

**The six times you've won the World Snooker Championship, have you felt any different going into the tournament?**

It doesn't matter what sort of form you take into the World Championship, it never goes to plan. The two years where I performed my best snooker, where I played unbelievable snooker, going into the 2012 World Championship I didn't pick my cue up for a week before the tournament because I was just so poor in practice. Then I went to Sheffield and had one match and a couple of practice sessions on the table and I just started flying. I just couldn't miss. The other time, in 2020, I literally hadn't played for a whole year and I got better and better with each match. I think it's the expectation levels. I'm experienced enough to know not to worry about

# SIXTY SECONDS

THE ROCKET, 46, ON CONSULTING A SLEEP EXPERT, THE BEST WAY TO EAT SCONES AND HOW LIVE AUDIENCES CHANGE HIS GAME

INTERVIEW BY PAUL SIMPER

With Ronnie O'Sullivan



TV doctor: Michael Mosley

what's gone before. Just go there and hopefully the snooker gods are kind to me.

**What guarantees you a good night's**

**sleep when you've got a big tournament coming up?**

There is no guarantee that I will have a good night's sleep because I've had insomnia for 12 years now. I watched a programme on TV the other day with Michael Mosley. He was doing

research on people who have insomnia and I didn't realise there were so many types. I think I've got insomnia maintenance problems.

**What does that mean?**

It's basically where you have no problem getting to sleep but then you wake up and spend all night lying there, trying to get back to sleep. What they got this woman doing in the show was to get up for 15 minutes and then go back to sleep. It worked for her. I'm not sure it will work for me. First of all, you have to diagnose what it is that's holding you back from sleeping. After the World Championship I'm going to go and see a sleep expert. I want to do whatever it takes to identify what's wrong with me, then try and correct it.

**How do you celebrate these days? You don't drink any more...**

I sometimes do have a couple of drinks. I might have two or three halves of Guinness. That's always a little bit of a celebration for me. I'll probably have a scone with clotted cream on it, which is one of my go-to meals during a match. I know that if I have a scone with clotted cream and jam, it sort of holds me through the whole match but without feeling too heavy on the stomach. I'll indulge a little bit in that.

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**Are you jam or cream first?**

Jam first. I used to be cream first but now it's definitely jam and then cream on top. It looks better.

**Do you prefer having a live audience?**

In the first year of Covid I enjoyed the peacefulness of playing in tournaments with no crowd. You could just get in and out of the venue and play snooker. But the downfall of not having a crowd was that sometimes you forget people are watching you at home. I would get to some tournaments and think, 'Ah, I'm not really feeling this today.' I played in five finals that year and for two of them I tried hard. The other three, I just thought, 'The earlier I can get out of here, the better.' So I lost three finals. If the crowd was there they would really give me a hard time. They would have been, 'Come on, Ronnie, you're not trying!' Having crowds back is the reason why I've won a tournament this year and been competing at a higher level than I was maybe last year.

**Who is the first person you want to see after a match?**

I have my mate Robbie, who comes with me to all the tournaments. I say to him, 'Here's my diary. Here's the tournaments I'm playing in. Just come down, mate. There's always a bed there for you, a bit



of breakfast, chill out, watch a bit of snooker. I don't take the snooker too seriously any more. We're able to enjoy it. Every tournament is like a holiday. I make the most of each one now. I love being away from home. I love my life and my lifestyle and I love what I do.

**Is there one thing in your life you haven't got right now that you think you need?**

I'd love to be running better. I put so much effort in. It's so frustrating because I'm all right but I look at some of these other guys and they're just quick, they're fast. I'm always driving my coach mad, asking him, 'How do I get faster?' Every time I try, I get injured. I've had to accept that I'm just a plodder.

**What else is on your to-do list?**

Actually, I'm going to go and pick my daughter up this week. She's 16 and in her GCSEs year, so she's revising a lot. I haven't seen a lot of my children because I'm always away. They're at the age now where they just want to do what they want to do. So she's graded me with a little window of her time. I'll take her out for a pizza then drop her off so she can do more revision. And I'll be meeting up with some of my friends soon. We're going to have a little dinner party at the house. Cakes and tea and a civilised conversation about... certain matters.



Jammy: Ronnie loves a scone

Watch the World Championship live on Discovery+ and Eurosport until Monday. For more snooker see Sport, page 36