

Mark Davis Interview

Lula: Please tell us about your performances in this year's German Masters against Niu Zhuang and Ryan Day.

Mark: I started off very slowly in this year's German Masters, but after the first two frames of my 1st round match, I started to play a lot better. I was disappointed to lose my 2nd round match to Ryan, but it was a good match, and we both played pretty well.

You have played on the TV table in the Tempodrome and as well as on table two to five. How do you feel about the set-up? (the lighting situation, the distractions ...)

I haven't played at the Tempodrome for around 3 years, so not sure how the set up was then. The lighting was a bit of a problem, as the TV table lighting was going over to the other tables. But apart from that, I think the set up is great, it is one of my favourite venues on tour. The crowd are always very good, and I enjoy playing in front of them.

You had a good run in the Snooker Shootout recently. What do you think about the tournament?

The shootout is a very different event from what we normally play. But I think it is something the players enjoy, it's only once a year, and I think to have an event like that once a year is no problem. I had a good run to the semi finals this year and enjoyed the event with crowd getting involved, etc. Hopefully it will continue.

Can you describe two of the best moments in your snooker life?

Getting into the top 16 for the first time and getting my first 147 in professional competition.

What kind of player are you? Please tell us about your strengths and your weaknesses.

I think I am quite an attacking player, and when I am playing well, that's how I like to play. Sometimes if I am not playing well, I can start taking too long on shots, which is not good for me. I just think I am not great at anything specific, but am ok at all parts of the game, but I try to improve the parts I need to improve.

You reached your best ranking position in your 23rd year on the main tour. Can you tell us about the reasons for this (late) improvement?

Working with Terry Griffiths helped a lot. The work I do with him is part on table coaching, but I don't do any big changes in my technique. I feel at this stage of my career I can't be making massive technical changes. But he also helps with the mental side of the game. He gives me certain notes to look through, but I have to keep doing it to get the benefits. Practice on the mind is just as important as practice on the table, but not many players will practice it enough - including myself!

But the increase in number of tournaments to play in was a big factor, too. It is very hard to climb the rankings with only 6 or 7 events a year.

Recently you said "Getting results is more of a battle for me than it might be for some other people." What does that mean?

I don't remember saying that, but I probably meant that the travelling and that sort of stuff is a bit harder for me than some other players. This is my 27th year on tour, and that's a long time, so I may find things about the tour harder than some of the younger guys. But I still like practising and still enjoy competing.

Snooker is always changing, be it the techniques, technological advances or tactics. Can you tell us how you have adapted to the changes in the game over the years?

I have pretty much tried to play the same game all my career. The only thing is that I have

tried to be a bit more positive in my shot selection over the years because the game is so attacking these days.

Would you tell us what is important to you in a snooker match?

Winning - that's all that matters to me. It's nice to play well, but winning the match is all that really matters.

Whose skills do you find most impressive lately and why?

For the new players it's Yan Bingtao. For someone so young, his safety play and tactics are incredible. He will be top player for long time.

Which players do you most enjoy watching and why?

Ronnie, because he is the best player ever and plays in a way that's great to watch. I also like watching Mark Williams, he plays differently than Ronnie but is also good to watch.

Do you think a snooker pro deserves a guaranteed income?

I don't think everyone on tour deserves an income, but if you are in the top 64 or top 50, I think you should be guaranteed some money. Not many sports exist where if you are in the top 50 in the world, you are not guaranteed a penny.

Do you follow women's snooker? If so, what do you think about the latest developments?

I don't really follow it to be honest, but when I was in Thailand for the 6 reds, I went to a local club and practiced with a young girl there. She was very impressive and I think she will do well in the future.

Compared to other professions, have you ever thought playing snooker felt a bit meaningless?

Plenty of times, especially when things are not going well.

Would you consider yourself to be a generally happy person?

I think so yes. But sometimes when practising or at events, you can look like you are not happy, but it's not the case; it's just that you are concentrating on your job really.

What are you most passionate about (off of the snooker table)?

My family. That's the most important thing; snooker is always second to my family.

How do you deal with the effects your snooker career has on your family life?

It can be difficult with all the time you are away from your family, especially for me, as I have been doing this for such a long time. But it is my living, it's what I do to pay the bills, so I have to treat it as a proper job, and do as best as I can.

What is your biggest wish for the near future?

Snooker-wise, to try and enjoy playing and to win a ranking event before I retire would be great, and something I would always remember. But I just try my best each time I play, so I have no regrets.

Thank you, Mark, for taking the time to answer our questions. May your biggest wish become true soon.