

SPORTING LEGENDS: RAY REARDON

SPORT: SNOOKER

COMPETITIVE ERA: 1949 - 1992

Born 8 October 1932, in the coal mining community of Tredegar in Wales, Reardon left school and became a miner when he was 14. It is rumoured that he used to wear gloves to protect his hands for snooker.

When he was 17, he won the News of the World amateur title and his reward was an ash cue which was presented by the legendary Joe Davis. Ray treasured the cue and over the next 30 years it brought him both fame and fortune.



During the early 1950s, Ray became a hero of the valleys when he won the Welsh amateur crown six years running. But when the Welsh coal mines started to close down, the Reardon family moved to Stoke-on-Trent, where Ray joined the police. He had an eventful career as PC184, being commended for disarming a man carrying a shotgun and also for climbing up an icy roof to arrest a burglar.

In 1964, Ray reached the final of the English Amateur Championships where he narrowly beat John Spencer, the man who was to become his great rival over the next 15 years. After a string of amateur successes Reardon decided to turn pro in 1967.

When Reardon entered the 1970 World Championship, he had a paltry £8 in the bank despite winning the inaugural Pot Black competition in 1969. He beat John Pulman 37-33 in the final to become World Champion, and the £1,250 cheque gave him financial security.

Ray won his second World title in 1973 after out-potting the Australian, Eddie Charlton in the final. He went on to take the most prestigious prize in snooker for the next three years. During the 1977 campaign, he was defeated in the quarter-finals by his old adversary John Spencer whose fine form enabled him to claim his third World Championship.

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Reardon was a true gentleman of the snooker game.

Ray became World Champion for the sixth time in 1978 when he humbled the South African, Perrie Mans. Since then he had only featured in one other World Championship final - in 1982 when he met an in-form Alex Higgins. Ray held his own and when the score was 15-all, the match could have gone either way.

Unfortunately for Ray, he made a stupid error in the 31st frame and the Hurricane took his chance to run out the victor, 18-15. Beating Jimmy White 10-5 in the final of the Professional Players tournament made up for some of Ray's disappointments in 1982.

Reardon started to slide down the rankings in the early 1980s. However, he beat Doug Mountjoy to take the Welsh professional title for the second time in 1983 and the same year he beat Steve Davis and Jimmy White to win the Yamaha International Masters.

By 1988, Ray had plummeted to 40 in the world rankings but he still had a few tricks up his sleeve. In the British Open he whitewashed Steve Davis 5-0. However, he could not keep his momentum going and he was knocked out in the next round.

When the world rankings were introduced in 1976, Reardon was the first number 1, retaining that position until 1980/81.

He retired in 1992, but maintains an active interest in the game. He has recently been advising Ronnie O'Sullivan.

Ray Reardon's Dracula-like appearance was satirized in the 1985 musical Billy the Kid and the Green Baize Vampire, in the character of Maxwell, played by Alun Armstrong.

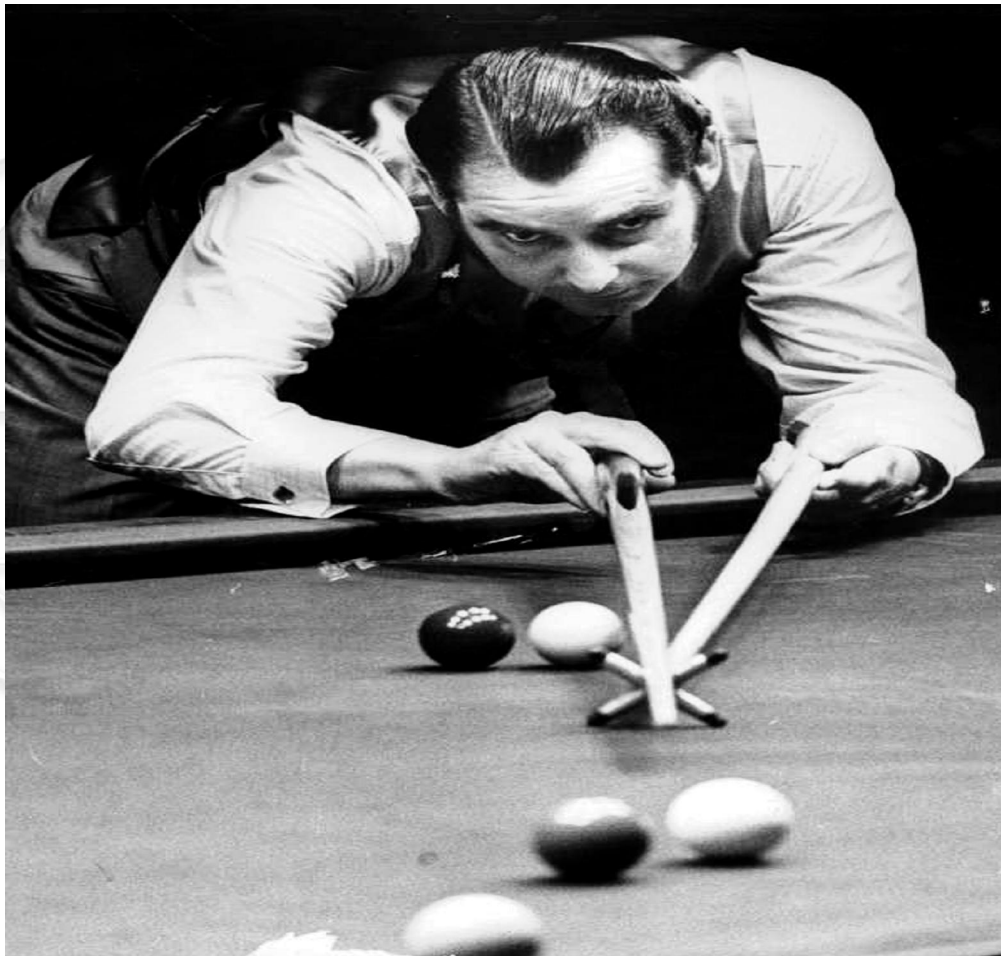
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Scott Burton's Final Thought

Ray Reardon was a huge star in world snooker, and made an indelible impression on future generations.

His patient, methodical approach didn't suit every fan's tastes, but Reardon was incredibly consistent and his championship record speaks for itself



Count Dracula lining up another classic shot!