

Panthers Port Macquarie Handicap Snooker Classic

This annual event took place on Saturday the 14th and Sunday the 15th May 2011. There were forty entrants, male and female, from Port Macquarie, the Central Coast, Grafton, Moree and New Zealand, all vying for the honour of winning this prestigious competition, and the not inconsiderable prize money of over \$3,000.

The competition itself provided many absorbing battles between all the contestants. Eventually it resolved into the final match between two scratch players: the well known and respected Forster/Tuncurry snooker player, Craig Mills, who is highly ranked within the NSW Billiards and Snooker Association, and Michael Cosh.

Michael is now a resident of Port Macquarie, having emigrated two years ago from his native Wales - the land of song, rugby and snooker. During the match, which was to be over seven frames, Craig took an early lead of two frames. Michael retrieved this situation by winning the next two games - to draw level.

Good safety play, together with outstanding potting and break-building by both players ensued over the next two frames, providing absorbing spectator enjoyment. Michael eventually triumphed in both - to win the title - four games to two.

In the Consolation event - a separate competition involving only the first round losers another close contest took place, with the Taree player, Craig Johnson, eventually defeating Luis Baker of Port Macquarie two games to one.

In presenting the awards the Tournament Director, Graeme Flyght, commented on the sporting manner in which the matches were played; and the high standard of play exhibited throughout the two days of the tournament. He also gratefully acknowledged the support that he received from the President of the Panthers Port Macquarie Snooker and Billiards Club, Jeff Bolton, the Secretary Trevor Snoxall, and Committee members Luis Baker, and Graham Burrell in running the event. He added his personal thanks to Wal Rooke, the previous organiser of the competition, for his continued maintenance of the tables and equipment, and particularly in the provision of the invaluable background information and computer material necessary for the smooth and efficient running of the event.

The status of the tournament was enhanced by the presence of the two officiating referees. These were Scotty Friend, the New Zealand International snooker referee, and Mingara based referee Phil Tarrant. Phil has been the holder of eleven NSW State Billiards Titles, together with six National Titles, and he achieved fourth place in the World Billiards Title event in India, 1973.

The whole tournament was only made possible by the support received from the sponsors. These include the Port Macquarie Panthers, under the leadership of General Manager, Russell Cooper for the provision of their excellent snooker room and facilities at the Club. Businesses, local and throughout NSW, made contributions of money and goods Private persons also made financial gifts. All donations are gratefully acknowledged by the committee, with sincere thanks

Lewis Parfitt