

**IN THE MATTER OF PROCEEDING BROUGHT
UNDER THE BETTING RULES
OF THE WORLD PROFESSIONAL BILLIARDS AND SNOOKER ASSOCIATION**



**Tim Ollerenshaw, Chair
Gordon McKay
Tarik Shamel**

BETWEEN:

WORLD PROFESSIONAL BILLIARDS AND SNOOKER ASSOCIATION (“WPBSA”)

World governing body for Snooker and Billiards

-and-

KURT MAFLIN

Respondent

**DECISION
OF
THE WPBSA DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE**

Detailed Reasons

(The Decision having been issued in summary on 12 August 2017)

BACKGROUND AND INVESTIGATION

1. This is the Decision of the Disciplinary Committee of the WPBSA convened to hear charges brought by the WPBSA against Kurt Maflin, a professional snooker player (continuously since 2010 and intermittently on the Tour since 2006) in connection with betting in contravention of Rules of the WPBSA to which he was and is subject.
2. As a result of information from betting operators supplied to Nigel Mawer QPM, Vice-Chair of the WPBSA, he commenced a thorough investigation into whether charges of misconduct should be brought against Kurt Maflin for betting on snooker. Following an analysis of the betting material obtained from the various bookmakers, an interview with Kurt Maflin took place on 23 May 2017 at which he was accompanied by his sister and Curtis Braithwaite a close friend and quasi-Manager. During the interview the Player admitted responsibility which

informed the framing of the subsequent charges. The allegations were put to Kurt Maflin in a letter from Nigel Mawer dated 13 June and the Hearing before the Disciplinary Committee was convened for 10 August 2017.

THE CHARGES

3. Kurt Maflin was charged as follows, that he:

3.1. Between 17th April 2011 and 2nd May 2011 had a betting account with BetFair and placed 5 bets on snooker to a value of £12 with an overall profit of £7.80 that were in breach of the WPBSA Betting Rules.

And/or

3.2. Between 9th August 2015 and 15th November 2016 had a betting account with BetFair. He placed 58 bets on snooker on their Sportsbook to a value of £1,552.50 with an overall loss of £209.03. He placed 7 bets on snooker on their Exchange to a value of £77.92 with an overall loss of £77.92. All of these bets were in breach of the WPBSA Betting Rules.

And/or

3.3. Between 14th August 2013 and 24th October 2016 had a betting account with William Hill and placed 123 bets on snooker to a value of £634.27 with an overall loss of £482.68 that were in breach of the WPBSA Betting Rules.

The total number of bets placed by Kurt Maflin on snooker in breach of the rules was 193 with a value of £2,276.69 where he made an overall loss of £761.

THE RULES

4. The Rules of the WPBSA relevant to the disposal of this case are as follows:

From 25th August 2009 until 1st January 2012:

Section 2 of the Members Rules

It shall be a breach of these Betting Rules, and therefore shall constitute Misconduct under paragraph 3.2(b) of the Disciplinary Rules, for a Participant to do any of the following:

[3.1.1.1] To place, accept, lay or otherwise make any wager, bet or other form of financial speculation (a "Bet") with any other person in relation to the result, score, progress, conduct or any other aspect of the Tour and/or any Tournament or Match in which the Participant is participating (or, in the case of a Representative, in which one or more of his Players is participating or in the case of a Player, in which one or more Players are participating who are managed by the same Representative as that Player).

After 1st January 2012:

Amended Section 2 of the Members Rules

It shall be a breach of these Rules for a Member to do any of the following:

[2.1.1.1] to place, accept, lay or otherwise make a Bet with any other person in relation to the result, score, progress, conduct or any other aspect of the Tour and/or any Tournament or Match in which the Member is participating;

EVIDENCE AND HEARING

5. The evidence available to the Disciplinary Committee and considered by it was as follows:

- Letters sent to Kurt Maflin regarding the Disciplinary Hearing, dated 13 and 27 June 2017
- Case Summary provided by the WPBSA
- Witness Statement of Nigel Mawer, dated 13 June 2017
- BetFair Kildo147 account spreadsheet in the name Kurt Maflin
- BetFair Neon147 account spreadsheet in the name Kurt Maflin
- William Hill Metalman123 account spreadsheet in the name Kurt Maflin
- Transcript of interview with Kurt Maflin, dated 23 May 2017
- Interview preamble document

- Letter to Members, dated February 2012
 - Email to Members, dated 29 October 2014
 - WPBSA Members Rules between 25th August 2009 and January 2012
 - WPBSA Members Rules post January 2012
 - WPBSA Members Rules 2017
 - Kurt Maflin's email, dated 29 June 2017
6. In his email dated 29 June 2017, Kurt Maflin indicated that he would attend the Hearing with a friend/representative (Curtis Braithwaite), admitted his breach and said he would provide a written statement which followed in the same email. The Player said that he had undertaken all the betting purely out of boredom and all these bets were for low amounts to help him out in his difficult financial situation. He admitted that he had been ignorant of his player's contract (which he accepted was his responsibility to do) and that he had not known that he could not bet on other players' snooker matches. He also pointed to his previously good record within the Sport.
7. At the Hearing Kurt Maflin attended with Curtis Braithwaite and together they addressed the Disciplinary Committee in an open way. The Player confirmed his acceptance of the breaches of the Rules. The Player and Curtis Braithwaite essentially repeated and amplified the points set out in the email which reflected also what had been said in interview.

FINDINGS

8. Based upon the admissions and other evidence available the Committee found as facts that the Betting took place as alleged and that there were contraventions of the Rules as specifically set out in the Charges.
9. In the circumstances, the Charges being proven, the Committee moved to consider Sanctions.

RELEVANT PROVISIONS IN RESPECT OF SANCTIONS FOR BREACH OF THE RULES:

10. The relevant provisions are as follows:

From January 2012 and before 18th January 2017:

Section 2 of the Members Rules

[1.1] *These Rules shall not have retrospective effect.*

[1.2] *Any proven breach by a Member of the provisions of 2.1 below will result in a lifetime ban from involvement in the game of snooker and billiards for that Member, save in circumstances where the relevant Member can show clear and exceptional mitigation.*

From 18th January 2017:

Section 2 of the Members Rules

[1.3] *Any proven breach by a Member of the provisions of sections , 2.1.2 – 2.1.5 below will result in a ban up to a permanent suspension from involvement in snooker and billiards for that Member, save in circumstances where the relevant Member can show clear and exceptional mitigation.*

[1.4] *These Rules shall not have retrospective effect.*

SANCTION DELIBERATIONS

11. The Committee took into account the following points:

- a) The volume of the betting.
- b) The (relatively) modest profit sought.
- c) The early admissions both immediately when confronted with the allegations, in interview and at all other times including at the Hearing. Such assistance had certainly saved costs in the overall process.
- d) The explanation of why the transgressions occurred as set out above.
- e) The frank admissions and explanations of Curtis Braithwaite.
- f) The demeanour and regret of the Player and the fact that he had stopped betting albeit only after becoming aware of a Decision relating to another Player (Alfie Burden) at the end of 2016 and that he does not appear to have bet on snooker at all since.
- g) His personal circumstances.

12. The Committee was compelled to look at the issue of a potential lifetime ban. It decided that this was not a case where a lifetime ban should be imposed. Following the very clear distinction reflected in the Rule Changes that came into force in 2014, there is similarly an identifiable difference between “match-fixing” activity and other betting. This case clearly falls into the category of the latter and therefore the Disciplinary Committee did not need to consider a lifetime ban as at all appropriate. Although there were periods of activity covered by Rules in force at the time which envisaged a lifetime ban in the absence of clear and exceptional mitigation, the fact that such minimum ban has now been removed from the Rules in cases such as this should be taken into account in relation to the sanction here.
13. Betting transgressions however, remain serious matters in the sport of snooker and should be treated accordingly. There can be no excuse for a Player (whether with management support or not) being ignorant of what may be in his Contract, the relevant Rules and the communications forwarded by the Sport’s statutory governing body or agents particularly in relation to Betting.

SANCTIONS

14. Accordingly the Committee came to the following decision.

14.1. Kurt Maflin will be suspended for a period of three months. Such suspension will, however be itself suspended in full until the conclusion of the 2018 World Championship provided there are no other subsequently proven breaches of the WPBSA Rules for charges brought for matters identified as occurring within the period up to that date; and

14.2. Kurt Maflin will pay a fine of £2,500.

Tim Ollerenshaw, Chair

Gordon McKay

Tarik Shamel

29 August 2017