

DR. DARTS' NEWSLETTER

Issue 71 1st April 2016



CRAZY!

The world of darts is this morning reeling from the news that a new European Union (EU) regulation threatens the very existence of the sport.

Regulation 1420/16 drafted by the Commissioner for Sports and Games and due to be submitted to and considered by the full Council today aims to bring darts into line with all other target sports such as rifle and pistol shooting and archery.



When the treble ring was introduced to the game of darts at the turn of the twentieth century the highest scoring area moved from the bullseye (value 50 points) to the treble 20 (60 points) and so it has remained for more than 100 years.

Now, in order to regularise target games in general, the EU Regulation will stipulate that, with immediate effect, it will be compulsory for the bullseye to be the highest scoring area in all such sports. Therefore shooting and archery would not be affected but for darts, if approved, the regulation

will cause major difficulties for the sport.

This absurd regulation will throw the entire sport of darts into chaos. By the EU insisting that the centre of the dartboard will be the highest scoring part, the treble 20, treble 19, treble 18 and treble 17 will have to be removed (See above. Image © 2016 The WINMAU Dartboard Co. Ltd. Used with permission.) Nine-darters will be a thing of the past creating an eleven dart finish which could only be achieved by hitting nine bullseyes with your first nine darts and finishing the remaining 51 in two darts. I don't think even Michael van Gerwen or Phil 'The Power' Taylor could achieve that.

The regulation will also cause problems for dartboard manufacturers. Ian Flack, Sales and Marketing Director for the WINMAU Dartboard Company, said

Those who are proposing such a radical change have simply not thought this through. From a production point of view it means we will have to alter the entire manufacturing process, which could mean an increase in the cost of dartboards to our customers. There will be a lot of head-scratching in our R & D department I can

tell you.

With those four important trebles (20, 19, 18, and 17) missing, all darts players at whatever level will have to change their mode of play; so reliant are they on those key numbers. The only relatively high-scoring treble remaining will be treble 16 (48 points).

One professional darts player, who wished to remain anonymous said

“I don’t know what the EU are thinking of. Why don’t people stop messing about with something that ain’t broke. Darts has been played for centuries in pubs and clubs and now the EU want to change the board so it fits in with posh sports like archery.”

Some believe that the changes will aid darts’ bid to become an Olympic sport but in my view that chance disappeared with the 2012 London Olympics. Darts will never become an Olympic sport now and I believe that the majority of darts players don’t care if it is an Olympic sport or not. They just want to play the most sociable sport on the planet.

When pressed for an explanation, EU spokesperson, Sweden’s Olof Prila, said

Regulation 1420/16, if approved, will bring darts completely in line with other target games within the European Community and ensure a standardisation of procedures, processes, and play that comply with the overall competencies expected by the EU Sports and Games Commission.

I sincerely hope that the EU Commissioner sees the error of his ways and nips this absurdity in the bud before it wreaks havoc with our sport.

FEEDBACK FROM READERS OF DDN

It’s always very satisfying for me to receive positive feedback from DDN readers. Owen W. recently wrote ‘*Another cracking read Patrick. Always nice to read about the News of the World tournament*’ whilst Chris C. said, ‘*Always pleasant and informative to read. Keep up the good work!*’ David B. from Thailand told me, ‘*Always a great read...wouldn’t miss it for the world!!*’ And Ad from southern Holland told me “For me DDN 70 is in the Top 5 you ever wrote.”

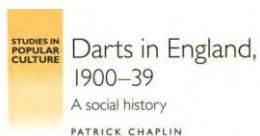
Of last month’s 70th issue Mick S. wrote

Morning Patrick, Just read your latest DDN. Fantastic read as ever. It’s great to see many people still talking about what is a pro dart player. For me it is a person whose only income is from playing darts. Joe Hitchcock was employed by Watney {a London-based brewer} but with the sole intention of playing darts. That to me makes him a pro.

Happy [70th] Birthday DDN! I hope you have many, many more birthdays. Sad to see Tommy [Cox] retiring but I would like to wish him all the best for the future. As ever it is great to have opinions from around the world. This is totally down to you Patrick. Without you what would we have?

I'll leave others to ponder that last question Mick. I'll just plod on until my ink runs out.

Jerry Lucky from California wrote:



Hi Patrick, I was thinking of signing up to your newsletter...by all means hook me up. By the way I also wanted to tell you how much I enjoyed your other books ESPECIALLY Darts in England! Wow! What a fantastic tome that was...full of great stuff...Keep up the good work.

Thanks Jerry.

Anyone interested in purchasing a copy of my book that Jerry enjoyed so much, *Darts in England 1900-39 – A social history* (see cover image, left) can order it from my publisher, the Manchester University Press at

www.manchesteruniversitypress.co.uk. The paperback costs £15.99 (sterling) plus postage and packing.

WHO WOULD HAVE BELIEVED IT?

At least once a year my wife Maureen and I journey across England to holiday in the beautiful county that is Herefordshire. We stay in the north of that county just a few hundred yards from the scene of the English Civil War battle of Mortimer's Cross and relax away from everything. My mobile phone doesn't even work there! If you'd like to know more about the specific area www.exploremortimercountry.com is the website to visit and for the whole of the county visit www.visitherefordshire.co.uk.

Last month whilst on holiday there we ventured into the neighbouring county of Worcestershire to the city of Worcester. We had visited there several times in the past but never visited Worcester Cathedral, the burial place of King John (of *Magna Carta* fame), Prince Arthur (older brother of Henry VIII who would have become King instead of Henry had it not been for the fact that Arthur died suddenly just after his wedding) and classical composer Edward Elgar.

"What's this to do with darts?" I hear you ask. I'll tell you...

Maureen and I had been shown around the cathedral and visited the crypt. We then stepped through the door that led to the café, the gift shop and the cloisters. As we were deciding what to do next, we heard a voice say, "Hi Patrick." We turned and there stood the 2001 Embassy World Darts Champion **John Walton**! (Image above © 2016 Moppix. Used with permission.)



You may recall that, just five weeks after winning the 2000 WINMAU Men's World Masters, where he beat England's Mervyn King 3-2 in the final, Yorkshire's John

'Boy' Walton collected his biggest pay-cheque ever of £46,000 at Lakeside, Frimley Green, Surrey, when he beat the then reigning champion Ted 'The Count' Hankey 6-2 in the final to lift the world title.

So last month, there I was 200 miles from my home in Essex and John also many miles away from his home in Sheffield yet there we were in exactly the same place at that single moment in time! John told me that he had recently purchased a motor home and that he and his wife's visit to Worcester was only the second time they had used it. John still plays County darts for Yorkshire.

Now you statisticians out there. What were the odds of John and me meeting like that? (Image © Moppix 2016)

CRICKET DARTS

Readers of my books (and some early issues of *DDN*) may well recall that I have often referred to the alternative darts game of **cricket**. Over here in the UK we can play a version of our national game of cricket on a dartboard yet in the USA they play a game also named 'Cricket' which has no direct connection to cricket as we know it; their game closer resembling the game we know in the UK as 'Tactics'.

UK 'Cricket' is described in my *Darts. Skills. Tactics. Techniques* (Ramsbury: The Crowood Press, 2015, pp 76-77) whilst the USA game of the same name is fully dealt with in my book *The Official Bar Guide to Darts* (New York: Puzzlewright Press, 2010) pages 40-47. For the latter I am indebted to Chris Carey (author of *The American Darts Organizations Book of Darts* (Guilford, Connecticut: The Lyons Press, Revised Edition, 2005) for his help and guidance relating to this most competitive of darts variants which is more popular in the States than 501.

More recently I owe a debt of gratitude to Steve Pittard who e-mailed me asking about the TV programme *The Indoor League* and posed a question about the derivation of 'Nelson' which is used in English darts terminology to mean the score of 111. Those queries sorted, Steve replied:

Incidentally Patrick, have you ever heard of the game of cricket darts played on a conventional board, if memory serves, it was featured in Hobbies Weekly 8th May 1957. I have a copy buried deep in my study somewhere. Could send you a scan if you were interested.

Interested? Me?

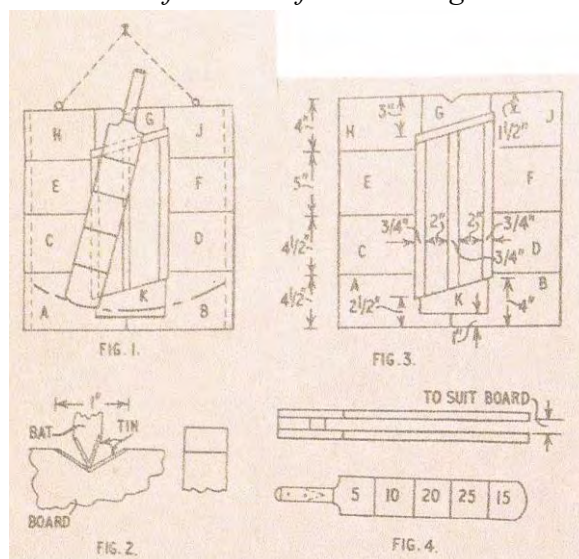
The cutting that Steve sent me is truly fascinating. Before I received it I assumed that the game would comprise of a standard dartboard being messed about with (perhaps in the same way as snooker dartboards) but no. In fact it had nothing to do with 'a conventional dartboard.'

In reality the *Hobbies Weekly* cricket darts involves ingenuity and creativity and the construction of one of the most unusual dartboards I have ever seen. The creator, a man only identified as 'T.H.M.', wrote that his cricket darts was

An interesting and exciting game...for two or more players that will give endless amusement for evenings or parties, can be made in a few hours for a shilling or two. It consists of a cork-faced backboard with a cork-faced cricket bat oscillating in front.

Ordinary darts are thrown at the board in turn in an attempt to hit the bat. Scoring is counted according to where the darts strike. The game is to score 500 points or as large a score as possible in a given time.

There is insufficient space here to detail the construction of this fascinating dartboard but suffice to say that I would not attempt it. (A few years ago it took me over nine hours to put together a flat-pack wardrobe so this is a definite non-starter as far as I am concerned.) Hopefully the drawings, reproduced above, right, will give you some idea of the complexity of the construction.



As to how to play, I hand you over once again to 'T.H.M.' (Please note this is only a brief extract from the 'rules'.)

To play, start the bat oscillating. Each player in turn from alternate sides throws 3 darts at the bat from the usual 9ft. to 10ft. distance, as for ordinary darts. Play continues in turn according to the rules, and counting up the score for each side. Either the highest score at the close of play or the first side to reach 500 points is the winner. If a side or player trying for the 500, scores more than is required, he is considered to have won the game. All other rules are as for ordinary darts. A single dart may be thrown to determine the rotation of play.

Thanks again to Steve for sending me the cutting from *Hobbies Weekly*. If anyone would like a copy of the article (perhaps even to try and construct this devious dartboard) then please e-mail me at patrick.chaplin@btinternet.com.

HARRY PERRYMAN – NEWS OF THE WORLD CHAMPION 1951

I know, from your responses to *DDN*, how much a good number of readers like to hear about former *News of the World* darts champions so this month I have another one for you: Harry Perryman who lifted the title in April 1951.

This piece of research all began when I received an e-mail back in September last year from Andy Routledge who wrote:

Hi Patrick, I was just listening to your contribution as part of a documentary on darts on Talk Sport and thought you'd be able to help me.

I'm distantly related to Harry Perryman who I believe won the News of the World championships in 1951 and I'd love to find out more about him and also to try and track down a copy of the paper on the day when he won. I know it exists because amazingly I once saw it in a frame in a second hand shop in Devon and, when I went back to the shop to buy it, it had gone!

Any insight you can give me would be great because I'd love to know more.

Researching former *News of the World* winners is an absolute joy for me so I set about seeking out information about Harry Perryman and soon discovered that, as Andy had thought, Harry had won the *News of the World* title in 1951.

I also discovered that Harry had first made it to the Finals of the *News of the World* London and Home Counties Division in the 1948/49 season, held at the Shoreditch Town Hall, Old Street, London E. C. 1., as the Middlesex Area champion playing out of *The Plough*, Alperton. He had beaten T. Thiel of *The Alma*, Harrow Weald in the Middlesex Area final. Harry did not make it past this stage that year. However, the following year was a different story.

In the 1950/51 competition, Harry Perryman, a 46-year-old joiner, made it through to the *News of the World* London and Home Counties Divisional Final held at the Shoreditch Town Hall on Tuesday 20th March 1951, as the Middlesex Area *NoW* champion, representing the Home Office Social Club, Greenford and won the title.

Runner up to Harry in the Middlesex Area tournament in 1951 was G. Russell who played out of the Northwood Hills Hotel, Pinner. At present I cannot trace who Harry beat to take the Divisional title but on that evening he progressed to the Grand Finals in the capital as the London and Home Counties Divisional Champion.



The finals were held at the Empress Hall, Earl's Court, London, before a crowd of 7,000 darts fans. In the actual final Perryman, 'a consistent player on the 19s' came up against another 19s expert, Laurie Runchman, a 38-year-old house decorator from Suffolk, the Eastern Counties champion, who played out of the *Feathers Inn*, Felixstowe. Perryman was too strong for Runchman winning the first leg in 25 darts. (The *News of the World*

individual darts tournament was always the best of three legs.)

The second leg was much closer and 'produced the tensest moment of the evening'. The *News of the World* reporter 'Champ' wrote

Runchman went to the board needing 76. He threw a treble 20, just missed double eight for game shot (scoring single 8) and before a 7,000 crowd just missed the double 4, scoring a single and missing his chance of saving the leg.

Perryman then stepped up to the hockey (as it was still spelled in those days) needing double 15 and hitting it to become the champion. He had taken only 19 darts to complete the second and winning leg for a 2-0 score line. The victor was presented with his medal and the magnificent *News of the World* trophy by English comedian Tommy Trinder. (See photo on previous page. Perryman is on the right. (Image: PC Darts Archive. Used with permission.))

Harry Perryman is mentioned in the 1952 *News of the World* London and Home Counties Divisional finals programme as being the previous year's Divisional champion; the programme notes adding 'This season Perryman lost to George 'Rubber' Connell (Halfway House, Southall) in the sub-area games, and Connell was himself beaten in the Middlesex finals.

MAKING DO – WHITTILING AND SHAPING

It's always good to receive feedback from my readers but it is also very satisfying to hear from darts folk who have visited my website www.patrickchaplin.com and then contact me with a question or, in this case, memories of playing darts years ago. Way back in October last year Glaswegian Eric Boyle e-mailed me to say:

Just reading about some of your darts history and it took me back to the fifties when I started playing darts with my father in Glasgow. At the time I was about 10 or 11 years old and we used to play off the 9 foot throw with brass barrelled darts, cane shafts whittled down and split by a razor blade with a small rubber band. The flights were made from paper. What we used to do was fold the paper up as normal then we would draw round an old penny, cut it out and then trim it to shape with scissors. We didn't do too badly either. We made the Glasgow championship pairs semi-final on two occasions. Can't throw one to save my life now!

Actually if you follow the dart flight-making process outlined by Eric, using an old English penny, trimming the paper with scissors, the resultant shape is *very* much like the standard flight shape used today.

Eric's e-mail reminded me of another Glaswegian darts ace I interviewed in the 1990s, Alex Doey. Alex claimed to have been the first-ever darts champion in Scotland. He too played with paper flights made in the way Eric described above. Alex's story is fascinating and one that I may well publish in a future *DDN*.

In the meantime, here's what John Young, a darts writer in the 1930s, taught players of that decade about paper flights with not a pair of scissors or a coin in sight.

MAKING YOUR OWN PAPER FLIGHTS

John Young's book *How to Play Darts and New Games for the Dartboard* was published in London by W. Foulsham & Co., Ltd., in 1939. It was one of only three books published in that decade entirely devoted to the game.

Regarding paper flights, Young warned his readers that '*Paper flights are often pierced and torn by other darts and, to ensure accuracy, need frequent replacement.*'

Although a player could use their own square pieces of paper to construct a flight, such flights were very cheap to buy, being manufactured by several companies and, according to Young cost '6d' (that's about 3p in today's money) for *a gross* – 144 flights! The flights were supplied 'in square form' and had to be folded in a special way. Young wrote

*First fold diagonally from corner to corner, making an "X" shaped ridge on one side of the card (Fig. 7). Now with this ridge on the **top side** of the card, fold crosswise; that is, from edge to edge in both directions; this divides the card into eight sections (Fig. 8).*

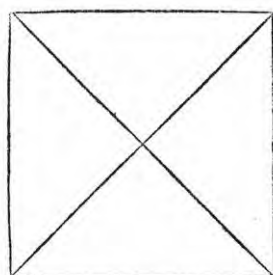


FIG. 7

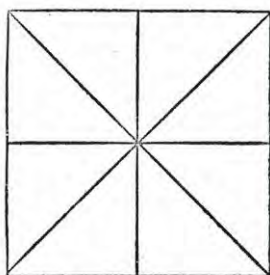


FIG. 8

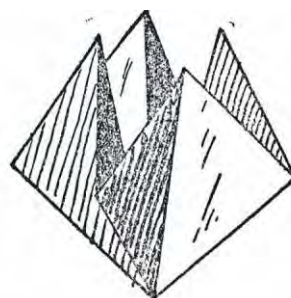


FIG. 9

Now bring the four corners of the flight upwards to the centre (Fig. 9); crease the edges firmly, and the flight is ready for insertion into the cross-cuts in the end of the cane shaft – the flight should not be inserted more than half an inch into the cane. Then slide the spring clip [on the cane] up as far as possible to hold the flight firmly in position.

Those were the days!

Young also told his readers that some darts flights were also made of linen! This from the same man who told the world in 1939 that dartboards were made of *pig bristle*!

MY DARTS RESEARCH IS SPONSORED BY



Winmau.com

NOTE: Text © 2016 Patrick Chaplin or as shown. Images © Patrick Chaplin or as stated or sourced. Neither text nor images can be reproduced without prior permission of the copyright holder(s).