crucible Theatre box office – <http://www.cruciblesnooker.com> - 0844 6565 147

See Tickets – <http://www.seetickets.com/>

Viagogo – <http://www.viagogo.com/>

However, Viagogo only deals with re-sales and as a result the prices are usually a lot more expensive than the first two options. If at all possible it is highly recommended to use the Crucible box office.

When do tickets go on sale?

For the 2017 tournament, tickets went on sale the day of the final sessions of the 2016 final.

Tickets for the 2018 tournament will go on sale Monday 1st May (the final day of the 2017 final.)

Do tickets sell quickly?

In recent years, yes they do, notably for the final especially. If you wish to be close as possible to the front rows, the advice generally is to purchase early (note the price changes below)

What about the ticket price changes?

From 2017, the ticketing prices changed so that the front four rows were allocated as “premium” tickets, charging almost double the standard ticket price. This was primarily move to derail the regulars and season ticket holders so that the front row would not be occupied by the same people, but it has angered many who may have gone for a front row seat for one session alone. The premium price includes a programme and headphones, but most fans will have the latter anyway.

I've seen session tickets sell out and then some more tickets go on sale. Why is this?

This is due to The Crucible Box Office's very fair resale scheme. If for any reason someone wishes to re-sell a ticket, they return it to the box office. The Crucible then puts it back on sale and if the ticket is re-sold, the original purchaser gets their money back minus any booking fee.

Closer to the tournament, this often does happen (notably if certain players are eliminated at the qualifying round stages). During the tournament this can also happen if a player is knocked out and friends and family have purchased for later rounds. Sometimes you can actually purchase a ticket that was offered for resale on the day of the actual session.

I have a ticket for a session. Where will I be sat?

When booking a ticket via the Crucible website, the online seating plan shown is as you walk into the theatre (opposite view to the TV) - so Centre Left is Table One, Centre Right is Table Two. (the tables are indicated before you click Buy for each match which should also help)

For the two table set up, Table One are the higher numbered seats and Table Two are the lower numbered seats. The Crucible has five doors which lead you to the seating areas – Blue, Orange and Red are for Table One, Red, Purple and Green are for Table Two.

Row A is the front row and normally sells quickly. Row P is the furthest row back, but even then it's not a huge distance away from the tables due to the way that the theatre is set up. The seating plan (as shown from the TV view) is here -

http://cdn4.worldticketshop.com/media/images/upload/location_map_4343_1336746070.png

Where and when can I see the players?

The players often enter and exit via the stage door, on Norfolk Street, at the side of the theatre. Sometimes they'll even go in the front entrance. It's not an exact science when to spot them though, so keep your eyes peeled. You will see some wait by the stage door to get autographs and pictures etc. The players can arrive on foot (if staying in Sheffield itself) or by taxi if staying outside Sheffield.

It's well worth noting that some players are more accommodating than others and sometimes if they are in the zone it's best leaving them be, wishing them good luck as they enter.

Where can I see Hazel Irvine and the BBC team?

Their studio is in the Winter Gardens and they then move inside the Crucible from the semi-finals onward. From the front of the Crucible Theatre, it's straight ahead of you across Tudor Square. They'll often broadcast in the afternoons, and occasionally they'll interview players too.

What facilities are available inside the Crucible Theatre?

There is a full bar available, and also a few pop up stalls that sell coffee and soft drinks. There is also a merchandising stall selling ear pieces, t-shirts, cues etc.

Please note that you are not allowed to take alcoholic drinks into the theatre - generally only tea/coffee cups with lids on, and soft drink bottles.

Can I enter / exit the theatre during a session?

The Crucible staff are normally instructed to keep the doors closed in between frames, and will only open them for a short time in between frames. Generally you will only be allowed to enter / exit the theatre either in between frames or at the mid-session interval, for your table only (in a two table setup). There's normally a fifteen minute mid-session interval which is usually enough time to go to the toilet and get a soft drink or coffee. If you are planning to have a pint, you're most likely going to miss one frame of the session.

In a two table setup, my table has finished play for the session. Can I watch the other table?

If the other table is still playing their session, normally the dividing partition is lifted at the end of the frame that the players are playing (normally in agreement with the match referee) and so you can stay in your seat and watch. The electronic scoreboards above the tables will update you in any case, so you will be able to work out if it's in the final frame of that session or not. On very rare occasions in a break of play during a frame, the referee can instruct that the dividing partition be lifted earlier.

How far is the Crucible Theatre from Sheffield train station?

Not that far. When you leave the station front, follow the Cutting Edge sculpture uphill to a pedestrian set of lights with the Showroom cinema on the opposite left side of the road. Cross the lights and go straight up the hill towards Sheffield Hallam University. Cross a pedestrian set of lights and go uphill along Surrey Street. Tudor Square with the Crucible is to the right.

Your public transport alternative if you find the hill steep is to take the Sheffield tram from the train station. Take the purple line (terminus: Cathedral) or blue line (terminus: Malin Bridge), and get off at either Castle Square or Cathedral. Both stops are close to the Crucible.

I have a ticket for an evening session. Can I get the train home late in the evening?

It depends how far you have to go. The last trains back to major towns and cities from Sheffield during the week, according to National Rail, are as follows:

Destination	Mon-Fri	Sat	Sun
Manchester	2248	2224	2214
Nottingham	2338	2338	2330
Leeds	2315	2230	2331
Derby	2321	2320	2236

Can I stay in Sheffield close to The Crucible Theatre?

Yes you can. The closest to the theatre itself is the Mercure St Paul's which has their breakfast bar area face into the Winter Gardens. Some of the BBC staff stay at this one and players have also been known to stay here. It's not cheap though as you can imagine.

Within walking distance you have chain hotels Novotel, Travelodge, Premier Inn, Best Western and Ibis which offer a reasonable rate.