



## **GB9 CLARIFIES EVENTS SURROUNDING 2009 NATIONS CUP**

*GB 9 Ball Tour (GB9) is a not-for-profit organisation. We are a players' organisation, run by players, for players. We aim to conduct our business in a fair, open and transparent manner, whilst protecting the interests of all GB9 members. We have no commercial interests and therefore our policy and decision-making are not influenced by commercial incentives.*

*The following statement pertains to the recent series of events surrounding the selection and participation of a GB Team at the 2009 Nations Cup, and in particular to the ongoing relationship between the European Pocket Billiard Federation (EPBF), and GB9. We are aware that there has been much conjecture surrounding recent events. We therefore wish to clarify the facts for our members.*

*Before that however, we must congratulate Team GB (Darren, Daryl, Imran, Karl) on their marvellous victory at the 2009 Nations Cup, and wish them luck in the forthcoming World Nations Cup.*

For the past 2 years (2008/09), since its inception, GB 9 Ball Tour have paid full membership fees to the EPBF in order to protect the interests of GB players, in the absence of an active national federation. To date, we have paid the EPBF the amount of £2065 (2008 - £967, 2009 - £1098). This represents a considerable investment of members' funds, and so naturally we are concerned that such investment reaps appropriate rewards for GB9 members.

GB9 has also endeavoured to fund a GB team to attend the European Championships for the last 2 seasons, either directly (2008 & 2009), or via the organisation of qualifying tournaments (2008). For example, this year we funded the top 2 eligible ranked players on the GB9 main ranking list (Darren Appleton, Imran Majid), at a cost of approximately £2400, and in total over the past 2 years have funded players to a total cost of £4,830.

Prior to paying full EPBF membership fees for a second time in February 2009, GB9 sought assurances from the EPBF that such payment was made in recognition that it would protect our (GB9) members' interests in the same manner as any other EPBF member federation. On the 7<sup>th</sup> February 2009 the EPBF confirmed via e-mail that the EPBF Board was happy with this proposal. The GB9 Committee took this to signify that GB9 players would be afforded the exact same rights as players of full fee paying member federations, including invitation and entry to EPBF tournaments, as appropriate.

Following the recent and well publicised selection of a GB Team for the 2009 Nations Cup we enquired with the EPBF regarding the process for selection of the team, and about the lack of consultation with GB9, as the full fee paying body for 2009. As per principles underpinning our selection of players for the European Championship, we were concerned that selection for a GB Team for the Nations Cup be made in an open and transparent manner, according to set and objective criteria, thereby not disadvantaging any individual GB9 members.

The EPBF stated that they had attempted to contact the (now defunct) British Professional Pool Players Association (BPPPA), regarding nomination of a GB Team, but that no response had been forthcoming. The EPBF had previously asked GB9 to nominate players for the European Championships earlier this year, but then stated they had approached the BPPPA regarding the Nations Cup. At no time during this correspondence was a statement made to GB9 that the onus was on individual nations to approach the EPBF in order to participate in the Nations Cup. Indeed, the EPBF's statement to us that they had approached the BPPPA regarding nomination of a team would seem contrary to this.

Following further correspondence, on the 8<sup>th</sup> June the EPBF notified GB9 that the GB Team had been withdrawn from the 2009 Nations Cup. The EPBF cited unpaid BPPPA debts, and the consequent and immediate expulsion of the BPPPA as a member federation, meaning that a GB Team was ineligible to participate in the Nations Cup. Furthermore, the EPBF offered to pay back fees paid by GB9 in February 2009, explaining that we had 'misunderstood' our role as a full fee paying organisation in the absence of an active national federation.

However, the situation existing between the BPPPA and the EPBF was not a new one, and GB9 had discussed this matter with the EPBF prior to payment of full EPBF fees in February 2009. Prior to this the EPBF had requested that GB9 settle outstanding BPPPA debts. We had outlined the reasons why GB9 as a separate entity to the BPPPA, with its own constitution, could not settle the debts of another organisation using the funds of current members of GB9. This situation did not arise post the announcement of a GB team for the Nations Cup and in correspondence with GB9 prior to this the EPBF had stated that they would take up the matter of outstanding BPPPA debts with a new national federation for Great Britain, as it was established.

We made a representation to the EPBF to this effect, asking them to reinstate the GB Team to the Nations Cup. We also clarified the fact that we had not requested a refund of fees paid, but rather a simple clarification regarding the process and basis for selection of the GB Team.

Following this representation the EPBF once again offered to refund fees paid by GB9 in 2009. However, they additionally stated that if we took up this offer that GB players would no longer be eligible to play Euro-Tour events without first paying an (unspecified) individual EPBF affiliation fee. At no time have GB9 asked for a refund of fees paid. We of course do not want to see GB players put in this position, as this would be contrary to our motives for paying full fees in the first instance.

We then learnt that the GB Team had been reinstated to the 2009 Nations Cup. We are unaware of any settlement of outstanding BPPPA debts to the EPBF in the interim period.

Further to this series of events, and communication with the EPBF, we would like to re-iterate the following in particular:

- (1) The discussions and correspondence that GB9 had with the EPBF prior to paying full EPBF fees for 2009, at no time included statements that such payments were to assure Euro-Tour and/or European Championship participation alone, for GB players. The payment was made on the understanding that GB players' rights would be protected as per the players of EPBF member federations, in the interim period prior to formation of a new national federation for Great Britain.
- (2) The EPBF stated in correspondence to GB9 that they had attempted to contact the BPPPA regarding nomination of a GB Team for the 2009 Nations Cup.
- (3) We do not intend to take up the EPBF's offer to refund fees paid, and compromise the position of GB players with respect to Euro-Tour and/or other EPBF events. Whilst we will continue to lobby on behalf of GB players as a full fee paying organisation for 2009, ultimately such decisions are in the hands of the EPBF.
- (4) GB9 as a not-for-profit players' organisation, as far as is possible strive to make decisions in GB players' interests. We attempt to do this in a fair, open and transparent manner, and do so without the influence of commercial and / or individual interests.

We do not take the decision to publish this statement lightly, and wish that circumstances had not warranted it. We do however want to communicate the facts regarding recent events to our members, and other interested parties.

As part of the development plans for American pool in Great Britain, and starting in January 2010 there will be a national league and county structure formed, called 'GB 9 Leagues'. 'GB 9 Leagues', is run by Entropy Management Solutions (EMS (Director Tony Weafer)). 'GB 9 Leagues' is a separate, but affiliated, organisation to GB 9 Ball Tour. It aims to develop the grass roots structure for American Pool that Great Britain so desperately requires at this point in time, thereby complimenting the already well established structure for professional pool that GB 9 Ball Tour currently provides.

'GB 9 Leagues' will provide much of the infrastructure required by a new national federation for Great Britain. It has therefore been agreed in principle between the GB9 Committee and EMS that EMS will also seek to establish a new national federation, and apply to become a member of the EPBF. EMS will take responsibility for the organisation and implementation of the work demanded of an EPBF member. This is subject to approval from the EPBF, but has the full support of the GB9 committee. It is envisaged that both GB 9 Ball Tour and GB 9 Leagues will affiliate to the new national federation, thereby providing coherency between the structures for professional and grass roots American Pool in Great Britain, and a new GB pool federation.

Once again, congratulations to Team GB for their victory at the 2009 Nations Cup.

GB 9 Ball Tour Committee

(3<sup>rd</sup> July 2009)