

No place like home for Donaldson

Travelling is part and parcel of being a top snooker player but for one week at least Scott Donaldson (pictured) will be able to sleep in his own bed while taking part in a major tournament.

He's from Perth, within 44 miles of the BetVictor Scottish Open tournament HQ at Edinburgh's revamped Meadowbank Sports Centre and the Scot likes what he has heard about the £45m refit of the two-time Commonwealth Games venue.

It's been three years since the event was last held North of the Border, COVID-19 and contract issues getting in the way, and it was actually held in Llandudno, North Wales in 2021.

But snooker is back in Scotland's capital for the first time since 2003 and 28-year-old Donaldson said: "The venue is looks really nice and I think some of the boys from my home club are coming down so I'm looking forward to that."

The world No 55 (as of October 2022), who turned professional in 2012 after winning the European Amateur Championship and gaining a tour card, has been disappointed in his form recently but scored an important 4-2 win over Louis Heathcote in qualifying to earn his place. Disappointingly, so far this season Donaldson has yet to make it beyond the last 32 of any event.

However, he hopes that will change next week and said: "My qualifying match was probably the best I've played all season. It was maybe the pressure which made me play better and this is an event which I really wanted to qualify for.

"There is definitely something different about playing in a home tournament and this is the first time it has been in

Edinburgh since I turned professional.

“It is going to be nice to be able to travel from home rather than a hotel. My dad enjoys watching me so I think he will be along. My mum just gets too nervous so she ends up doing my head in.”

Donaldson, nicknamed The Perth Potting Machine, reached his first ranking event semi-final at the 2017 Welsh Open and he would love to find that form again. He admitted: “Snooker is hard. Ronnie O’Sullivan makes it look easy, but most players will go through spells where they really struggle.

“You just have to be patient and keep working. This is my eleventh season on the tour so I’ve shown that I am able to come back from bad spells.”

The player, who has a highest tournament break of 141 to his name, added: “The bad moments are part of the process and you don’t know how good you are until you have been through a bad spell.”

The highest world ranking he has achieved was 22 in February 2020 and he faces either Shaun Murphy or Lei Peifan in the Scottish and he said: “I don’t think you can rule Lei Peifan out, it is only a best of seven. These games are mostly 50/50 games.

“I know Murphy will be a big bookies favourite, but Lei winning wouldn’t surprise me. The Chinese players work so hard and, if they can get on a roll, they can reel frames off easily.”

The event runs from Monday, November 28 to December 4 and tickets start at £10.