

What To Look For When Buying A New Snooker Table

Many people wishing to purchase a new billiard table are tentative because they feel they know very little about the product. Indeed, most purchasers buy only one table in their lifetime. We therefore offer the following suggestions for guidance purposes only.

1. Billiard Table Cushions

The performance of the cushions on a table is crucial, particularly the speed and angle of response. As a means of minimizing costs, many new tables are available with cushions that perform poorly. This is due to these tables being manufactured with a cushion that has been constructed in a way which we regard as inadequate.

The issue of cushions is important since replacement of cushions costs several hundred pounds.

2. The Cloth on the Table

The most highly regarded billiard cloths are manufactured in England and the best of these in the west of England. A true English billiard cloth is made from wool and has a directional nap on the surface. If you rub it lightly in one direction, it gives a smooth feeling to the hand.

Rubbed in the opposite direction it has a rough resistant feel. The better qualities of billiard cloth are very fine so that when the ball is in motion it rolls on – there is relatively little friction to arrest its travel.

The quality of cloth is important, as, once again, replacement of inferior cloth with the high quality article costs several hundred pounds.

3. The Pockets

The brackets holding the pocket nets should be of metal. Some are made of plastic which tends to break; some of these have a "metallised" surface on the plastic so that they appear to be more durable than they actually are. We recommend that the pocket nets should be fastened to the table using a strong wire. Use of staples tends to be inadequate – if the nets are stapled to the underside of the table the staples tend to come away under the pressure of heavily struck balls. In this event while the nets may remain perfectly good, the balls when potted will drop to the floor damaging them or the floor surface, or both. The metal brackets should be covered in strong leather which protects the balls as they strike the bracket before dropping into the net. We recommend that you check the fitting of the leathers to ensure that there is no position where the balls will actually strike the metal direct, allowing such damage to occur.

4. Timbers

Billiard tables should be made from quality furniture timbers. Use of custom wood or particleboard is not adequate. The table framework must be strong enough to carry the heavy weight of the slate bed. Over time materials such as custom wood or particle board are unlikely to continue to take the strain.

5. The Slate

A quality billiard table will have a bed of slate. Slate should provide more consistency in keeping the table level than other known substitutes. Such a level surface is essential if the balls are to run true. When considering a table look underneath it. The slate should be lying flat, totally resting on the under frame. If this is not so, over time the slate is likely to sink under its own weight until it does lie on the surface of the frame. That is, the table will move out of level. If you see a series of wooden wedges between the top of the frame and the underside of the slate, we suggest that you do not buy the table because, here, the table has been presented so that it is level temporarily. It is likely to remain so only in the short term. Such wedges have a tendency to become loose or they may drop out. Then the position of the slate will change and the table will be out of level. If a table is correctly constructed the levelling process in your home is carried out by means of adjustment from the base of the legs.

All new tables are made to look as attractive as possible, which makes your choice difficult. We suggest that if you are looking at a table which carries no brand name, pass it by.