

PABSA Newsletter

October, November, December 2021

Victor Sarkis wins 2021 Pan American Snooker Championship



Ahmed Aly Elsayad wins 2021 Pan American Snooker Seniors



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Victor Sarkis wins 2021 Pan American Snooker Championship

After the successful completion of the 2021 Pan American Snooker Seniors, it was time for the exciting and much anticipated 2021 Pan American Snooker Championships also at the Corner Bank, Toronto, Canada. With the lucrative prize of a two-year World Snooker Tour tour card on offer, the tournament was sure to be a delight and a showcase for the best talent of the pan-American region. Another strong field of Canadians was joined by players from the United States and Canada. After the cancellation of the 2020 event due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the excitement from all players and spectators was clear to see.

The round-robin group stage consisted of eight groups of five with the top two in each group qualifying for the knockout stage. Matches in the group stage were best of five. Out of a field of 40 players, there were some fantastic matches to start with former professional Itaro Santos of Brazil taking on 2019 quarterfinalist Mike Collier of the United States, and Victor Sarkis of Brazil taking on the newly-crowned Pan American Snooker Seniors champion Ahmed Aly Elsayad. There was also a repeat of the 2019 quarterfinal in which Levi Meiller of Canada took on Renat Denkhya of the United States.

With a lot of unknowns and a lot of tough groups, every match was hard to predict and made for a tough battle to qualify for the round of 16. Brazil's Victor Sarkis started well and stamped his authority in the championships by beating Ahmed Aly Elsayad 3-0, and Itaro Santos started off slowly but came through to beat Mike Collier 3-1 after a strong opening frame from Collier. The talent of the pan-American region really shone through the group stages with Victor Sarkis making a 117 break and Renat Denkhya's break of 108.

With the group stage complete, the last 16 lineup included a strong field of twelve Canadians, three Americans, and one Brazilian. With this strong field of players competitive matches were guaranteed in the knockout rounds, which included Seniors Champion Ahmed Aly Elsayad taking on PABSA President Ajeya Prabhakar in the clash of the round. With the home support behind them, the Canadian players fought hard but many fell in the round of 16 and quarterfinals. Three out of the four semifinalists were non Canadians. This didn't, however, prevent everyone (home players and home fans included) from getting behind all players still competing in the competition. With many big names out in the group stage and earlier rounds, the last 16 lineup saw Brazil's Victor Sarkis take on Ahmed Aly Elsayad of the United States, and Renat Denkhya of the United States take on the only remaining Canadian, Derrick Claus.

Flying the flag as the last remaining Brazilian, Victor Sarkis had a determined look in his eyes as his match with Ahmed Aly Elsayad went all the way to a deciding frame. In an impossible-to-call final frame, it was the Brazilian who had enough to get himself over the line into the final, winning 4-3. Elsayad, the newly-crowned Seniors Champion, gave it everything to try and make it to the final but couldn't quite overcome the Brazilian's energy in a passionate and determined match.

Renat Denkhya and Derrick Claus also went all the way to the final frame. With Claus in control at 3-1 up, the match shifted and Denkhya showed pure determination to complete a comeback win of 4-3 to reach the final. This was the second time Denkhya has reached the final after he lost the 2019 Championships to Igor Figueiredo in Houston, United States. The last remaining Canadian had fallen, so it would be Brazil versus the United States in the final, with Sarkis taking on Denkhya in a best-of-nine match.



In front of a packed evening crowd at The Corner Bank, the two players competed for the ultimate prize of a two-year WST tour card and the chance to play the best players in the world. With such a glorious prize on offer, the pressure and tension was clear for all to see, and both players made a tentative start at 1-1. Sarkis then took his determination onto the table and gained control of the match, heading to a 4-1 lead. Only one frame from victory, Sarkis lead convincingly in the sixth frame until he needed only a few more pots to secure a win. But, from the brink of defeat, Denkha produced a composed, tenacious 70 clearance to win the sixth frame on the black and keep his hopes alive. Denkha then took the next frame, really placing the pressure on Victor to get over the winning line. Denkha was back in the match at 4-3. But Sarkis found what he needed to get himself over the line and win the match 5-3, stopping a potential comeback from Denkha.

There were jubilant celebrations from Sarkis and his Brazilian supporters for this fantastic achievement. With a victory for him, his family and friends, Brazil, and all of the Americas, Sarkis now claims his place on the WST for the 2022 season alongside the likes of Ronnie O'Sullivan, Judd Trump, and current champion Mark Selby. Sarkis's determination and fight took him to victory after some tough matches and passionate battles along the way. Sarkis's tears of joy after winning show how much this title means to him and to his family and friends. Sarkis will now be the third Brazilian player to compete on the professional tour, after his fellow countrymen Igor Figueiredo and Itaro Santos. The trophies were presented by PABSA Director of Coaching and former world champion Cliff Thorburn.

The Pan American Billiards and Snooker Association would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who made this tournament possible, including the players who entered, the supporters, the staff at the Corner Bank, and the proprietors of the Corner Bank, John White and Jim Wyche. Snooker in the Americas is back and there will be much to look forward to in the future.

A final thank you to our PABSA partners of Wiraka and Hainsworth who provided some of the equipment used during the tournament.



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Ahmed Aly Elsayad wins 2021 Pan American Snooker Seniors

The 2021 Pan American Championships got underway on November 13th with the Snooker Seniors event followed by the main Championships on November 17th. Both tournaments were held at our fantastic venue, The Corner Bank, in Toronto, Canada, where club proprietors John White and Jim Wyche set up the tables and viewing area superbly for players and spectators. With the fantastic prize of playing at the 2022 World Snooker Seniors at the Crucible Theatre in Sheffield, UK, on offer, it was sure to be a fantastic battle for the title.

After the 2020 Championships were cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, players from all regions of the Americas were keen and excited to play in this year's championships with 48 entries for the Seniors and many reserves waiting to play. The tournament consisted of many players from Canada, the United States, and Brazil. The initial round-robin group stage consisted of eight groups of six, with the top two players in each group qualifying for the knockout stages.

Once the group stages were complete, the top 16 players emerged into the knockout rounds. Out of a field full of Canadians it was home favorite Levi Meiller who made it to the final and represented Canada. However, even with this strong Canadian field, Meiller would be joined in the final by Ahmed Aly Elsayad of the United States in a North American battle for the title and a place at the Crucible Theatre. Meiller had beaten fellow Canadian Vito Puopolo in a deciding frame 4-3 to reach the title match whereas Aly had beaten Canadian Eddie Galati 4-1. Both finalists had reached the quarterfinals of the 2019 Pan American Snooker Championships in Houston, USA.

In a closely matched final, these two capable players fought well. Elsayad took a 3-1 lead going into the interval and, having taken control of the match, produced a fantastic pressure clearance and final black down the side rail to claim a 4-1 victory. Once he downed the black to claim the title, Elsayad's delight could be seen from all with cheers and shouts of excitement before Meiller offered a gracious and respectful embrace and handshake. The respect between both players could be seen throughout and after the match.

With his victory, Elsayad claimed his place at the 2022 World Snooker Seniors at the Crucible Theatre and, in doing so, he will become the first American to ever play there. This is a fantastic and historical achievement for snooker in the United States and the pan-American region. Having adopted the nickname "The King" having claimed a record-breaking sixth USA National title in October, Elsayad could potentially face "The King of the Crucible," Stephen Hendry, or "The Whirlwind," Jimmy White, in the first round of the World Snooker Seniors in May 2022.



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PABSA needs your help to continue to grow snooker and billiards in the Pan American region. To support our association and donate please follow the link below. Thank you for your continued support.

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Suriname joins PABSA

PABSA is pleased to announce the joining of Suriname to the association. Suriname joined just before the commencement of the 2021 Pan American Snooker Championships.

PABSA President Ajeya Prabhakar "I am very happy to see another south American country, Suriname, just north of Brazil geographically join PABSA. We are partnering with their team to grow snooker in the country that has a deep interest in cue sports."



Hainsworth becomes PABSA official cloth provider

PABSA would like to welcome a new partnership with Hainsworth of Great Britain. We are delighted to announce Hainsworth will become the official cloth provider for The Pan American Billiards and Snooker Association.

PABSA President Ajeya Prabhakar "Hainsworth was the official cloth supplier for this years Pan American Championships and the players found the cloth very slick and nice to play on. Thank you to Hainsworth for supporting PABSA!"

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