

DR. DARTS' NEWSLETTER

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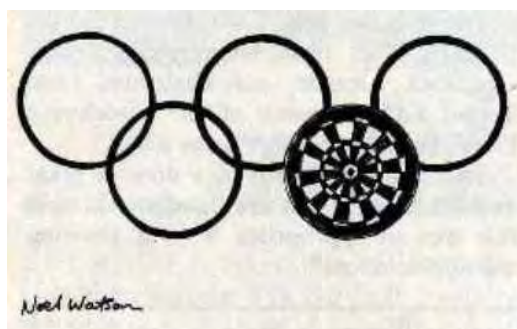
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BREAKDANCING MAKING THE OLYMPICS? WHAT ABOUT DARTS?

Hearing the news that breakdancing has taken a step closer to inclusion in the 2024 Paris Olympics made me ask “What has happened to the case for darts to be included?”

The idea of darts becoming part of the Olympics has been debated for many years as the two accompanying illustrations on this page and the next indicate, being drawn from issues of *Darts World* during 1972 and 1973.



But it was back in 2005 that the UK Sports Councils agreed that, for their purposes, darts was a ‘sport’. Since then those darts fans who passionately want darts to be included in the Olympics must be wondering whatever’s happened in the intervening *fourteen years*.

Sadly the Sports Council approval came too late for darts to be considered for the 2012 London Olympics. There was insufficient time for the case to be made so fans (but how many I know not) looked forward to darts being featured in Rio in 2016 (No chance) but that passed too.

Not wanting to go over any old ground or point any digits at anyone or any organisation, I decided to contact Bill Hatter, President of the World Darts Federation (WDF) for an update. Bill told me:

“The WDF is currently in the process of compiling the IOC application. This will likely take another year to develop and submit due to the changes in the IOC application process.

Once the application is submitted and hopefully accepted, the WDF will then move from AIMS (Alliance of Independent Members of recognised Sports) and become a member of ARISF (Association of IOC Recognised Sports Federations), where we will be included in the pool of other sports that are recognised by the IOC. Inclusion into the games is determined and decided by the IOC. All new sports in the Olympics are pulled from the pool of sports that are sitting as ARISF members. That’s all I can provide at the moment.”

Thanks Bill.

On contacting the Professional Darts Corporation (PDC), Dave Allen, Head of Media, commented:

Re darts and the Olympics: As darts does not satisfy IOC criteria for membership, this isn't something the PDC are considering or actively pursuing.

That's understandable.

Back in 2016 legendary PDC Tournament Director Dick Allix, for me, summed up the case when he wrote in the US darts magazine *Bulls-Eye News*

Darts has suffered an image problem all the while I have been involved and it still does. Any attempt to get the sport into the Olympics would give the media a field day. Athleticism would come under fire. They would fall on the sport and the IOC like a pack of dogs on a three-legged cat. It would be murder, and I for one would not want to see that. It would be undeserved and unwarranted. Unfair, certainly, but it would happen. Darts would become a laughing stock for late night talk shows. I have defended the sport too many times from accusations that it is a past-time, not a real sport and worse. [The] WDF would have to face that and answer it head-on. Good luck with that.

So, I do not think the IOC would accept darts for a second; they wouldn't want the flack. Why, I wonder, does anyone want darts in the Olympics? I don't want it because I think it's not for us."

There's the question. "Who in the darting community, apart from the WDF, actually wants darts recognised as an Olympic sport?" Do you? Do you really care if it's recognised or not? Perhaps some of you might have done when England ruled the oche. There was always talk of Phil Taylor guaranteeing gold for Great Britain and that was probably true at the time but that's no longer the case.

Many of the darts players I've spoken to don't care about this issue one jot. They just want to play and enjoy their darts.

I believe that the road to Olympic recognition is so full of potholes that, as Dick Allix stated, the journey (as has already been demonstrated by the WDF over two decades) is such a rocky one, with inherent dangers, that perhaps the WDF should threaten to withdraw its application if indeed it has actually been made.

Then we'll see just how many people care about darts being an Olympic sport. Back in 1936 author Rupert Croft-Cooke in his book (also titled *Darts*) summed up his feelings about the game he loved:

[Darts] has none of the sentimentalised tradition of cricket, nor the subtlety of chess, nor the distinction of golf, nor the spitefulness of croquet. It is a public bar game, a game for good fellows. A spit-and-sawdust pastime. It is a game to play with the glow of beer in one's brain, to the sound of tinkling glasses.

I agree.



Let's all enjoy darts in our own way and, for the sake of the sport, forget the Olympics.

(Source of both illustrations: PC/DW Archive. Used with permission.)

DARTS BRACKETS

Subscriber Spencer Lynch writes:

Got a strange question about a dart bracket. There are two main ones and I do not know why. The one is the most common and is sold with most dart boards. The other is an oblong hole that the screw head from the board goes into and slides down. Why have two? Or does one outdate the other?

Seems like a question for FAQ [Frequently Asked Question]. Thank You and I love your newsletter!

I replied

Hi Spencer. Funnily enough yours is not a FAQ although I guess it should be as there are a number of versions of the dartboard clamp available.

One of my key contacts in the industry tells me that the answer is that the 'oblong hole' version is simply a manufacturers' variation. I am also informed that 'the ultimate mounting tool' is available which can be found at

<https://winmau.com/deluxe-dartboard-clamp-8560>.

I am pleased that you are continuing to enjoy my Newsletter.

GEORGE FOSTER AT 80

Following my mention of England's legendary left-handed darts player Alan Glazier reaching the grand age of 80 in the June DDN I was contacted by Vicki Foster, wife of Australian darts ace George Foster.

Many readers of DDN will recall George who is particularly well known for winning the UNICORN World Pairs Darts Championship in 1976 for his adopted country with his good friend Kevin White:

Vicki wrote:

I note that, in the latest DDN, you mention Alan Glazier turning 80 earlier this year. Just thought I would let you know that George also turned 80 on the weekend - 1st June. We had a wonderful party with many family and friends at our place to celebrate. He had a fantastic time and thankfully



George is in great health. He has now retired from his part time job as a Maintenance Officer at an aged care facility. About time I would say!

Congratulations George on reaching this milestone. You're looking well!

NEWS FROM THE SOLOMON ISLANDS

In the June issue I let you know that *DDN* had reached the Solomon Islands. My original contact on the Islands, Leon Alvarez has written:

Dear Patrick, I have just received your darts news... Thank you very much for giving our Islands a write up in the magazine. We are extremely thankful to you for helping to promote darts in our Pacific region. I am so proud and immediately forwarded the magazine on to our customers and friends.

Cyril Soeda, from Yaren in Nauru, wrote back to say



'It is so great to see the Solomon Islands featured in the darts spotlight. It shows Britain darts is played beyond Australia and New Zealand. Leon, please thank the publisher and tell him Darts is very small here in Nauru but we do love playing the game and receiving his magazine you forward to us.'

Thank you Leon and Cyril. Most kind.

[Nauru, in the south Pacific, north-east of Australia, is the world's smallest island nation with a population of just under 10,000 and Yaren (pictured) is the *de facto* capital of the country.]

HOW TO CLEAN A HORSEHAIR DARTBOARD!

Many of you who have read my book *180! - Fascinating Darts Facts* published in 2012 may recall that, in one section, I disproved and utterly dispelled the myth that early bristle dartboards were made of *horsehair*.

This myth had started back in the 1930s and was still current in the 1980s. Clearly I had hoped that in *180!* (which is still available from The History Press; signed copies direct from me) I had laid this legend to rest...but no. Check out, but don't believe

https://www.ehow.com/how_8391202_clean-horsehair-dart-board.html

It states

Clean the surface of the dartboard with a wire brush to remove stubborn dirt and residue. Use gentle motions to avoid damaging the dartboard. If there is mildew, take the dartboard outside and let it sit in the sun. Ensure it does not come in contact with water.

Hopefully the next *DDN* will include advice on how to maintain a sisal/bristle dartboard.

AMBIDEXTROUS DARTS PLAYERS - FEEDBACK

As you all know, the debate/discussion around ambidextrous darters began in the April edition and continued in the May edition. Due to lack of space I haven't been able to include feedback until now.

Dave Allen Media Manager for the Professional Darts Corporation (PDC) wrote:

Just a note on this in terms of the ambidextrous darts players.

You'll remember the Belgian Erik Clarys, who won the World Masters and was a PDC player at the time I joined in 2004. He later suffered a career-ending elbow injury in 2006 when he fell from a ladder at work, and had tried to return to playing left-handed, unfortunately without any success.

As you say, a few players in exhibitions would throw with their "non-throwing" hand, without the success you'd see of Ronnie O'Sullivan on a snooker table!



Erik Clarys, pictured right, was known as 'The Sheriff'. He won a number of European titles in the mid-to-late 1990s and one world title, the World Masters, in 1995 where he overcame, amongst others, Andy Fordham and Martin Adams before beating the reigning champion Wales' Ritchie Burnett in the final. Erik switched to the PDC in 2004.

In June 2006 he shattered his right elbow when he fell from a ladder. The injury forced him to withdraw from that year's UK Open. After numerous operations and trying to throw with his left-hand he has been unable to return to darts. (Image © Lawrence Lustig/PDC. Used with permission.)

Both Ian Flack, Sales and Marketing Director of the WINMAU Dartboard Co. Ltd., and Vince Bluck, Managing Director of NODOR International contacted me about another dartsman who played with both hands. Ian said



I might be able to help with the ambidextrous question, as I know the legend Allan Plant [pictured] was a left-handed player but played for Wales with his right hand when he injured his normal throwing hand:
<https://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/sport/14489429.newport-darts-legend-allan-plant-dies-aged-76/>

I'm sure you'll remember Planty from the Winmau World Masters and he's still sorely missed as one of the sport's greatest characters.

Vince Bluck wrote

Hi Pat. Interesting letter from your subscriber about ambidextrous dart players... I may have mentioned this to you before, and you may have even included it in an obituary, but I believe that the late Allan Plant was the only player to represent his country playing both right and left handed.

A long standing Welsh international, I believe Allan had to change his throwing arm after a mining accident. He successfully re-trained and was once again selected to play for Wales.

Not sure whether this fits the ambidextrous definition which perhaps implies that someone can use both hands equally well at the same point in time. It's a great story in any event though.

A great story indeed. Thanks Vince.

On a slightly different, but related tack, subscriber Paul Garratt writes:

Hi Patrick. Thanks for another interesting DDN.

I didn't write about ambidextrous darts players last month because I didn't think I quite fit the bill and my standard (mid 30s to 40 average) was a bit less than I thought you were looking for.

After reading the follow-up this month though I have to write and apply to join the '180 with each hand club'. I'm naturally right-handed but dartitis wore me down over six or seven years until I could no longer throw with that hand. I didn't want to stop playing so I taught myself to play with my left. Dreadful at first, after about 18 months to two years I became 'pub competitive' again with a 180 and 130 finish my main left-handed achievements.

(As a post-script I'm back right-handed again!) A problem with my left shoulder was restricting that throw so I wondered if my right arm had come back to me. Slowly it has. Darts giveth and darts taketh away!

Thanks Paul. Has anyone else any similar stories? If so, let me know.

DARTS AND ORIGAMI

Yes. You read it right. 'Darts and Origami. Dave Mitchell, a writer and paper folding designer from Arnside, Cumbria here in England recently contacted me. He wrote:

Hi Patrick. I stumbled across your site and the information on the history of paper flights today. I research paper folding history and had not come across the information about the 1898 patent before. However, I do know of an earlier instance of paper flights being used ... see www.origamiheaven.com/historyofpaperflights.htm ... and thought you might be interested to see this. You might also not know of the Pacioli reference.

I hope you won't mind that I have purloined your information for my page!

Of course I don't mind David.



As for the ‘Pacioli’ reference, I had seen the image (left) before but in a slightly different form but had never been able to pin down the source; something that had irritated me beyond belief for years.

So you can understand my relief when David was able to provide that information. He told me:

My information on Luca Pacioli’s ‘De Viribus Quantitatis’ comes from the dissertation ‘Luca Pacioli and his 1500 book De Viribus Quantitatis’ which can be found at

http://repositorio.ul.pt/bitstream/10451/18435/1/ulfc113829_tm_Tiago_Hirth.pdf.

The last item in section two of the book is transliterated as: ‘134. Chapter One-Hundred-Thirty-four Document: To toss a needle with a string and have it stay in the door or other wood.’

Pacioli finishes this second part with the description of a needle with a string through its oar thrown at a wooden object... This is on page 99 if you want to look it up. I take it that ‘oar’ is a mistake for ‘eye’.

Interesting that the word ‘dart’ is not mentioned in the text.

Who would have ever thought that *DDN* would feature the research of a paper folding designer? Yet it makes good sense. After all, brass and cane darts with paper flights were the cheaper replacement for darts with feather flights in the early days. If players could not afford to buy the manufactured product they would make their own flights out of a piece of card and often out of cigarette cards. (I know I have an example of the latter *somewhere* in my collection.)

Subscriber Mick Simpson asked me a couple of weeks ago, “What is the most unusual enquiry you have ever received?” Well Mick. I think this is one of them.

OBITUARY – MIKKO LAIHO

It was with great sadness that I learned via the June issue of *Darts World* of the death of darts entrepreneur, master caller, player and coach, Finland’s Mikko Laiho. He suffered a stroke on 29th April this year and died instantly.

I first met Mikko (pictured) in London in 2010 and we’d kept in touch mainly via e-mails ever since. I found him as enthusiastic as anyone could be for everything darts. This was evident as he worked all the hours he could to promote and raise the profile of the sport he loved.



A top Finnish player, Mikko featured in the WINMAU World Masters in 1984, 1985, 1987 and 2004, making the last 32 in 1985 and 2004.

In the 1985 Masters Mikko lost to Eric Bristow two sets to nil, the Crafty One shooting out on 170 in the first set. He shook Eric's hand to congratulate him. Recalling the incident in 2010 in conversation with me Mikko told me

Eric remembered that after the final dart and he told me he likes me. Me, being a little cockey-boy and trying to be at least funny, told him that will NOT be the case after we have met the next time! He burst out laughing and told me having an attitude [like that] could take me a long way.

Also a darts journalist, Mikko wrote two books (in Finnish, naturally) which, translated, were titled 'All About Darts' and 'More About Darts'. Mikko also managed two of Finland's greatest darting talents, Marco Pusa and Jarkko Komula. According to *Darts World* 'Mikko's personable approach led to a 14-year coaching relationship and contributed to their successes at major worldwide competitions.'

The *Darts World* obituary added:

For the past eight years, Mikko had been closely involved in coaching whilst developing practice games and structures. These are designed to initially assess players at any level and then to assist them to improve their game. The culmination of Mikko's efforts was proved with the GoDartsPro programme and website which was set up with his business partner, Anders.

WINMAU's Head of Marketing, Simon Hall, told *Darts World*

"Mikko's passion for darts was utterly contagious and it's hard to see this being matched again. He was a personal friend as well as a colleague and all of us at WINMAU will miss his totally unique view on life and darts in general."

RIP Mikko.

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