

DR. DARTS' NEWSLETTER

Issue 144

www.patrickchaplin.com

March 2022



RUSSIAN INVASION OF UKRAINE

World Darts Federation (WDF) – Statement issued 4th March 2022

‘The world is horrified by what Russia has done, aided and abetted by Belarus. World leaders sought to avoid this invasion through diplomatic means but to no avail given Russia’s unswerving intention to invade Ukraine.



The unprecedented sanctions that are being imposed on Russia and Belarus by countries, and industries all over the world appear to be the only peaceful way to disrupt and disable Russia’s current intentions and restore peace.

Imposing sanctions on athletes because of the actions of their government goes against the grain. This is different, as governments, business and other international organisations have imposed

sanctions and measures against Russia across all sectors. Sport must step up and join these efforts to end this war and restore peace. We cannot and should not sit this one out.

Statement of the Executive Board of the International Olympic Committee from February 28, 2022

The Executive Board (EB) of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) discussed again today the dilemma the Olympic Movement is currently facing after the breach of the Olympic Truce by the Russian government and the government of Belarus through its support in this.

The Olympic Movement is united in its mission to contribute to peace through sport and to unite the world in peaceful competition beyond all political disputes. The Olympic Games, the Paralympic Games, World Championships and World Cups and many other sports events unite athletes of countries which are in confrontation and sometimes even war.



At the same time, the Olympic Movement is united in its sense of fairness not to punish athletes for the decisions of their government if they are not actively participating in them.

We are committed to fair competitions for everybody without any discrimination.



The current war in Ukraine, however, puts the Olympic Movement in a dilemma. While athletes from Russia and Belarus would be able to continue to participate in sports events, many athletes from Ukraine are prevented from doing so because of the attack on their country.

This is a dilemma which cannot be solved. The IOC EB has therefore today carefully considered the situation and, with a heavy heart, issued the following resolution:

In order to protect the integrity of global sports competitions and for the safety of all the participants, the IOC EB recommends that International Sports Federations and sports event organisers not invite or allow the participation of Russian and Belarusian athletes and officials in international competitions.

Based on the IOC's resolution, the WDF is following the IOC recommendation that no Russian or Belarusian players or officials are permitted to participate in WDF events or ranked tournaments with immediate effect and until further notice.

2022 Lakeside WDF World Championships

As a consequence of this announcement, the WDF are now in the process of redetermining the line up for the 2022 Lakeside WDF World Championships and a further announcement will follow in due course.

We are continuously monitoring the situation and will update our position as things change.'

Dr. Eddie Norman, who travels the world promoting darts, wrote to me recently concerning the horrific situation in Ukraine, a place he has visited in the past and helped darts to begin to grow there. He wrote:

Patrick,

Darts was just getting a grip in Ukraine and I was hoping to visit again in the Autumn. Results over the years indicates to me that, although not huge, Darts was growing in Ukraine. I promised them I would be back but what chance now?

A beautiful country then.

Eddie

No chance Eddie. All we can do is prayer for peace and a swift resolution and help wherever we can.

(My thanks to Eddie for his email and for providing the images that accompany this article.)

REMINDER RE. CHANGE OF EMAILS

Frank Branscombe, General Secretary of the Hampshire County Darts Organisation, emailed me last month:

Hi Patrick. Trust you are well and may I extend a belated Happy New Year to you and yours. I have just received your latest edition of DDN and I never cease to be amazed by the facts, figures and anecdotes you accumulate that make such interesting reading.

Frank was also writing to advise me of his change of contact email address. It's so simple for a change to be made so if you ever plan to change your email, and you wish to continue to receive *DDN*, please let me know and I'll make the change immediately. Clearly, if you don't notify me, then that's it.

I've lost you.

JOE HITCHCOCK AND HIS 50th MARATHON MATCH FOR ST. DUNSTAN'S

I am always aware of the popularity of *anything* I write about the legendary Joe Hitchcock and try, as best as I can, to include something about him on a regular basis. So I was very pleased recently when I discovered the following article, titled simply, 'JOE HITCHCOCK', about the great man in the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Hampshire issue of *The Dart*, dated 27th April 1946.

Joe and his team, the St. Dunstan's Four were a sighted team that raised thousands of pounds during the mid-to-late 1940s for St. Dunstan's who cared for blinded servicemen and women.

The 'marathon' was a key feature of the team's entertainment, Joe taking on all-comers at one game of 3,001. 'The Editor' (Frank Wolfe) wrote

Joe has just played his fiftieth marathon match for St. Dunstan's. His first was on October 1st 1945 and during that time has suffered defeat only once.

I had heard so much about the capabilities of Joe Hitchcock that I decided to go along to Finsbury Park on October 1st and watch him.

What I saw there gave me the impression, as it did numerous other onlookers, that here was a really brilliant dart player. I admit that I thought at the time it was a 'flash in the pan' match for Joe. No man could score two 140's and eleven 100's during a game that was finished in 41 throws.

I was wrong. Hitchcock has played in the same form ever since. He finishes these marathon matches of 3001 up in an average of 44 throws which means that he averages 68 per throw. Not now and again, but every time he plays.

On that occasion that I saw him Joe started with 30, 100, 100, 100, 100, 45, 100, 100, 60, 60, 140, 85, 85, and very seldom did his darts stray more than half an inch from the treble twenty.

Now, on looking through his records, I notice that on several occasions he has scored four tons on the trot. Any match taken at random shows good runs of scoring. At the Orange Tree, Euston Road, he started with 121, 140, 140, as his first three throws. On another occasion when playing against George Connell at Southall, Hitchcock's last five throws were 140, 100, 100, 140 and 110 game shot. That's 590 with five throws. That particular match was finished in 41 throws and altogether he scored four 140's and six tons as well as the 110 finish. Quite recently he started off with 100, 125, 100, 121, 100, 55, 100, and was out in 40 throws.

All except one of these matches were played on a nine feet throw and the following figures are taken from those fifty matches. Number of throws 2,208, Eight 180's, 83 140's, 35 scores between 100 and 140 and 339 hundreds.

I congratulate Joe on such brilliant play and hope that he maintains his form. Yet all good players are beatable as was proved when C. Beck beat him at Tottenham. On that occasion Hitchcock was down to a double in 43 throws but narrowly missed the required doubles and his opponent finished in 50 throws.

So my advice to would-be contestants is 'the better they are, the harder they fall', but if you beat Joe you'll find him congratulating you before you have pulled your darts out of the board.



Cartoon by Harlequin. © 1946 The Dart

CASINO DARTBOARD

Darter Stuart MacKenzie showed this photo of a Casino dartboard, manufactured by WINMAU, on the *Darts From the Past* Facebook page, asking if anyone knew anything about it. He asked, “Was it a brewery promotion board?”

I was able to reply to Stuart and reproduce my response below:



‘Stuart, the Casino wasn’t a brewery promo board but a proper game played on a special dartboard. The WINMAU Dartboard Company, then based in Haverhill, Suffolk, produced it from circa 2002. The then Managing Director of WINMAU was quoted as saying that the Casino board was

“A fantastic and exciting dartboard which will provide many hours of superb entertainment for dart and card players alike. We are pleased to endorse the WINMAU name on this product.”

but they withdrew from making it after about two years (2004).

It was then produced by the inventor, Roger Mullan. He maintained the name CASINO 301 and was based at Chelsea Harbour in London and used the sales pitch ‘*The New Deal in Darts*’.



The Sales Manager at that time was Ben Bowler whose name appears on this promotional card. The promotional blurb was sent to me by Ben circa 2005.



Stuart replied “*Ah. That’s brilliant. Thanks for the info. I guess my memory ain’t as good as it used to be but judging by the wires, it was older than that! Thanks again,*”

Nine different dart/card games including ‘3 Dart Brag’ and Pokerdarts’ could be played on this board and, of course, the usual games associated with a standard dartboard.

(The above photo shows me about to ‘trial’ the Casino 301 at my local club. I think that was some years ago as I don’t look like that now!)

Back in March 2005, Colin Potts, another darts fan, similarly enquired

Hello. I have just come across a dartboard "Casino 301". It has a pretty conventional board with the addition of playing cards around the outer. It appears to be quite old, but has never had a dart thrown at it! Could you tell me anything about it, or point me in the direction of someone who could? Hope you don't mind me asking. Regards, Colin Potts.

I have no idea if Casino 301 proved very popular as, it seems to me, the majority of darts players prefer not to have their match mucked about with. But, of course, I am happy to be proved wrong.

Also can any reader recall any other card game being transferred to a standard dartboard? If so, please contact me at patrick.chaplin@btinternet.com with details. Thanks.

MOLDOVA DARTERS SUBSCRIBE TO DDN

Dear Dr Patrick,

I am writing from the Republic of Moldova. Recently we had a gentleman from the United Kingdom visit us in Chisinau our capital city to teach us the rules of darts and get darts off the ground here.

His name was Dr. Eddie Norman. We first contacted Eddie three years ago to invite him to come but this is the first time he has managed to squeeze us in. He is on his Diamond Road Tour.

He organised a darts tournament for us and we had an entry of 62 players. Not great but great for us for a first tournament starting from the bottom but we will grow with Eddie's help and support.



Eddie read and distributed copies of your darts magazine [DDN] and he spoke so highly of you and your great contribution to the world of darts. We were amazed when he said you had no staff employed to help run your office.

He also spoke and showed a video on the Professional Darts Corporation darts championship. Perhaps one day we may have a player there. He also spoke on the History of Winmau Darts which we found very interesting. Eddie organised a competition for us and his organisational skill was amazing.

Moldova hopes to join the EU. But that maybe some way off.

Could I please ask to be put on the mailing list for your darts magazine, Eddie said if I asked you would send me one. If you see Eddie please say 'Hello' from his friends from the new Moldova Darts Federation he helped form and would love him to return soon.

With Kindest Regards

Jerome Fonseca

(Translated to English with kind help of United Kingdom Trade officials.)

I replied:

'Thanks Jerome. I have passed your 'Hello' to Eddie Norman and on behalf of all DDN readers we send our best wishes to you and your friends in Moldova and hope they all keep safe and well during these worrying times.'

DDN 'staff'

In the message received (above) from Jerome, he mentioned that Eddie had surprised him by informing him that *DDN* does not any staff and that I research, write and publish *DDN* on my own.

However, I must mention that I *do* have a proof-reader. My wife Maureen checks through the last draft of each and every *DDN* before I finalise it and send out. Without her keen eyes I am sure *DDN* would contain a number of missteeks.

And then Mick Simpson wrote:

Hi Patrick. Thanks, as ever, for another interesting and different DDN. You must stay awake at night trying to think of what to write about. Well. Let me tell you Patrick, you make it work every time.

I replied:

*Mick. I never stay awake worrying about the next DDN or what it will contain. I have 35 years of research material all around me in my so-called office so it is never difficult to fill DDN. The problem is knowing **what** to put in it (and I never worry about that). And, of course, I can always rely on readers to provide me with feedback which can be included, (Like this one from you.) Cheers!*

DARTS CASE MADE OF DEAD MATCHSTICKS



Here in the UK, it seems that Covid-19 has either been sorted or is now being ignored. I appreciate that there are much more pressing issues to deal with but has it gone away? Of course, it hasn't. But here, due to the removing of all restrictions, we have all been allowed to return to all enjoying darts-related things we were doing pre-plague. As readers probably know, I collect darts-related books, ephemera and odd bits and pieces and this has restarted.

Amongst the first items is this wonderful handmade box built to hold a set of darts. The item (right) was described by the antique centre in Hertfordshire (south-east England) as

'Box, handmade from spent match sticks to hold 3 darts (included). Named to Don Langham, Black Horse (pub?). Possibly made by a prisoner.'

Years ago, many darts players made their own boxes to hold their darts, usually because the original boxes had fallen to pieces and keeping darts in the top pocket damaged the shirt.

Many were carpenters and thus very skilled with their hands so constructed darts cases from pieces of wood. Others were also hobbyists and turned their skills to something more detailed. This is one example. And what an example!

I don't believe this was made by a prisoner of war (the darts, and especially the stems, are too 'recent'). On the top lid can be seen the legend 'Langham' and beneath it 'Black Horse' and, as you can see, the name 'Don' (again made out of dead matches) is stuck to the front of the box. It did not take me too long to find a pub called the *Black Horse* (now closed) at the Essex village of Langham (about 35 miles from the antique centre and my home). Was that where Don used to throw his darts? (Without a doubt.)

FLIGHT OF FANCY – REVIEW

'Morning Patrick' write Brian H. *"I've just finished reading "Flights of Fancy", the collection of darting stories recommended by you in DDN # 142. Just wanted to say I thoroughly enjoyed it!"*

It was quite a mix of whimsical murder mystery, the supernatural & the real emotions behind a life spent playing darts. In the final story of Mike's dartathon he muses over a life "wasted" at the dartboard but reconciles his life choice as being beneficial to him in coping with difficulties in his life & concludes that his time spent was no more wasted than anyone else around him. Amen to that.

Thanks for the heads up on this book & thanks to L.D. for a very enjoyable darting read.



Regards, Brian H.

AND FINALLY... My thoughts and prayers are with the people of Ukraine.

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