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## ROBBY FOLDVARI

INTERVIEW, 4-Jan-2007

*Robby has won many tournaments around the world while also performing exhibitions and coaching in over 30 countries.*

Highest competitive billiards break: 686

Highest competitive snooker break: 141

Some of his unique achievements include:

### NATIONAL

Australian Snooker Champion 2006  
Australian Billiards Champion - undefeated, 1982, 1983  
Australian Billiards Champion, 50 up – undefeated, 2000  
Australian Professional Snooker Finalist 1988  
Australian Snooker Open Champion 1992  
Australasian Professional Billiards Champion 1985  
Oceania Snooker Finalist 2005  
Commercial Club Open Billiards Champion, 2001  
Three Consecutive Princes Coca Cola Snooker Cup Champion  
Fred Osbourne -Albury Snooker Champion Twice,  
Victorian Snooker Champion 1983  
Victorian Billiards Champion 1982, 1983  
City of Melbourne Snooker Champion 1980  
Yarraville (Lance Pannell) Snooker Champion  
Monash University Sports Hall of Fame  
Confederation Snooker Cup Champion 2005

### INTERNATIONAL

World Professional Billiards Champion 1986 (England)  
World Snooker Team Cup, Australian Captain 1996 and 2006 (Thailand, USA)  
World Matchplay Billiards Champion 1996 (UK)  
World IBSF Billiards Champion 1997 (Australia)  
World IBSF Snooker Masters, No 1 Seed after round robin, 2004 (Holland)  
World IBSF Billiards (150 format), No 1 Seed after round robin, 2005 (Malta)  
World Professional Billiards Finalist 1987, 1991 (England, India)  
World IBSF Billiards Semi Finalist 1983 (Malta)  
UK Professional Billiards Champion 1993, 1994 (England)  
First ever overseas player to win UK Pro Billiards Champion  
UK Professional Billiards Finalist 1987  
Clacton Professional Snooker Champion 1991(England)  
The only player in the modern day game to win both a professional billiards and snooker tournament  
Winner of largest UK Snooker Pro Am, Willie Thorne Snooker Pro-Am  
Winner of 5 Snooker Pro/Ams in UK  
Winner of 12 Billiard Pro/Ams Grand Prix in UK  
USSR Open Snooker Champion 1990  
Open Zeeland Snooker Champion (Holland)  
Radiant Grand Slam Billiards Champion (India)  
Oceania Snooker Finalist 2000 (New Zealand)  
Oceania 9ball third place (New Zealand)

**Singapore Official Coach Snooker, 9ball, Billiards  
China Official coach  
WPBSA Official coach**

*Hi Robby, firstly congratulations on winning the 2006 Australian National Snooker Championship. Was it a great achievement? And was it a good tournament?*

**I am very proud of winning it as it was the only tournament missing from my resume. I was not allowed to play in it for a number of years as it was closed to professionals and this year I beat a lot of good players which was rewarding.**

*In the early days, how did you start playing billiards and snooker? how old were you?*

**My Dad made me a table which I played on outside when I was 11. I took it up seriously when I was about 15**

*We all know you were a professional player in England, was this just billiards or snooker as well? And how long were you a pro for?*

**I played both professionally at Billiards and Snooker. I am very proud of this as in the 90's I was the only player to do this for a long period and being quite successful, being ranked between the 50's to 80's for a number of years at snooker and in the top 4 at billiards consistently.**

**In fact I played a pro billiards and snooker event on the same day, playing in Sheffield in the morning and playing snooker 200 miles away in the evening.**

*You must have practiced a lot? Can you recall how many hours you used to do per day? And was it mainly solo or with other players?*

**I used to play at least 6 hours a day which was not unusual for a professional but probably practiced too much in the second half of my pro career. Probably about 75% solo and match practice /money matches the rest, combining billiards and snooker. I used to practice with fellow professionals such as Steve James(top 10 player) Willie Thorne, Rex Williams, Graham Miles and many professionals. During this time I made over 3000 centuries in snooker matches and dozens of breaks of over 500 at billiards.**

*Do you have a most memorable billiards match? Please tell us about it.*

**Hard to say but beating Michael Russell and Geet Sethi and Dagley was always fantastic as you could not beat anyone better. The UK Pro was usually a good tournament for me, I beat Sethi 4 – 0 in the final and another match against Peter Sheehan I think I did not miss a shot**

*How about a most memorable Snooker match?*

**Once again, one match does not stick out but just a few are;  
Playing Ronnie O'Sullivan in the World Pro Snooker Championship, I missed 3 shots in first 6 frames and it was 3 each. In the next 3 frames I made two 50 odd breaks and didn't miss a ball but I went 6-3 down**

**Just playing people such as Hendry, Doherty, Ebdon, all of whom I defeated although it was early in their careers**

**Playing Steve Davis for a solid gold 12 inch cue in India**

**Winning the final of the WPBSA Clacton Professional tournament in the UK against Darren Morgan 8-1 who was soon to be a top 10 player**

**Winning the UK's largest Snooker Pro Am, The Willie Thorne Open where over 300 of the best players used to enter over 4 weeks. In the final I defeated Antony Hamilton 5-4 with him going for a 3<sup>rd</sup> year consecutive victory.**

Winning the USSR Open Snooker championship in Moscow in front of what the former chairman of the WPBSA Mark Wildman says was a world record snooker crowd of 3000 people in the Olympic Basketball stadium.

I was not permitted to play in Australian ABSC tournaments for a number of years as I was in the top 100 snooker professional rankings. In about 1992 there was an unofficial Australian Snooker Open which most of the best players played at the Golden Triangle. It was the icebreaker for introducing fully open events again with higher prize money than usual. The Pros had to give 14 start. I won the title beating George Ganim in the final but in the semi I played Stan Gorski who many thought was the best non pro player in Australia. Giving him 14 start. I was 3 -0 down and got back to 3 each only to be 66 points down with 5 reds left and made a 67 break needing all 5 reds with blacks to win.

Recently in the World Masters Snooker Championship in Holland I played a best of 5 match against a Frenchman and lost the first frame and then I made 3 successive centuries with the last century called by the referee however the scorer said it was 91 even though the referee, myself and my opponent all agreeing that it was a hundred

In 1984 I went to the UK I played a match against an amateur who was runner up at Pontins to Terry Griffiths and we played best of 9 at snooker and I made 4 centuries and 90 break, this led to me getting a sizable sponsorship deal for a number of years

Being the Captain of the Australian World Cup Snooker Team 10 years apart, 1996 (Professional) and 2006 (IBSF) and we reached the quarters on both occasions.

*Most memorable achievement?*

Performing Exhibitions as watching all the older players I have learned a lot from their trick shot shows and usually I play very well as I enjoy exhibitions as there is less pressure.

EG. At Clayton RSL first shot I made a 300 break at billiard unfinished and then made 2 consecutive centuries at snooker. A few days later I did the same thing at the Hampton RSL

*I've personally seen you play at a decent pace and recently at the 2006 city of Melbourne where you played Marco Chan you played quite fast. However, I've also seen slow. Why is it that your speed can vary so much?*

There has been some comments of late about the speed of my play which mostly is not worth commenting about. In fact I have been urged by some people to take legal action as the comments were so far fetched. Above I have stated many of my accomplishments and by doing so, prove I have played at the highest level, within the rules.

There have been comments on why the Australian Championship finished late with the Tournament Director deflecting from the main reason which were of organizational matters, which included:

#### **SCHEDULING**

##### **1. Not learning from last years schedule**

In 2005, I was virtually not involved in the entire day and the winner Vinnie Calabrese is one of the fastest players in Australia and they finished late  
The Tournament Director admits there should only be Semi's and Final on the last day now.

2. Putting on a supper after 4 frames also was unbelievable, I believe this took around 1hour, I had time to take my shoes off, have a nap, have a wash, eat a bite, have a drink and go to the toilet. I was 3 frames to 1 down at the interval, I never lost a frame after the interval, so the complete nature of the game changed.

3. The day started promptly at 9am last year, whereas this year we started 20 minutes late due to electrical lighting problems

4. There were stoppages for smoking between some frames in the final

Added to this I played completely within the rules

Probably the 2 highest decorated referees in Australia officiated my games at RACV and I was not even officially warned once.

In fact I have not been warned in any tournament after and including that Championship, including the World Cup, South Pacific Championship, Princes Cup, Australian Open and City of Melbourne

In the final of the Australian Championship, it was one of the greatest safety battles and the more safety shots the longer the game. Also it wasn't that long, frames averaged out to be around 30 min per frame which with the amount of safety and unfortunately the lack of big breaks, shows the speed of play was quite acceptable. Some officials and A grade players have stated that it was enjoyable to watch such high class safety and my play was completely acceptable through out the tournament.

Glen Wilkinson and Mathew Bolton ran over time in the Australian Open, their 8 frames took four and a half hours to finish and delayed the next session, were they too slow? I was not watching the match, you cannot tell just by the finish time of the match. At the South Pacific I defeated Aaron Mahoney 3-1 before Paul Balzer defeated Wilkinson 3-0, were they too slow? I don't know how the balls were situated in that match. In the Aust Open semi final Steve Mifsud and Aaron Mahoney were still playing 4 hours and 15 minutes after the start of their match when I left.

May I point out one frame in this year's World Professional Championship took 1 hour and 15 minutes.

The only tactic I play is playing the percentages for my game (my percentage for cue ball control for safety and snooker shots, dare I say, is higher than most players in the world) and so I make a valid decision on occasions on attack or defence depending where the balls are on the table.

In the same light the 2006 AFL semi final between West Coast and Bulldogs was played and no goals were scored in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter until the last 30 seconds. Just before the goal, learned commentators, Robert Walls and Malcolm Blight commented it was "a great quarter of football even though there were no goals scored for 27 minutes".

To summaries for those who stereotype games and players the following should be noted;

Games with fewer shots take a shorter time

Games with big breaks take less time

Frames with many misses take more time

Frames with more safety take more time

Smoking and other match stoppages make matches longer

All players must be treated consistently

Players have different abilities, different strengths and weaknesses.

I don't mind at all if there is a change of rules so malicious gossip is silenced.

**Put a limit on safety shots in a game and there will be a significant change in the length of some matches. You will be changing the game and its nature to be more like pool and the real intricacies of the game will be lost which so many people loved watching in the games heyday in the 80's on UK TV.**

**I say the above to you as a lover of snooker (this is by definition a safety shot), who has played at the highest level for many years and derives income from tournaments, exhibitions, coaching and product brands from his achievements around the world**

**In the course of the hundreds of matches I have played overseas, in over 30 countries, I have played in more different types of Billiards and Snooker World Championships than anybody, and on every occasion I have always been proud to represent Australia. On occasions I have played on under injury which I do not want to elaborate on but I have always enjoyed the competition, skill of billiards and snooker.**

*Thanks for your time Robby and all the best for 2007!*