

## 2023 PRESIDENT'S REPORT

There is an old saying, "where have all the years gone?" It has been a long ten-year journey which is nearing an end. I am so grateful, and humbled, to have been given the opportunity to be President of the ABSC.

During this time, I have had tremendous support from the Board and without this help we could not have achieved so much.

Just to mention a few of our achievements: -

- Aligning ourselves with World Snooker Federation. (WSF)
- Joining World Seniors Snooker, (WSS). This provides a spot in the WSS finals at the Crucible, Sheffield, England.
- Promotion of women's snooker through World Women's Snooker (WWS).
- Hosting the 2019 World Billiards with both the IBSF and WBL supporting the event for the first time in many years.
- Hosting the 2023 World Snooker Federation Championships at Mounties, NSW.
- Securing three Q Tour Global events for the region.
- Negotiations commenced to host the 2024 World Billiards
- Elevating Mounties billiard room to a world class venue. Installing steel block cushions on all ten tables. Installing Peradon LED lights and electronic score boards on all tables.
- Negotiated with our sponsor to change Strachan 30 oz cloth to Superfine providing a faster bed and playing conditions.
- Increasing sponsorship in all major championships. (Sponsorship more than \$160,000 a year)
- Building and securing future sponsorship with many new venues.

We continue to enjoy sponsorship from our Sponsor of Record, Consolidated Leisure and Sport (CL&S). Ray Atwell, Managing Director of CL&S, has been supplying Strachan "Superfine" cloth, Aramith balls and sponsoring the ABSC for well over 50 years and we are truly thankful for their valuable support.

States have enjoyed the hospitality provided by the following venues:

- Launceston Worker Club:
- Mounties Community Club:
- Blacktown Workers Club:
- Commercial Club Albury:
- RACV Club Melbourne:
- The Brunswick Club:
- Yarraville Club:
- Club Marconi:
- Pot Black Family Pool Centre:
- Snooker S.A.
- Mingara Community Club

My sincere thanks go out to all the above clubs for their valuable support and sponsorship of billiards & snooker over the years. We continue to build strong relationships with these venues and the new venues and will continue to do so in the coming years.

It would be remiss of me not to acknowledge the contribution made by a few members during the WSF Championships. First and foremost, my sincere thanks to David Jackson for his invaluable contributions adding to the success of the championships. David contributed greatly by donating many things. I know David would not want me to list everything, so I won't, but his generosity was over and above all expectations. Don Stewart and Greg Jenkins were the "ground crew" who assisted in the setting up of the tables at the venue and Brian Mills who took control of the schedule for the practice tables. To Steve Fitzpatrick, V.P. of Mounties, and Belinda Dinga for their tireless efforts in selling the memorabilia of the championships and of course Roger Davey for arranging airport transfers and shuttle service for players and referees. Finally, thanks go to Peter Tankard for arranging the transfer of equipment from China to Sydney and storing the good in his warehouse until needed. Without these people the championships would not have been as successful as they were. A HUGE THANKYOU to each of you.

During my tenure as President of the ABSC and Oceania, we were at risk of losing the two-year main tour spot with World Snooker Federation. Unfortunately, recent winners of the Regional Snooker Championship were not committed to the two years on offer. This spot was given to the winner of the Oceania snooker championships, but Australia was the only country in the region capable of winning the championship. To ensure the spot was not lost for all times a decision had to be made to invite countries from within the Asia Pacific region to participate in these championships. This decision unfortunately created some criticism within some ranks of the Australian players as they considered the spot as "ours." The spot is only ours if we provide a worthy recipient who would be committed on the tour for two years. This did not happen for over six years. Since we did not fulfil our commitment to WSF, it forced the Board of Oceania to make the difficult call to change the identity of the Oceania region to become Asia/Pacific ensuring we retained the spot. The APSBF regional championships will now give our players an opportunity to play some of the best players within the region and secure the two-year tour spot. This higher level of competition will provide experience for all interested.

The International Billiards & Snooker Federation, (IBSF) has continued to lose the support of many regions and countries. Europe, Africa and the APSBF are no longer members so the IBSF can no longer call itself a truly international sporting association. There are some countries within these three regions who still compete at IBSF events, but the IBSF Board is mostly made up of Asian countries. They continue to advertise having 90 countries as members but realistically it would only be in the thirties. They do this to keep their international accreditation with the IOC. The IOC criteria to be recognized as an International Sporting Association is that you must have over fifty member countries. The IBSF no longer meets these criteria, therefore at risk of losing its international identity.

The management of the Mingara Community Club had to forego hosting the Australian Masters Snooker as the event “outgrew” the facilities the Club could offer. This presented us with an opportunity to change the name from Masters to Seniors. By doing this we created a fantastic opportunity for the winner to compete at the Crucible, Sheffield, England, to play in the World Seniors final. Adrian Ridley was fortunate to win the 2023 Seniors spot and for anyone who believes the decision to change the name was wrong, should ask Adrian about his experience. In saying this however, we do not want to lose the history of the Masters Snooker so expressions of interest have already gone out to a club in the Central Coast of NSW.

One of the few concerns I have is the lack of new referee certification. We must make sure each of us do whatever is required to enrol new referees. Many referees have retired, and we MUST replace them. If we do not have referees, then players will be forced to referee their own matches.

Finally, a much stronger focus must be on junior development. Unless states support juniors, we have no future. The ABSC, with the support of CL&S, conduct the Mitchell Junior Team Challenge, and event for each state to provide a team of five players to compete against other states. Along with this, the ABSC conduct National Championships for all ages under 18. We have some outstanding juniors coming through, but we must continue to provide support and nurture them at both state and National levels.

Thanks to Directors of the ABSC for their contribution and support over the past ten years. This coming year we will see some changes with the possible retirement of some people. For those of you who may be retiring, I thank you for your contribution to our sport.

At this stage there has not been an appointment of a new President, but I would like to take this opportunity to wish he or she well and offer whatever assistance they may require.

Finally, thanks to those members who have supported me during my tenure as President. Although out of sight from most of you, I have enjoyed the past ten years and am proud of the progress we have made. I will walk away with sadness but with immense pride in what has been achieved. Without the full support of the Board these things would not have been possible, so I thank you all for your contribution. The incoming President and Directors will continue to promote our sport and I am sure that what has been achieved in the past will continue to grow into the future.

I am sure that 2024 will be a very successful year and that you all continue to enjoy the opportunities our sport provides for you.

Yours in sport,

**Frank Dewens**

**President ABSC 2013-2024**