

DARTS HISTORY

(aka *Dr. Darts' Newsletter*)

Issue 154

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MICHAEL SMITH BECOMES THE 2023 PDC WORLD CHAMPION IN ONE OF THE 'BEST-EVER' FINALS

By the time you read this issue of *Darts History* everything that has been said, on TV, radio and social media, will have been said about the 2023 PDC World Championship final (in fact about the entire championship) but I have to add my piece. I have been researching darts half of my lifetime and I have never seen such a well-deserved champion.



Back in December 2018, Rob Maul of *The Sun* newspaper reported that Michael was planning to be the 'best man in darts' just before he became the groom in his marriage to his Polish partner Dagmara. Michael had beaten, the then 'Rookie' player Nathan Aspinall 6-3 to reach the final of the 2019 William Hill PDC World Darts Championship for the first time.

Michael was determined to win that title and then 'plonk the trophy on the top table of his St. Helens wedding' and many pundits believed that it was Michael's chance, 'a decent bet to lift the Sid Waddell Trophy' for the first time. However, Dutchman Michael van Gerwen, had other ideas and beat Michael Smith in the final by 7 sets to 3 to take the title for the third time.

In the intervening three years, Michael Smith, whatever had happened in terms of results, he kept faith in himself. He won some titles, had some bitter disappointments and during those three years had to put up with interviewers and fans asking what being a losing finalist felt like *again*, “What went wrong?” and the pundits forever raised the question “Will Michael Smith ever win the world title?”

Now they will have to think of another question as ‘Bully Boy’ has done it and done it with class at the Ally Pally where this year, he again met MvG in the Final but this time reversed the result by beating MvG 7-4 and producing a nine-darter which obviously delighted the crowd and viewers: only the second time that a nine-darter has been hit in the world final.

Look at Michael’s expression in this PDC/Lawrence Lustig image (used with permission). See how much this win meant to him.

SOUTH AFRICAN LADIES’ DARTS

Towards the end of 2022 I received an email from Lyn McIlvaney who wrote

Good morning, Dr. Dart. I was amazed at how much info is out there about ladies’ darts. I played for Southern Natal in Durban, South Africa from 1974 to 1994.

SPRINGBOK TEAM

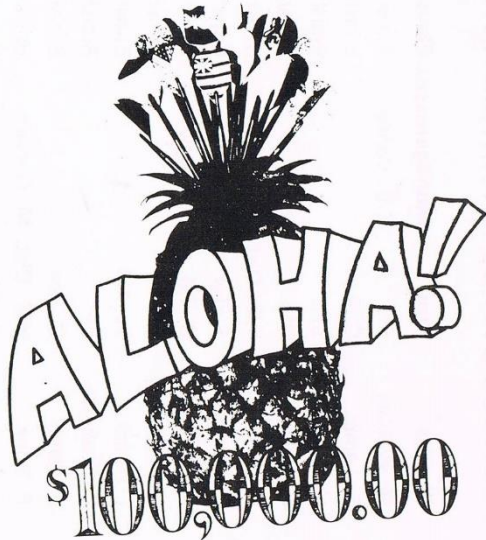
Participating in the Royal Hawaiian International Darts Tournament
September - 1982



Back Row Left to Right:
L. Seaborn (EP), J. Boshoff (S. Tvl), L. McIlvaney (SN), C. Vance (Delegate)

Front Row Left to Right:
J. Ludick (Captain — W. Tvl), M. Joubert (Manageress — Border)

ROYAL HAWAIIAN
INTERNATIONAL DARTS TOURNAMENT



I was awarded Springbok colours and played in the British Open three times, [1980, 1981 and 1982 and] in Hawaii in 1982. [See above extract from the Royal Hawaiian International tournament programme for that year. Lyn can be seen in the back row, third from the left.]

I was awarded the President's Sports Merit Award in 1983.

How wonderful it is to know that you have kept so many records. I absolutely loved my game and consider it the best 20 years of my life. God bless you and your family. Regards, Lyn.

Thanks Lyn. I am sure that the 'info out there about ladies' darts' includes the article I wrote about the South African ladies' back in 1996 which readers can find on my website at

<https://patrickchaplin.com/2019/05/22/the-south-african-ladies-darts-association/>

READERS LETTER – 30th DECEMBER 2022

Dear Patrick,

As a vivid reader of Darts History for so many years along with many contacts that I forward on the magazine to each month, as we approach the beginning of a new year, we would all like to say thank you for all your hard work that goes into publishing and distributing Darts History.

I have the easy job of just forwarding on Darts History at the press of a button. The amazing facts that you dig up each month are a joy to your readers like myself, and the many readers around the world I forward the magazine to.

Thank you also to Maureen your great proof reader.

From myself and others, thank you very much to bringing your great knowledge on the sport we love to our laptops and computers each month, it is really appreciated.

I feel sure that there are many more readers who may like to take a moment to drop you a line to say, Patrick, thank you, your great work is really appreciated.

With Kindest Regards

Dr. Edward Norman MBE. PhD.

Thanks Eddie and to all those who compliment about *Darts History* from time to time..

DARTS IN MOROCCO?

In November last year I received an email from subscriber Darran Laker who wrote

Hi Patrick. Hope you are well and feeling better. Love receiving your newsletters.

Just a quick question, I'm from Hull, played for many, many years there. I live in Spain and Gibraltar now. We were watching the darts last night and my wife asked an interesting question. She is from Morocco and was asking about Moroccan and black players. I found on the internet one Moroccan player in Holland, I think, but are you aware of any that have been successful?



I took a dartboard to her brother in Morocco and he loved it. There are a few bars with boards but not many. Obviously, alcohol is not widely sold and therefore our view of a traditional bar is not the same as there. And black players, numbers increasing but not a massive amount, I'm not sure of the reason for that. Such a shame.

I replied

Darran. Thanks for your email dated 15th November and your kind remarks about my newsletter.

That is an interesting question you pose. I have checked my archive and find that I have no record of any player from Morocco playing in any top competition. In fact, I have no information about darts in Morocco at all!

I have also checked the World Darts Federation (WDF) website and cannot find any mention of Morocco ever being a Member of the Federation.

I can only assume that there is a low participation rate in Morocco. Indeed, I cannot locate any darts organisation for darts in Morocco either.

Funnily enough, there is an enquiry on Trip Advisor, dated ten years ago (!), where someone is asking where he and his friends, who were travelling to Marrakesh, could find a bar where they could play darts. No one replied.

You are probably right that, due to the lack of sales of alcohol, darts has not featured. It was always the case that darts was directly linked with alcohol but, especially since the 1990s, in countries such as Holland, a darts-and-café culture has grown up and is gradually spreading to other countries. I was surprised to learn a number of years ago, how popular darts was/is in Iran (but Government-controlled).

As for black players, they have always been rare in top competition in the UK. Deta Hedman, a Jamaican, springs to mind as a top player who has been on the scene for decades at international level. Her brother Al was a well-known player too. More recently Devon Petersen (South Africa) has made an impression on the world stage and some Indian darts players show signs of potential. But no black/Moroccan players.

I then enquired of the globe-trotting Dr. Eddie Norman who told me:

You asked me about darts in Morocco. I have been several times on my travels trying to get darts going in the country but without success.

I have tried in Rabat, Tangier and Agadir.

About six years ago I got a few people interested and arranged a small tournament at the famous Tanger Inn, and had about twenty-five people turn up. All seemed keen, the Tanger Inn already had one dartboard on the wall, a gem to find.

The famous historical pub is where the 1950's American beatnik writers like Jack Kerouac, Allan Ginsberg and William Burroughs did their writing and the walls are decorated in

beatnik memorabilia, a beautiful pub but the last time I visited the dartboard had gone - sad times.

I also tried a meeting at the English Pub in Agadir, a few folk turned up but now basically like the Irish Pub in Boulevard du 20 Aout in Agadir where I also tried to get darts started, both are now just restaurants.

So, Morocco has become a losing challenge for me.

But it revived a little interest in me and I have a contact in the British Embassy in Morocco and have written to him to see if he knows of any interest in darts in the country. I will let you know

He may have something to say as he does play darts.

As your correspondent lives in Gibraltar can I suggest he asks the Gibraltar Darts Association can they help as Morocco is on their doorstep.



Sorry I have bad news on this occasion.

The English pub in Agadir, (pictured above) used to have a dartboard but not now.



Thanks Eddie.

Justin Broton, one of my Gibraltar contacts, told me

“I know that Moroccan players who live in Spain and play darts.”

Since writing to Darran, the original enquirer, and hearing from Eddie, I asked the members of the Darts From The Past Facebook page the same question.

Member Andy Scott told me

“El Abbas El Amri (pictured), born in Morocco, has played in PDC Euro Tour qualifiers in Germany.”

I subsequently discovered that he is sponsored by Sapphire, in Germany. (Could someone tell me if Sapphire is soft-tip, steel tip or both?)

I am keen to learn more about El Abbas El Amri and his successes thus far and Sapphire too. If you can help, please contact me at patrick.chaplin@btinternet.com.

So, it seems that, although darts is not played to any great extent in Morocco, there are examples of the sport being played by Moroccans in not only in Germany and Spain but also, likely in France, as S.M. Robertson suggests “as France has large Moroccan communities” and, of course, France is not averse to darts!

Both England’s Linda Duffy and Steve Brown could not help with information about Morocco but pointed out that darts is very popular in Iran, Steve adding that Iran “is one of the leading nations in youth darts.”

I look forward to hearing from readers who may be able to help with research concerning Morocco.

MONARCH WATER ANNOUNCES MARK WEBSTER AS ITS GLOBAL BRAND AMBASSADOR UNTIL 2024.

Mark Webster, professional plumber and former World Champion darts player, has extended his contract with leading water treatment manufacturer Monarch Water as their Global Brand Ambassador for a further 2 years.

Mark has had a glittering career on the darts circuit including winning the ultimate prize – the World Championship in 2008. Mark is currently a darts commentator for Sky Sports, which has the second highest viewing figures after premier league football, but has an eye on a possible return to the circuit in the future.

Mark said

“I’m delighted to be extending and continuing my relationship with the Monarch team and am really looking forward to working with them even more closely. Their brand quality and reputation are well known but perhaps not so well known is their commitment to sustainability and one example of this is their pledge to plant a tree for every invoice that the company raises. It’s great to be working with the best in the business and it’s a plus that they are so socially responsible!”

Monarch Water’s Head of Sales, Ian Flack, added,

“I am delighted Mark has extended his contract with us. He is the perfect ambassador for our brand and, being a professional plumber, he knows our industry and product range so well. We have some very exciting things in the pipeline for 2023, so watch this space...”

Mark has recently commentated at the PDC World Darts Championship which was broadcast live on Sky Sports and culminated in the final on the 3rd January with that sensational win by ‘Bully Boy’ – Michael Smith (See page one). But if YOU feel like becoming a winner, it’s...

COMPETITION TIME!

To kick off the New Year, the kind folk at Monarch Water have provided an exclusive prize that will be won by **one** lucky *Darts History* subscriber.

The prize comprises a set of Monarch original promotional WINMAU darts plus a signed Mark Webster signature card and 5 x Monarch pens (See below).



This prize will appeal especially to those of you who collect promotional darts which are not available to the public in ordinary sport shops.

To enter, simply answer this question:

In Mark's quote (above) Monarch Water push sustainability but don't mention the company. So, what company have Monarch Water partnered with to plant a tree for every invoice raised?

CLUE: the answer lies on their website at <https://monarchwater.co.uk/sustainability-at-monarch-water-love-water-love-the-planet/>

Please send your answer (plus the letter that can be found in the SUBJECT line of my email to you with this January *DH*) to patrick.chaplin@btinternet.com by **8th February** to stand a chance of winning this unique prize.

(PLEASE NOTE: That the darts prize is **not** a Mark Webster signature set.)

DARTS, PUBS AND COVID

After reading the post-Covid article in the November edition of DH/DDN Chris Kelly wrote|:

“Patrick. I thoroughly enjoyed it, as always.

I have spent a lot of time in the pubs of ‘The City’ and knew there was quite a competitive darts scene there so was particularly interested in your first article. It is such a shame that these pubs are going. I knew the Still and Star had closed down some time ago, which is a real shame.

The other day I went to another pub nearby called The Barlocks to have a practice and that had closed too. It was all a bit depressing. It has got to the stage now that when I go on a pub crawl in London, when I get the chance, I don’t even bring my darts anymore because I seldom find a board to practice on. I guess it’s the same everywhere you go though. Very sad.

Anyhow, thank you for all the work you do and looking forward to the next edition.”

And from Justin Irwin, the ‘Bachelor of Darts’ (pictured below) author of *Murder on the Darts Board* (2008), who wrote

Hi Patrick. I'm belatedly catching up on Darts History and read with sadness and interest about the closure of dart pubs in London since Covid. I too have been very concerned about this, so spent several days in early 2022 visiting every dart pub I know (or knew!) in the centre of London.

It's not all bad news - there's still more than 60 pubs with boards - and it's not all about Covid. Taking just Aldgate, which your correspondent Michael Cowell wrote about in your November issue, I know of 15 pubs that closed in the 8 years before Covid, and just one that has shut since. Fortunately, there are still at least 10 in that part of London.

Please do direct your readers interested in playing in pubs in London to www.capitalarrows.com. And keep up the good work, before we all become part of darts history!

MY RESEARCH IS SPONSORED BY

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