

Stroud-made cloth is a table topper

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A SNOOKER table firm has had to rip its baize off for this week's British Masters tournament - to make way for a "superior" Gloucestershire green.

Billiard and snooker table manufacturers Riley clinched the deal to supply the prestigious tournament in Wembley Arena.

But the snooker bosses have a deal with Stroud-based specialist cloth mills Winterbottom, Strachan and Playne to supply the green baize for the tables.

The Stroud product is so far ahead of its rivals

that Riley have to abandon their normal baize coverings in favour of the Gloucestershire-made variety.

The company's Lodgemoor Mill on the outskirts of Stroud has been refining the production of woollen baize for centuries and also makes the cloth coverings for the top quality tennis balls used at the Wimbledon championships.

David Smith, the company's financial director, said: "Our cloth is generally accepted as being the finest in the world and is being used by most

of the major manufacturers in the world

"We export all over the world and although it's a small market we are generally accepted as the best in the world.

"Cloth has been produced on this same site for centuries, as far back as the 13th century, and the methods we use today are a mixture of time honoured practices and new technology.

"The secret in producing the best quality cloth is in the finishing and we believe we have refined that process better than any one else in the industry."