



Sport in Society

Cultures, Commerce, Media, Politics

ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: www.tandfonline.com/journals/fcss20

Changing Britain through the frame of snooker

Alex Rhys-Taylor

To cite this article: Alex Rhys-Taylor (20 Aug 2024): Changing Britain through the frame of snooker, *Sport in Society*, DOI: [10.1080/17430437.2024.2389812](https://doi.org/10.1080/17430437.2024.2389812)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/17430437.2024.2389812>



© 2024 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group



Published online: 20 Aug 2024.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 156



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

Changing Britain through the frame of snooker

Alex Rhys-Taylor 

Goldsmiths College, University of London, London, UK

ABSTRACT

This paper considers snooker's rise to popularity, and its relative decline, through the frame of recent British social history. The paper situates an ostensible decline in snooker spectatorship and a demonstrable decline in participation across the UK, against a backdrop of shifts in economic activity, class structure, cultures of masculinity and urban space. Drawing on theories of gender, class, subculture, media and critical urbanism, the paper argues that a sociological frame lends a lot to understanding snooker in the UK. At the same time, it argues that the frame of snooker might also lend a lot to a sociological understanding of industrial, and later, post-industrial Britain.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 18 August 2023
Accepted 27 July 2024

KEYWORDS

Snooker; class; gender; sport; masculinity; post-industrial; urban; space; billiards; pool

Over the last half century, many of the UK's popular sporting pastimes have been the subject of sociological scrutiny. As C.L.R. James (2005) intimated vis-à-vis cricket, sports and games are often interwoven with the wider social, political and economic landscapes from which their players emerge. As such, sociological enquiry into games such as football, cricket or boxing have revealed as much about class, race, and gendered relations beyond the sports field as on it. Amidst this coverage, however, there is a significant lacuna for what was once one of the UK's most popular sporting activities; the game of snooker. With the exception of a paper on the international growth of the game (Harris 2021), its televisual broadcast in the '80s (Bury 1986), and Ned Polsky's stateside ethnography of snooker's smaller-tabled-larger-pocketed cousin, pool (Polsky 1969) there is little sociological literature on snooker. This paper argues for a sociological understanding of snooker, looking particularly at the game's growth in a deindustrialising landscape, and subsequent diminution in the late post-industrial context. Often spoken about as a 'crisis' for the game in the UK (Chafer 2020; Monique 2023), this paper argues that any meaningful understanding of changes to snooker spectatorship and participation is not simply reducible to an understanding of individual preferences or ahistorical trends and fashion. Rather, it requires an understanding of the game's place vis-à-vis a constellation of broader transpersonal shifts. These include alterations in the role of urban space, reconfigurations of class structures, transformations in gender roles, and revolutions in both media consumption and healthcare. All of these are best properly understood through sociology. In turn the paper uses snooker to animate the broader shifts in British culture and society, that the last half century of sociological theory has revealed.

CONTACT Alex Rhys-Taylor  a.rhystaylor@gold.ac.uk  Goldsmiths College, University of London, London, UK

© 2024 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited. The terms on which this article has been published allow the posting of the Accepted Manuscript in a repository by the author(s) or with their consent.

This paper is written from the perspective of an adequate pool player and a less-than-adequate snooker player. Much can be said about the contemporary game from the reflexive account of an enthusiast. Indeed, there are *many* snooker biographies that speak volumes about the current game from the perspective of its players. Autobiographical reflections alone, however, present a limited picture. Not least, they are often marred by what Norbert Elias referred to as a myopic ‘retreat into the present’ (Elias 1987). It is this paper’s contention that any reflexive understanding of the here-and-now benefits from the application of a socio-historical lens. Surveying the social history of snooker from its origins amidst nineteenth century ‘gentlemen gamblers’, through its place within early twentieth century working-class reform movements, the paper moves on to a consideration of snooker in deindustrialising Britain. Therein we see the game blossoming amidst shifts in technology, gender roles and class structures, waves that carry snooker to its zenith as the most popular televised sport in the country. From its pinnacle in de-industrialising Britain, this social history ends in a thoroughly post-industrial context. Quantifying the recent state of the game through a survey of recent television viewing figures and the British government’s ‘Taking Part’ sports participation survey, the paper draws particularly on a critical urbanist understanding of the shifting demography and economic function of cities. This framework is particularly helpful in interpreting the game’s early twenty first century decline. Taking stock of the contemporary game, the paper concludes by suggesting areas in which, contrary to the local story of post-industrial decline, snooker and cue sports might be growing and changing, reflecting important changes in the social world around them.

Sport and the masses

Many of the sports that are popular in twenty first century Britain first emerged as means for entertaining, refining and uniting elites between the late seventeenth and early nineteenth centuries. Modern football (Russell 1997), cricket (Sandiford 1994), and boxing (Bell and Armstrong 2021), all have origins in this period. As Britain industrialised and expanded, premodern prototypes of these games found fertile soil in the ground of private schools. Therein sport came to be seen as useful for more than leisure, and was put to use in disciplining the growing number of educated bodies (Hughson et al. 2016, 297). Codified within private schools, from there these sports became a set of tools within both the machinery of Empire (James 2005; Mangan 2013) and in disciplining the urban masses at home (Hargreaves 1986, 58–59).

It is in the midst of this context, in 1875, that members of the Devonshire Regiment in Jubbulpore, India, supposedly found themselves, in their barracks, playing a derivation of billiards called ‘black pool’ (Everton 1986, 48–49). In the military, cue sports were dominated by the officer class, whose domestic habitus had often included private billiard rooms for at least a century prior. Notably however, they cue sports were also popular with privates and lower ranks. While lower ranks would not have had their own tables at home, they might have been familiar with one of the many public billiard rooms (Cotton 1725, 150) that had opened in the previous century’s proliferation of urban leisure activities (Cunningham 2016a). Crucially, somewhere between Jubbulpore 1875 (Everton 1986, 48) and Rangoon 1886 (Ainsworth 2006), the game was altered through the addition of coloured balls with different point values. This alteration, and the codification of the game,

which became known as snooker, is *generally* attributed to a young subaltern serving with the regiment at the time, Neville Chamberlain (later the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom).

The reason that black pool mutated into what became known as snooker is telling of another social function of sport in Victorian Britain. As much as sports fostered respectable comportment, the codification of sports in the late nineteenth century was coextensive with an efflorescence of gambling. Sitting uneasily with the task of social reform, sports-based gambling was, nonetheless, fitting with the speculative capitalism of the age (Reith 2002; Vamplew 2004). Early nineteenth century cricket and football teams for instance, were generally pulled together by wealthy aristocrats for the purposes of a wager (Huggins 2020). This was also true of billiards and pool, whose bases in skill rather than chance offered an interesting prospect to the calculative gambler (Everton 1986, 46). Yet for all their elegance, billiards and pool are simple games with limited ways of scoring. The addition of coloured balls with different values vastly increased the variety within the game. And with that variety, came an expansion of associated monetary forfeits (Everton 1986, 48). Having established itself in military communities, snooker osmosed out of the colonial barracks, back to the stately homes and private clubs at the heart of Empire. Therein it was taken up by the same gentlemen gamblers and sporting amateurs who played billiards. At the same time snooker was also carried back to the billiard tables of the Working Men's clubs, the British Legion and other philanthropic projects (Hargreaves 1986, 60) occupying the new leisure time afforded to lower ranks by industrial workers' movements (Cunningham 2016b).

However, the real uptick of public interest in snooker only started in earnest in the interwar years. Amidst a growing appetite for mass entertainment, a concern with maintaining a fighting-fit population, and the democratisation of mass transit, the interwar years saw many sports organising themselves into a range of professional national leagues and tournaments (Wigglesworth 1996, 70). It was also at this point that the first book of snooker rules was published (Everton 1986, 50). Standardisation lay the ground for subsequent growth in participation and spectatorship. In the early twentieth century, the growth of the game came from *both* its bourgeois and proletarian participants, often bringing the two strata - 'prince and pauper' - into contact with one another (James 2005, 101). Like the cricket pitches observed by C.L.R. James, the early twentieth century snooker match was a space in which working-class people could see themselves adorned in the sartorial 'armour' of respectability (James 2005, 8). More than that, they could also win at a game dominated by bourgeois amateurs. The ubiquity of money matches also meant that working-class players could achieve relative social mobility through their own individual effort. It is significant that snooker had an allure that arced across Britain's disparate socio-economic strata. This both reflects, and contributes to, more general increases in social mobility through the early twentieth century (Miles 1999). It is also significant that this particular bridge between disparate social classes seemingly by-passed the traditional middle classes. Canadian author Mordecai Richler (2002, 77), argues that the middle classes simply sneered at the bourgeois pretensions of this particular form of working-class leisure. As we shall see, this becomes important in the early twenty first century wherein only *some* sports flourish through their ongoing transformation alongside the petit-bourgeoisification of working-class lives (Critcher 1979; Giulianotti 2003).

A spectator sport

Snooker has none of the fluid dynamism of rugby or football. There are no moving parts beyond the spectator's field of vision, no one running from out of nowhere to dive through the air and steal a win. With snooker, the action is in the millimetres of difference in a ball's placement. And the game is slow, with some matches taking three days to complete. Yet it is immersive, with 'the emotional undertow [...] legible from the state of play' and in the 'silent gestures and comportment of players' (Bury 1986, 55). Despite this appeal, the early game was limited in terms of spectator numbers. The flipside of the room-sized field of play is that the millimetres of significance upon which a frame hinges, are too slight to be legible by a spectator sitting any more than a few rows back. Despite the uses of suspended mirrors and raked seating, the limited size of a live snooker audience was a substantial barrier to its early growth as a spectator sport. Even with the advent of television, snooker struggled to reach a wider audience. The initial one-off televisual broadcast of exhibition matches by the BBC, first in the 1930s (Anon 1937) and again in the 1950s (BBC 1953), appear not to have garnered enough interest to warrant a regular presence.

In retrospect, the most obvious obstacle to snooker's ability to enchant television audiences might have been its reliance on different coloured balls. In black and white, many snooker balls looked alike. The advent of colour television, however, presented both the emerging snooker authorities and broadcasters with a mutually beneficial opportunity. In a crystallisation of this symbiosis, the BBC 2 controller, David Attenborough, commissioned 'Pot Black'. This weekly snooker showcase was broadcast in colour in the early evening on Wednesdays, starting in the summer of 1969. Snooker was less beholden to the whimsy of British weather than tennis or cricket and was untarnished by growing incidents of football hooliganism, television. As such producers increasingly turned to snooker to draw viewers. In 1985, aided by a televisual blackout of domestic football and a ban on English teams in European football, snooker exceeded football for television spectatorship in the UK. That year, the famous Embassy World Championship final between Steve Davis and Dennis Taylor was the most watched sporting event, garnering just under 18 million viewers over its three-day duration, with a late-night peak of 14.4 million viewers (AGB 1985). Between the late '60s and mid-1980s, television helped make snooker a significant national interest. However, this popularity is not simply reducible to televisual broadcast. The socio-economic landscape of the era played an important role too, especially in producing the players that spectators would watch.

Growth in de-industrialising Britain

While snooker *emerged* at the pinnacle of Britain's industrial activity, and grew in the inter-war years, participation arguably only *flourished* in the earlier stages of Britain's transition *away* from industry. It was within the deindustrialising landscape of what Coffield referred to as 'shit jobs and govvy schemes' (1986, 86 in Nayak 2006, 814) that cultures of working-class masculinity, focused on sports, gambling and drinking, bloomed. While privately educated boys and men still played snooker in their private clubs, lofts and basements, it was within the new working-class cultures of deindustrialising Britain that the snooker table founds its most fertile niche.

This was a significant moment for working-class communities across Britain. With, for instance, the gradual closure of East London's docks, or the steady shuttering of Glasgow's shipyards, and the accelerated growth in service sector jobs, the intergenerational transmission of craft and culture was severely disrupted. After a long period of steady industrialisation, working-class futures looked more uncertain than they had for many decades. The disruption gave way to many subcultural youth tribes as means by which to navigate the shift and recuperate lost status and community (Cohen 1997). For some, the safety rafts were subcultures framed by music, fashion, and exotic drugs. (Cohen 1997; Hebdige 1995). For others, a culture of sports, games, cigarettes and alcohol kept them afloat. On the other side of the Atlantic, Ned Polsky's social history of pool halls, and their boom in the late nineteenth century, points towards a related example. With the American frontier settled, the frontier masculinity was displaced by what Polsky saw as a newly effete urban society. As such 'the pool rooms' latent function [was] as the greatest and most determinedly all-male institution in American Life, serving 'as sacrosanct refuge from women' (Polsky 1969, 33). Similarly, British snooker halls of the 1970s and early '80s were redolent with signs and signifiers of an increasingly imperilled working-class masculine culture. As snooker world-champion Jimmy White notes of his initial awe-struck discovery of the snooker hall, 'the floor was awash with cigarette ash and stubs, and there was a kind of dusty, musky, beery smoky almost soot like smell' (White and Kingsland 1998, 16). Much like pubs, it was partly the aesthetics and culture of a working-class world that attracted many to snooker halls.

Yet it is also true that, as much as snooker halls were sanctuaries of masculine working-class communities and culture, they did not reproduce working-class bodies in the way that other sports had done previously. If a sport was ever used to maintain the vigour of labouring bodies (Hargreaves 1986; Wacquant 2009; Skoog 2021), snooker was not it. Bourgeois bodies, service sector bodies and even out-of-work bodies could all do well at snooker. Rather than reproducing the muscular team-playing bodies suited for industry, snooker might be said to produce a much more post-industrial body and subjectivity. For instance, snooker rarely fosters the same team spirit and allegiance that football, rugby, or cricket do. Rather, it has always tended to cultivate a sense of independence and *individual* achievement. The quiet politeness associated with the game also betrays its historical association with the world of bourgeois commerce (Pocock 2002; Cohen 2005). Consider too, the stoic mindset required to sail the peaks and troughs of a three-day match. Does this not mimic the capitalist ideal of a 'resilient' subjecthood (Joseph 2013; Mckeown and Glenn 2018)? Snooker resonated with the late twentieth century embrace of capitalism so well that, in the mid-eighties, Steve Davis, the world number one, appeared alongside Margaret Thatcher at the Conservative Party events. There he appeared as a representative of a newly deindustrialised suburban working-class culture. Combining aspects of both proletarian and bourgeois worlds, snooker halls provided the ideal spaces in which young working-class men could negotiate the shifts in demography, economy and culture outside, a means by which to recuperate the status increasingly deprived from them through the worlds of work and education (Nayak 2003, 2006). To borrow from Nayak's work on post-industrial masculinity, the snooker halls were a space in which the 'industrial past and the post-industrial future [were] materially and symbolically negotiated' (Nayak 2006, 815).

Several professional snooker players' biographies pay testament to the role of the snooker hall in this period. Six-time world finalist, Jimmy 'the Whirlwind' White, was rescued from

truanting and potential underemployment in 1970s South East London by a paternalistic snooker club owner (Williams and Gadsby 2012). Graham Dott (2006 world champion) started playing as a diversion from a likely future in the imperilled shipyards of Glasgow (Dott 2011). Snooker offered Ronnie O’Sullivan (seven-time world champion) a reprieve from following his father into the seedier corners of London’s informal economy (O’Sullivan 2019). Proficiency in snooker is often seen as a sign of misspent youth (Everton 2011, 2). However, as with other sports (Collins and Kay 2014), today’s amateur clubs also have their own veterans who claim their youth could have been much more misspent, were it not for the game around which their lives were structured. Advances in media technology help, in part, to understand the rise in snooker spectatorship. However, it is deindustrialisation and its impact on working-class communities that really helps to understand how and why people gravitated towards *playing* snooker through the 1970s and ‘80s.

After ‘peak snooker’

It is no exaggeration to say that snooker in the UK has undergone something of a transformation since the 1980s. This is evident at both the level of participation, and spectatorship. The most notable trend in both is that, in the UK at least, they have reduced in volume. Notwithstanding changes to the ways in which the UK government classifies ‘cue sports’, the annual ‘Taking Part’ survey demonstrates a negative trend in participation. The 2006–2007 survey saw 12.7% of a sample of 24174 people playing pool, billiards, or snooker in the 12 months prior to the survey. By 2010–2011 this figure had dropped down to 10.9% and to 8.6% in 2016–2017. With snooker helpfully disaggregated from its cousins, pool, and billiards, this number shrinks to 6.1% in 2019 (Department for Culture, Media and Sport 2008, 2011, 2015, 2020).

The decline in television audiences is also striking. Consider the difference between the peak 14.4 million simultaneous viewers of a snooker match in the 1980s and the average of just over 2 million UK viewers tuning in for the 2010 World Championships (Deans 2010). The decline of television audience is, of course, partly explicable through technological shifts that assure that nearly all television audiences are smaller than they once were. In the ‘80s a UK home had one television with only three or four television channels to choose from. Today, the average UK household has nine ‘connected devices,’ (Kokholm 2020), and subscribes to between one and five additional streaming services, which themselves accompany a terrestrial television offer of between 130 and 240 channels depending on each household’s location and setup (OFCOM 2022). These channels must also contend with competition for viewers’ attention from other screen activities including gaming and social media. Anything that had high viewer numbers in the 1980s would struggle to reach the same volume of audience today. Yet it is also the case that not all sports have suffered from the transition to new forms of media, distribution and broadcast. Many televised sports have transformed themselves over the last three decades. The most successful of these transformations has undoubtedly been in football. Faced with the stigma of fanatical and violent hooliganism, football went through a lengthy process of commercialisation and ‘deviance disavowal’ (Davis 1961) from the 1990s onwards and, in doing so, actively reinvented itself as a more middle-class sport (King 1997). Cricket too underwent its own transition to the world of global, digitised media in that instance, recentring gravity away from the elite world of English clubs. Snooker also started developing international

audiences in Asia through the 1980s, and has recently started reaching wider international audiences in Europe and India (Harris 2021). However there seems to be very little movement in terms of reforming the sport or its image in the UK. All the while other sports were reforming their commercial base and image, snooker has held firm to its established association with dark, working-class, masculine spaces. These associations have likely had consequences for both spectatorship and participation in British snooker.

Masculinity

Taking the game entirely in isolation, divorced from any historical, cultural or social context, there is no reason that participation in snooker should be gendered. As the World Women's Snooker organisation points out, snooker is one of the few sports in which men and women can compete on the same field equally (World Women's Snooker 2023). One upshot of this is that the professional tour is open to both women and men. In 2023, two women, Reanne Evans and Mink Nutcharut, competed against men in the qualifying rounds of the World Snooker Championship. The game's ultimate scoring achievement, the score of 147 achieved by potting the balls in optimal order, was also first accomplished by a woman (Mink Nutcharut) in 2019. Admittedly, the same score was first officially recorded as having been achieved by a man in 1955. However, the reason it had not been achieved by a woman sooner arguably has little to do with sexed (taller or stronger) bodies. Mink appears around 158 cm tall, but this is compensated for by using cue-rests and extensions to her cue. The most plausible reason for the delay is simply that there are fewer women playing the game, fewer amateur clubs open to women, and little financial reward for the tournaments in which they have been permitted to play in. Women simply do not have the facilities, or capital, to go *professional* and build up their skills in the way men have done. In the government survey of sports participation, 2018–2019 saw women comprise nearly 33% of people who had played pool in the last year (which is much more accessible insofar as pool tables appear in pubs, youth clubs and cafes). With snooker, that percentage was 17% (Department for Culture, Media and Sport 2021). Despite its potential for being a mixed sport, snooker remains dominated by men.

Part of this dominance is related to the literal historic banning of women from the spaces in which snooker was played. This exclusion was particularly prominent in working-class contexts wherein repeated efforts were made to maintain the male exclusivity of sporting culture and related spaces (Hargreaves 1986, 104). Over the last four decades, many sports that were exclusive to men in the early twentieth century have since opened to accommodate women. Contrary to the trend, however, amateur snooker has been amongst the slowest to respond. As recently as 2018, Rebecca Kenna (3rd in the world of women's snooker), quit playing in her local snooker league because one particular club refused to allow her access to their venues to play matches (BBC News 2019). To a certain extent, refusals of entry are not really required to exclude women from the game. Even when snooker spaces claim to be 'open to all', they remain redolent with the signs and symbols of historic masculinities. Consider, for instance, the uniform of the professional snooker player: a long-sleeved shirt, bow tie and waistcoat. The outfit has origins in the royally approved attire of seventeenth century English gentlemen (Pepys 1666/1972, 315). Even in the twenty first century, this attire is required of all competitors, *including women*. This is not a problem for anyone with the stomach to dabble in a bit of 'gender trouble' (Butler 2006). And the rule inadvertently

lands snooker on the progressive side of the net to hyper-feminising sports like beach volley ball (Steinfeldt et al. 2013). At the same time, the acute masculinity of a professional uniform and its implications for participants' own self-image, *might* also be a quiet deterrent to participation.

A more significant barrier to participation, however, lies in the setting of local snooker halls. In the first instance, snooker halls often work to exclude through their location and opening times. For example, snooker halls are generally in less affluent neighbourhoods, around poorly lit industrial estates or otherwise amidst institutions of the night-time economy. These are spaces typically given to the staging and performance of masculinity and potentially dangerous places for women. For the women that get past this threshold, the interior of the snooker hall is also distinctly masculine. Some clubs only have one functioning toilet. Many clubs do not open until the evening and stay open until sunrise. Most serve alcohol. And, crucially, in nearly all of them, ribald conversation bounces between tables. Were the masculinity of the space in doubt, one might only consider what is right under one's nose. Snooker halls often smell, quite remarkably, of men; a mixture of urine masked by disinfectant, beer, woody and spice inflected colognes and unrepentantly masculine sweat (Waitt 2014; Waitt and Stanes 2015). As one reviewer says of a well-established East London snooker club, 'It's one of those places you prefer visiting with ur mates not with the girls' (Ghandi 2023).

That snooker is so deeply entwined with conservative evocations of masculinity is understandable given the history of the game, particularly the historic role of sport in cultivating a supposedly respectable manliness. It is even less surprising when one considers the route by which most players, and indeed, spectators, have discovered the game. Unlike many of the sports codified in Victorian Britain, snooker has never been a part of the school curriculum in the UK. And unlike pool or table tennis, snooker tables are too large, expensive, and delicate to be introduced through youth clubs. As a result, most snooker players appear to have discovered the game in a snooker hall or pub. And they do this through some sort of paternal assistance. In a survey of leading snooker players' biographies and autobiographies, it is nearly always a father or father figure who introduces the game. Early professionals Jon Pullman and Ray Reardon had fathers who played billiards semi-professionally. Likewise for 1980s champion, Steve Davis, whose dad played snooker as a hobby (Williams and Gadsby 2012). John Parrott's (1991 world champion) dad took him to a snooker club one rainy afternoon as an alternative to their usual father-and-son game of crown green bowls (Parrott 1991). Ronnie O'Sullivan started by playing on his uncle's table before his father bought him a small table (O'Sullivan 2019). Three-time world champion Mark Williams and six-time world champion Steven Hendry also took up the game after receiving the gift of play-room sized tables from fathers who went on to be deeply involved in their careers (Williams and Gadsby 2012). Ken Doherty (1997 world champion) was introduced to the game by his older brother who had taken over the role of a father figure (Doherty 2011, 20). And the aforementioned Scottish professional Grahame Dott was introduced to the game by his uncle, who also played with his grandad (Dott 2011, 7). This author too, was introduced to the game by his father. These intimate introductions, by a father, or a brother, or an uncle, to a cultural scene in which purportedly masculine behaviours are valued, tangles the sport in the reproduction of masculinities. On this basis, one might even argue that attachments to the aesthetics and culture of the snooker hall – the

smoke, the banter, the spilled beer – are also cyphered forms of affection between a child and his dad (Fletcher 2020). It would certainly explain why a cultural shift in the game is so hard to imagine for so many.

Smoking and gambling

The snooker hall arguably thrived when it became an island of working-class culture amidst a sea of change. Outside the snooker hall, as the cultural tides lapping at its walls rose, the viability of the culture hunkering down inside diminished. The relative devaluing of these masculinities is largely related to epochal shifts to the mode of production, gender equality, and related social structures (McDowell 2011; Nixon 2005). It is also worth noting that an increased use of health-related legislation has also had a discernible impact on the culture associated with snooker. Where once philanthropists sought to cultivate the masses through voluntary participation in sport and social clubs, the last two decades have instead seen the British population subjected to legislatively underwritten ‘behavioural nudges’. Several of these biopolitical interventions appear to have been aimed at ostensibly delinquent behaviours historically associated with snooker clubs (and pubs). For instance, as snooker held fast to a scene of smoking white men, the late 1990s saw the UK government undermining a key pillar of that trifecta, and a primary source of professional snooker player’s. Curbs to the sponsorship of sport by the tobacco industry were a serious threat to professional snooker. All the major snooker tournaments up to that point had been sponsored by a cigarette brand (Embassy, Benson and Hedges, Rothmans et al.). This sponsorship also purportedly provided up to 70% of the sport’s revenue (Anon. 2020). The ban on tobacco advertising hit many UK sports. But no sport’s self-image was as nicotine stained as snooker’s. Right into the 1990s, snooker players were seen smoking throughout televised matches. Even when players were stopped from smoking mid-game, journalists were still handed free packets of cigarettes while covering tournaments (Richler 2002). On the basis that tobacco was so deeply woven into its world, snooker authorities were allowed to keep tobacco sponsorship for longer than any other sport. By the mid 2000s, however, sponsorship ended and prize money in professional snooker decreased immediately (Anon. 2020), as did the number and the quality of tournaments.

Possibly more significant in terms of its impact on participation, was the subsequent 2007 prohibition of indoor smoking. This legislation followed on from a 2005 ban on betting activity from everywhere but newly licensed venues. The Riley’s chain of sports bars claim that the double legislative hit was central to the 130-year-old chain’s decimation (Riley’s, 2005). It is a plausible explanation if only evidenced by a slightly-better-researched, albeit weak, correlation between declining patronage of pubs in the wake of smoking legislation (Muir 2012; Adda, Berlinski, and Machin 2012; DeCicca, Kenkel, and Lovenheim 2022).

Space

The story of the impact of smoking and gambling legislation opens onto another correlate with the decline in participation, namely the decline in facilities. Compared with even fifteen years ago, there are simply far fewer places to play snooker. In 2005, a snooker website listed 945 locations with bookable snooker tables in the UK (Virgo 2005). Prior to COVID-19 the English Partnership for Snooker and Billiards listed just over 700 venues (Huart 2018). In the years between these listings, and certainly in the years since, closures of these

venues appear much more common than their occasional opening. These closures appear to have accelerated at certain points, particularly as large chains of snooker hall flourished. Riley's, for instance, once the largest chain of sports and snooker bars in the UK, had 165 venues in the 1990s. At the time of writing, all but 13 of Riley's venues endure under the original name with most closing in sporadic bursts (Blitz 2009; Rkaina 2014). Only a few of those sold on to new owners were reopened as snooker halls. A survey of the last two year's local news stories reveal more recent cases of doors being shuttered in Romford, Stoke, Glasgow, Belfast, Grays, Brighton, Stockport, Bury, Hornchurch, Southampton and Dennistoun (Anon 2022; Corner 2022; Farr 2023; Gee 2023; Grimsditch 2023; Lynch, n.d.; Reporter 2020; Tarnai 2021; Thomas 2022; Thompson 2022; Woodhouse 2017; Yandall, n.d.). Online message boards report stories of further closures from Nottingham, Milton Keynes, Belfast, Edinburgh, Stevenage and Luton (Kree8or 2023).

Of this recent list, many were *ultimately* undone by the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated lockdowns. During this period snooker halls were subject to the same prohibitions as many indoor leisure facilities. Unfortunately, unlike some other sporting facilities, the foundations of snooker clubs were already compromised. As discussed, the erosion of the cultural soil out of which snooker once bloomed, and the legislation around smoking and gambling likely served to undermine many venues' viability. Other pressures are captured well in the news stories about their closure, nearly all of which tell of landlords and local authorities gambling on the potential for increased profit through conversion of snooker halls into residential units. The trend in 'change-of-use' from a specific purpose to residential use is not specific to snooker halls *per se*. Rather, it emerges out of a half-century-long shift in the use of urban space in the UK. This shift is characterised first and foremost by the departure of industry and wholesale commerce from many cities in the Global North. With industry and commerce outsourced, areas once zoned for this activity have been rezoned for a highly profitable, residential return to a gentrified urban centre (Lees, Shin, and López-Morales 2016). The UK has seen the whole process lubricated by tweaks to the planning system over the last decade. Amongst the most significant vis-à-vis snooker halls, has been the relaxation of the 'change-of-use' planning regulations since 2013. The most recent of these bureaucratic amendments saw offices, light industry, restaurants, retail, indoor recreation spaces, nurseries and some community spaces all rezoned under a new, generic 'commercial use-class' (Her Majesty's Government 2020). Previously, the designated 'use class' of buildings had protected them, to varying degrees, from being straightforwardly converted into residential properties. However, in lumping different uses together in a new catch-all planning category, the UK government has also removed the legislative hurdles to residential redevelopment. This means nearly any building hitherto used for offices, retail, restaurants, or indoor leisure, can be readily converted into a residential property with little-to-no opportunity to object. On the one hand this is presented as an ostensible fix to a housing crisis. On the other hand, it places significant development pressure on the land upon which snooker clubs (and many other community facilities) depend.

Not all sports are under the same threat of property development. While many playing fields have been built over, there is at least legislation that requires additional consultation to develop land associated with outdoor sports (Her Majesty's Government 2015). Snooker, however, does not benefit from the modicum of legislative protection afforded to outdoor playing fields. Nor are snooker clubs in a good position to make a counteroffer to their landlords. Not least of the obstacles to their survival are the costs incurred by the elephantine

footprint of snooker tables. A full size snooker table measures 1.8 metres by 3.6 metres. To play around the table, players need clearance space for the cues, so each table in fact requires an area measuring at least 5.5 metres by 7.3 metres. A snooker hall would normally have a minimum of four tables, but usually between eight and twelve. That's a requirement of 140–325 square meters, without counting the bar, toilets or other rooms. Even though snooker halls are not usually found in the highest value parts of any city, in a cities like London, Leeds, Birmingham or Manchester this is an expensive amount of space. The average rent on the lowest grade commercial space in London is around £355–£430 per square metre per year. Excluding business rates, licenses, insurance and utility bills, that's a starting overhead of £50,000–£68,000 per year for the very smallest venue at the far corner of a crumbling industrial estate. For a larger venue with more than 12 tables, it could be upwards of £122,000 per year in a similar low-grade location. The value of this land has increased most significantly in erstwhile low-income neighbourhoods (Hamnett 2009, 2004). To meet these costs, playing snooker costs more money than ever (around £14–£20 per hour in London) all the while wage growth has slowed, and state benefits have been capped. The effect of this not only explains club closures. It might also help to explain trends in participation statistics. In 2009, the numbers of respondents from routine and semi-routine occupations playing snooker, pool or billiards comprised 28% of a survey sample, with professional classes making up 34% (Department for Culture, Media and Sport 2009). By 2018 the number of routine and semi-routine labourers playing snooker appears as 14% of the sample – with professional classes making up 50% of a shrinking group of participants (Department for Culture, Media and Sport 2019). The data are suggestive of a marked decline in working-class participation in snooker. The rise in costs and the related decline in the volume of participants appear to mutually reinforce the pressure on facilities, forcing closures which, in turn, further limits opportunities for participation.

Conclusion

The invention of a new gambler's game by the officer class in a colonial outpost speaks of the interaction between cultures of capitalism and power at the tail end of the nineteenth century. The game's promulgation through working-class lives speaks to the paternalistic use of sport as a disciplining device both at home and abroad. The late twentieth century rise in snooker spectatorship offers a technicolour window into the technological mediation of leisure. The growth in participation in the sport at the same time, through the 1970s and 1980s, speaks of a transformation in working-class lives, the emergence of a new individualistic working-class culture and the disruption to hitherto predictable futures. At the same time, the late '70s efflorescence in snooker also speaks to the disorienting aspects of these changes, and the need to retain paternal attachments through signifiers of an imperilled cultural milieu. The snooker hall, and the game of snooker, spoke to all these needs at once. The more recent trend toward decline in UK spectatorship is instructive of several twenty first century trends, particularly the proliferation of alternative forms of digitised consumption. The long-term decline in participation is indicative of the revaluation of urban land and the demographic transformation of inner cities. The result of these trends is a game, historically shunned by the traditional middle classes, increasingly only affordable by people with disposable income.

This paper offers no prescription for the relative diminution of snooker in the UK. For any realistic proposals, a greater depth of data and analysis is required. Part of this depth comes from recognising that any understanding of local changes requires a shift away from methodological nationalism (Beck 2016). As much as the histories of snooker and *The Nation* are intertwined in the UK, understanding this intertwining properly involves zooming out to a broader cosmopolitan perspective. This point is as relevant to the colonial history of snooker, as it is to its future. For as much as snooker participation and spectatorship has an historical core in the UK, the sport is globalising, with notable growth in participation and spectatorship across India, China, Thailand, Saudi Arabia, Iran and across Europe. With the inclusion of this transnational context, snooker has a great many more spectators, and players, than it ever had in the UK alone (Harris 2021). This begs questions as to the impact of the international game on amateur enthusiasts and hobbyists in snooker's erstwhile home. In this respect, *zooming out* to a wider global perspective is crucial. But so is *zooming in* for a more granular analysis. For example, there are fruitful comparisons to be made between the multicultural conviviality of the twenty first century inner-city snooker halls of London, Birmingham and Glasgow (where recent anecdotal evidence suggests post-COVID-19 participation is, contrary to the longer-term trend, growing), and the death of residual suburban clubs. The story of ongoing cosmopolitan urbanisation, and the tensions imminent to it, is highly relevant to understanding the future of the game in the UK.

An understanding of the game today also requires a much fuller understanding of gender in relation to the game. Of course, as this paper has suggested, snooker is a useful window into the historic intertwining of masculinities, class, and leisure. This is not, however, the full story. Snooker is a pioneering sport in the inclusion of women as players (and referees) alongside men in major tournaments. There are likely important lessons to be learned from how this has been achieved. Equally, the limitations to snooker's growth across gendered divides are likely instructive of broader issues in the sport and its social foundations. And finally, any full sociological understanding of snooker would benefit from a fuller consideration vis-à-vis other games, particularly the peculiar resilience of its older cousin, pool. Pool has had multiple booms in the US, first in the late nineteenth century, in concert with urbanisation, then in the 1960s repopularised by the cinematic representations such as *The Hustler* (Polsky 1969). Right into the 1980s and beyond, the image and sound of pool balls cracking has become an established shorthand for cool, edgy deviance. In each iteration pool, never encumbered by the bourgeois pretensions of snooker, thrived from its association with danger. This has not been lost in translation to the UK where the hegemony of 'American cool' has been an integral feature of twentieth and twenty-first century culture. At present, pool players and tables (if not spectators) easily outnumber those of snooker in the UK. And they appear especially popular with young people and across social strata. Often the sociality of youth clubs, shebeens, cafes and bars around the country, revolve around games of pool. Moreover, the allure of pool's smaller tables and bigger pockets is truly international, with new variants attracting more spectators and prize money than any cue sport that came before it. Understanding one cankered branch of the family tree of cue sports, requires understanding the blossoming of other branches too. As trivial as these issues appear, these are rich seams for a sociologist to follow. Not least, the history and current state of snooker in the UK makes more sense when understood sociologically. And the recent history, and current state, of the UK might also be that much more graspable when understood through the frame of snooker.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

ORCID

Alex Rhys-Taylor  <http://orcid.org/0009-0006-3986-6583>

References

- Adda, Jérôme, Samuel Berlinski, and Stephen Machin. 2012. "Market Regulation and Firm Performance: The Case of Smoking Bans in the United Kingdom." *The Journal of Law and Economics* 55 (2): 365–391. <https://doi.org/10.1086/663349>.
- AGB. 1985. "Broadcasters Audience Research Board: The Months Viewing Summary April 1985." <https://www.barb.co.uk/1985-04-monthly-viewing-summary/>.
- Ainsworth, Peter. 2006. The Origin of Snooker: The Neville Chamberlain Story. *Snooker Forum* <https://snooker-forum.com/TheOriginofSnooker.pdf>
- Anon. 1937. "Television Listings." *The Observer*, April 11.
- Anon. 2020. "Looking Back at Snooker History: Tobacco Sponsorships." *Snooker Shorts*, March 25. <https://www.snookershorts.com/shorts/looking-back-at-snooker-history-tobacco-sponsorships>.
- Anon. 2022. "Snooker Club Closes While Fuel Poverty and Rent Rise." *The Brighton Seagull* (blog). July 11. <https://seagull.news/snooker-club-closes/>.
- BBC. 1953. "Radio Times, Television Edition." https://genome.ch.bbc.co.uk/schedules/service_bbc_television_service/1953-03-27#at-21.00.
- BBC News. 2019. "MPs Call for End to Keighley Snooker Clubs' Men-Only Rules." Sec. Leeds & West Yorkshire. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-leeds-47726687>.
- Beck, Ulrich. 2016. "Varieties of Second Modernity and the Cosmopolitan Vision." *Theory, Culture & Society* 33 (7–8): 257–270. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276416671585>.
- Bell, Matthew, and Gary Armstrong. 2021. *A Social History of Sheffield Boxing, Volume I: Rings of Steel, 1720–1970*. Cham: Springer Nature.
- Blitz, Roger. 2009. "Rileys Enters Administration." <https://www.ft.com/content/4d9f6f3c-195f-11de-9d34-0000779fd2ac>.
- Bury, Mike. 1986. "The Social Significance of Snooker: Sports-Games in the Age of Television." *Theory, Culture & Society* 3 (2): 49–62. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276486003002005>.
- Butler, Judith. 2006. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. 1st ed. New York: Routledge.
- Chafer, Luke. 2020. "Is Snooker Heading into Its Final Frame?" *The Glasgow Guardian*, October 2. <https://glasgowguardian.co.uk/2020/10/02/is-snooker-heading-into-its-final-frame/>.
- Cohen, Michèle. 2005. "'Manners' Make the Man: Politeness, Chivalry, and the Construction of Masculinity, 1750–1830." *Journal of British Studies* 44 (2): 312–329. <https://doi.org/10.1086/427127>.
- Cohen, Phil. 1997. *Subcultural Conflict and Working-Class Community*. Cham: Springer.
- Collins, Mike, and Tess Kay. 2014. "Sport and Youth Delinquency and Crime." In *Sport and Social Exclusion*, 160–192. New York: Routledge. <https://api.taylorfrancis.com/content/chapters/edit/download?identifierName=doi&identifierValue=10.4324/9780203859728-9&type=chapterpdf>.
- Corner, Sam. 2022. "Director to Fight Plans to Turn Snooker Hall into Flats in Hornchurch." *Time 107.5 Fm*, February 22, sec. Local News. <https://www.time1075.net/175829-2-hornchurch-snooker-club-flats-plan/>.
- Cotton, Charles. 1725. *The Compleat Gamester: Or, Full and Easy Instructions for Playing at Above Twenty Several Games Upon the Cards; with Variety of Diverting Fancies and Tricks Upon the Same, Now First Added*. London: J. Wilford.
- Critcher, Chas. 1979. "Football since the War." In *Working Class Culture*. New York: Routledge.
- Cunningham, Hugh. 2016a. *Leisure in the Industrial Revolution: C. 1780-c. 1880*. New York: Routledge.

- Cunningham, Hugh. 2016b. *Time, Work and Leisure: Life Changes in England since 1700*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Davis, Fred. 1961. "Deviance Disavowal: The Management of Strained Interaction by the Visibly Handicapped." *Social Problems* 9 (2): 120–132. <https://doi.org/10.2307/799007>.
- Deans, Jason. 2010. "TV Ratings: More than 2.5m Watch Snooker Final." *The Guardian*, May 4, sec. Media. <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2010/may/04/snooker-final-tv-ratings>.
- DeCicca, Philip, Donald Kenkel, and Michael F. Lovenheim. 2022. "The Economics of Tobacco Regulation: A Comprehensive Review." *Journal of Economic Literature* 60 (3): 883–970. <https://doi.org/10.1257/jel.20201482>.
- Department for Culture, Media and Sport. 2008. "Taking Part: The National Survey of Culture, Leisure and Sport, 2006-2007; Adult and Child Data SN: 6272." *UK Data Service* <https://doi.org/10.5255/UKDA-SN-6272-1>.
- Department for Culture, Media and Sport. 2009. "Taking Part: The National Survey of Culture, Leisure and Sport, 2008-2009; Adult and Child Data SN: 6530." *UK Data Service* <https://doi.org/10.5255/UKDA-SN-6530-1>.
- Department for Culture, Media and Sport. 2011. "Taking Part: The National Survey of Culture, Leisure and Sport, 2010-2011; Adult and Child Data SN 6855." *UK Data Service* <https://doi.org/10.5255/UKDA-SN-6855-1>.
- Department for Culture, Media and Sport. 2015. "Taking Part: The National Survey of Culture, Leisure and Sport, 2014-2015; Adult and Child Data SN: 7872." *UK Data Service* <https://doi.org/10.5255/UKDA-SN-7872-1>.
- Department for Culture, Media and Sport. 2019. "Taking Part: The National Survey of Culture, Leisure and Sport, 2018-2019; Adult and Child Data; SN: 8631." *UK Data Service* <https://doi.org/10.5255/UKDA-SN-8631-1>.
- Department for Culture, Media and Sport. 2020. "Taking Part: The National Survey of Culture, Leisure and Sport, 2019-2020; Adult and Child Data; SN: 8745." *UK Data Service* <https://doi.org/10.5255/UKDA-SN-8745-1>.
- Department for Culture, Media and Sport. 2021. "Taking Part: The National Survey of Culture, Leisure and Sport, 2018-2019; Adult and Child Data. SN: 8631." *UK Data Service* <https://doi.org/10.5255/UKDA-SN-8631-2>.
- Doherty, Ken. 2011. *Ken Doherty: Life in the Frame*. London: John Blake Publishing, Limited.
- Dott, Graeme. 2011. *Frame of Mind: The Autobiography of the World Snooker Champion*. London: Kings Road Publishing.
- Elias, Norbert. 1987. "The Retreat of Sociologists into the Present." *Theory, Culture & Society* 4 (2–3): 223–247. <https://doi.org/10.1177/026327687004002003>.
- Everton, Clive. 1986. *The History of Snooker and Billiards*. 1st ed. Haywards Heath: Partridge Press.
- Everton, Clive. 2011. *Black Farce and Cue Ball Wizards: The Inside Story of the Snooker World*. New York: Random House.
- Farr, Jacob. 2023. "Historic Edinburgh Snooker Club and Bar Set to Be Turned into New Homes." *EdinburghLive*, January 18, sec. Edinburgh News. <https://www.edinburghlive.co.uk/news/edinburgh-news/historic-edinburgh-snooker-club-bar-26006043>.
- Fletcher, Thomas. 2020. *Negotiating Fatherhood: Sport and Family Practices*. Cham: Springer International Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-19784-1>.
- Gee, Chris. 2023. "Apartments Plan for Once-Popular Former Snooker Club and Bar in Bury." *Bury Times*, February 14. <https://www.burytimes.co.uk/news/23318169.prestwich-plan-former-snooker-club-bar-rileys-bury/>.
- Ghandi, Rahul. 2023. "Eastender Snooker Lounger Review." Google.Maps.Com. https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=snooker%20clubs%20open%20up%20to%20women&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8&tbs=lf:1,lf_ui:1&tbm=icl&rflfq=1&num=10&rldimm=12848597213606808462&lqi=Ch5zbm9va2VyIGNsdWJzIG9wZW4gdXAgdG8gd29tZW51vqqB5YGugIAIWjAQABABEAIQAxAEEAUYABgBlh5zbm9va2VyIGNsdWJzIG9wZW4gdXAgdG8gd29tZW6SAQlwb29sX2hhbGyaASRDGREU1VoTkIH0w5TMFZKUTBGblNVUINOMkZRZG1wM1JSQUKqAWsQASoih5zbm9va2VyIGNsdWJzIG9wZW4gdXAgdG8gd29tZW4oADIFeAEiG4XNSC66tFAR1jw1Rhq9Hx2G9LuSyBUVHKAfwzliEAliHnNub29rZXIgy2x1YnMgb3BlbiB

- Mangan, J. A. 2013. *The Cultural Bond: Sport, Empire, Society*. New York: Routledge.
- McDowell, Linda. 2011. *Redundant Masculinities?: Employment Change and White Working Class Youth*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Mckeown, Anthony, and John Glenn. 2018. "The Rise of Resilience after the Financial Crises: A Case of Neoliberalism Rebooted?" *Review of International Studies* 44 (2): 193–214. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210517000493>.
- Miles, A. 1999. *Social Mobility in Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century England*. Cham: Springer.
- Monique. 2023. "Snooker – A Sport in a Crisis." *Ronnie O'Sullivan* (blog). January 25. <https://ronnieo147.com/2023/01/25/snooker-a-sport-in-a-crisis/>.
- Muir, Rick. 2012. "Pubs and Places." The social value of community pubs. Institute for Public Policy Research. https://socialvalueuk.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/pubs-and-places_2nd-ed_Jan2012_8519-1.pdf.
- Nayak, Anoop. 2003. "'Boyz to Men': Masculinities, Schooling and Labour Transitions in de-Industrial Times." *Educational Review* 55 (2): 147–159. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0013191032000072191>.
- Nayak, Anoop. 2006. "Displaced Masculinities: Chavs, Youth and Class in the Post-Industrial City." *Sociology* 40 (5): 813–831. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038506067508>.
- Nixon, Darren P. 2005. *Economic Restructuring, Unemployment and Male Identity in Post-Industrial Society*. Manchester: The University of Manchester (United Kingdom).
- OFCOM. 2022. *Media Nations Report 2002*. London: OFCOM.
- O'Sullivan, Ronnie. 2019. *Ronnie: The Autobiography of Ronnie O'Sullivan*. London: Hachette UK.
- Parrott, John. 1991. *Right on Cue: An Autobiography*. London: Robson.
- Pepys, Samuel. 1666/1972. *The Diary: A New and Complete Transcription. 1666*. London, New York: G. Bell.
- Pocock, J. G. A. 2002. *Virtue, Commerce, and History Essays on Political Thought and History, Chiefly in the Eighteenth Century*. ACLS Humanities E-Book. Cambridge: University Press. <https://gold.idm.oclc.org/login?url=http://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb.01741>.
- Polsky, Ned. 1969. *Hustlers, Beats, and Others*. 1st edition. New York: Doubleday.
- Reith, Gerda. 2002. *The Age of Chance: Gambling in Western Culture*. New York: Psychology Press.
- Reporter, Staff. 2020. "Rileys Snooker Club in Grays Set to Close." *Your Thurrock* (blog). 16 July 2020. <https://www.yourthurrock.com/2020/07/16/rileys-snooker-club-in-grays-set-to-close/>.
- Richler, Mordecai. 2002. *On Snooker*. Toronto: Knopf Canada.
- Riley's. 2005. "House of Commons - Culture, Media and Sport Committee - The Gambling Act 2005: A Bet Worth Taking?: Written Evidence Submitted by Rileys." <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmselect/cmcumeds/421/421vw10.htm>.
- Rkaina, Sam. 2014. "Rileys Sports Bars Close after Company Goes into Administration." *Mirror*, September 15, sec. City News. <http://www.mirror.co.uk/money/city-news/rileys-sports-bars-close-after-4264684>.
- Russell, Dave. 1997. *Football and the English: A Social History of Association Football in England, 1863-1995*. Lancaster: Carnegie Publishing.
- Sandiford, Keith A. P. 1994. *Cricket and the Victorians*. Farnham: Scolar Press.
- Skoog, Emma Pihl. 2021. "The Professional Body in Boxing and Strength Sports: The Connection between Manual Labour and Sports in the Early and Mid Twentieth-Century Sweden." *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 38 (9): 954–971. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09523367.2021.1978980>.
- Steinfeldt, Jesse A., Rebecca A. Zakrajsek, Kimberly J. Bodey, Katharine G. Middendorf, and Scott B. Martin. 2013. "Role of Uniforms in the Body Image of Female College Volleyball Players." *The Counseling Psychologist* 41 (5): 791–819. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0011000012457218>.
- Tarnai, Ezster. 2021. "Vacant Snooker Club Could Be Turned into Flats in Dennistoun." *Glasgow Times*, November 26. <https://www.glasgowtimes.co.uk/news/19742892.vacant-snooker-club-turned-flats-glasgows-dennistoun/>.
- Thomas, Aled. 2022. "Snooker Club to Be Knocked down for Flats." *Swindon Advertiser*, August 3. <https://www.swindonadvertiser.co.uk/news/20593312.snooker-club-knocked-flats/>.

- Thompson, George. 2022. "Former Snooker Hall Set to Be Converted into Shops." *Eastern Daily Press*, October 1. <https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/housing/23006888.former-snooker-hall-set-converted-shops/>.
- Vamplow, Wray. 2004. *Pay up and Play the Game: Professional Sport in Britain, 1875-1914*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Virgo, John. 2005. "John Virgo's Official UK Snooker Club Directory." <https://web.archive.org/web/20050204030734/http://www.johnvirgo.com/directory.asp>.
- Wacquant, L. 2009. "The Body, the Ghetto and the Penal State." *Qualitative Sociology* 32 (1): 101–129. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11133-008-9112-2>.
- Waitt, Gordon. 2014. "Bodies That Sweat: The Affective Responses of Young Women in Wollongong, New South Wales, Australia." *Gender, Place & Culture* 21 (6): 666–682. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2013.802668>.
- Waitt, Gordon, and Elyse Stanes. 2015. "Sweating Bodies: Men, Masculinities, Affect, Emotion." *Geoforum* 59: 30–38. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2014.12.001>.
- White, Jimmy, and Rosemary Kingsland. 1998. *Behind the White Ball: My Autobiography*. 1st ed. London: Hutchinson.
- Wigglesworth, Neil. 1996. *The Evolution of English Sport*. New York: Psychology Press.
- Williams, Luke, and Paul Gadsby. 2012. *Snooker's World Champions: Masters of the Baize*. New York: Random House.
- Woodhouse, Christopher. 2017. "Belfast's Frames Bar and Snooker Hall to Close." *Belfast Telegraph Co.Uk*, April 3, sec. Sunday Life. <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/sunday-life/belfasts-frames-bar-and-snooker-hall-to-close/35588967.html>.
- World Women's Snooker. 2023. "FAQs | WWS | Women's Snooker." *World Women's Snooker* (blog). <https://www.womenssnooker.com/about/faqs/>.
- Yandall, Chris. n.d. "Former Rileys Snooker Hall, Southampton to Be Replaced with Housing." *Daily Echo*. Accessed April 6, 2023. <https://www.dailyecho.co.uk/news/19797678.former-rileys-snooker-hall-replaced-housing/>.