



# ROCK RARING TO GO IN WORLD MATCHPLAY

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# Observer Sport

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# Mitchell is looking to follow in pal's Tour footsteps

## SNOOKER

By MICHAEL BEARDMORE  
Sports Editor

ERDINGTON snooker prodigy Mitchell Mann hopes to follow in practice partner Dave Gilbert's footsteps – by using qualifying school as a stepping stone to the big time.

Mann travels to Sheffield this weekend for the first of three Q-School events, hoping to claim one of 12 places on offer on the game's Professional Tour.



**Mitchell Mann returns to Q-School in Sheffield this weekend**

Practice partner Gilbert made it back on to the Tour through Q-School last year and has not looked back – reaching the last 16 of this year's World Championships before losing to Aussie ace Neil Robertson.

And, having been in fine form over recent weeks, top amateur Mann – who missed out at Q-School last year – hopes he will join Tamworth's Gilbert on the main tour next year.

He said: "Without a shadow of a doubt, I'm mentally and technically in better shape than last year.

"There's still room for improvement but I just want to get my first couple of matches won and hopefully it will all come together.

"As far as form and mental attitude goes, I've been working on it and it's spot on now. "I was trying so hard to get to grips with technical things and I couldn't quite put my finger on it.

"But I've been working with a guy, John Farnworth, who has helped me out both mentally and technically.

"Plus I was practicing with Dave before the World Cham-

pionships – last year at the Q-School he was better than everyone else in the tournament.

"He made it look easy, getting to every quarter-final (four players go through from each of the events) and then finally getting through in the last one.

"When I've been playing him, I've been trying to watch what he does and see if there is anything that I can try to add to my game."

More than 100 hopefuls have forked out the £1,000 entry fee to enter Q-School and Mann knows winning one of the 12 Tour spots up for grabs will not be easy, given the standard he witnessed last year.

He added: "Most of the players that are in it will feel like they have a good chance, I wouldn't have thought there will be many pushovers.

"And as well as the amateurs, there are the ex-pros who have fallen off the tour and are trying to get back on."



**Dave Gilbert is shining on the Tour – and Mann hopes to follow him**

Mann's Q-School schedule gets underway on Sunday against Michael Wild – if he wins his five next matches next week, a place on the tour is his.

If not, he will return to Sheffield for Q-School 2 the following week and, if not successful, Q-School 3 the week after.

The youngster has one other avenue of making it on to the tour at the World Under-21 Championship in China this summer.

To qualify for that, he must be in the top two of the National Under-21 series – he currently sits top but this weekend's event in that competition clashes with the Q-School.



**Bradley Lynch in his Great Britain kit after receiving an international call-up.**

Picture by Steve Harlow

**SWIMMING: Boldmere Swimming Club's Bradley Lynch flies out to Israel this weekend to represent Great Britain in a prestigious international open water competition. The 15-year-old has received a call-up from British Swimming for the LEN Cup (European Open Water Swimming Cup) in Eilat and will**

**be rubbing shoulders with some of the world's top open water swimmers, including Britain's own Olympic medallist in the event, David Davies. His selection, in the 15-16 year category, caps a fine few months for Lynch who also shone at the Olympic trials earlier this year. He broke three**

**Junior Midland District/West Midland Region Records in the 200m Freestyle, 400m Freestyle (which had stood since 1983) and 1,500m freestyle. He also picked up four gold medals at the Midland Youth Championships in Coventry last weekend – see page 154 for more.**

Kinney makes history on new Olympic track

## ATHLETICS

ROYAL Sutton Coldfield AC runner Justine Kinney created her own piece of history last Friday.

She became the first winner on the track of the new Olympic Stadium in Stratford, London, winning her heat of the 400m hurdles at the BUCS Championships, in 59.79secs.

The weekend got better for Kinney as she went on to qualify for the final with a semi-final run of 59.30secs.

And she completed a memorable weekend by securing the gold medal in a winning time of 58.81secs.

Meanwhile, Royal Sutton AC's senior team travelled to Sutton-in-Ashfield to compete in the first Midlands Track and Field league fixture of the season.

A number of athletes put in great performances and, in particular, the sprinters excelled.

Nicholas Pryce won the 100m and 200m A races with Luke Fleming winning the 200m B race.

Fleming also finished second in the 400m B race.

In the ladies sprints, Charmaine Riley and Kanisha Hec-

**Justine Kinney made history by winning the first race on the new Olympic track**



tor won the A and B races in both the 100m and 200m.

The club also had victories in both the 800m races thanks to Fred Tremblay and Nick Corker.

Corker also won the 5000m. Megan Stratford, Vikram Balachandar and Simon Corker also competed well in the middle distance events, earning valuable points for the club.

In the field events, Megan Evans finished second in the high jump and was third in the triple jump and long jump.

Fiona Smith competed in all the throwing events with the highlight being a second place in the hammer.

The day ended well with a second place in the women's 4x100m relay and a win in the men's 4x400m, where Nicholas Pryce had a flying final lap to overhaul Burton AC.

A number of athletes will be in action this weekend at the Warwickshire County Championships.

The next league fixture takes place on May 27 at Wyndley.

Published by Central Independent News and Media, Tamworth. Printed by Northcliffe Press Midlands.

ISSN 1369-0809



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