

DR. DARTS' NEWSLETTER

Issue 63 August 2015

DR. DARTS' NEW BOOK AVAILABLE NOW!



Even though I issued a pre-publication flyer with the July *DDN* I make no apologies whatsoever for using *DDN* to overtly push the publication (on 7th August) of my new book *DARTS. SKILLS. TACTICS. TECHNIQUES* in this latest issue.



It is published by The Crowood Press (www.crowood.com) as one of their prestigious *Crowood Sports Guides* series. These *Guides* are described as 'the perfect tool for anyone wanting to improve their performance, from beginners learning the basic skills to more experienced participants working on advanced techniques'. These practical, non-nonsense guides are designed to help give players that all-important advantage.

Darts fans familiar with my work will know that this is my first darts tuition book to be published here in the UK and I am absolutely thrilled with it. The contents include, a history of darts (something previously lacking in other 'how to play' darts books), the rules of the sport, choosing the right equipment

etc., etc. Basic skills are explained clearly with full-colour photographs and there are plenty of ideas on how to improve your performance on the oche together with numerous suggestions for making your practice more interesting PLUS...Lots more!

Of course I could not have written it without the help of others so I'd like to thank everyone who helped in any way to bring *Darts. Skills. Tactics. Techniques* to the global darting public, especially Suzan Ahmet and Chris Barrell (illustrations), Vince Bluck, Managing Director of NODOR International (information and advice), Steve Daszko for provision of photographs, Ian Flack, Sales and Marketing Director at the WINMAU Dartboard Co. Ltd., (for images, advice and on-going sponsorship of my research), Bobby George for his Introduction, David King (Darts501.com) (illustrations and technical advice), Robert Pringle, Sales and Marketing Manager, Harrows Darts Technology (for photographs and illustrations), Chris Sargeant (images galore) and Tony Wood (editor of *Darts World* magazine 1972-2009).

Thanks too to *DDN* subscribers Bill 'The Eel' Bell, James Copeland, Mick Simpson, Steve Wadsworth and ex-England international Doug McCarthy for ideas and encouragement.

Darts. Skills. Tactics. Techniques (ISBN 9781785000058) comprises 96 pages, 95 colour images and diagrams and costs £12.99 (plus postage and packing). It is also available as an e-book, number 9781785000065. Copies can be obtained direct from my publisher The Crowood Press at www.crowood.com or Amazon.

In addition, signed copies (with a dedication of your choice) can be obtained direct from me for £12.99 plus £3.60 postage and packing (UK and Europe) or £9.70 postage and packing Worldwide.

Please note: These postage and packing costs are for *single* copies. If you require more than one copy please contact me *before* placing your order.

At the moment I can only accept payment via PayPal at the following address:



info@patrickchaplin.com

However, UK darts fans can also pay by cheque. If you want to use this method then please contact me at the above e-mail address and I will provide you with details of my mailing address.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Onward #63...

NEW SUBSCRIBERS

A warm welcome to all new subscribers who have joined since the last issue. This time these include Brian Metz and Mike Cassidy, two members of the infamous Unimeeses darts team from Seattle, USA and Doug Schofield from Chicago.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind *DDN* subscribers to please let me know if you ever change your e-mail address. (Welcome back Grover Partee!)

NOT RETIRING...

In the last issue I mentioned that I would reach the age of 65 (!) during July and might be retiring from darts writing having achieved that milestone.

I am grateful to all those who wrote to me in support of my carrying on. “What else would you do?” asked one subscriber (Good point) whilst others were of the view that ‘darts still needs you.’ OK. I’ll carry on until my ink runs out...

HOW WOULD THE PLAYERS OF THE PAST FARE AGAINST TODAY'S CHAMPIONS? – MORE FEEDBACK

In response to my question posed in issue 61, “How would the players of the past like Joe Hitchcock, Jim Pike and Tom Barrett fare today against the top PDC players?” I published some replies in #62 but had to hold back the response received from ex-England International, *News of the World* Individual Darts Champion and WINMAU World Master, Dave Whitcombe, due to lack of space. Here now is what Dave (pictured below right with me a few years ago) had to say:

Hi Pat,

Concerning your piece about whether or not the old players of yesteryear would have fared well today and vice versa.

You mentioned the elm dartboard in the sense that it may have been a disadvantage. However, when I first started playing county and super league in London, together with the News of the World it was all elm boards I played on. In 1989 when I won the News of the World title it was indeed on an elm board at that time as well. To be honest in my opinion elm was a superior board. You hardly ever got a bounce out, the points didn't go in very far - hence lots of room, and it didn't matter if you played with brass darts because of the room. The early days of the bristle board were poor. Only in the last few years has that changed and comparing the two even now, I would rather play on an elm board.



You mentioned brass darts. Of course brass darts are fatter. But it is only the longing to score 180 that they become a disadvantage. Having said that, Tommy Fox [a top Kent player] hit as many 180's as you can shake a stick at and he used the [Leo] Newstead dart.

I too used brass a few years ago as an experiment and won everything that could be won (local league) with them against current county players. Tom Barrett, the first time I saw him won in 3 x 15 dart legs with the fattest of brass and any player who plays county would settle for that anytime.

Distance today could only be an advantage from the 9 foot throw.

All in all I believe some players from yesteryear would have made a mark today. Only the intensity and long matches on TV would trip them up. But players are good at adapting.

One last thing. Alan Glazier knew Hitchcock. And Alan once told me he was a great player. That was good enough for me.

Thanks Dave. Some sound thinking there and hard to dispute.

Subscriber Alberto Harding e-mailed me with his views. He wrote:

I have only been following darts from about 5 years ago. So I have only read about and seen video clips of players from eras gone by. In my opinion, the top players from any past era would be highly competitive today.

I think obvious differences are the equipment used. I think this can be said for almost any sport. I guess that the most obvious difference in equipment is the barrels used today. I don't think it is obvious to players today that there is a difference in the size of the triple/double segments than years past. I wasn't aware of this for a long time and I now have a little more respect for past players.

Another difference which has allowed current young players like Michael van Gerwen to reach such high levels is TV and the money it has brought. I feel this came about from the players that split away from the BDO resulting in the PDC.

Thanks Alberto. The money certainly seems to have helped.

I posed the same question to readers of *Darts World* magazine in the July edition. Reader B. Hutchings from Hampshire replied:

I do enjoy watching the professionals play today...and their scoring ability has become quite unbelievable. I don't think the players of the past would stand a chance of winning against those of today as so much has changed, i.e. the oche length. The size of the darts, and the difference between brass and tungsten. I would have liked to have seen them try, however.

The players of the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s had to be adaptable as oche (or hockey as it was back then) lengths varied from place to place. It's now set me thinking how well those great players might have adapted to tungsten darts and how much better they may have become.

Here's what *Darts World* reader Kevin Dakers from Edinburgh had to say:

I think what has to be mentioned is the difference in throwing distance, the darts and the dartboards. All you can be is the best in your era and people like Jim Pike, Tom Barrett and Bill Lennard were the Phil Taylor and Gary Anderson of their time.

We'll never know the answer, though it makes for a good debate...

Darts is a game I enjoy and there are many wonderful players and matches in this era, but we should never forget that the players I have mentioned made a valuable contribution to this great sport.

Subscriber Finlay Ferguson wrote:

Patrick,

In respect to the question you posed in the recent newsletter, namely how would the darting legends of the 70s and 80s fare against the best of the game today, I can possibly offer some information on that debate.

Whilst attending an exhibition in Wolverhampton last year a question was posed to one of the pros after the darts had concluded and whilst we were being treated to a Q and A session. The pro was Bob Anderson [pictured here during the WINMAU World



Masters in 1985] and the question was, to paraphrase, how he thought himself, Jocky, Eric, etc. would have fared against the likes of MVG and Taylor.

Bob was very honest. He stated that on his best day, if he was playing at 100% against these guys right now....he still wouldn't be good enough to beat them. I was stunned at his

honesty but you can't help but respect it.

Whether he wasn't taking into consideration the change in technology, more generous targets due to the wiring systems in today's boards or even better darts setups, I don't know.

What he did say though was that the best guys we have right now are the best guys the game has ever had. When you see MVG, Taylor and Gary Anderson in full flow it really is difficult to argue with that.

Keep up the good work

In reply to my subsequent e-mail to him about this question, Bob Anderson replied:

Hi Patrick, Good to hear from you. I remember being asked this question and my response was pretty much as reported, my point being that over the years the proverbial bar has been raised by each generation. Our best consistent run of games would not therefore match up with today's performances. That is not to say we would not take a game or so, but over the length of matches in today's arena the overall higher standards would prevail. This is my opinion however, and some of my peers may hold different views.

Thanks Bob and to all those who have provided feedback to this fascinating scenario.

So, do Bob's peers (John Lowe, Eric Bristow, etc.) hold the same views? We've already heard from Dave Whitcombe but I'd like to hear from any other top players

especially if they disagree with the comments made. Please e-mail me at info@patrickchaplin.com.

I'll keep this debate open for another issue or two.

LEO NEWSTEAD (Part Two)

In #62 I outlined the life and achievements of Leo Newstead, a legend of English darts whose career spanned from the late 1930s, through the 1940s to the end of the 1950s.

In this issue I reproduce (with permission) the first part of an interview by Frank Roberts titled 'The Man Who Has Beaten All The Champs' that first appeared in the *1949 Darts Players Annual* published in the autumn of 1948. It records Newstead (pictured right, on the right) at the very top of his game and fame. (Image © PC/DW Archive. Used with permission.) The interview not only tells us about Leo Newstead's life as a darts champion but also describes the organisation of exhibition darts teams during the 1940s. Roberts wrote:

"Champion of Champions" would be an ideal title for Leo Newstead, because he has met and defeated nearly every Champion in Great Britain. Almost every reader will have heard of Leo; at least 25% have seen him play.



Most readers know that exhibition teams such as the "News of the World" Four and the St. Dunstan Four tour the country at the invitation of Leagues and Clubs, usually for the purpose of attracting an audience that will swell either their own funds or the funds of some charitable organisation. On these occasions a programme is drawn up and includes matches between the touring team and teams of locally selected players, and an individual match between the local champion or the best available man and one of the tourers. During the many years he was with the "News of the World" team Newstead was the man to play the individual match.

It is quite natural that the local people expected to play under their own conditions. In some places any type of board other than the one in use there was not known to them. Any length of throw other than the distance used there would not be acceptable to them. So it was that Leo found himself playing under various conditions which usually placed him at a disadvantage.

Sometimes it would be "1,001 up start and finish [on a] double," perhaps on a board without treble ring or 25 (as in Yorkshire or Kent). Sometimes it would be "Round the Board on Doubles," or "1,005 up on a Five-ten Board." [The latter is more commonly known today as a Fives Board.] Sometimes the length of throw would be six foot, or perhaps 7ft 3ins, in fact, anything between six and nine, [feet] Leo always

met the champions on their terms. He lost a few matches – there are no undefeatables in this game – but the percentage of defeats is a decimal part of 1% of the thousands of matches played.

Newstead started playing darts at the age of nineteen. Now, at 40, he is still one of the country's best players. He first came to the forefront by winning house championships in local leagues around his neighbourhood and in 1939 won the North London Club's Individual Championship, after which he was picked to play for an eight representing North London against a representative side of South London. The match was played at "The Weaver's Arms" Newington Green, with that always-popular compere, the late Alf Squires, officiating. Newstead gained special mention in the press reports of the match for his splendid play; his first three visits to the board produced tons, which contributed largely to his team's victory. In the return match at "The Bull," Clapham, he was again selected to play and was promoted from seventh to second position in the team [in the order of play]. Again the North Londoners won.

It was in the match at "The Weaver's Arms" that he first met Jim Pike, with whom he later travelled so far. Pike was at that time the best player south of the [River] Thames and his link-up with Newstead formed a formidable pair, and a solid foundation to the "News of the World" exhibition team.

(The second part of this fascinating interview from over 60 years ago will be featured in the September issue of *DDN*.)

CAN YOU HELP?

Contrary to what some folks may think I *do not* have the answers to all the questions I receive about darts and darts products. So every so often when my archive fails me I throw the query open to you my *DDN* readers in the hope that someone can help.

Back in June, Phil Brown wrote to me saying,

Hi, I am a dart collector and I have acquired a miniature bristle Tru-flite dartboard and cabinet and miniature darts. I have looked on the Internet but cannot find any information. It's a nice item but I just wondered if you can give me any information. Thanks. Phil.



Phil sent me an image of the dartboard, cabinet and darts (see left) and was good enough to place a standard dart in front of the Tru-flite product so we can gauge the actual

size of the set. I know there was a company called 'Tru-Flite' in the 1970s and/or 1980s (not to be confused with Tru-Lon) but apart from that fragment I know nothing. My research showed that there was a brass, cane-stemmed dart with paper flights available in the 1920s called the 'Trueflight' but this was marketed by the NODOR Company (now NODOR International) so there's no connection.

So, over to you. Can you help? If so, please e-mail at info@patrickchaplin.com.

AND FINALLY...THE CHAPLIN DARTS CUP 1968

I am indebted to long-time subscriber Phil the Postman for sending me an unexpected gift. Phil e-mailed me in July saying

Hi Patrick, long time since I have been in touch with you directly but I love receiving your newsletter every month. I thought you might be interested in a darts medal from the 60s I have obtained. I will say no more but wait until you receive it.



Not knowing what it concerned I asked Phil if, when I had looked at it, he would want it back. His reply was that I could keep it. When it arrived, it looked like any other common or garden base-metal darts medal (see image, right) but what I didn't expect, when I flipped the medal over, was to see the legend



'CHAPLIN CUP. WINNERS 1968. VI. SUN & WOOLPACK'. Needless to say I was thrilled. Phil had traced the *Sun & Woolpack* (a rare combination name for an English pub) to Enfield, Middlesex where a darts team from that pub were the Enfield and District Darts League Division One winners in 1962-63 and runners up in 1963-64.

I know nothing about this league and Phil could not find anything out about it on the internet. However, he is thinking of paying the pub a visit to see if 'some of their most senior regulars might have some information hidden away.' It would be great to know if 'Chaplin' was a publican or a regular. (Perhaps he was a relation of mine, although I have yet to trace any of my family living in that area.) Anyway, good luck Phil and thanks again.

That's it for this month...

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