

DR. DARTS' NEWSLETTER

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DAVE KELLY – US DARTS ACE

It is always a sad day when one hears about the passing of any well-known darts player. Regrettably, the month of June 2020 was no different. It is thanks to Warren Ackary, one of my Australian friends, who was told by Aussie star Russell Stewart that US darts star Dave Kelly (pictured) had died from cancer on 1st June.



Dave Kelly, a native of Boston, Massachusetts, had an illustrious darting career the highlight of which was being part of the World Darts Federation (WDF) Pacific Cup VI winning team in 1990. That event was hosted by the Singapore Darts Association in October that year; the US team comprising Paul Lim, Kim Kellar, Eva Grigsby and Dave, with manager Della Fleetwood.

Eight countries competed for darts supremacy in the Pacific region. In addition to the USA were teams from Australia (defending champions), Canada (who had missed the competition in 1988), New Zealand, Singapore, Japan, Malaysia and Taiwan. The US won gold in the Mixed Team event and the Mixed Doubles (Lim and Grigsby), Grigsby

and Kellar won silver in the Women's Doubles whilst Kelly and Lim won silver in the Men's Doubles and Lim, silver again, in the Men's singles. Dave Kelly and Paul Lim won silver in the Men's Doubles whilst Eva Grigsby took bronze in the Women's Singles.

All this added up to a victory for the American team with 150 points with Canada snapping at their heels with 145 points. It was the first time the US had held the trophy since 1988.

The win was celebrated by the premier US darts magazine *Bull's Eye News* in the December 1990 issue, the front cover of which is shown here. The victorious team with the trophy (from left to right) Della Fleetwood (manager), Paul Lim, Eva Grigsby, Kim Kellar and Dave Kelly. (Image © *Bull's Eye News*. Used with permission.)



Over the whole tournament Dave's three-dart average was 25.12; hitting seventy-six scores of 100+, eighteen 140+ and eight maximum 180s.

Dave visited the UK a number of times playing British Darts Organisation (BDO) tournaments from 1982 until 1993 and then with the World Darts Council (WDC) from 1993-96 and then for the Professional Darts Corporation (PDC) from 2006 to 2008. Dave is probably best known in the UK for reaching the semi-finals of the WINMAU World Masters in 1991. This was back in the days when all players entered in the competition and started from scratch from the floor that is, no seeding. To make it through to the final stages was an achievement in itself. Before that Dave had played in the World Masters twice in the early 1980s and in 1989.



In the quarter finals in 1991 Dave beat Danish marksman Per Skau 3-1 and went on to meet the eventual winner, England's Rod Harrington, in the semi-final. Harrington beat Kelly by the same score 3-1. Harrington then went on to win the title beating Phil Taylor 3-2 in a tightly contested final.

Kelly appeared in only one BDO Embassy World Championship and that was in 1993 when he lost in the first round to Martin Phillips of Wales 3-1 with a three-dart average of 27.78.

Dave appeared for his country in the inaugural 1993/94 WDC World Championships at the Circus Tavern, Purfleet, Essex but failed to make it through the first, group stage, being beaten 3-0 by both Bob Anderson (England) and USA colleague Gerald Verrier. He returned to the Circus Tavern in 1997

but was defeated in the Preliminary Round 3-1 by England's Ritchie Gardner.

Back home in the USA Dave's tournament successes were endless. For many years he was sponsored by Budweiser 'The King of Beers'. When his sponsorship with 'Bud' was renewed in 1993 his exhibition commitment increased from around thirty to fifty per year. The Dave Kelly Exhibition Program focussed mainly on the north-east. When interviewed by *Bull's Eye News* back in 1993 about his fifth appearance in the Masters Dave replied,

"Well, working with Budweiser and doing the exhibitions, I get enough practice in. I try to go over there as mentally tough as I can. I know it's not easy to do what I did when I made top four."

Dave also appeared no less than three times in the PDC World Matchplay 1994-96.

On the PDC website Dave Allen, Head of Media, added

[Dave Kelly] also continued to compete on the North American circuit, and also played in the PDC's 2007 US Open and 2008 North American Championship, as well as at the Las Vegas Desert Classic Qualifiers.

Leading the tributes on the PDC website was three-time World Champion John Part. John said:

"Dave was a man whose talent and charisma made you believe anything was possible. His very presence at darts events gave the game that little bit extra that told you here is a sport, the sort of activity the best of the best can pursue with dignity.

A fierce competitor whose passion doing so was only equalled by his magnanimity and leadership off the board, Dave was a beacon who easily drew people to himself and the game, and became the iconic American leader who rallied his compatriots to accept nothing less than equality in the world of darts, both by example and spirit. The ultimate teammate is gone."

Writing on Twitter, fellow three-time World Champion John Lowe said:

"Sorry to hear Dave Kelly passed away this morning, I have known Dave for many years, he always kept in touch, a great dart player and representative of America."

1994 World Matchplay champion Larry Butler described Kelly as "one of my favorite people", and former Sky Sports commentator John Gwynne hailed him as "a most likeable man".

Paul Lim, told me

I knew Dave Kelly from the get go when I first moved to the USA from Papua New Guinea leaving my job as a chef to pursue my Darts in the American Dart circuit.

I first went to Boston and that's when I first met Dave Kelly. Being the Dave as he is, I immediately took a liking to this person simply for his thoughtfulness and friendliness. He made me feel like I am his long lost brother. Eventually, I moved to California because I couldn't stand the January freezing cold temperature.

But we became very close friends, playing in competitions as opponents and later as doubles partners. We travelled together, we shared rooms, we confided in each other. Always there to listen to my problems and always there to lend a helping hand when needed. He loved my cooking and I remember doing a feast with a group of our friends during a tournament in Martha's Vineyard in Massachusetts.

A person who loved life. A great dart player but most of all a great person.

Very sad that he has to go through his later part of life in sickness and pain. Just isn't fair I thought sometime... But I am glad it is over and he doesn't have to suffer anymore. We definitely lost a great one.

I cannot describe how much I miss that guy...

Thanks Paul.

Dave Allen also pointed me in the direction of Howie Reed's tribute published on Dartoid's website. Here's the link:

www.dartoidsworld.net/2020/06/column-hr283-rest-well-with-the-angels-dave-kelly/

Dave Kelly – US Darter (b. 11th May 1956 d. 1st June 2020)

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STEVE CHAPMAN – RETIREMENT – FEEDBACK

In the last *DDN* I featured an article about Steve Chapman (pictured) who has retired from writing darts articles for the *Plymouth Herald* after 38 years. Steve has also spent many years compiling County reports and other features for *Darts World* magazine. The report certainly touched a chord with some *DDN* readers. Bill Bell wrote:

I had a look at Steve Chapmans website threeinabed really good site for their local dart leagues. I doubt if many areas have something as good as that.

While Mick S. sent this message:

It's a shame to see Steve retire but after all he has done for Darts...Steve, if I wore a hat I would take it off to you.



Brothers Patrick and Gerald Corrigan both emailed me about Steve. Patrick said

Sorry to hear about Steve Chapman's retirement due to bad health. I originate from Plymouth and really enjoyed reading his Darts column, whenever I returned to visit my brother (another darts player) who would save me the Herald's whenever he was mentioned. His reports were extensive, and not just the odd piece, which must have taken some considerable networking on his behalf. I am not a Royalist, but if a gong was ever deserved, for his charity work alone, he deserves one. [Please] pass my very best wishes to Steve.]

Gerald added

Thank you for your article concerning Steve Chapman, I first knew Steve when he was playing for the Grenville F Troop dart team, I was playing for the Cherry Tree team, I think Steve would agree we had some great matches when the teams met.

As for his darts column, it was very much appreciated being the only one reporting on darts in the area, when Courage and Plymouth Breweries merged there were approximately 92 teams in seven divisions to cover, add to this Ladies, other Breweries and Social Club leagues it was no mean feat, and he done a superb job.

His column expanded over the years to feature players and tournaments, we all looked forward to read and see photos in his articles.

So a very big thank you Steve for those memories.

LOCKDOWN INTERNET COMPETITIONS

Darts of course was not totally lost during lockdown; just darts in a 'new' format or time spent searching the 'net for old tournaments. Of the former, subscriber Paul Coppard writes

Hello Patrick, have been watching the internet competitions glued to the PC screen every night and am delighted with it. Coming from a different standpoint it has been a revelation. The banter and spirit of the games show the sport in the best light. Talking to and watching the lower ranked players [that] we see less of gives a broader insight and makes one realise just how talented they are.

You'll have a new subject for your excellent magazine and it will be interesting to gauge the opinions of others. Sure, there will be the odd glitch with the internet connections but they haven't spoiled the good entertainment.

Have any other DDN readers a view about darts during lockdown? If so, drop me a line at patrick.chaplin@btinternet.com.

WELCOME TO NEW SUBSCRIBERS

Welcome to all new subscribers to DDN which this month includes 'Heikke' who I believe is my first subscriber from the People's Republic of China. Welcome one and all.

AUTUMN GOLD MASTERS – 1988

I recently received an enquiry from subscriber Ashley asking about the 1988 Autumn Gold Masters.

There seemed to be some question as to whether or not that tournament ever took place even though a 1988 result features on some websites. Following research of back issues of *Darts World* by my 'Research Assistant' (my wife Maureen) a solution was found. There was no Autumn Gold scheduled for 1988 but there was an Autumn Gold played that year.

The reason: the 1987 Autumn Gold Masters was delayed when in November that year the scheduled event in Gateshead was postponed when Tyne Tees Television electricians pulled the plug due to industrial action. The 1987 final was then played in February 1988. John Lowe won it beating Bob Anderson in the Final. On informing Ashley, he replied, "*Wow! Very interesting. Never knew about that strike. It definitely makes sense now.*"

LOCAL HEROES - DES STABB – PLYMOUTH DARTS MASTER - OBITUARY

Steve Chapman writes

Plymouth (Devon) darts players were saddened to hear news of the death of Des Stabb. His health began to deteriorate following a stroke two years ago but died of natural causes on Sunday 19th May. [*Des is pictured below playing in the TV programme The Indoor League in 1973 playing against Tommy O'Regan.*]

He still enjoyed a cigarette and a glass of wine right up until his death when he was found peacefully in his sitting room chair by his brother's partner who came to deliver his Sunday lunch.



Des was one of Plymouth's finest players in his day and first came to prominence in the 1967-68 Courage League campaign when he and Timmy Green played for the Mermaid, a hostelry in Eggbuckland that has since shut its doors.

But it did not take long for the duo's prowess to get noticed and the following season both Des and Timmy were playing for the formidable side that graced The Longroom.

The 1970-71 season saw The Longroom win the treble, the first time that the feat had been achieved in the Courage PB League which, at the time, was the biggest brewery league in the country. The treble was

made up of the league title, Knockout Cup and Johnstone Trophy.

The following year Longroom clinched the treble once again and had the captain's winner in Geoff Gunning, the secretaries' winner in Des Stabb and Tim Green took the individual title. They clinched the Johnstone Trophy in the 1976-77 campaign and again in 1978-79 and were crowned league champions once again in 1979-80.

The following season Des changed his darts night to a Tuesday as back in those days you could only play for one brewery league and in 1980-81 Des played for the Radnor Arms in the Whitbread League and in his first season, won the pairs title with Graham Bryce as well as the team winning the league title.

But Monday night was Des's favoured darts night and in the 1983-84 campaign, he was playing for The Lord Beresford who cleaned up by winning the league title, Johnstone Trophy and Challenge Cup.

That formidable team consisted of Geoff Gunning, Martin Smith, Buster Yabsley, Des Stabb, Graham Bryce, Timmy Green, Dave Greet, Dave Smith, Dave Gaylard, Tommy Griffiths and John Canham.

As well as winning the unique treble, The Lord Beresford also boasted the two individual finalists for that season but unfortunately for Des he lost to his team-mate Dave Smith. Lord Beresford were runners up to the Cherry Tree in 1984-85 but won the Challenge Cup.

In the early 70s, a new concept was introduced to sporting fans by Yorkshire TV called The Indoor League, which was created and produced by Sid Waddell. Indoor League ran from 1972 to 1977 when darts coverage on TV was in its infancy. Several indoor sports were competed for and Des Stabb had the honour of competing in the first showing in 1973.

In that year's competition Des defeated England international Willie Etherington and Ronnie Church, the beaten finalist in the 1972-73 News of the World, before losing to the then No.1

player in the world, Tommy O'Regan, in the semi-final, who went on claim the title when defeating Welsh international Alan Evans in the final. [The image shows Tommy O'Regan in action at that event with Des looking on.] Stabb was again in the line-up the following year but lost in the first round to Leighton Rees who took the title when defeating his Welsh compatriot Evans.

[When featured in Sid Waddell and John Meade's book *The Indoor League* (1975) Sid quoted an interview with Stabb:

Des Stabb of Plymouth had a traumatic entry into the big-time of darts: [Des told Sid:]

'I was playing in this championship and there were several hundred people watching. I was due to play Tom Barrett, [pictured] so I had a few drinks and then a few more. Then came the time to meet him. A guy with a "mike" introduced me: Des Stabb, the Secretertiers Cup Winner and runner-up in the Courage PB Doubles and Individual Competition.' Then he introduced Tom Barrett. "The News of the World Champion in 1964 and 1965" – etc, etc. It took this guy half an hour to introduce Barrett but I beat him. I beat him easy. When I threw the winning dart all the drinks came back up.'



Sid added

So twenty-five-year-old Stabb lays his claim to fame. He's certainly one of the most promising youngsters around today. At the time of the 1973 Indoor League Championship he was unbeaten in the Super League. He's been playing for seven years and competes in the Courage PB League and Devonport and District League. His local's the Longroom in Stonehouse, Plymouth and he plays four nights a week.]

In 1975, Des Stabb qualified for the World Masters which was contested at the West Centre Hotel, Fulham. The tournament featured the best sixty players from around the world, twenty-four winners of major tournaments from the previous year and an English qualifying round consisting of thirty-six players.

The thirty-six County players played down to the last eight before joining the 24 invitees to make the first round.

Cliff Inglis was defending his title he won in 1974 as the first winner while also in the line-up was an 18-year-old Londoner by the name of Eric Bristow and two Cornishmen in Lionel Johns and Ron Burley. The Masters title was eventually won by Alan Evans who defeated another Welshman, David "Rocky" Jones. [Sadly neither Des nor his Devonshire colleague George Murphy made it to the final stages of that tournament.]

Tributes have been pouring in from darts players far and near of the sad news of Des's death and one former team-mate, Graham Bryce, knew Des as well as anybody after playing in the

same teams at the Hyde Park, Longroom, Futurama, Cambridge, Duke of Somerset, No Place Inn and many more and said that “Des was one of the finest players this city has seen”.



A team-mate of Dessie's back in the early days, and a player who is still performing at a very high level is Ralph Lancaster (pictured) who said that Des was a good friend to all and a very good darts player.

Ralph recalls one story in the 70s when he and Des played a doubles challenge match at The Clifton with a fixed double start. They won the match with a 10-dart leg and the landlord sent in the result to the paper, highlighting the feat. When Ralph checked the following week for

the write up the headline said: “Plymouth pair hit 10-darter” . . . Des Lancaster and Ralph Stabb.

Another former team-mate of Des's at The Clipper was Dick Johns and he recalls the night when somebody brought in Sid Waddell's book “*Bedtime Darts*” and asked Des for his autograph on the page that he was mentioned in Sid's book.

In the chapter on The Indoor League Sid wrote: “My final memory relates to the aptly named Devon darter Des Stabb, a real character.

“Just before a crucial match he discovered that he had lost one of his darts. In a flash a couple of dozen children were scuttling under the tables searching for it. Des was so pleased when a little boy found it that he gave the kid all the money in his pockets which totalled £3.50. A sizable amount of beer money in 1974”.

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LOCKDOWN MUSINGS (No. 1) – DARTBOARD NUMBERING

There's been a lot written over the years about the numbering sequence on the 'standard' dartboard. Remember Professor David Percy's 'optimal' dartboard (pictured, right) back in 2012? The full story was featured in *DDN* #35, March 2013.

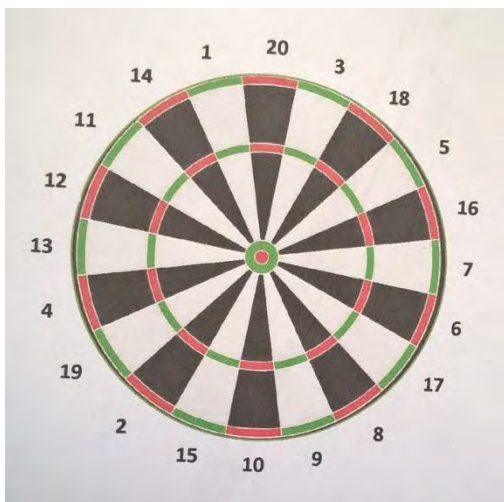
I am pleased that at least one person has taken time out during lockdown to present his own spin on the matter. Alan Snow, a visitor to my website, explains:

Dear Doctor Darts, (Patrick). During this Lockdown (April 2020), I have applied my Statistical Analysis background to several issues, one of them being the dartboard layout. Your 'History of Darts' research



has prompted me to ponder on how the Dartboard layout could be 'improved'. (I know it will never happen: it's been the way it is for too long.....).

Never-the-less, and purely as a mathematical exercise, I have designed a "better" layout for the dartboard, to make it more challenging for most players, based on the following "design criteria":



1. Risk (like going for Treble20), should be a balance between Reward and Penalty (that is, missing the target should incur a large penalty). So I have placed low score neighbours on each side of the main high-scoring targets (20, 19, 18, 17, 16, 15).

2. Missing an even numbered segment (20, 18, 16 etc.) - and hitting a neighbouring segment - should switch the score needed to finish from even to odd (and vice-versa for missing an odd-numbered segment).

3. The location of the most aimed for segments (that is the high numbers), should be spread around the board to test the players aim.

This design approach results in the following 'fairer' arrangement (above) clockwise from '12 o'clock': 20, 3, 18, 5, 16, 7, 6, 17, 8, 9, 10, 15, 2, 19, 4, 13, 12, 11, 14, 1.

Alan has invited comments from DDN readers. Indeed Alan's work does show that a few numbers on the standard dartboard stay where they are on his 'Optimum' dartboard whilst some compare favourably with Professor Percy's 'Optimal' board.

TYRE SURROUNDS

Even though he is now retired (and at the time like a lot of us, locked down due to the virus) that doesn't prevent Dr. Eddie Norman from thinking about darts. On this occasion he dropped me a note that will clearly strike a chord to subscribers of a certain age. Eddie writes:

Hi Patrick, I was regularly asked on my travels around the world why dartboard surrounds are so expensive and I wondered if you had ever come across the same question over the years.

When I first started out in the darts business many local pubs had only a dartboard cabinet. Next door to the House of Darts International [Eddie's business which he ran with his brother Peter] was a large motor cycle repair business. At the rear of their premises they used to accumulate large piles of used motor cycle tyres as customers bought new ones.

One day, I tried one of the tyres to see if it would fit around a dartboard. The size of the tyre was 325 x 19. The tyre was the correct size but obviously was too thick so had to be sliced through the middle. This would need to be done correctly.

Near the House of Darts International was a saw mill cutting through trees. I asked them to see if they would cut through a tyre, it took minutes. It made two board surrounds. These

were cheap and perfect for the job and fitted a board perfectly. The size 325 x19 had to be correct.

We painted these up in many colours, and they were immediately snapped up by two local pub landlords. The word soon spread and soon we were inundated with orders for the tyres. We had local university students paint them for us. We put them in our catalogues and they were sent around the world. [However,] they dropped off when Japanese motor bikes came on the market with different size tyres.

A few weeks ago a pub in Australia e-mailed me to say he still had the original tyre around the board after forty years, many repaints but still perfect. They certainly had their money's worth!

Thanks Eddie. I remember seeing darts surrounds on the walls of local pubs for years comprising a painted half-tyre and, yes, they were still there when Honda and other Japanese motorbikes were introduced and way beyond. Do you remember them? Do you have a photograph of a tyre surround? I couldn't find one. Let me know, especially where there is one still in use. Email at patrick.chaplin@btinternet.com.

In the meantime (and I can't resist this) Happy Re-tyre-ment Eddie!

AND FINALLY...

On 22nd July I will attain the age of **SEVENTY**! I cannot believe this is the case so I asked my wife Maureen to check my birth certificate and it's true. Bearing in mind that I began researching darts in 1985 that means that I have spent one half of my lifetime looking into the history of the sport we all love. Eight books (with another one on the way *eventually*), a PhD plus occasional lectures and hundreds of articles and 124 *DDNs* later, I still do not believe I have covered more than a fraction of what there is to discover.

Hopefully my legacy will be that I have laid the foundation for others to build on so that, in due course, the history of darts will be revealed in its entirety.

MY RESEARCH IS SPONSORED BY



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