

= Shaun Murphy ( snooker player ) =

Shaun Murphy ( born 10 August 1982 ) is an English professional snooker player , who won the 2005 World Championship . Nicknamed " The Magician " , Murphy is noted for his straight cue action and his long potting .

Born in Harlow and raised in Irthlingborough , Murphy turned professional in 1998 . His victory at the World Championship was considered a major surprise as he was only the third qualifier to lift the title . His other ranking tournament victories came in the 2007 Malta Cup , the 2008 UK Championship , the Players Tour Championship 2010 / 2011 ? Finals and the 2014 World Open , while he reached a second World Championship final in 2009 and a third in 2015 . He has also won seven non @-@ ranking tournaments , including the 2015 Masters , which completed his career Triple Crown .

Murphy has won over £ 2 million in prize money and has compiled more than 300 century breaks in his professional career . His highest world ranking was number three , which he maintained for three seasons following 2007 / 2008 , and he is currently ranked number four .

= = Career = =

Born in Harlow , England , Murphy began playing snooker at the age of eight after his parents bought him a snooker table for Christmas . He made his first century break at the age of 10 and practised at the Rushden Snooker Centre , where players such as Stephen Hendry , Mark Williams , and Ken Doherty have also played . At the age of 13 , he secured a five @-@ year £ 5 @, @ 000 @-@ a @-@ year sponsorship deal with the Doc Martens shoe company and stated his ambitions of winning the World Championship and becoming world number one . He turned professional in 1998 at the age of 15 .

Murphy was coached by Steve Prest until the 2006 / 2007 season . Willie Thorne and Ray Reardon also gave him guidance , and when he was 15 , he was given the latter 's old cue by his father .

= = = Early career = = =

Murphy began his career on the UK Tour in 1998 ( renamed the Challenge Tour in 2000 ) , at the time the second @-@ level professional tour . He was runner @-@ up in the fourth event on the UK tour for the 1997 / 1998 season and , for the 2000 / 2001 season , won the third and fourth events on the Challenge Tour , topping the Order of Merit rankings .

In 2000 , he received the World Snooker Newcomer of the Year award and one of six Young Player of Distinction of the Year awards from the World Professional Billiards and Snooker Association . In 2000 , he won the English Open Championship .

Murphy won his first professional tournament at the 2000 Benson & Hedges Championship , defeating Mark Davis 6 ? 1 in the semi @-@ final , and Stuart Bingham 9 ? 7 in the final , recovering from 2 ? 5 down . Although he was not yet on the first @-@ level main tour , this victory brought qualification for the Masters ? a prestigious non @-@ ranking invitation tournament with places for members of the top 16 , the winner of the qualifying tournament , and a limited number of wildcards . In the 2001 tournament , he showed promise in his first televised match , defeating world number 15 , Marco Fu , and building a 4 ? 1 lead over seven @-@ time world champion Hendry , before losing the match . He made his first maximum break in the 2001 Benson & Hedges Championship .

= = = Early ranking results = = =

Murphy first reached the final stages of a ranking event at the 2002 World Championship , hosted at the Crucible Theatre , where he lost 4 ? 10 to Hendry in the first round . In the 2002 / 2003 season , he reached the final stages of the Scottish Open , where he was defeated 3 ? 5 by Drew Henry in the first round , and the World Championship , where he lost 9 ? 10 against Doherty on the final black in the first round .

For the 2003 / 2004 season , Murphy was ranked number 64 and qualified for the final stages of three ranking tournaments . In the LG Cup , Murphy defeated Steve Davis 5 ? 4 in the second round , before losing 2 ? 5 to John Higgins in third round . After the victory over Davis , Murphy said " This is one of the greatest days in my snooker career . " In the British Open , he defeated Dave Harold 5 ? 1 in the first round , before losing to Paul Hunter 2 ? 5 in the second round .

In the Players Championship ? the new name of the Scottish Open ? he lost 3 ? 5 to eventual champion Jimmy White in the second round . He failed to reach the World Championship , losing a qualifying match 7 ? 10 against Stuart Pettman , in which Pettman was docked a frame for arriving late .

For the 2004 / 2005 season , Murphy was ranked number 48 and reached the final stages of four ranking events , including the World Championship victory . In the Grand Prix ? the new name of the LG Cup ? he lost 2 ? 5 to Stephen Maguire in the first round . This was followed by his first ranking semi @-@ final , at the British Open , where he was whitewashed 0 ? 6 by Higgins . In the Malta Cup , he lost 2 ? 5 to Matthew Stevens in the first round .

= = = 2005 World Championship = = =

Murphy won two qualifying matches to qualify for the 2005 World Championship . He defeated former world champions Higgins 13 ? 8 , Davis 13 ? 4 , and Peter Ebdon 17 ? 12 to reach the final to face Stevens , the world number six . He trailed Stevens 6 ? 10 at the end of the first day ( the World Championship final is played over two days ) , but made a comeback to bring the score to 16 ? 16 . He then made two frame @-@ winning breaks to lift the title . His 11 century breaks were the most in that year 's tournament .

Murphy 's victory was considered a major surprise . His pre @-@ tournament odds were 150 ? 1 , and before his win he was considered an underachiever . He became only the third qualifier to win the World Championship ( or to reach the final ) after Alex Higgins in 1972 and Terry Griffiths in 1979 . At the age of 22 , Murphy was the second youngest player to win the World Championship , following Hendry who first lifted the title when he was 21 . No previous world champion had played as many matches ( seven ) to lift the title , and he was the lowest ranked player , at number 48 , to win the tournament . No player had won the World Championship as his first ranking event win since Joe Johnson in 1986 . His run in the tournament earned him the nickname " Magician " and the tournament doubled his previous career prize money , with which he purchased a Mercedes @-@ Benz and a house . After his win , in July 2005 , he married his fiancée Clare .

= = = 2005 / 2006 = = =

For the new season , he improved his ranking to number 21 , which would not usually guarantee qualification for ranking events . However , as world champion he qualified automatically for every tournament in the season as the number two seed ( and number one seed for the 2006 World Championship ) . He was invited to play in the Premier League Snooker , a non @-@ ranking tournament with a 25 @-@ a @-@ second shot clock , but he went out in the round @-@ robin stage .

In the inaugural , non @-@ ranking Northern Ireland Trophy , he reached the quarter @-@ finals before he was defeated 4 ? 5 by Neil Robertson . In the first three ranking events of the season ? the Grand Prix , the UK Championship , and the Malta Cup ? he reached the last 16 , losing final @-@ frame matches to Bingham , Robertson , and Graeme Dott , respectively . After his loss to Bingham , he complained about having to play his match on an outside table , given his world champion status . In the revival of Pot Black , a single @-@ frame knockout tournament not staged since 1991 , Murphy was defeated in the final by Stevens . Murphy was awarded Sportsman of the Year at the BBC East Midlands Sports Awards in December 2005 .

In the Masters , Murphy lost 4 ? 6 to Higgins in the quarter @-@ finals , but reached his second ranking final in the Welsh Open , losing 4 ? 9 to Stephen Lee . In the World Championship , he reached the quarter @-@ finals , but fell victim to the so @-@ called " Crucible Curse " ? no first

@-@ time champion has successfully defended the title at the Crucible Theatre ? when he was defeated 7 ? 13 by Ebdon .

== = 2006 / 2007 == =

For the next season , Murphy moved to number five in the world rankings , entering the elite top 16 for the first time , and thereby automatically qualifying for the final stages of ranking tournaments and receiving an automatic invitation to the Masters .

In the Northern Ireland Trophy ( a ranking event in this season ) , he lost 4 ? 5 to Lee in the quarter @-@ finals , and in the UK Championship , he lost 3 ? 9 to Alan McManus in the second round . A 3 ? 6 defeat by Stephen Hendry in the quarter @-@ finals of the Masters was followed by his second ranking title , when he defeated Ryan Day 9 ? 4 in the final of the Malta Cup . After the victory , he said it was a relief to get rid of the one @-@ hit wonder label . In his next match , a victory over Jamie Cope in the Welsh Open , he scored centuries in four consecutive frames , becoming only the second player to do this ( after Higgins in the 2005 Grand Prix final ) and the only person to do so in a best @-@ of @-@ nine match . He went on to lose 3 ? 5 to Maguire in the quarter @-@ finals . In the World Championship , Murphy defeated Stevens 13 ? 12 in the quarter @-@ finals ? recovering from 5 ? 11 down and knocking the latter out of the top 16 ? before losing 16 ? 17 against Mark Selby in the semi @-@ finals .

== = 2007 / 2008 == =

For the 2007 / 2008 season , he was ranked number three , his highest ever ranking , and reached at least the semi @-@ finals of five ranking events , without winning any .

In the inaugural Shanghai Masters , he was defeated 2 ? 5 by Ian McCulloch in the first round . He reached the final of the Pot Black , where he was defeated by Doherty . In the Grand Prix , he reached the semi @-@ finals , where he lost 5 ? 6 against Ronnie O 'Sullivan , despite leading 5 ? 2 . Further semi @-@ finals followed at the Northern Ireland Trophy and the UK Championship , where he was defeated on both occasions by Maguire , 5 ? 6 and 5 ? 9 , respectively , making it three consecutive semi @-@ final losses . Before the UK Championship , he was provisionally ranked number one . He successfully defended his Malta Cup title ( that year the tournament was not a ranking event ) with a 9 ? 3 victory over Doherty in the final . In the China Open , he defeated Selby 6 ? 3 in the semi @-@ final ? his sixth semi @-@ final in the past seven ranking events ? but lost 9 ? 10 to Maguire in the final . Before the World Championship , he was again provisional number one .

In the World Championship , as one of the favourites , he reached the second round , before losing 4 ? 13 to Ali Carter . After his loss , Murphy criticised the state of the tables .

== = 2008 / 2009 == =

Murphy maintained his number three ranking for the 2008 / 2009 season . He won the non @-@ ranking Paul Hunter Classic , defeating Selby 4 ? 0 in the final , but lost in the first round of the first four ranking tournaments , including a 4 ? 5 defeat by world number 47 Mike Dunn in the Bahrain Championship . In October , Murphy and his wife separated , after three years of marriage ; he did not wear his wedding ring in the Grand Prix .

Despite the four consecutive first @-@ round losses ? which had been attributed to the split from his wife ? Murphy claimed his third ranking title at the UK Championship , defeating Fu 10 ? 9 in a low @-@ quality final , in which he fluked a pink in the deciding frame that was effectively match ball . The victory meant he joined Davis , Alex Higgins , Griffiths , John Parrott , Hendry , O 'Sullivan , Williams , John Higgins and Ebdon as the tenth player to have won both the World title and the UK title , cementing his place as one of the elite top players in the world .

In the World Championship , there were concerns that Murphy 's estranged wife would serve him divorce papers during play of his first @-@ round match against Andrew Higginson . He defeated

Higginson 10 ? 8 without incident , although his wife 's parents were present in the arena and were asked to leave . He went on to defeat Fu 13 ? 3 , Hendry 13 ? 11 , and Robertson 17 ? 14 to earn a place in his second world final , with two @-@ time world champion Higgins as the opponent . In the final , he trailed 5 ? 11 after the first day , and was beaten 18 ? 9 by Higgins . On the first day of the final , a newspaper published a " kiss and tell " story involving Murphy .

== = 2009 / 2010 == =

Murphy maintained his number three ranking for a third year in the 2009 / 2010 season . He successfully defended his Paul Hunter Classic title , defeating White 4 ? 0 in the final . He won the Premier League Snooker with a 7 ? 3 win against O 'Sullivan in the final , ending the latter 's run of five consecutive wins in the tournament .

He reached the semi @-@ finals of the first ranking tournament , the Shanghai Masters , before losing 5 ? 6 against Liang Wenbo . This would be his only run to the semi @-@ finals or better in a ranking tournament that season . In the UK Championship , as the defending champion , he lost 5 ? 9 to eventual winner Ding Junhui in the second round . After the match , Murphy complained about Ding leaving the arena too often after frames , saying " I can 't believe anyone needs to go to the toilet after every single frame . " He reached the quarter @-@ finals of the Masters , where he lost 4 ? 6 against Williams . In the Welsh Open and the China Open , he lost his first @-@ round matches to Stevens and Nigel Bond , respectively . In the World Championship , he defeated Gerard Greene and Ding , but lost 12 ? 13 against Carter in the quarter @-@ finals , despite leading 8 ? 4 . This was the first season in which he did not reach a final or better of a ranking tournament since the 2003 / 2004 season .

== = 2010 / 2011 == =

After three seasons ranked number three , he dropped to number seven for the 2010 / 2011 season . He won the Wuxi Classic , a non @-@ ranking tournament held in China , defeating Ding 9 ? 8 , having recovered from 2 ? 8 down . Murphy reached the semi @-@ finals of the Paul Hunter Classic , now part of the Players Tour Championship minor @-@ ranking series , but lost 2 ? 4 against eventual winner Judd Trump . Murphy won the Brugge Open , the second European event of the Players Tour Championship , with defeating Matthew Couch 4 ? 2 in the final . He reached the final of the Ruhr Championship , but lost 2 ? 4 against John Higgins . Murphy finished 1st on the Players Tour Championship Order of Merit , couldn 't defend his Premier League Snooker title , as he lost 1 ? 7 against Ronnie O 'Sullivan in the final . He then reached the semi @-@ finals of the 2010 UK Championship , where he lost to eventual runner @-@ up Mark Williams 8 ? 9 .

Murphy lost in the first round of the Masters 3 ? 6 against Jamie Cope , in the second round of the German Masters 2 ? 5 against Joe Swail and in the first round of the Welsh Open 0 ? 4 against Matthew Stevens . Murphy then won the finals of the Players Tour Championship with a 4 ? 0 victory over Martin Gould , winning his fourth ranking title . The next week Murphy also reached the final of the Championship League , but lost 1 ? 3 against Matthew Stevens . Murphy reached the semi @-@ final of the China Open , where he lost 1 ? 6 against Judd Trump . Murphy 's last tournament of the season was the World Championship , where he lost in the second round 10 ? 13 against Ronnie O 'Sullivan .

== = 2011 / 2012 == =

Murphy began the 2011 / 2012 season ranked number seven . He could not defend his Wuxi Classic title , as he lost 3 ? 6 against Ali Carter . Murphy reached the semi @-@ finals of the Australian Goldfields Open , but lost 2 ? 6 against eventual champion Stuart Bingham . At the Shanghai Masters Murphy reached the quarter @-@ finals , but lost 4 ? 5 against Mark Selby . Murphy 's next tournament was the Brazil Masters , where he defeated Graeme Dott 5 ? 0 in the final . Murphy also participated at the Premier League and ended the league stage with two wins

and four losses . As a result , he did not advance to the play @-@ off . Murphy then reached the quarter @-@ finals of the UK Championship , but lost 3 ? 6 against Ricky Walden . He also participated at the Players Tour Championship , where his best results came at the Warsaw Classic and the Kay Suzanne Memorial Trophy , where he reached the quarter @-@ finals , but lost 3 ? 4 against Neil Robertson and 2 ? 4 against Matthew Stevens respectively . He finished number 37 on the Order of Merit , and could not qualify to the Finals to defend his title .

Murphy reached his first Masters final , but lost 6 ? 10 against Neil Robertson . Murphy then reached the semi @-@ finals of the next two ranking tournaments , but lost 0 ? 6 against Stephen Maguire at the German Masters , 2 ? 6 against Ding Junhui at the Welsh Open . He then lost in the quarter @-@ finals of the World Open 0 ? 5 against Mark Selby . Murphy ended the season with two first round losses . He lost 2 ? 5 against wild @-@ card Lu Ning at the China Open and 8 ? 10 against Jamie Jones at the World Snooker Championship .

== = 2012 / 2013 == =

Murphy began the 2012 / 2013 season ranked number six . The first tournament for Murphy was the Wuxi Classic , where he lost in the first round 1 ? 5 against Ken Doherty . Murphy 's next tournament was the Six @-@ red World Championship , where he finished first in Group E with four wins out of five matches and advanced to the knock @-@ out stage . There he defeated James Wattana , Barry Hawkins , Dominic Dale and Judd Trump to reach the final , but lost 4 ? 8 against Mark Davis . He then reached the quarter @-@ finals of the Australian Goldfields Open , but lost 4 ? 5 against Peter Ebdon . Murphy gone one better in the next two ranking tournaments , as he reached the semi @-@ finals of the Shanghai Masters and the International Championship , but lost 3 ? 6 against John Higgins and 5 ? 9 against Neil Robertson respectively . Murphy then reached the final of the 2012 UK Championship courtesy of two tight victories . The first against teenager Luca Brecel in the quarter @-@ finals , after Brecel twice had the chance to pot the final pink and black to win the match , then against Ali Carter in which Murphy recovered from 4 ? 8 down and 0 ? 32 in points behind in the deciding frame to win 9 ? 8 . He was ultimately defeated by good friend Mark Selby 10 ? 6 in the final . He also participated at the Players Tour Championship , with his best result coming at the third English event , where he reached the semi @-@ finals , but lost 0 ? 4 against Marco Fu . He finished number 29 on the Order of Merit , and couldn 't qualify to the Finals .

Murphy began the year by reaching the semi @-@ finals at the Masters , but lost 2 ? 6 against Neil Robertson . He then reached the quarter @-@ final of the German Masters , but lost 4 ? 5 against Robertson . In the first round of the 2013 World Snooker Championship , Murphy defeated Martin Gould 10 ? 5 to advance to the second round , where he faced Graeme Dott , winning 13 ? 11 . In the quarter @-@ final , he faced Judd Trump in a tense match that went to a deciding frame , after Trump won five consecutive frames from 7 ? 12 down to level at 12 ? 12 . Trump ultimately prevailed in a nervy last frame to go through to the semi @-@ final .

== = 2013 / 2014 == =

Murphy 's 2013 / 2014 season began with a shock 1 ? 5 defeat by Alex Davies in the qualifying round of the 2013 Wuxi Classic . The tournament was the first to use a new format that required top @-@ 16 players to compete in qualifiers .

Between August 2013 and January 2014 , Murphy lost 3 stones ( 42 pounds or 19 kg ) in weight , due to a new diet and fitness regime . He stated that one of his health and fitness goals was to improve his stamina and concentration at the table .

In group two of the 2014 Championship League , he made his second official maximum break in his round @-@ robin match against Mark Davis .

In the first round of the Masters , Murphy came back from 2 ? 4 behind to defeat Ding Junhui 6 ? 4 . He produced another comeback in the quarter @-@ finals , where he trailed Marco Fu 1 ? 4 before winning five frames in a row to clinch a 6 ? 4 victory . He faced defending champion Mark Selby in the semi @-@ finals , but lost 1 ? 6 .

In February 2014 , while playing Jamie Jones in the last 16 of the minor @-@ ranking Gdynia Open , Murphy made his second 147 break of the season and the third of his professional career . He went on to win the tournament , defeating Fergal O'Brien 4 ? 1 in the final to capture his first title in 29 months . The following month , he defeated Selby 10 ? 6 in the final of the World Open , winning the fifth ranking title of his career and his first ranking title in three years .

At the World Championship , Murphy defeated Jamie Cope 10 ? 9 and Marco Fu 13 ? 8 to reach the quarter @-@ finals , where he faced defending champion Ronnie O'Sullivan . Although Murphy won the first two frames and left O'Sullivan requiring three snookers in the third frame , O'Sullivan ultimately made the score 2 ? 1 then won 12 of the next 13 to defeat Murphy 13 ? 3 with a session to spare .

== 2014 / 2015 ==

In October 2014 , he won the Bulgarian Open defeating Martin Gould 4 ? 2 in the final . Two weeks later he reached the final of the General Cup but lost 6 ? 7 against Ali Carter . In November , he won the Ruhr Open beating Robert Milkins 4 ? 0 in the final . In the second frame of the final he achieved the fourth maximum break of his career after missing out on the maximum on two previous occasions during that day , in matches against Joe Swail where Murphy made a break of 129 before missing the blue ball and in a match against Mark Williams with the break ending on the green ball and thus 122 . In 2014 , Shaun Murphy became the first player to make three maximums in a calendar year .

In January 2015 , at the Masters , Murphy beat Mark Selby , Stephen Maguire and Mark Allen en route to the final against Neil Robertson . Murphy won the match 10 ? 2 , completing his career Triple Crown .

In the World Championship , Murphy , seeded eighth , beat Robin Hull 10 ? 3 , Joe Perry 13 ? 5 , Anthony McGill 13 ? 8 and Barry Hawkins 17 ? 9 to reach his third World Championship final , meeting tenth seed Stuart Bingham . In the final , despite leading 3 ? 0 and 8 ? 5 , Murphy fell behind 14 ? 11 in the third session . Despite fighting back to level the score at 15 ? 15 , Murphy lost the next three frames and the final 18 ? 15 .

== Rivalry ==

Murphy has clashed with Stephen Maguire , another of the 2000 Young Players of Distinction , on several occasions . At the start of their 2004 Grand Prix match , there was an incident that resulted in Maguire being docked the opening frame . After they had shaken hands at the outset of the first frame , Maguire asked referee Johan Oomen for permission to leave the arena and retrieve his chalk , which he had forgotten . While Maguire was away , the referee and Murphy spoke before tournament director Mike Ganley arrived on the scene and docked Maguire a frame for technically not being ready to start at the scheduled time , which angered and surprised Maguire . Murphy refutes that the docking of the frame was down to him speaking to the referee . Maguire won the match 5 ? 2 and later commented : " Rules are rules but I've never heard of anything like that happening before " .

Further incidents came in subsequent years . During the 2006 World Championship , Maguire said " I don't want to be a fat world champion " , a reference to Murphy . After beating Murphy in the 2007 Welsh Open , Maguire said of the chalk incident , " That put the icing on the cake , but we've always had a rivalry . I dislike him and I think he dislikes me . I try hard to beat everyone , but it would have hurt more if I'd lost to him . " Murphy currently leads the head @-@ to @-@ head 12 ? 10 .

Murphy has been outspoken about several other of his rivals , criticising them for having too many toilet breaks and complaining about table conditions among other things . Murphy also makes collective criticisms of his fellow professionals for not attending events and has branded other players ' concerns over prize money as a joke . Murphy's harshest criticism has been reserved for Ronnie O'Sullivan . Murphy highlights what he perceives to be O'Sullivan's lack of professionalism .

= = Playing style = =

Murphy is noted for his straight cue action ? which Davis once called " the best cue action I 've ever seen " ? his long potting , and his breakbuilding . Phil Yates wrote in 2008 in The Times that Murphy has improved his tactical game since his World Championship victory . He has compiled more than 300 century breaks and has made four maximum breaks . His career earnings amount to more than £ 2 million .

= = Personal life = =

Murphy was born in Harlow and grew up in Irthlingborough . He was home @-@ schooled from age 13 after being bullied at school , and his parents split up when he was 14 . He lived with his father Tony , a former professional golfer , and did not see his mother again until he was 19 . During the 2007 World Championship , it was reported that he had developed a rift with his father , who was a member of the World Snooker board . He said that they had not spoken in over a year , but that he would willingly speak to his father again if the other called him .

Murphy moved to Rotherham during the 2004 season to be with his fiancée , Clare , whom he married in July 2005 . Murphy 's wife filed for divorce in 2009 on the grounds of infidelity after The People newspaper published an exposé revealing he had spent the night with an escort girl he had met at a religious youth group . Murphy 's then manager , Brandon Parker , issued a statement confirming that Murphy had slept with the woman but denied he had been unfaithful , stating that Murphy did not have sex with her . He also dated Claire Chorlton , who was first introduced to the viewing public backstage during the final of the 2012 UK Championship . Murphy is currently engaged to his girlfriend Elaine , after proposing marriage at a restaurant in her native Ireland during Christmas 2014 , and he now lives just outside Nottingham .

Murphy has been a Christian since 15 , after meeting a religious family on holiday . Murphy is well known for his charitable nature , having spent some of the summer of 2006 doing aid work in Zimbabwe with his then wife , Clare . He also donated one @-@ tenth of his 2005 World Championship winnings to the church , and at the 2012 World Snooker Championship Murphy donated £ 100 to the Royal Manchester Children 's Hospital Charity for every century he made .

= = Performance and rankings timeline = =

= = Career finals = =

= = = Ranking event finals : 12 ( 6 titles , 6 runners @-@ up ) = = =

= = = Minor @-@ ranking event finals : 6 ( 4 titles , 2 runner @-@ up ) = = =

= = = Non @-@ ranking event finals : 18 ( 10 titles , 8 runners @-@ up ) = = =

= = = Pro @-@ am event wins = = =

Paul Hunter Classic ? 2008 , 2009

= = = Variant event finals : 1 ( 1 runner @-@ up ) = = =

= = Maximum breaks = =