

SNOOKER

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The 1982 World Snooker Championship will soon be taking up a considerable amount of our television viewing time. With household names like Steve Davis, Alex Higgins, Ray Reardon and Terry Griffiths, snooker has now become one of the major TV sports.

For a long time, though, snooker has been popular among men and, in the 4,000 or so working men's clubs, the snooker table has always been a star attraction. It is a precision instrument often maintained as part of an after-sales service. It has to be kept level, the cloth cleaned and ironed regularly and the cushions checked for their spring or bounce. The tables are expensive — the cost running into thousands of pounds — but most clubs have at least one. The club championships, inter-club championships, leagues and trophies galore make this a must.

Snooker can be captivating for players and spectators alike and more so since its recent television exposure. The game is enjoyed by men and women of all ages but in the main, the players are men. There is one very obvious reason for this. Very few working mens clubs allow women to play on the snooker tables and some do not permit women in the snooker room at all. On certain nights when the main matches are scheduled, women may be barred from the club completely and, where there is no separate snooker room there may be a line drawn on the floor — beyond which women cannot cross. So the first time you turn on your TV set to watch the World Snooker Championships and see Steve Davis playing a woman, it will be only as a result of tremendous changes in male attitudes to women and not because one exceptional woman has made it in the world of snooker.