

I was au fait with Islam, but I was impressed by Iranian

It must be one of the more unusual appointments in the world of international sport.

David Roe – using the Muslim name Davoud – underwent conversion before a high-profile official ceremony in Tehran , Iranian media reported.

The coach, who began working in Iran last month, has been presented with a translated Qur'an and tickets to go on the hajj pilgrimage to Mecca.

"I used to be a coach in Dubai, Qatar and Bahrain for several years, and I was au fait with Islam, but I was impressed by Iranian culture when I visited the country," Roe was quoted as saying. He said he had decided to convert after visiting the shrine of Imam Reza in the city of Mashhad.



Snooker Scene's editor, Clive Everton, said: "He's a nice lad and was a very good player. But without a competitive future he's got to do something else."

Monday's ceremony in Tehran was attended by the chairman of Iran's physical education organisation, Ali Saeedlou, and the head of the Friday prayer leaders' policymaking council, Hojat al Islam Reza Taghavi.

"Respect for all is part of our religious duties," Taghavi told Roe. "Before your conversion we had a human bond between us, and now we also have an ideological and religious bond, too."

Iran, perhaps surprisingly, is relaxed about billiards and snooker. There are said to be about 1,000 billiards and snooker clubs in Iran. Last year it hosted the world under-21 championships.

Its team is currently taking part in the Arab Billiards Championship in Dubai.