

ROBBY FOLDVARI

It gives me great pleasure to nominate Robby Foldvari for Life Membership of the Victorian Billiards & Snooker Association. I first met Robby when he was a teenager of 15 or so, and it was obvious even then that his dedication and ability would take him a long way in cue sports. In fact those qualities took him to the pinnacle of the billiards world.

Australian triple World Billiards Champion Robby Foldvari was born in Melbourne in 1960. Robby's father, a migrant from Hungary, made Robby a home-made outdoor billiard table when he was 11. Later, a full-size table was installed in the garage where Robby honed his craft for years, often practising on rain-soaked carpet in the winter and under the baking heat of a tin roof in summer. Robby soon developed as an emerging talent in a sport where proficiency takes decades to acquire, becoming the youngest winner of the Victorian and Australian Billiards Championships aged 22 in 1982 and the following year setting a world record break for amateur billiards of 615 under new rules. Around this time Robby came under the tutelage of the well-known New Zealander Murt O'Donoghue who lived in Sydney, 600 miles from Melbourne. In the days before the internet and email a large part of Robby's tuition was conducted by mail - Robby would draw a diagram of a position, send the diagram to Murt, and several days later receive an annotated reply with the recommended shot to play.

Robby turned professional in 1984 and within two years reached the pinnacle of his sport by winning the World Professional Billiards Championship in England, becoming only the second Australian after Walter Lindrum to annex that title. Robby was 25 at the time and beat England's great Norman Dagle 3-1 in a best of 5 400-up final at the Romiley Forum in Stockport, England. Further world championships followed in the World Matchplay Billiards Championship in 1997, beating India's Geet Sethi 4-2 in a best of 7 100-up final at the Norwich Sport Village Hotel in Hellesdon, England; and the IBSF World Billiards Championship in 1998, beating Thailand's Praput Chaithanasakun 1869-1439 in a four hour final at the RACV Club in Queen Street Melbourne. During this period Robby also competed on the professional snooker tour for a total of 13 years, becoming the only player in the modern era to win a professional tournament in both billiards and snooker when he beat Darren Morgan 8-1 in Clacton, England to win the 1989 WPBSA Invitational Event One.

Throughout his career Robby has toured the globe playing in over 30 countries and over 40 world championships in a variety of cue sports. Robby has competed throughout Australia, winning National Titles in every cue sport discipline, and in North and South America, Europe, Africa, and Asia – every continent in fact bar Antarctica.

Since 2005 Robby has been the Resident Professional at the RACV Club in Melbourne, while continuing to tour extensively for exhibitions, speaking engagements and tournaments. Robby is also a fully accredited coach and a highly respected commentator, on 2019 was appointed Ambassador for the 2019 World Billiards Championship held at his home Club, the RACV. Throughout his career Robby has been proud to represent his home State Victoria and his country Australia. I commend Robby to you as a Life Member of the VBSA.

David Pitt