

ROUND THE WORLD ON A GAME OF SNOOKER

"**F**EEL that muscle; hard as a nail. And I play tennis and table tennis and I swim. How's that for a billiards player?" says young Horace Lindrum, Australia's champion snooker player, who is touring this country and showing New Zealand players how to break them up.

Horace, indeed, is first-rate counter-propaganda to the old theory that young men who play billiards, and especially those who play professionally, are pale, listless ne'er-do-wells with a perpetual cigarette drooping from the corner of their mouths. Horace is 30 years of age, and he is as well set up an athlete as you could hope to find. His eye is clear, his muscles are well developed, and his handshake is firm.

"But even if I didn't take any other exercise but walking round the table in exhibition matches, I'd still keep pretty fit," Horace points out. "I have never worked out how many miles I walk in

REALISING that the average billiards spectator likes novelty as well as a straightforward game, Horace Lindrum has developed an interesting repertoire of trick shots. One of them consists first of smacking the red ball into a bottle-necked basket three-quarters of the way down the table. Then he smacks the white into the same basket, whereupon the red pops out again—the white comes out blushing, he usually explains to the gallery. He also has a series of elaborate cannons which send the balls running up one billiards cue and down another and even along the edge of the table if need be.

Horace Lindrum related some of his experiences in "Mac's" sports session from Station 2YD the other week.

the course of a week's play, but it's plenty. And bending over the table sighting shots keeps your stomach muscles in good trim too."

100 Years of Billiards

For a hundred years, ever since they emigrated from England to Australia, the Lindrum family has been playing billiards and snooker of championship standard. There have been several champions, notably Fred Lindrum and Walter Lindrum, whom even the new balk line rule couldn't prevent from making more breaks of a thousand than his opponents knew what to do with. And, of course, there is young Horace.

Horace learned to play billiards in the 16-table room his family ran in Melbourne. He hardly touched a cue before the age of 15, but once he started, he found the game came naturally to him, and in 12 months' time he had made his first 100 break. When he was 18 he made a break of 1431; it took him 50 minutes and he broke down with a miscue.

At the age of 19, he won the snooker championship of Australia and two years later he won the Australian billiards championship as well, defeating Uncle Fred Lindrum by a clear 9,000 over the week's match. Five years later he was runner-up to Joe Davis in the world snooker championship, held in London, and was runner-up to Davis again the following year. He is entirely self taught, though he admits he has learned a lot of wrinkles from Uncle Fred and Uncle Walter.

Started In New Guinea

It is to his mother's shrewd management that he owes his first real start as a snooker professional. His first professional exhibitions were in New Guinea, of all places, and he had no sooner returned than his mother packed him off on a tour of England which she had arranged while he was away.

Horace was the first billiards professional to tour New Guinea, and it was for exactly that reason he went there. It meant strenuous travelling, and he visited eight centres, from Port Moresby and Rabaul to small gold-mining camps in the interior which were reached by air route over impenetrable jungle.

After touring England, Horace kept travelling, and he now claims to be the most travelled professional in the game. He has played exhibition snooker in



Horace Lindrum Talks About Billiards

America, Malta, Ceylon, India, Burma, Siam, the Straits Settlements, the Philippines, Fiji, Hawaii, Canada, and nearly every European country. He has travelled in the Bremen, the Rawalpindi, and the Niagara, all three lost since the outbreak of war. In Continental cities he played chiefly at English clubs; he didn't attempt to master the difficulties of the Continental game, which is played with a different table and different sized balls.

Stormed Conservative Citadel

He has spent five years in England, playing strenuous exhibitions all the time. And Horace thumbs his nose at wisecracks who think billiards and snooker aren't very strenuous.

Horace's bright personality and unaffected Australian manners made him immediately popular with English billiards enthusiasts, and if he did nothing else, he made a name for himself as the Australian who melted the frigid reserve at Thurston's, one of the most starch-fronted and conservative homes of billiards in London. "Lindrum Breaks Cathedral-like Atmosphere at Thurston's," said the headlines on the day following his first exhibition match there.

"Fountain Pen" Brown

Horace met all the great billiards and snooker players in England, and although he came away without the coveted world snooker title, he acquitted himself well. One of the most widely discussed players he met was Alec ("Fountain Pen") Brown, who on one occasion during an

important match, having left the white tucked up among the reds with apparently no chance of evading a foul, distinguished himself and startled officials and spectators by playing the shot with a fountain pen. They promptly brought in a rule to stop that sort of thing.

In England, Horace achieved two distinctions which no one can ever take away from him. He made the first 1,000 break after the introduction of the balk line rule, designed to curb the nursery cannon experts and make the game more open and attractive, and he was the first player to be televised. The ordeal took place at Alexandra Palace, and with due appreciation of the honour, he says he would hate to play again under such frizzling lights.

Horace is modest and unassuming when it comes to his own feats, however, and like all good sportsmen, he doesn't forget that there were great players before he was even born. His snooker breaks of 147, 142, 141, and 139 are all very fine, he says, but what about the billiards breaks of Tom Reece, who in 1907 worked the balls into a pocket and ran up a break of 449,135 before he called it a day and went home?

Frankly and unashamedly professional in his attitude towards the playing of billiards, Horace is grateful to the game for having let him see more of the world than most young men of his age. "If I never made another penny," he says, "I could still say that I've seen the world on a game of snooker."

Too Hot For The Englishman!

ONE of the best stories about the Lindrum family concerns a patronising Englishman who entered their billiards rooms in Melbourne one day, paid for a game and then, noticing the old marker standing by, said to him, "I say, would you care to have a game with me?" The marker, who was old Fred Lindrum, agreed, and was then ordered to "break them up." With a superb shot, Fred promptly screwed into the top pocket off the red and ran out the hundred in no time at all. A little disconcerted, the Englishman nevertheless said, "That's pretty hot stuff. Would you care for another game?" "No thanks," said Fred. "but this youngster here will probably have a game if you ask him."

"This youngster" was Fred's son, Fred Lindrum, junior, and when confidently ordered to "break them up," he, too, screwed it off the red and ran out. Blinking in astonishment the Englishman then said, "That's too hot for me," and calling over a lad in short pants who was standing by, he observed airily, "At least I'll get a game this time. Come along and try your hand, sonny." But the boy in short pants was Fred Junior's younger brother, Walter Lindrum, and he, too, screwed it off the red with his first shot and rattled up a 100 break in a few minutes.