



SUTTON RFC LADS ARE MIDLANDS MARVELS

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Observer Sport

Telephone: 01827 848586 | fax: 01827 848640 | email: sports.editorial@cintamworth.co.uk | www.suttoncoldfieldobserver.co.uk

Glass is half full for Don despite setback

BOXING

ERDINGTON boxer Don Broadhurst has suffered a setback as he looks to come back from two years out of the ring.

Broadhurst was due to box at Villa Park on Saturday, May 14 – but he has had to delay his return after a fall left him needing surgery on his hand.

“I fell over and cut my hand on some glass,” he said. “It was a deep one and left me needing 15 stitches.

“It shouldn’t keep me out for too long and I am seeing the surgeon again this week to find out when I can start punching again.

“There is another show at



Don Broadhurst plans to make his ring return in June after a minor injury

Villa Park on June 18 and hopefully I will be able to box on that one, that’s the aim anyway.”

Broadhurst, sponsored by Nelson Recruitment, had been in training for his May fight and had felt good.

“I was really happy with myself,” he said. “When I started sparring again after the two years out, I was a lot more advanced than I thought I would be. I was full of confidence and felt there was a lot left in the tank, which is what I wanted to see.

“This is just a blip for me. I have done plenty of work and laid the foundations so I should be able to get back into action quickly.

“I am hungry to achieve things in the boxing ring still and I want to go out and make a bit of a statement.”

Hatton seeded third among England elite

BOXING

SUTTON heavyweight Ryan Hatton has been seeded for the England Elite Championships.

England Boxing have announced Hatton is the number three seed behind Lawrence Okolie and Natty Ngwenga.

That means the 19-year-old goes through to the quarter finals at the Echo Arena in Liverpool on Friday, April 29.



Ryan Hatton will meet other top heavyweights in Liverpool at the end of April

Hatton is seeded to meet Ngwenga (Army) in the semi-finals the following day – and they have met before.

Earlier this season, Ngwenga beat Hatton on points. But Okolie (Dagenham) is the fighter to beat at 91kgs.

The 23-year-old Londoner last week qualified for this summer’s Olympics in Rio by winning silver at a qualifying tournament in Turkey.

‘Demons’ drain confidence of Crucible debutant Mann

SNOOKER

By **JOSHUA RICHARDS**
Sports Reporter

MITCHELL Mann admitted his ‘demons’ cost him the chance to spring a World Snooker Championship first-round shock against world No7 Mark Allen.

The 24-year-old was this year’s sole Crucible debutant after making it through the gruelling three-match qualifying format but appeared to be nerveless when he went 2-1 ahead in the first session with breaks of 69 and 77.

However, as opportunities came and went, Erdington potter Mann’s confidence dwindled and Allen capitalised to see out a 10-3 win on Wednesday morning.

And the world No74, the lowest ranked player in the draw, was disappointed not to have given a better account of himself.

“I felt like I started great given it was my first time there and in the first frame it just felt like I was playing in my room,” Mann said.

“But then I just seemed to lose a lot of faith in my cueing. I didn’t want to take many balls on and that shut my confidence right down.

“I didn’t feel shaky at all, but I had my own demons with my technique.

“I really enjoyed it. I wasn’t nervous, I felt great early on. There were no nerves. But once I started missing a few I doubted my technique and it killed me.”

BUT POTTER VOWS TO LEARN FROM LOSS



Above: Mitchell Mann lines up a pot on his World Snooker Championships debut against Mark Allen at the Crucible Theatre in Sheffield. Mann led 2-1 early on but went on to a slip to a 10-3 defeat.

Mann’s prize money for the season amounted to £10,175 before arriving in Sheffield.

But he now returns home with a cheque for £13,250 and intends to invest some of that money working with Liverpool-based coach Neil Johnson, who spent two years as a professional before turning his attentions to developing the next generation.

“Neil seemed to sort me out the last time I was with him, so I believe we can iron these flaws out,” added Mann.

“I won’t take any time off, I need to work really hard at my game.

“My technique and therefore my confidence is low. It gets on top of you, there’s no hiding out there.

“You want to go out there and get a feel for it, it’s so different to the qualifiers.

“There’s no hiding and when your confidence gets as low as it was for me it is not really the place to play. But I think I can play well there in the future.

“Mark is one of the best players in the world and he can adapt to those sort of environments, whereas for me it was completely different.

“But I feel as though I can do well here if I can just gain some more confidence.

“I finished the season well from what was bit of a bad start.”

■ Watch the World Championship LIVE on Eurosport, with Colin Murray and analysis from Jimmy White and Ronnie O’Sullivan.

Allen: Black miss changed it

MARK Allen admitted that Mitchell Mann had him worried early on at the Crucible – and pointed to one key miss from the youngster as the game’s turning point.

Mann showed no signs of stage fright as he rattled in breaks of 69 and 77 to take a 2-1 lead against the world number seven from Northern Ireland.

The youngster looked a good bet to take the fourth frame too but missed a fairly routine black off the spot and Allen went on to win nine of the next 10 frames to record a comfortable 10-3 victory.

Allen said: “He had me under lots of pressure early on in the match and the first four or five frames could really have gone either way.

“The turning point was when Mitchell missed a black off the spot in frame four. He had a 30-odd lead and that sort of changed it. I managed to win the frame from there with a 60-odd break. I played well after the interval and put him under lots of pressure.

“For a debutant here it’s bound to be hard whenever you’re put under pressure by one of the established names. That’s the way it turned out.”

Allen dominated the opening session on Tuesday after a slow start, winning five frames in a row and scoring one ton and four other breaks of more than 50.

He finished the job on Wednesday morning, winning all four frames against an out-of-sorts Mann and Allen felt the Crucible jitters might have got to the Erdington potter at that stage.

Allen added: “Mitchell missed a few in the second session, he didn’t play his best. He decelerated on a couple of long reds and he hadn’t been doing that before.

“He had been quite positive early on in the match and the balls were hitting the back of the pockets with force.

“I didn’t sense that happening in the second session and he looked like he was struggling.”

Tokyo is target for double champ Luke

SWIMMING

LUKE Davies has his sights firmly fixed on the 2020 Olympics after bagging double British Championships breaststroke gold in Glasgow.

Davies stormed to victory in both the 100m and 200m in the 17-20 age group section, also known as the ‘Target Tokyo’ bracket.

And Tokyo four years from now is very much the target for the Four Oaks star, who competes for both Boldmere and City of Birmingham clubs.

The 19-year-old said: “Tokyo is still four years away but that is what I’m working towards as I was

Luke Davies bagged two gold medals at the British Championships



a bit too young for Rio this year. I think I’m on track to get there with the performances I produced in Glasgow – and I still feel I’ve got more to come.”

The 200m is Davies’ specialist event and he classes the 100m as his weaker discipline but picked up gold in both.

He also only narrowly missed out on reaching the open age final, featuring the likes of world record holder Adam Peaty.

Davies added: “It was great to race against world record holders and international medallists. It’s good to look at where they are and where I am. It’s something to work towards.”

Two other Boldmere stars impressed in Glasgow – Jake Dixon finished fifth in the junior (15-18yr) 100m breaststroke final in a personal best while Ben Stanford set a PB in the open age 50m freestyle heats.

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Mitchell Mann (back) salutes the Crucible crowd after his loss to Allen.