

DR. DARTS' NEWSLETTER

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MEMORIES OF JOCKY – SCOTLAND'S FORMER NO. 1 LOOKS BACK AT THEIR FRIENDSHIP



In last month's *DDN* I mentioned that freelance journalist Eddie Reid, a friend of Scotland's former #1 darts player Rab Smith, had interviewed Rab about his friendship with darts legend Jocky Wilson. (Image of Rab, left, courtesy of the PC/DW Darts Archive.)

Eddie had contacted me after having been a guest at the BBC Scotland's recording of the documentary 'Jocky Wilson Said', a programme to which I also

contributed. (The programme can be viewed on YouTube.) Eddie has submitted a number of Rab's recollections and I am pleased to feature the first of his stories in this issue of *DDN*.

HOW RAB SMITH MET JOCKY

Rab turned professional in 1977. He went on to win five Majors that year and quickly became a Scotland International player. He finished the year ranked No.4 in the world. He didn't enter all the tournaments he could have in 1977 and, had he won just one more tournament, he would have been World No.1.

One of the heartlands of Scottish darts was the Kingdom of Fife. Kirkcaldy was a coal mining area within Fife and every Miners Welfare Club had a darts team. Rab attended many darts exhibitions at various clubs in Kirkcaldy and he was the star attraction. Towards the end of his first exhibition in Kirkcaldy a young man called Jocky Wilson came up to him and offered to play him for £50.00.

Jocky was not a professional player at that time and Rab had never heard of him. However, the young man was insistent, and the crowd had clearly heard of their local hero, so Rab accepted the challenge. They played their match and Rab won.

At the next exhibition he played, at a different club in Kirkcaldy, young Jocky was there again. Towards the end of the event, Jocky approached him and laid down the same

challenge and it was again accepted. This was a closer match than their previous meeting, however the result was the same and Rab took the spoils.

[The image, right, shows Jocky winning one of his first major trophies the Fife Cup.]

He estimates that he played Jocky at exhibitions in Kirkcaldy maybe six times and Jocky didn't win any of them. That said, Rab could see a significant improvement in the young man's game on each occasion.

Jocky Wilson turned professional in 1979 and very soon became a Scotland International. The regular Scotland team at that time was Rab Smith (Captain), Jocky Wilson and Angus Ross.



Shortly after Jocky turned professional in 1979, he and Rab were drawn to play each other in a televised event. (Rab can't remember either the event or the venue. However he says that it was definitely in England and it was televised. [Can anyone help identify that event?])

The result of that match was that Jocky Wilson beat Rab Smith for the first time.

*Rab said, reflectively, "He had never beaten me in his life. He waited until we were on television, then the b*gger beat me!"*

They got on well and Jocky always had a great deal of respect for Rab's advice on any subject. Jocky was always a bit of a "rough diamond" and when the management of the Scotland team wanted to convey a message to Jocky regarding his general conduct, they always used Rab as the conduit for that advice.

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Thanks to Eddie and Rab. More stories will follow in future issues of *DDN*. In the meantime if you have any memories of playing or watching or meeting Jock or Rab please contact me at patrick.chaplin@btinternet.com.

DOUBLE BULLSEYE – FEEDBACK

It's always a pleasure to receive feedback and I am particularly pleased this month to publish a response from David King (he of darts501.com fame) who has often undertaken deeper research into some aspects of darts history, such as the Yorkshire Board, than I have.

On this occasion David comments on my theory about the derivation of the US darts phrase 'Double Bull'. He writes:

Hi Patrick. I don't think the lingo in the USA for double-bull has anything to do with cricket, it is just a term that has been used in the UK many years ago. As you will know from your own research that all that is written isn't always true!

That's very true. As followers of my work will know, I spend a lot of time debunking myths and untruths in the history of our sport. David continues

The origins of the Bullseye is something that I have looked at in the past, i.e. Why Bullseye rather than the Centre?

The term 'Bullseye' for a centre target area has been used for hundreds of years. It is used in archery, and this is the most likely taken forward to dartboards. As you well know the early French darts used a target area similar to an archery board: just smaller. The rings indicating the distance from the centre and scoring value. However, more likely in the earlier boards to quickly show the nearest dart to the centre or 'Bullseye'.

My research has shown that the earliest dartboards were indeed miniaturised archery targets.

As regards your research, written evidence is always crucial, but many overseas players may not know of the wonderful variations of dartboards used in the UK. Some of these dartboards, as you will know, are still made today, the Yorkshire and the Manchester



dartboards are two. Both these boards have a scoring bullseye, and the Yorkshire dartboard preceded the 'London Clock' or standard dartboard we mainly see today. The Yorkshire dartboard only has a single bullseyes section and the outer bullseye I believe was introduced into the Fives and later London dartboard.

Players moving from a Yorkshire to a Fives or London board have indeed referred to the 'inner' Bullseye as the Double Bull because it scores twice the outer and can be used as a double in out-shots. All through research, historical evidence requires reference points and, in most cases, written

evidence to support a claim. Seldom are these terms written down. The jargon in darts now is rarely referred to as many don't understand the terms.

'Seldom' is the right word here. Darts has always been under-recorded in documents, diaries and local and national newspapers. That's why it took me so long to compile my collection of darts terminology which was eventually merged with Bobby George's collection and published as *Scoring for Show: Doubles for Dough – Bobby George's Darts Lingo* (Apex Publishing, 2011).

David added

The Bullseye has also been known as the 'Dosser' ref: 'The Various Darts Games and How to Play Them' by A. Wellington Circa 1937. As to why I don't know, as I can see no tangible

reference to the term 'Dosser' to the scoring area. The bull / Bullseye / Bull's Eye or Dosser has always been the centre of the board the outer bull or outer bullseye half its scoring value except in soft-tip!

Having read this part of David's reply I realised that I had never looked into the word 'dosser' as meaning the bullseye. In *Scoring for Show...* Bobby and I wrote

Dosser – Olde worlde dart expression for the bull's-eye. For some dart players who played on dartboards with a single bull the name dosser was changed to double dosser if they swapped to the standard board with an inner and an outer bull...

So I recently set about trying to trace the origins of 'dosser'. What I found in *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles*, made me smile. The third of four derivations of the word 'doss' reads 'To push with horns, as a *bull*.' OK. I appreciate that's a bit tenuous but whether or not this is the true source of the expression I care not.

David continued:

I can certainly say I have heard 'double bull' being used in a darts match in London over thirty plus years ago and don't think the term for double-bull in the USA stems from American Cricket. I believe it stems from the evolution of the dartboard and players unsure what to call the 'inner'/'outer' bullseye. Because the inner or bullseye was also as a means of finishing a 301/501 match it also because of a double in its own right. It was referred to as 'double bull' particularly when referencing in an outshot as one may say double sixteen rather than thirty-two.

As I said to David in my reply to him

I must say that never in all my years of playing darts have I heard the term 'double bull' used by anyone in the numerous pubs I've played in nor have I ever seen any primary or secondary evidence of such use in the UK. However, you are more well-travelled than me so I bow to your greater knowledge on this.

Is that a phrase other readers of *DDN* have heard on the hockey/oche in days gone by?

David concludes

With the Manchester Log-end board [pictured] the boards are usually constructed with an inner and outer bullseye. However, the traditional Manchester Log-end dartboard doesn't use the inner bullseye as such, and both the inner and outer are considered the same. The inner bullseye is only used for games such as 301. I have also heard of the inner bullseye being removed to prevent bounce-outs as it is not an integral part of the main Manchester Log-end game.

I believe when you look at this question again, you might draw the same conclusion.



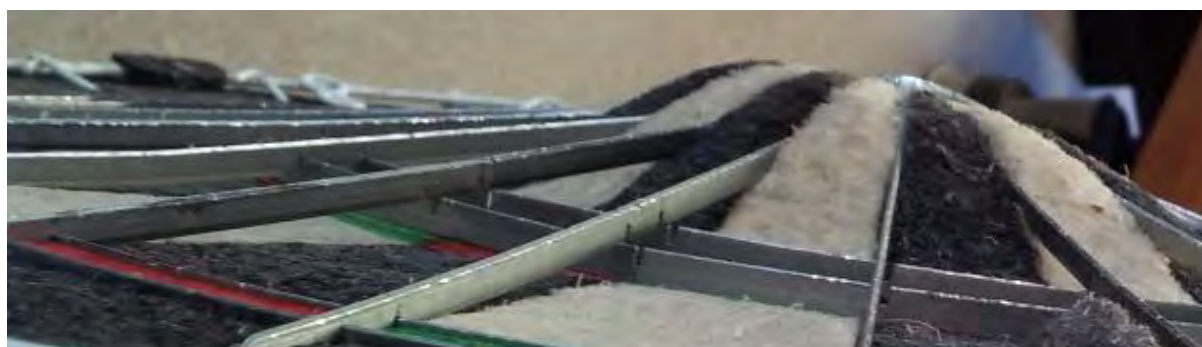
Some great points there David. Thanks. What do other think? Drop me a note at my usual address.

HOW TO CLEAN A BRISTLE DARTBOARD - FEEDBACK

In #113 I made reference to how to clean a bristle dartboard and how not to. Subscriber Mick Simpson wrote:

*Interesting that about cleaning the bristle board. I don't I know if I ever told you but one of the pubs I used to play against used to **soak** the bristle board? Somebody had told him dartboards need to be soaked so he did! I explained that was way back when Elm boards were used. Not bristle. He stopped doing it then.*

Here's what happens if you soak a bristle dartboard!



The legend 'DO NOT SOAK' was printed on the reverse of all NODOR bristle dartboards to prevent people dunking them into water overnight. One advertisement in my archive for the NODOR dartboard includes the statement '**and they require NO soaking**'. Interestingly at that time NODOR also made archery targets.

The idea of soaking elm or poplar dartboards was to maintain the subtleness of the board. Often pub landlords would have two elm dartboards: one on the wall in play and one in the soak.

THE SWEDISH OPEN 1973

From time to time I receive enquiries concerning specific tournaments and/or matches. Back in June Johan Slotved from Sweden wrote:

Dear Dr. Patrick, I have followed darts as a very poor pub player here in Ludvika, Sweden for many years. Now retired I also occasionally visit Alexander Palace in England for the world event. I also visit the Sweden Open most years to watch, never brave enough to play.

It was at the world championship in London this year that I was given your e-mail address and heard about your darts magazine (and hope you receive this e-mail). Could I possibly please receive the magazine to be sent here in Sweden? [Of course Johan. Job done.]

Also a puzzle. I have looked and scoured the internet and found nothing but I was told and it is a continuing darts story here in Ludvika that many years ago in the 1970's a darts player/organiser arranged for a party of about 150 British darts players to charter a private plane

to fly to Ludvika from England to play in the Sweden Open to help put Sweden Darts on the Europe map.

Would you have any information on this at all? I am told that Bill Perry an English darts player who became a frequent visitor to Sweden was on the flight. I tried to contact Mr. Perry recently to solve the mystery but understand he has deceased.

Bill Perry passed away in 2006 but just reading Johan's e-mail I knew who would be at the centre of the 'private plane' story: none other than the ubiquitous Dr. Eddie Norman. Eddie wrote

Yes that was one of the charters I arranged through my own 'Edward's Travel Agency', my two invited special guests on the trip were Olly and Lorna Croft. [Olly was Secretary of the British Darts Organisation (BDO) at that time.] They stayed with Pete, my brother, the night before.

It was the Sweden Open September 1973 when Kim Brown [a member of the West of England Darts Team] won in Ludvika. I remember it like yesterday. Bill Perry was on the trip, Mike Brown and other guests included Ken Osborne and his famous cardigan. [See DDN #109] I chartered several 'darts' planes in the 1970's but this one will be in my mind for ever.



[The photo here shows the organisers stepping off the plane in Sweden. They are (left to right) Bill Phillips (President, the West Of England Darts Organisation), Bill Sheppard (Chairman, West Of England and Vice Chairman British Darts Organisation), Ken Nicholas (Treasurer, West of England Darts Organisation and the BDO), Eddie Norman (Secretary, West of England and Competition Secretary of the BDO) and Olly Croft (Secretary, BDO). They are holding the fascia of the illuminated scorer.]

Eddie added

Planning it was like a military operation as I shall tell you and something people told me I could never do that made me more determinate than ever to succeed.

On the way to the final Kim Brown had beaten a number of great players including Wales' Leighton Rees, Bill Perry (the Worcestershire champion) and Brian Netherton (who had won the title the previous year). His opponent in the final was the home-grown Swedish champion Gunnar Moberg who had beaten a number of 'names' as he fought his way through his half of the draw including the top London player Tom O'Regan.

In the final, which was the best of three legs, Gunnar easily won the first leg scoring 124, 116, 100 and 85 but Brown came back in the second leg with three consecutive scores of 100 and an 85. The third and deciding leg saw Gunnar left with 51 and Brown on 40 after fifteen darts. *Darts World* reported

With his first throw Gunnar hit single 19, the second single 16 and on the third bust his score by getting a double 16 instead of double 8. Kim missed double top with his first two darts, but clinched victory with his third to secure the title for England and follow in the footsteps of predecessors Tom Barrett and Brian Netherton.

Kim Brown told *Darts World* afterwards

“I’m absolutely delighted. Naturally I wanted to win, but I wasn’t over-confident, or think that I might win until I reached the finals. Having won this Swedish Open, I feel sure that this will put me in line for bigger tournaments.”

Sadly, although Kim played in many tournaments after the Swedish Open, he never really fulfilled his potential.

As for the runner-up Gunnar was magnanimous in defeat telling *Darts World* “I enjoyed playing and I don’t mind losing – after all, there’s always next year.”

Although there was also a Ladies’ tournament, it was completely unreported in the November 1973 issue of *Darts World* and so, I guess, all details are now lost to history. All that was recorded in that issue was the fact that the champion was Berit. Malm (pictured).



Interestingly the Swedish organiser, Patrick Eneroth, told *Darts World* that darts had, over recent years, become a major participant sport in his country. He said

“More people play darts in Sweden than any other sport. It’s expanded out of almost nothing to the extent that now we’re even starting up regular training sessions for the would-be darts players.”

It’s difficult to explain why it’s caught on so well over here, but I think that the main reason must be that not only do people enjoy the game for its own sake, they also enjoy the social aspects and the atmosphere surrounding it.”

Indeed Sweden had already sent a representative to the *News of the World* Grand Finals at the Alexandra Palace, London for the first time in April 1973. The debutant was Orvar Svensson, a 29-year-old engineer from Stockholm playing out of the Nightcap Clan Society reputed at the time to be ‘the best dart club in Sweden.’ Orvar had become the Swedish champion in 1972 and retained his title in 1973, at the same time winning the Pairs tournament. Sweden had to wait until 1978 for the country’s first *News of the World* champion namely Stefan Lord (playing out of the Stockholm Super Darts Club). Stefan won the title again two years later in 1980.

Having discovered the full story of the 1973 Swedish Open I forwarded the detail to Johan who had made the original enquiry. He replied

Dear Patrick, I cannot believe you could find the information so fast. Thank you for your Darts Magazine, it is absolutely a great read, and I will certainly be passing it around and look forward to future issues. I thought at first it might have been Bill Perry who organised the event, but he once told us it was arranged by the 'top man'. But I never found out who the 'top man' was.

Thank you for the photograph. I am so pleased I contacted you. I await for further news. My pleasure to mention my enquiry.

GAMESMANSHIP - FEEDBACK

Following on from my lead story last month, Brian H. has commented

Hi Patrick. Thanks for another great read. Nothing like cheating & gamesmanship in sport to put me off a player or a team! (Sir Henry Newbolt must be turning in his grave seeing the game of cricket he eulogised in Vitai Lampada riven with sledging & out & out cheating). And sadly darts is no exception to the current trend with players complaining of behaviour of others that they blatantly carry out themselves.

My own personal experience of gamesmanship was when playing in a pub handicap: during the warm up my opponent regaled me with tales of the top class players he played & beaten. Fortunately for me this obvious tactic had the opposite effect as it annoyed me so much that I forgot any nerves or tension & played a blinder! : A warning to potential spoilers of how such tactics don't always work!

Thanks again for all your hard work Patrick. Look forward to your next offering.

Thanks Brian. I'm absolutely certain you can't play to your best if you're engaging in gamesmanship.

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