

DARTS WORLD MAGAZINE  
SOUVENIR EDITION

IN ASSOCIATION WITH  
**REDDRAGON**

# 2022 Review



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# JOE CULLEN

## 90% TUNGSTEN

Following another epic season, The Rockstar range explodes with an all new Ignition Series, inspired by his high octane style that has earned him thousands of fans around the world. Made exclusively for Joe, the vertical and horizontal milled grip design replicates the cutting edge boundaries of Joe's game. Complete in Joe's trademark Rockstar colours, the Ignition Series inspire great performance, leading by example.

### IGNITION SERIES



*Joe Cullen*



**PRO DESIGN**

## Souvenir Edition



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## On the OCHE

**WELCOME** to Darts World's annual review for 2022. When we put together the souvenir edition for 2020 we believed it so unique that a souvenir edition was both warranted and unlikely to be repeated. Yet, darts has proven us wrong every year since and an annual review seems thoroughly merited once more.

This free issue of Darts World is our third such gift to darts fans everywhere and – powered by our friends at Red Dragon Darts – it's a keepsake chronicle of what could be said to be the first truly 'post covid' season.

Both the professional game and the grassroots organisations, fulfilled their scheduled calendars and all seemed to have announced an expanded one for 2023.

It seems right that in Michael Smith we have a new World Champion and World No.1 to lead us forward as well as one of the game's great champions, MVG, is back to claiming a fistful of the biggest TV titles including the Premier League!

It may be that the old-guard domination from 2021 began to fade over the course of 2022 and that we may be witnessing a shake-up and shake-out that had been distorted and delayed by pandemic measures and circumstances.

The UKDA is well into its second season and all seems to be settling for the carrier of the 'County' banner. The ADC is developing rapidly and producing superb events whilst giving players the opportunity to gain valuable experience before stepping up to the elite levels. We look forward to seeing continued development this season and beyond.

Perhaps the most significant development is the MODUS super series. There is now a route for all to TV and stage standard 'semi-professional' darts with over Emillion in the kitty. The combination of these and World Senior darts et al. should see the completion of a second level of broadcast darts serving the needs of both players and fans

From our own point of view, Darts World marked its 50th birthday toward the end of the year and is delighted to have a special souvenir print issue that runs to 100 pages and is effectively three magazines within one. A regular news and features reporting issue, a special 'Golden Age' issue featuring the thoughts and memories of some of the best writers and most important voices in darts, and a complete reprint of our first ever issue from Nov/Dec 1972.

The success of our anniversary celebrations has also led to a special edition golden dart set, the DW50, designed, produced, and tested by the best in the business. Other limited-edition items and subscriptions all available in our online store at [dartsworld50.com](http://dartsworld50.com).

Enjoy this look at a remarkable year for darts and don't forget to get out there and play, watch and support darts whenever and wherever you can.

Darts World Editorial Team

# Darts WORLD

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# Michael's Magic Moment

## Bullyboy Smith Fulfills A Darting Dream

WORDS: HARRY MASTERSON

IMAGES: KIERAN CLEEVES / PDC

**M**ichael Smith bounced back emphatically from having lost the 2022 World Championship Final, as he becomes the eleventh different PDC World Darts Championship winner, as well as the Number 1 spot in the rankings.

The 32-year-old gained revenge for 2019 on Michael van Gerwen in the Final winning 7-4, including a perfect nine-dart leg after his opponent missed D12 himself for a 9, in what was the greatest leg the sport has ever seen!

Bully Boy had lost 8 consecutive PDC major finals but has now won three of the last four, with one of them being the sport's biggest prize: the Sid Waddell Trophy, £500,000 in prize money, and the title of World Champion.

The Englishman's fulfilled his dream of becoming a World Champion and will receive the famous call from Master of Ceremonies John McDonald at the upcoming Masters that "he is the reigning champion of the world".

The new World Number 1 opened the Final with the darts, having won 'the bull' off-stage against van Gerwen who was appearing in his 6th World Championship Final. It was the former three-time winner who took the opening set at the Alexandra Palace, breaking in the third leg before holding straight after to gain the initiative in the Final.

The 3rd leg of the second set may go down in history as the best the sport of darts has ever seen, after the pair were both left on nine-dart checkouts, with Mighty Mike on 144 and Smith on 141 on the Dutchman's darts.

The Green Machine missed D12 for the leg and a perfect leg, before the reigning Grand Slam champion stepped up and pinned the D12 for a 141 checkout, sending Wayne Mardle, Stuart Pyke, and the whole of the Alexandra Palace into overdrive!

Both Michaels threw everything at each other in the first six sets, with the Final level at 3-3 as the newly crowned World Champion broken twice in the sixth set to level, after the Winmau man claimed the previous one without reply.

Van Gerwen led 2-0 in the seventh set only for his opponent to claw back and lead 4-3 in the Final, including a 130 finish on double five to break in the fourth leg. This was the moment where Michael Smith kicked on with the rampant Dutchman who was the favourite for the title, starting to wilt once more on the darts world's biggest stage.

Bully Boy took a 6-3 lead going within one set of World Championship glory, taking the ninth set without reply from his opponent who had started to struggle with his grouping. The World Number 3 took the tenth set but was powerless to stop Smith from taking the title, as he produced a carbon copy of the seventh set in the eleventh.

The St Helens ace finished 106 in the third leg as he bounced back from 2-0 down to take his maiden World Championship title, finding double eight with his second dart in hand to make his darting dreams a reality.



gic



## Beautiful Normality Restored

The thrilling Final brought to a close a fantastic tournament that included many talking points after an eventful sixteen days of what was, in many ways, the first truly post covid era championship.

From Gerwyn Price's ear defenders to the Ally Pally wasp paying its annual visit to the back of David Cameron's shirt, this year's Cazoo World Darts Championship had it all.

Gabriel Clemens and Dimitri van den Bergh made history for their respective nations in North London, becoming the first German and Belgian players into a Semi Final at the Worlds. The German Giant who had threatened a major breakthrough for several years, secured a famous 5-1 win over Gerwyn Price on New Year's Day in the Quarter Finals, delighting the many Germans who had made their annual pilgrimage to the Alexandra Palace.

The Dream Maker had only dropped one set before his Quarter Final with Jonny Clayton, having overcome compatriot Kim Huybrechts and Lourence Ilagen without dropping a set on the world stage.

The Hurricane caused a major upset after the Christmas break, as he dumped defending champion and tournament 2nd Seed Peter Wright out at the Third-Round stage with a 4-1 win, with the former Quarter Finalist outplaying the colourful Scot in North London.

Alan Soutar who also spends his time firefighting and guide dog training, continued his excellent record at PDC World Championship's, reaching the L16

for the second time in what was his second appearance at the tournament.

Soots sent big names crashing out in 2022 and repeated the trick this year, defeating Daryl Gurney 3-0 in the Second Round, as Superchin became the first player in the top 32 to depart the Palace.

The Scotsman then dumped reigning UK Open champion Danny Noppert out in the Third Round, recovering from 2-0 down to beat the Freeze 4-2 delighting the crowd who he had certainly won over, going into the top 32 on the PDC Order of Merit after another fantastic Alexandra Palace campaign.

Other stories featured Ricky Evans superbly taking the sting from playing Fallon Sherrock with a Santa-themed walk-on and Omelchenko giving Ukraine a strong presence on the London stage!

Credit must be given to the Professional Darts Corporation for putting on another fantastic tournament which seems to improve with every unrestricted hosting. Once again saw a record number of 180s hit with 901 at the 2023 World Championships.

But the greatest kudos must go to the man who endured years of online and in-person stick and abuse before fulfilling what some always believed was simply the destiny of his talent. Michael Smith aka Bullyboy will enjoy a minimum of one year where every single one of such remarks is totally repudiated by his very introduction.

OCHE ICONS

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# GERWYN PRICE THUNDERBOLT

NEW



90% TUNGSTEN | MATCH WEIGHED | Hardcore FLIGHTS | NITROTECH SHAFTS

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These latest Thunderbolt Special Editions offer Gezzy pure pitch and control as the fiery-driven World Champion continues to create his own story.

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NEW

TOUR POLO

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SIZES: M, L, XL, 2XL





# 50

YEARS  
IN THE  
DARTS  
WORLD

THE STORIES, THE ICONS,  
THE MOMENTS & THE  
IMAGES OF MODERN DARTS

DARTS WORLD MAGAZINE  
NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2022  
£5 Issue 581



# MEMORIES, MOMENTS

## 50 Marvellous Years

**F**EW publications can lay claim to being “The Official Voice” of their sport. But, then not many are 50 years old and have coexisted side-by-side with the object of their affection throughout such swings and roundabouts.

In the early 1970s, a handful of ingredients were coming together to form the recipe for the huge success of the hitherto lesser-known pub game of Darts.

The advantages of Tungsten led to a step change in playing standards and manufacturers across Great Britain were quick to spot the potential.

Star names would soon be born, as the stages upon which they would play grew bigger and better with fame and fortune awaiting those, Eric, John and Jocky amongst them, who could master the big stage, the raucous crowds and soon the television lights.

The influence of this generation and in some measure, Darts World

is hard to overstate.

Icons from throughout this time quickly recount tales from their darts upbringing:

“My first memory of Darts World was my Gran used to have it every month so it’s always been in my Grandparent’s house and I remember it pretty good (sic)” (Jonny Clayton)

Within 100 or so of our 581 (Std Print) issues, Darts World became part of the culture of the burgeoning sport.

We had covered the very beginnings of the ‘County’ game and to this day publish every result this soon became a rite of passage:

“We used to always get Darts World on the old county bus. Someone always used to get a copy and pass it around and everyone would have a read to see how the county scene...was going.” (Alan Warriner-Little)

Even the biggest names were not immune:

“The first time I played for Staffordshire, I bought it so I could see my name in it” (Phil Taylor)

Although the results and detailed reports from your own or your team’s game may have been important, often it’s those cover images that stick in the mind years or decades later. On these pages and elsewhere within this issue you will see plenty of iconic covers, from through the years, including the favourites of some of our contributors.

Multi major Major winner Alan Warriner-Little is still trying to get around to putting up his favourite cover:

“Wow, I have got to say it’s me. When I won my first major title. The World Grand Prix in 2001. It was the best one ever (laughs) best looking bloke on the cover ever”

2008 World Champion **Mark Webster** is a little more subtle. In addition to his World Championship-winning cover (with Anastasia) Webby also selected a cover from shortly afterward:



# 'S, ICONS AND IMAGES in the Darts World

"I was also very proud of making a Welsh squad for a match versus Scotland and us all making the cover for that. Although I did look like the scruffy one with my top button undone, mind"

**Russ Bray** remembers the covers featuring his Idol Eric Bristow, off to the Palace to collect his MBE or with trophies and champagne. Many are now iconic images of the history of our sport.

A surprising number that we spoke to were taken aback to think that the magazine has covered the entire history of modern competitive darts. Issue 1 hints at the beginning of the BDO and by issue 2 we are revealing its formation.

Whether it was the first County match, the first World Masters and World Championships, Eric's rise to dominance or John Lowe's perfect moment. A new generation rose, the split happened and Barry Hearn and Sky stepped in.

For a while, there were parallel lives before more and more moved

from one to the other, culminating in Barney's earthquake in 2006. Next, the near mastery of Taylor, the emergence of MVG, the Cross fairytale, the final demise of BDO and the breakthrough of Fallon Sherrock. All were revealed, reported or discussed within our pages.

Since our earliest days, we've recorded lesser-noticed stories such as the efforts of many to bring darts to schools to aid kids in enjoying numbers. The PDC's support of Bullseye Maths has finally seen this laudable aim come to large-scale fruition and is playing its part to help a generation recover educationally from the covid pandemic.

We wondered what fantasy Darts World cover players would enjoy seeing, whether real or imaginary:

Jonny Clayton had no doubt at all, he wants the issue with himself on the cover, holding Big Sid, as World Champion. Webby fancied a Marvel-inspired cover with himself as Spiderman collecting the Premier League. AWL wanted

a Manchester United themed challenge with himself defeating Marcus Rashford in the final match.

Our favourite was Russ's thought of a dart riding wave or out in space to symbolise the continuous success of our sport. Oddly enough, it very nearly materialised when we designed a dartboard coming back out from behind the world as our first post-lockdown cover.

It's our pleasure to note that everyone still loves glancing through a proper print magazine and that they have a strong desire to retain that community, team and local element that's been with us since day one.

Toward the end of 1972 darts sketched its blueprint. We had players, equipment makers, many fans, and media interest, which was capped by the launch of the game's very own dedicated chronicler, voice and champion. **For 50 years since we've all been part of the 'Darts World'**



LEGACY  
www.dartsworld.com

# SMITH'S SLAM

## Bullyboy Breaks His Major Duck

WORLDS: HARRY MASTERSON  
IMAGES: TAYLOR LANNING / PDC

**M**ICHAEL Smith was crowned the Cazoo 2022 Grand

**Slam of Darts champion, finally ending his wait for a televised major PDC title at Aldersley Leisure Village.**

Bully Boy finished off what was a Super Sunday after comfortably beating Nathan Aspinall 16-5 in the Final, including nine maximums on the oche.

The World No.4 found his ability on the outer ring when it really mattered, with a double percentage checkout rate of 50%. The rest of the PDC players will be aware that Smith has finally got over the line, with many including finalist Aspinall believing this will be the first of many for the man from St Helens who added:

"Nobody can take this away from me now. It's a big weight off my shoulders."

The 32-year-old included a staggering 17 maximums in beating Raymond van Barneveld 16-12 in the opening Semi-Final, starting up Sunday's afternoon action at Aldersley Leisure Village. The Englishman raced into the first interval without dropping a single leg, only for Barney to roll back the years once again as he managed so often during the week in Wolverhampton.

The ability on the outer ring

was once again shown by the great Dutchman, finding the double with his last dart on many occasions to delight the always lively Barney Army.

But it was Smith who marched his way into his maiden Grand Slam Final, including two top-plus checkouts of 108 and 130 in ending the fairy tale run for Van Barneveld, hitting tops to clinch the 28th leg of the tungsten tussle.

Nathan Aspinall ended the hopes of a first televised major title for Luke Humphries, clinching a 16-12 win in the second Semi-Final at Aldersley Leisure Village. The match with the Asp was one too many for the Red Dragon star, after impressing in beating reigning World Matchplay champion Michael van Gerwen 16-10 on Saturday night.

The pressure was on for the reigning US Darts Masters champion, going into his ninth televised major Final having lost the previous eight including two World Championship Finals and a

World Matchplay Final.

The scoring power was soon found as was his best at the outer ring, as the St Helens man raced into a 7-3 lead at the second interval. The thirteenth leg would be the fifth and final leg Aspinall would win in the Final, with Bully Boy whitewashing the Asp 5-0 in the fourth mini session to go within one leg of his very first Grand Slam crown.

A 56 finish with his first dart at tops, clinched a 16-5 victory in the Final for the World Number 4 who picks up his first major televised title and £150,000 in prize money.

During the week Luke Humphries had continued his fantastic 2022 spell at Wolverhampton, producing knockout wins over Michael van Gerwen and European Championship winner Ross Smith over the course of the week.

Smudger too had put up one of the performances in





# WEBBY'S WORLD

the group stages, needing a win over Michael van Gerwen to end the challenge of Luke Woodhouse in Group G. The Dover-born darting star included seven maximums and an average over 107, to beat the former three-time World Champion 5-4 and qualify for the Last 16.

Defending champion Gerwyn Price produced a sensational checkout when it really mattered in his Last 16 victory over Danny Noppert, hitting the bullseye to complete a 167 finish fighting from 7-4 down to beat the Freeze 10-8 on Wednesday night.

Two players went one better and found the big fish in Wolverhampton (no easy feat) with Luke Woodhouse finding the bull after two treble twenties against Nathan Aspinall in his last group stage contest. Premier League Runner Up Joe Cullen hit the other 170 in the eighth leg of his Quarter Final matchup with Michael Smith.

The Players Championship Finals are at the end of November with defending champion Peter Wright ruling himself out due to family reasons and the World Championships is less than a month away. Surely Michael Smith has thrown his name into the favourites hat along with the likes of Michael van Gerwen and Gerwyn Price could Bullyboy Smith follow up his starter with more major courses? He certainly thinks so:

"It's time to be greedy, it's my time now"



**Since taking my columnist bow earlier this year the darting action, from across the spectrum, has barely paused for breath. The previously more relaxed Summer period is ancient history.**

Michael Van Gerwen really stood out for me during this period. He is sending a double message to the rest of the field and it's quite a scary one. Not only did he win the Matchplay whilst not fully fit or back to his best and went on to dominate the Grand Prix as a heavy favourite.

All-in-all it was a great couple of events with performances of Nathan Aspinall and Danny Noppert really standing out. I have a soft spot for The Freeze and it's great to watch him develop. I noticed his new darts at the recent Winmau launch and was rather impressed.

It would be easy to overlook the performance of Gerwyn Price in Blackpool but at times he was unplayable. The best player in the event until the final. As I write the World No.1 has just moved into the last 8 at Wolverhampton and he has never lost a knockout game at this venue. Surely, the Grand Slam is his for the taking? But, then again, I said that at the Matchplay....Oh dear, wrong again. Huge congratulations to Michael Smith and perhaps I can rely on third-time lucky!

For those kind folk, some of whom even want to see me on the oche again, who have enquired about my rehab from shoulder surgery and playing plan for 2023 I have to say it's not the best news. The recovery is taking longer than I had thought and in some ways, I am behind schedule.

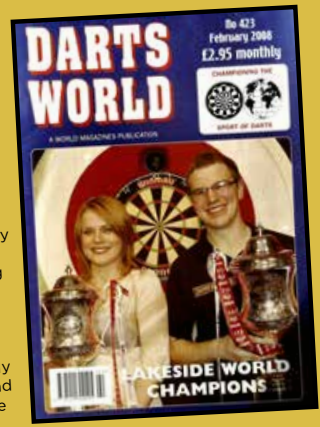
Rather than going to Q School, and just 'having a stab', I will be fulfilling my media commitments and hopefully playing some amateur darts including the MODUS Super Series.

Speaking of the newly reformatted and re-housed event I have to say I think it's brilliant. No need for too much doom and gloom for those who Q School doesn't work out for. There is another genuine option available.

You can play the Challenge Tour and perhaps have a crack at the Super Series which, even if you don't win, is a tremendous amount of practice and opportunity to progress yourself.

Put simply, I think it's just brilliant.

Mark Webster is the 2008 World Champion (WDF) and is supported by Winmau and Monarch Water.





# SMUDGER'S SECOND COMING

*Ross Smith Takes European Championship*

WORDS: HARRY MASTERSON IMAGES: PDC EUROPE

**R**oss Smith has enjoyed a successful if slightly up and down darts career, appearing in numerous events including the World Championships and the UK Open on multiple occasions. Yet many have long believed there was more to come.

Smudger's darting dreams came true though in Dortmund this Autumn and he was crowned European Champion earning his maiden major title.

Before his trip to Germany, the 33-year-old had reached a UK Open Quarter Final back in 2019 losing to eventual winner Nathan Aspinall 10-6 averaging 91.98 over the sixteen legs played.

From missing out on the 2015 World Championship due

to £500 in rankings money, Smudger eventually reached the Alexandra Palace in 2019 beating Paul Lim 3-1 in what was his first match on the Ally Pally stage. Smith went on to lose to Daryl Gurney in the Second Round but will have been thrilled to have earned his first win on the world stage against a man who hit the first televised nine-darter.

The Englishman entered Dortmund as the 27th ranked player on the European Tour Order of Merit and facing Masters champion Joe Cullen in the First Round in Friday's evening session.

An opening checkout of 130 settled any nerves for Ross, hitting the bull with his last dart in hand to hold throw. A resurgence from the Rockstar put the 33-year-old behind but a crucial break of throw on double eighteen with his second dart, and levelled at

4-4 finishing 81.

The Premier League runner-up missed three darts at double sixteen, ending his hopes in the competition after the Dover man Smith finished double twelve with his first dart to earn a 6-4 victory.

Former World Matchplay champion Dimitri van den Bergh was next for Smith who broke with a ton plus checkout in the second leg, hitting double sixteen to finish 109, while building a 2-1 lead against the Dream Maker.

The Englishman found another break of throw on double eleven to finish 121 with his last dart in hand. Smudger averaged 100.75 in his clash with the Belgian and wrapped up a deserved 10-8 victory.

A second of three Premier League participants on Smith's winning journey waited in the Quarter Final and most



## RUSS BRAY



### Back in the 70s I actually played darts!

I can remember seeing the very, very first Darts World cover. It had four players on it and one of the guys was Tony Bell. Tony not only played for England but was also our County Captain at Hertfordshire.

Another landmark was when you very first got in it yourself. I got a mention in the Unicorn 180 awards when I hit my first one. My mate wrote in and seeing your name in here was pretty special.

After that I was getting it every month, religiously, you would check out all the results and see if you got your name in again! I miss having it delivered or going to collect it. You would get the results for everything, all the way from minor leagues through to major Internationals, you knew everything happening in darts.

It could work the other way though, sometimes it said that 'Bert Smith' had beaten Russ Bray with 23 average!

My favourite cover images were those featuring Eric Bristow, he was my idol and then you have all the ones of players winning the Gold Cup, The Masters, or The Embassy [World Championships]. They are truly iconic images. Probably worth a few bob, these days....?

Although I personally think the print magazine is fantastic, you have to move with the times and it's good that it's available online like all the other newspapers, etc. Back in the day, you would open Darts World and people like my good friend Phil Jones would report on his area - London Pride - the next page would be Lancashire or Alan's Towe's The Line and so on. It was so important to have kept that local and community feel.

DW - We could just as easily have similar reports from Switzerland, France or Asian countries these days

Definitely, it's been a pleasure to write for Darts World over the years along with good friends like Bobby George. My imaginary cover would be an image of a dart riding the crest of a wave or in outer space to symbolise its worldwide and everlasting nature.

arguably his most difficult test in the whole competition.

World Champion Peter Wright raced into a 4-0 lead and missed two darts for 5-0, going into the first break. The Dover man broke to earn his first leg of the match.

The Scotsman continued to dominate proceedings stretching to an 8-3 lead but again missing darts to strengthen his advantage, this time failing on four occasions for 9-3. Again, the Englishman took advantage, finding tops with his first dart to trail by 'only' four legs.

Ross then certainly found a real purple patch, reeling off the next two legs before finding double eight with his last to dart to break again, putting the match on throw once more with Wright leading 8-7.

The 33-year-old broke again, this time on the bullseye finishing 94 to level the match at 8-8. His reliable double-eight proved handy again in the eighteenth and final leg of the match. Smith booked his place in his maiden European Championships Semi Final beating Snakebite 10-8.

Smudger then broke the heart of Chris Dobey in the Semis, entering an early 4-0 lead after missed darts from Hollywood on the outer ring. Smith always

held the initiative in the second last-four clash and punished five missed darts on double from the Newcastle man after finding tops for an 11-9 Semi-Final victory.

A Smith was going to win the European Championships but was it going to be Michael or Ross? The tournament number 27 immediately settled any nerves with a 133 checkout on double eight for a 1-0 lead.

The Dover man entered a 5-3 advantage on double five, a segment which served him very well in Dortmund, and ended the session with his second 121 finish of the Final having checked it out in the second leg of the match. Smith hit the bullseye for a 6-4 lead going five legs from £120,000 in prize money and his first televised title.

In the nineteenth leg took out 25, finding double eight with his last dart in hand, to become European Champion for the first time in his darting career.

Dan Dawson signed off a piece for Darts World 572, back in 2020, in a way that cannot be questioned:

**"...the second coming of Ross Smith could yet fulfill the immense promise of his early days in professional darts"**

Well said sir, well said indeed.

# Blueberry Hill at 50

WORDS: STEVE BROWN IMAGES: STEVE BROWN/BLUEBERRY HILL

## Oldest Open Celebrates Its Golden Moment

**WHAT many believe to be the oldest continually held darts open is called the 'Blueberry Hill Open' and is held in a restaurant and music club called 'Blueberry Hill' St. Louis USA.**

The bar is situated in the 'Delmar Loop', a thriving boulevard full of bars, restaurants, theatres etc, and Delmar Boulevard is designated "One of the Ten Great Streets in America" by the American Planning Association. The Blueberry Hill Open is actually the longest-running dart tournament in the United States, having started back in 1973.

From humble beginnings, the small bar has expanded to take up a whole city block, with a full basement that hosts regular music concerts (and used to hold major darts events and National Championships). It is also regarded as one of the finest eateries in St Louis, with an extensive menu (including local specialities, like toasted ravioli and gooey butter cake - yummy!)

So, let's move on to the tournament itself...

Being the 50th anniversary, Joe wanted to make it special, and invited all the previous singles winners along for a special group photo. Sadly, not everyone could make it, and of course, there are several who are no longer with us, but I accepted the invitation. Not to blow my own trumpet or anything, but I do hold the record for most wins with six!

It was the first time I'd been back since 2013, and it felt like it'd never been away...

We had a much bigger turnout than in recent years, particularly with the women, which was great to see, including a couple of PDC players in attendance.

**"... FIRST HELD IN FEBRUARY 1973. WE WERE NOW UP TO TWO DARTBOARDS, AND AGAIN, THE ONLY EVENT WAS AN OPEN SINGLES. FIRST PRIZE WAS A WHOPPING \$25...."**

American PDC tour card holder, Jules Van Dongen, made the short drive across Missouri, and was joined by up-and-coming Dutch prospect, Danny Jansen.

There are traditionally three singles events each for men and women, the first being the Friday Night "King of the Hill" and "Queen of the Hill". This year, Jules Van Dongen became the first Dutchman to be crowned King (defeating twice 301 Singles Champ Trevor Buboltz), while Chattanooga's

former 301 Singles Champion Lisa Ayers was crowned "Queen" (beating three-time 301 winner Brenda Roush).

Saturday saw the cricket singles, and it was Van Dongen again who triumphed, this time over local favourite Jordan Meyer. The women's cricket went to reigning 301 Champ, Tanja Bencic, who looked really good against Lisa Ayers.

On to Sunday, and after all the reminiscing, we got down to the serious business of the 301 Singles. The final of the women's was an all-Cincinnati affair, with Kelli Rinear facing close friend Sherry Wright. Unfortunately for Sherry, she was struggling to find the starting doubles, and Kelli took the title 3-0.

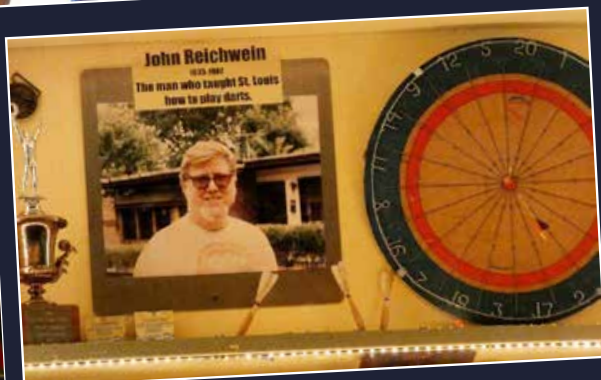
The men's final featured Wisconsin's Steve Hilger, and he was taking on Gavin Nicoll. If the name Nicoll sounds familiar, it's probably because dad Timmy lost the final here three years ago, and aunt Julie got her photo on the wall here way back in 2000! Well, it was young Gavin who emerged victorious, capturing the title in straight legs.

Ironically, in Julie Nicoll's absence, Gavin was asked to step into the photo of the previous winners, and just a few hours later, he had actually earned the right to be in the photo!



Well, it was a great experience to be a part of the special day, and hopefully, there will be many more.

Steve recently had the opportunity to talk to the owner of Blueberry Hill (and most of the Delmar Loop), Joe Edwards, and find out a little more about the bar and the tournament and its remarkable history. Catch a taster in Darts World Extra 6 or the full interview at [dartsworld50.com](http://dartsworld50.com)



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DARTS WORLD MAGAZINE  
SUMMER 2022  
£3.99 Issue 560



# MATCHPLAY TREBLE

THE THORN, THE QUEEN  
& THE GREEN MACHINE

**EXCLUSIVE:** PETER WRIGHT, MARK WEBSTER & CHRIS MURPHY  
**REVIEWS:** THREE WORLD MATCHPLAYS, PREMIER LEAGUE AND WORLD CUP OF DARTS  
**GRASSROOTS:** ADC, UNDISPUTED, WDF, THE OPEN ROAD AND UKDA SEASON'S END

# MVG'S MATCHPLAY FAIRYTALE

Once Upon A Winter  
Gardens Stage....

WORDS: HARRY MASTERSON  
IMAGES: TAYLOR LANNING/PDC

**W**hat a spell this has been for

**Michael van Gerwen! After winning the Premier League in June The Green Machine followed up with victory at the Betfred World Matchplay beating Gerwyn Price 18-14 in the Final.**

The Dutchman ended a six-year wait for the Phil Taylor trophy making it a hat trick of wins, having not played much in the lead-up to the tournament due to surgery on his throwing hand which kept him out of the World Cup.

Mighty Mike said after his victory: "People don't realise how much this victory means to me. I've been going through a rough period, and I have to fight back constantly and battle against everyone all the time so to produce something like this in a final, it's a credit to darts"

"I can only be proud. This is what they [The Crowd] want, they want drama in the final. I am really proud of myself that I could hold my nerves together."

Having been forced to exit the World Championship due to a positive Covid test, the bounce back has been nothing short of exceptional, dealing with the heartbreak at Christmas like a true professional.

MVG started his campaign with a 10-7 win over Adrian Lewis, despite only averaging 89.99 including two maximums and continued to get better beating Joe Cullen 11-5 in the Last 16, a repeat of the recent Premier League Final to reach another Quarter Final at the Winter Gardens.

The Dutchman was then involved in a classic with Nathan Aspinall who had beaten four-time Euro Tour winner Luke Humphries in the First Round, before knocking out Number 5 seed James Wade in the Last 16 11-9, missing ten darts at double on the oche.

At one point in his tungsten tussle with the Asp, van Gerwen led 15-10 sitting just one leg away from reaching another Semi Final at the Matchplay. Credit must be given to the man from Stockport including finishes of 106 and 90 with his last dart at the bull, to break throw in the twenty-seventh leg and

prolong the match a little longer despite being under all sorts of pressure throughout.

There is a reason that the Green Machine is a 3-time World Champion and a 5-time Grand Slam champion, stopping a four-leg rot from his opponent with a 146 finish on double thirteen, sealing his spot against Dimitri van den Bergh in the last 4, and putting a marker down to the rest of the players involved.

The Dream Maker will not have been taken lightly having knocked reigning champion Peter Wright out in the Quarter Finals, averaging 102.01 in a 16-14 win with nineteen maximums on the stage.

Mighty Mike again began slowly, trailing at the first three breaks but the leg difference reduced as the tie went on, only behind 8-7 with the match on throw by the third interval.

Four legs on the spin showed that the 2020 champion may have played just one game too many, as the 33-year-old broke on double eleven in the twenty-ninth leg to lead for the first time at 15-14. Van Gerwen completed a 17-14 win on double ten to reach his third Matchplay Final where he would face Gerwyn Price.



The Iceman certainly had a pleasant visit to Blackpool opening with a 10-8 win over Martin Schindler, showing in the latter stages that he was certainly a strong contender for the Phil Taylor trophy including eight maximums and only ten missed darts at double, dealing with a spirited German who's enjoying his best year on the PDC showing weel at the World Cup and reaching a Pro Tour final.

The four-year wait for a nine-darter was ended by the rampant Welshman, striking double twelve to complete perfection in his Semi-Final win over Danny Noppert, having seen Michael Smith miss the same double in his match with Dirk van Duijvenbode despite an 11-7 defeat.

A huge boost during the Winter Gardens run, for the Red Dragon star, was that after his 16-14 win against Jose de Sousa in the Quarter Finals, he returned to World No.1

However, it would not be a fairy-tale week for the Markham man letting the

lead slip against van Gerwen in the Final, but the way the Dutchman was playing he can certainly hold his head up high, having never reached the Final of the Matchplay before this year.

A shaky start on doubles from the Vlijmen ace allowed Price to take the early advantage, including checkout of 101 on tops for a 2-0 lead. MVG unsurprisingly found his first leg with a ten darter on double six, having missed double twelve for a perfect leg in his previous visit.

As in his Semi-Final with the Premier League champion waited until the twenty-ninth leg to pounce, finishing double five for a 130-checkout breaking throw and entering a 15-14 lead. Five legs on the spin sealed an 18-14 victory for van Gerwen, closing out with a 121 finish on the bull to complete a third win in the iconic ballroom.

It's safe to say the summer darting extravaganza lived up to expectations once more in 2022 having seen a perfect leg, some entertaining tussles from

the start, and those nail-biting moments coming later in the week.

Luke Humphries will be disappointed having been one of the huge favourites going into the Matchplay after all his success on the Pro Tour and the Euro Tour, losing to Nathan Aspinall 10-5 in the First Round. The reverse will be the case for Aspinall, who reminded anyone who had forgotten just how good he is.

Jose de Sousa returned to form beating Gabriel Clemens before a strong victory over 2018 champion Rob Cross with both players averaging over 103 in one of the best matches of the tournament.

With two huge titles under his belt The Green Machine will certainly take some beating going into the autumn with his confidence heading back to where it was in 2016/17.

Michael has made himself the man to beat once, with the Grand Prix, the Grand Slam and Ally Pally fast approaching.

# QUEEN OF THE GARDENS

*Fabulous Fallon Captures Inaugural Matchplay Crown*

WORDS: JR LOTT

IMAGES: TAYLOR LANNING/PDC

**Eighteen Rees, Dennis Priestley, Phil Taylor, Trina Gulliver, and now Fallon Sherrock. The**

**greatest names in the annals of darts' history often appear first on the game's biggest trophies.**

Sherrock became the latest by engraving her name on the Women's World Matchplay, beating Aileen de Graaf 6-3 in the Final including a fantastic 142 checkout in the sixth leg. The Milton Keynes thrower claimed the trophy and £25,000, after beating Katie Sheldon in the Quarters and Lorraine Winstanley in the Semi-Final.

De Graaf had made sure the script was thrown out of the window and upset the predicted final between Lisa Ashton and The Queen of the Palace. Four-time World Champion Ashton didn't look at her best in either of her games whereas De Graaf has timed her peak perfectly in recent weeks.

The two-time Lakeside Semi-Finalist punished missed darts at double from the match favourite, taking the lead (3-2) on double sixteen, giving the Ally Pally victor cause for major concern in the fifth leg. There is a reason, however, the

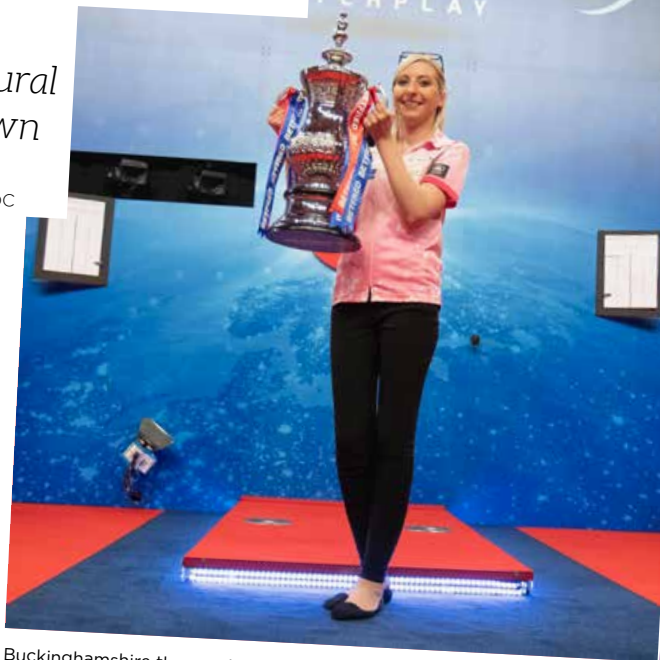
Buckinghamshire thrower is the trailblazer for women's darts, finding her second maximum and a 142 finish on double eleven, breaking to level the Final at 3-3.

Sherrock reeled off the last four legs, closing out with an 85 checkout on double five and becoming the first name onto that Women's World Matchplay Trophy.

A sign of the health of the Women's game was witnessed earlier in the afternoon when 18-year-old Katie Sheldon certainly gave Sherrock a scare in the third Quarter Final, checking out 86 to win her first leg before breaking on 74 hitting tops, and leading 2-1 in a race to four.

Perhaps, the match of the event was the Ashton vs De Graaf semi. The Bunschoten-born thrower beat Darts World contributor Laura Turner 4-1 in the second tungsten tussle of the day, but knew she had more to do. The 32-year-old kept her composure and broke in the final leg hitting double eight, punishing many missed darts from the Lancashire Rose including four in the fourth leg, to win a classic match 5-4.

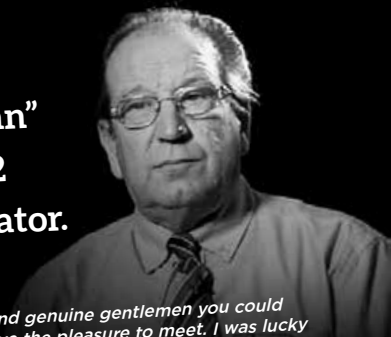
The day and a chapter of tungsten history belonged to Sherrock. Despite her many achievements in the game, some had noted the paucity of silverware in her trophy cabinet. The Queen of the Palace will now place the 'Crown in the Garden' where it belongs.



# Richard John Gwynne - "John"

## 23 April 1945 - 9 July 2022

### Teacher and Sports Commentator.



**J**ohn Gwynne, who has died at the age of 77 following his 18-month battle with cancer, was part of multiple families. Sky Sports, especially darts and Soccer Saturday, where he also covered sports including cricket and rugby as well. Lancashire CCC where he had been the stadium announcer, and the wider darts family.

Gwynne, who reported on darts for radio and the 'Darts Phone Line Commentary' before joining Sky Sports, was originally a schoolteacher. The Darts Line later became the Piccadilly line, after the Manchester radio station, and was, in turn, the title of his long-running feature in Darts World magazine.

With the formation of the WDC (later PDC) in 1993, John was immediately brought into the Sky team. Matt Porter, CEO of the PDC noted:

"As part of the original Sky Sports commentary team alongside Sid Waddell and Dave Lanning, John's distinctive voice was part of the soundtrack to the PDC's formative years and they formed an iconic trio.

"John was hugely passionate about the sport of darts and made a great contribution at all levels during his career.

Gwynnie retired after twenty World Championships as well as twenty World Matchplay events and was inducted into the Professional Darts Corporation's Hall of Fame in 2014.

Amongst the many poignant tributes and comments made by players, official and fans Dennis Priestley's words stand out:

*"Today we lost one of the most wonderfully caring, intelligent, eloquent,*

*funny and genuine gentlemen you could ever have the pleasure to meet. I was lucky enough to have known John for over 30 years and count him as one of my closest friends from my darting career.*

*I last spoke to him a couple of weeks ago and will cherish that conversation for the rest of my life.*

*The airwaves will never be the same without your dulcet tones bringing the action to life. Whether it be at darts, football, cricket or rugby.*

*My thoughts go out to John's family and friends and offer strength at this extremely sad time.*

**RIP Old Mate"**

At Darts World John's humour, experience and connections meant that his columns were never dull and always had a touch of irreverence as well as the detailed reporting of which he was a superb exponent.

Our team has fond memories of John assisting them at a World Championships, helping to settle a player's debut nerves, and, of course, plenty of back and forth with Sid.

A chance encounter meant that John began to contribute again during 2020 but sadly his illness was diagnosed soon after.

Son, Brother, Husband, Dad, Grandad, Great-Grandad, Uncle, Cousin, and a dear friend to a great many people.

***Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him. May he rest in peace. Amen.***

***The italicised words are those of Andrew Gwynne (MP) the son of whom John was justly proud.***

# 6 APPEAL

## Magical Mike Crowned in Berlin

WORDS: HARRY MASTERSON IMAGES: KAIS BODENSIEK/PDC

*"I'M A HAPPY MAN. JOE WAS PHENOMENAL IN THE FINAL. WHAT A DAY, I'M OVER THE MOON"*

**I**n new Players, new venues, and even a new format: the 2022 Premier League had its fair share of thrills and a few spills, as the new look darting roadshow crisscrossed sixteen different venues in the UK, Ireland, the Netherlands, and Germany.

Michael van Gerwen ensured not everything was new! Despite not topping the league table, and surviving a match dart, MVG picked up his sixth Premier League crown after beating Joe Cullen 11-10 in a thrilling climax.

Finals debuted in the Mercedes Benz Arena in Berlin, and it certainly was a night to behold for the Green Machine beating James Wade 10-4 in the Semis before taking out the Premier League debutant in the Final.

Mighty Mike had taken to the new mini-tournament formula without pause. The Dutchman stormed to his first night victory in Exeter, dropping just three legs over three games in that evening's 8-man knockout.

Averages of 102.36 in a 6-1 victory over Jonny Clayton and 104.37 to beat Michael Smith 6-2, put the Winmau man in the night's final where he whitewashed reigning world

champion Peter Wright 6-0 missing just two darts at double.

Overall three-nightly victories saw the Dutchman pick up £30,000 in bonuses on top of the £275,000 earned for winning - even when under par and managing an injury - will give van Gerwen optimism that he can catch the world's top two and reclaim the World Number 1 spot that he held for so long.

Despite announcing he required surgery to his throwing hand that would rule him out of the World Cup of Darts, this didn't stop a record-equalling night as he levelled with Phil Taylor on 6 titles apiece since the competition started in 2005.

2021 Champion Clayton was the only player to record four-night victories in this year's competition, winning in Liverpool on Night 2 and following up with wins in Birmingham, Aberdeen, and Glasgow as he finished the league format top of the league table. The Red Dragon star will be extremely happy with his nightly performances, especially Night 8 averaging 111.16 in beating James Wade 6-1 in the Final.

Arguably the Ferret's best night victory, beating Michael Smith 6-1 at the Quarter



Final stage including three maximums and ten 140s to blow Bully Boy away. The Welshman then beat Peter Wright in a classic Semi Final that included eight maximums and both players averaging in three figures.

Snakebite averaged 107.71 which was the highest of either player, but his doubling was less strong, missing ten darts at the outer ring. This was punished by the league leader who simply missed fewer.

Debutant Joe Cullen despite missing a dart at double sixteen to win the competition, was delighted with his efforts across the whole sixteen nights, finding two-night victories in Rotterdam and, imperatively, the aforementioned winner takes

# PIER LEAGUE DARTS



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all match with Peter Wright

The Bradford thrower really impressed on Night 7, going into the Netherlands as the league's bottom player before a dart was thrown. His match with Gary Anderson will

certainly be remembered for the events that took place after the game, but to beat the Flying Scotsman after his heroics in Nottingham the week before surely deserves a lot of praise.

The former back-to-back World Champion was unhappy with his opponent after he felt there was possible encroachment whilst he was on the oche, with the Englishman denying these claims after the game.

Cullen then went on to beat the eventual champion in the Final after finding victory against Peter Wright in the Semi. The debutant threw seven maximums and included a ton plus checkout of 118 in the third leg, as he clinched a last leg decider to beat van Gerwen in his own backyard.

Another magical moment in the 2022 installment must be from Night 3 in Belfast, where Gerwyn Price threw two perfect legs in storming to his first victory of the league. The first came against Michael van Gerwen in the third leg of their Semi-Final, finishing 144 after six perfect darts to send the Northern Ireland crowd into ecstasy.

Lightning struck twice in the capital as The Iceman saved another for James Wade in the Final, a man who players just love to throw perfect legs against. The third leg again for the Markham ace but a different route this time, throwing two 180s and finishing 141 to complete the traditional nine-dart leg, certainly giving those in attendance their money's worth.

Safe to say, one for the memory books this year's competition with Gary Anderson grabbing a nightly win although he only gained nine points across sixteen nights, and drama with Peter Wright missing out on Finals night despite being in the top four all through the competition.

It is safe to say the new look format produced a more competitive edge certainly bringing the best out in some, whilst it seemed to drain others. Will there be more tweaks and changes or are we good to go again in 2023?



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# Whilock's World-Cup

*Wizard from  
Aus sees  
nation's name  
adorn sought  
after trophy*

WORDS: HARRY MASTERSON &  
JR LOTT

IMAGES: KIM BODESEIK & PDC

**"The World Cup of darts has become a standout event now and it was fabulous to see everybody there and back in Frankfurt"**

The worlds of former World Champion Mark Webster are hard to improve on as a descriptor. During 'the Covid era' the WCoD visited different venues and often teams could not take part. But 2022 saw the event return to its best:

Having gone on record, just beforehand, with six suggestions for a new nation to win the event, it did not bode well when all top eight seeds progressed to the Quarterfinals for the first time ever!

It wasn't that other nations didn't perform or give us moments to remember. Latvia for example was superb and only fell at the final hurdle to England. Sweden, Poland, and Denmark all entertained and tempted us. But none could quite step up when it came to tackling the big-name seeds.

Perhaps most importantly the host nation had fulfilled its billing. Any football fan knows that an event that waves

goodbye to its host early on misses something, whereas one where the home nation over-perform often generates fantastic atmospheres and huge attention. Clemens and Schindler look like a combination that could develop if both could fire at the same time. Although they flirted with disaster more than once, the pair found a way to win and seemed to enjoy the occasion.

The same was true of a couple more of our suggestions. Australia and Northern Ireland were winning games, sounding confident in interviews, and smiling all the time!

Two of the most successful WCoD nations were debuting new partnerships and although both progressed early on it is fair to say they were not as dominant as previous partnerships representing England and The Netherlands have been. Wade and Smith seemed to gel nicely as a pair

and seemed relaxed whilst Noppert and Van Duivenbode looked a little subdued. Each could be said to have done the minimum, in reaching the Semifinals, and offered the possibility of development. Both bowed out in the final four and seemed to be missing that certain something.

The Celts were again proving a force with the defending champions Scotland only being eliminated by their predecessors Wales and Northern Ireland falling at the last eight stage.

Meanwhile, the Belgian duo of Dmitri Van den Bergh and Kim Huybrechts were beginning to catch fire. The Hurricane gets fired up in this team event, and is also inching back toward his best form, Dimi was coming off the back of a very impressive European Tour performance and was looking to have timed a return to his best rather well!

It was another nation, however, that had been the single most impressive throughout, however. Australia's pairing of





Damon Heta and Simon Whitlock had almost hit a perfect leg early on and had racked up 100+ averages on an imperious route to the final. The truth is that The Heat has been in superb shape through 2022 and The Wizard from Aus has played in every event and been passionate about winning this title for a dozen years.

The Aussies didn't get it easy; they played tough non-seeds in Sweden then Belgium, England and Wales back to back. Yet, in truth, they were never really threatened and had more than enough for any opposition.

Ten years on from suffering World Cup heartbreak in that extraordinary 2012 finale against England, Whitlock fulfilled his darting destiny alongside Heta to scoop the £70,000 top prize at the Eissporthalle.

A superb victory was theirs and, with a nod to the dearly missed Kyle Anderson, they eagerly lifted that long-awaited trophy.

"It is life-changing. I have dreamt about this moment my entire life and I've finally got there," said an emotional Whitlock, one of four World Cup ever-presents.

We'll leave it to Webby to sum up:

"Simon Whitlock has given a lot to the sport, he has been patient and suffered heartbreak..... it's just a perfect result..."



## WEBBY'S WORLD

**It's a good time to be thinking about the wider world of darts, for you all, instead of dwelling on the slight pain in my shoulder caused by a recent surgery to tidy up some of the wear and tear I have inflicted on it over the years.**

Oddly it's not the dart-throwing that was the problem - I don't do so much nowadays - but the everyday mundane tasks we all need to do. As with any injury and surgery, there is rehab to be done and it must be taken seriously. Not always my strongest suit.

Although getting back to playing is one of the reasons for repairing the damage more important is that it was impacting on normal life, playing with my kids and the things we all take for granted. So it's good to have it out of the way and hopefully be able to crack on. If the most positive prognosis pans out, and I have the discipline to do the rehab properly, we could be looking at throwing competitive darts by the Autumn!

Huge congratulations to my friend and sometime practice partner David Davies who captured the ADC Welsh title recently. I think David surprised himself in averaging over 93 and handing the in-form Robert Owen an 8-1 beating. I am well pleased for him, might pop round later and have a look at his championship belt.

Speaking of people you can be genuinely pleased for, how about Simon Whitlock. Simon has given a lot to the sport and especially Australia. He has been so patient, suffered dreadful heartache and he just has a ludicrous appetite to carry on playing. Just think back, how many times have we had the discussion "is this the end for Simon Whitlock" and we'll probably have it again. But he always finds something, he is the absolute master of halting a slide-in form.

Before I go I must mention a little-known 170 finish that you may not have heard about....

In some ways, it sums up our game very well. In the back room prior to the game, I couldn't hit a thing. Then in a superbly enjoyable pairs exhibition, Jonny Clayton took out a cocky bull finish, Max Hopp finishes 81 off his knees and I had a little go at 'the Big Fish' while wired up and on film.....

See you next time...

Mark Webster was the 2008 Lakeside World Champion and is a World and European Cup Singles Champion (@Webby180)

# Two Out of Three Aint Bad

## Thornton Lifts Seniors Matchplay

WORDS: JR LOTT  
IMAGES: CHRIS SARGENT/WSDT

**T**he Scotsman, not for nothing nicknamed The Thorn, battled past Martin Adams and then edged out The Power in a dramatic final to claim his second inaugural World Seniors Darts Tour major.

The first of the three 'World Matchplays' to be held this year took place in the unusual setting of the Bonus Arena in Hull. World Seniors are seeking to replicate their, so far successful, formula of a very familiar field, with a few fresh faces, a popular title, but this time without the iconic venue.

Two new faces, and one returning one, were highly appropriate as they achieved huge Matchplay success in earlier decades.

Remember Larry Butler? In 1994, he became the very first World Matchplay Champion, defeating Dennis Priestley in the final. He remains the only American to win a PDC major. After a good run at the inaugural Seniors World Championship The Bald (or is it American?) Eagle was back for the initial holding of the seniors equivalent.

The American Eagle was less than his best and sadly looked to be physically struggling,

although he and Lisa Ashton fought out a tough game, especially in the early stages.

Peter Evison took his World Seniors bow a little over a quarter of a century after retiring Phil Taylor's cape and claiming the 1996 title. The Fenn Tiger hit a 103.77 average and dumped out The Power 8-1 before squeaking past Dennis Priestley in the final. It was a pleasure to see the diminutive and dapper Evison's return to TV action.

**"...Just because you're over 50 doesn't mean you're finished.."**  
- Robert Thornton

TV events. The Cheif hit the highest average seen in WSDT events on TV and brushed him aside without reply.

1998 was the turn of Ronnie The Rocket Baxter to reach the Blackpool final. Baxter had shut off The Power en route, 13-10 in the Quarter final, but



Evison was very unlucky to be paired against Colin McGarry, one of this event's 'new faces' who qualified via the non-

could not go all the way, losing out to Rod Harrington in a very tight final. Ronnie was a popular Premier League player on more than one occasion



and memorably a World Championship runner-up.

Baxter fought well in Hull and will hope to be included in future fields as there certainly seemed a flicker of his old self in his performance.

It seems that we may be near the end of the playing appearances of the first golden generation. John Lowe has accepted a non-playing ambassador's role and Bob Anderson, at 74, will surely choose to join him at some point. Keith Deller was always the baby of that bunch and could definitely play at this level for a while longer, but he is likely the sole representative.

Even the generation that followed is already looking thin on the ground, Phil Taylor and Martin Adams bridge the two but many of that group have long since retired and/or moved into the commentary box.

Instead, it will be those in the third group of those who are recently 50 years old or will be very soon that must carry this formula to its next stage. Kevin Painter and Robert Thornton were amongst the first of them. Others such as Colin Lloyd and Wayne Mardle will soon reach that point. There are many more who fans will delight in seeing again.

It should not be lost on anyone that the standard, especially in the later

stages, is improving all the time, and it's a combination between the qualifiers and this very active early 50s group.

In the end and notwithstanding those tremendous battles, with both Adams and Taylor, it was Robert Thornton who once more triumphed and held the trophy aloft.

Another case of 'Two Out of Three Ain't Bad' for the popular Scotsman who has seamlessly extended a hugely successful career by staying active, and competitive, via the Live League and other formats and embracing World Seniors Darts wholeheartedly.

The Thorn now reigns as Seniors World Champion and World Matchplay winner, whilst only being defeated by Seniors World Master David Cameron.

Before the event, we suggested that, perhaps, the only question we needed to ask was: How much did Phil Taylor want his name on another World Matchplay Trophy?

The answer was "quite a lot"

The Power showed signs of renewed appetite, tactical nous, and some raw emotion not seen for quite some time. He reminded everyone that, although not quite there yet,

"The old Phil is coming back...."

## MIC DROP

**Since my last report, I've been quite busy, including at the World Disability Darts Association (Winmau) World Cup of Darts in Ostend. Well done to all on a successful event. Then I was a referee at league finals and presentation night in Basildon after a 3-year break. It's fantastic to see all these occasions returning once again and not just for my calendar!**

After a similar hiatus, I made my 4th trip to the Swiss and Helvetia Open Weekend, this time in Basel (the previous 3 were in Zurich) Another fantastic weekend successfully completed. Basel Airport is actually not in Switzerland but in France. So, another country ticked off the list in the name of darts.

Next and a little closer to home, I was the host/referee at the 3rd exhibition at Didcot Town F.C, this time with former World Champion, Rob Cross. A great night enjoyed by a sellout crowd. We have 2 more there booked for 2022.

Details can be found on the Facebook Group that I run, called Darts Exhibitions Diary. Its solely for exhibitions and those who, attend, promote or host them and has been going quite nicely.

Then it was onto the Devizes League presentation night, Darryl Fitton being my partner in crime for this one. Quite remarkable to think that it's my 6th time at this event.

Next another of my favourite exhibition venues, Workington RBL in Cumbria. Wayne Mardle was his usual inimitable self, playing some brilliant darts including 10 x 180 and a 171. If you've never seen Wayne in exhibition before, add it to your Darting Bucket list. Heartily recommended.

A few days later, I travelled to Blackpool where Kevin Painter and myself did an afternoon exhibition in a hotel social club. It was very warm outside, 38 degrees at least, but the entertainment was even hotter.

I must congratulate Kev, on his capture of the ADC European Championship belt. It was a gripping encounter with James Richardson and experience seemed to tell. The Artist must be the hardest working retiree in sport!

To complete the trip we were able to attend the Matchplay at the Winter Gardens, my 1st time at the event.

Looking forward to an exhibition with my good friend, Bob Anderson, in Herefordshire this weekend. See you there!

Stay healthy and keep enjoying our wonderful sport in whatever capacity you are involved in.

**John Fowler is an independent referee, host, and MC who has officiated at all levels including World Championships. @jayeffmc**



I would like to begin by paying tribute to the late John Gwynne and, on behalf of everyone associated with London darts, both past, and present, I would like to extend my deepest condolences to his family. John was a man whose opinions on the game were always carefully thought out, and much respected by all. His positive attitude, passion and unbridled enthusiasm for our sport was second to none and our sport is much poorer without him here to encourage and support us all.

**E**ach summer, during the close season, I like to feature one of the many leagues that operate in London. This year the spotlight turns to the Trafalgar Darts League. As the name suggests, the League originally focused on venues in and around Trafalgar Square, but like so many others throughout the land has had to venture out beyond its traditional catchment area.

The League was a close-run affair, with 10 teams going to post. Southwark Huntsmen ended the season as Champions, with X-Men and Boomers taking the minor honours. Orcs Shoe Inns, Horseshoe Misfits completed the top half of the table. Ordinary Punters were next,

followed by Holland Club RS, And The Pacemakers, XLT with Albany being presented with the ornately decorated Wooden Spoon on Finals night.

The highest finish went to X-Men's Nigel Rogers with a 150, and the best leg of the season came from Luke Delicata (Southwark Huntsmen) who fired in a brilliant 12 darter.

The Champions were somewhat surprisingly not represented in any of the matches that were played on Finals night, with the majority being contested in the main by players from X-Men and Horseshoe Misfits.

Some of the finals were played in advance of the big night, Raj Gujjalu (Horseshoe Misfits) and Nigel Rogers (X-Men) took the Memorial Trophy KO. Bernie Morris (X-Men) took both Plate competitions, winning the Singles and partnering with teammate Jacob Hole for the Pairs title.

The first trophy of the night was claimed by X-Men, who bagged a three-nil win over Holland Club RS in the Challenge Cup Team KO, played over five

legs of 801. The Jubilee KO (over the 601 trip) saw another cup deposited in the X-Men's cabinet, the trio of Jacob Hole, Liam Curran and Nigel Rogers winning a fine match that went all the way courtesy of a superb 121 checkout by Craig Munro to square the contest.

All five legs were needed before the destination of the Secretary's Cup was known, Jacob Hole was again victorious, on this occasion defeating Frank Daly of XLT. The House Championship went with throw until Liam Curran (X-Men) broke the throw in the fourth leg to seal the deal against Raj Gujjalu (Horseshoe Misfits).

Both combatants were swiftly back on the oche, this time to do battle in the Pairs Final, which was a 301 double in, double out format. Nigel Rogers paired up with Curran, while Gujjalu had Simon O'Neil for company. The match was typical of what went before, some good scoring and tidy finishing eventually set up the dreaded one leg shootout. The Misfits pairing had a chance for glory, but it went begging and the

X-Men tandem were on hand to collect their final pot of the session.

The final match of a great evening saw Craig Munro square off against Dave Farmer (Boomers) in the Singles final. Munro was in a determined mood from the off, firing in two tons in his first three visits which set up a comfortable opener. Farmer was more competitive in the next. Munro fired in a maximum halfway through, and then broke throw thanks to a fine 78 finish with Farmer sitting on 40. The third leg saw the Boomer off to a flier with a ton and 140 in his first two visits, but Munro kept up the chase and the pressure told as Farmer was unable to locate the big trebles. Munro kept his cool to crack home the title winner and complete the win in minimum time with a more than respectable 23.48 average.

## ALL CHANGE

It's all change for London as they head into the second season of County darts under the stewardship of the UKDA. The Executive Committee will take on a new look, following the resignation of Richard Biggs (Chairman), Mary Cusack (General Secretary) and Jane Johnson (Treasurer) after a year's service in each of their respective roles, the latter two following the long-serving Marilyn Smithies who had previously held both positions with distinction for many years.

The fixtures for next season are already out. London starts the new Premiership campaign, which this year is

sponsored by Cosmo Darts, on the 3rd and 4th September when Hampshire visit the capital. The first two days of October see the Londoners off to the Midlands to take on newly promoted Staffordshire. Lincolnshire are the guests in early November, before London round off the calendar year with a trip to Yorkshire.

The season is now extended to the first weekend of June, with the Magic Weekend not taking place. Personally speaking, I am disappointed that this is not going ahead. One of the main arguments for counties going with the UKDA model following the demise of the BDO was that they claimed to want a fresh approach to the County scene, with new ideas and innovations. Yet the first of these has seemingly already fallen by the wayside.

I do hope that this concept gets resurrected, perhaps not as a way of ending the league season, but as an alternative option for a new competition that involves all divisions rather than just the top two. With so many new players coming into the game preferring to go down the Challenge / Development Tour route for a weekend rather than travel all over the country to play a solitary best of 5 or 7 legs County match, these concepts ought to be and should be supported by all and allowed to grow rather than be ditched after one year.

### "The Pearly King"

**Supported by The Horseshoe Pub, Clerkenwell and Darts GB**



## SHAUN GREATBATCH 11TH JULY 1969 - JUNE 5TH, 2022

**Sean '9-Dart' Greatbatch sadly died last month after a long battle with illness. Along with the many references to his darting skill, and success, came as many, if not more, comments and tributes to the manner in which he battled and bore the ill health that shortened his career and ultimately his life at the age of 52.**

His son made the following announcement on social media:

It is with an extremely heavy heart that I have to bring you this news. My Dad, Shaun, passed away yesterday. He fought so hard for so long and we will be forever proud of him and everything he achieved. He was the best Dad, Husband and Grandfather you could wish for. RIP big man

Darting success was perhaps inevitable, for Shaun was the son of Welsh International Sandra Greatbatch, but around the turn of the century a step change was noted as Shaun began to reach the final stages of some major BDO opens and then the Last 32 on his Lakeside debut in 2001.

Shaun would go on to reach the Semi Final at the legendary venue, in 2006, but by then the event that gave him his nickname, and a darting legacy never to be forgotten, had taken place.

Suffolk native, although he played County darts for Cambridgeshire, Greatbatch achieved immortality in the final of the 2002 Dutch Open with his moment of perfection coming on the way to winning the tournament against Steve Coote. A 9-Dart Leg was captured on live television for the first time in our sport's history and attached to Shaun's name in perpetuity.

After his superb run in 2006, including open wins and a later Grand Slam of Darts appearance, 9-dart's form dipped and, in 2008, he was diagnosed with multiple myeloma.

Bravely, as he lost weight rapidly, Shaun still appeared at the 2009 World Championship, exiting at the first round to John Walton, to a guard of honour from fellow contestants and officials alike.

Darts World remembers that Shaun was a lovely gentle person "who's only malice was in his walk on tune"

RIP '9-Dart'



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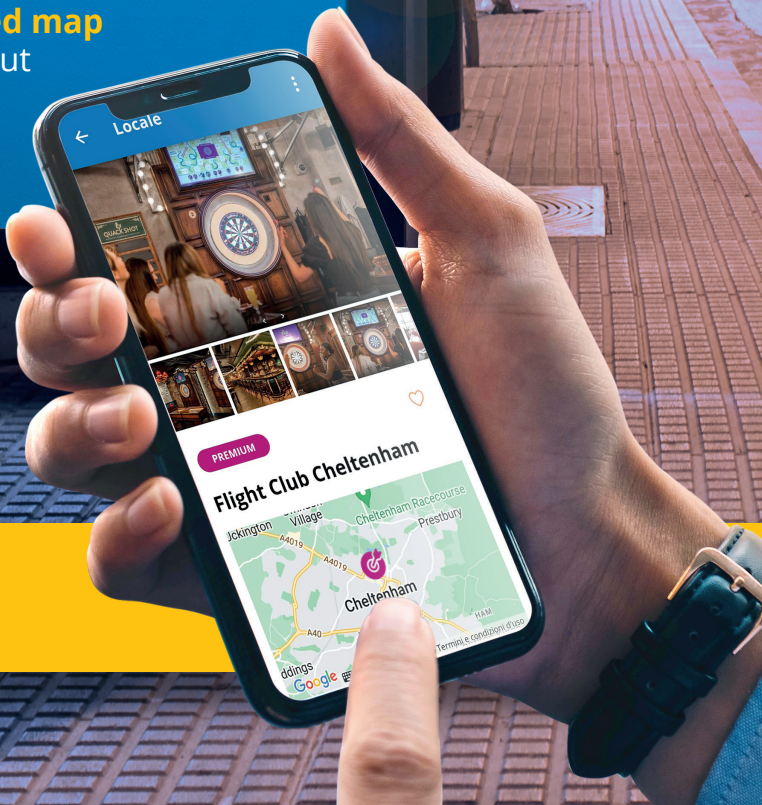
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# Mike Gregory

16th December 1956 - 19th April 2022



**Michael Seward "Mike" Gregory was a World Championship finalist and back-to-back News of The World champion who also collected a plethora of important titles from the mid-1980s and 1990s.**

Mike was one of a handful of players to challenge the dominance of Bristow, Lowe, and Wilson who then went on to kick start the next era with players such as Phil Taylor and Dennis Priestley.

Dubbed 'The Quiet Man' he often seemed shy compared to his counterparts but the Somerset thrower put together a remarkable record of event wins that spoke for itself. Having reached the World Masters final in 1983, losing 2-1 to Eric Bristow, he then started winning things. 1984 saw him collect the Butlins Grand Masters, British Professional and British Matchplay titles in less than 6 months and effectively back-to-back.

After a couple of years of almost and nearly results Mike again produced a run of success from 1986 to 1988. This period saw the Bath man claim The World Matchplay (MFI), two Dry Blackthorn Masters, and a European Cup Singles. Then came those consecutive wins in the most unforgiving event in darts, the original News of The World event, in '87 & '88. In the tungsten era, only Gregory and Eric Bristow went back-to-back.

Regardless of the much-discussed off the oche events during this time, Gregory's success on the board was outstanding. In 1991 he started picking up titles gain and did not stop for almost five years. As during previous successful spell it began with winning major opens on the global stage, Canada and Australia proved particularly happy hunting grounds, this form saw MG play a role in two events that are now seen as major milestones in darts history.

First the now legendary Lakeside World Championship Final against Phil Taylor. Acknowledged as one of the best matches played initially for quality and then for drama. MG famously had 6 match darts to halt 'The Power' but somehow it was not to be.

Commercial decisions, not involving the players, surrounding 'The Taylor-Gregory Final', and merchandise connected to it, lead directly or indirectly to the founding of the WDC and later 'The Split' in top-level darts.

The first event to be organised by what is now known as the PDC (then the WDC) was simply an addition to the

normal dart calendar in 1992. Gregory collected the Swedish Open on 4th October before claiming the inaugural (WDC) LADA Masters seven days later. Within three weeks of collecting the £5000 (and a new LADA), he reached the final of the WDF affiliated World Masters.

Remarkably Mike repeated the trick the following year, again claiming the (WDC) LADA and the (WDF) Swedish events. He later made the controversial decision to eschew the newly formed grouping and return to BDO/WDF darts.

Mike's final flourish, continued from the tail end of 1994, with a string of mainland European open titles, through to the high-quality invitational European Masters of 1995. Gregory overcame the BDO new brooms of Burnett, Wallace, and Manley to claim his last high-profile title.

Although MG continued playing for much of the next decade he seemed to peak at the last eight or four stages in open events and suffer early defeats on TV. His last World Championship was at the Lakeside in 1999.

A last hoorah saw him reach the final of the Scottish Open in 2003 in a field that included Gary Anderson, Steven Bunting, and Gary Robson to name a few.

Mike played his County darts for Somerset and Superleague for Radstock.

Mike Gregory is survived by Erica and his two sons, he had been battling dementia for a number of years. May he Rest in Peace.

# Noppert-unity

## Knocks

Giant Killing  
Mr Freeze  
Wins FA Cup  
of Darts

WORDS: JR LOTT

IMAGES: L LUSTIG / PDC

**D**anny Noppert has demonstrated in the clearest possible terms and in the most convenient definition that nice guys can indeed finish first!

For the first time, in a career not short of surprising high points, the Dutchman was crowned UK Open Champion and had claimed a televised ranked PDC major title. In doing so 'Mr. Freeze' became the eleventh player and fourth from The Netherlands to lift the trophy.

The £100,000 winners cheque will prove especially handy as Danny has recently become a father for the first time and will be certain to see demands on his purse increasing dramatically. In addition, the 31-year-old now sits safely inside the top 16 and will be amongst the favourites for a Premier League spot depending on the criteria for the 2023 event.

Noppie was making his fourth attempt at the UK Open and had never previously made it past the L32. Yet the unpredictability and career-changing nature of the FA Cup of Darts always dangles the

carrot of underdog success and 2022 delivered in spades.

In addition to the Champion, there was a tremendous run, to the semi-final, for Keane Barry who even took out the reigning champion James Wade in the Qtrs. Wade who had won his third title behind closed doors in Milton Keynes had put up a strong defense as the event moved back to the raucous atmosphere generated in Butlins, Minehead.

The twentieth staging of the event saw three nine-dart finishes. José Justicia hit the first against Adam Gawlas. James Wade also hit another, possibly the least reacted to ever seen in his match-up against Boris Krčmar. Michael

Smith hit another in his own sixth-round game against Mensur Suljović.

Along with his perfect leg Bullyboy was having a fine event to follow on from his World championship runner-up spot. Smith removed Chris Dobey in his first match and then a pair of tough encounters against European opposition. First Gabriel Clemens put up heroic resistance before going down 8-10 and then Mensur pushed Micheal even further with the last leg decider needed for the win and place in the Qtrs. Here Gerwyn Price was despatched in relative comfort at 10-7 before Smith played the role of pantomime villain by stopping the young Keane





# Laura TURNER



**After more than two-years, cancellations and a global pandemic, the World Championships returned to Lakeside.**

The event was shrouded with doubt and controversy in the run-up, with mentions of the low ticket sales and the banning of three-time World Champion Anastasia Dobromyslova and the other Russian (& Belarus) representatives.

I've been lucky to play at Lakeside on several occasions over the years, if nothing else it is synonymous with darts and there is a comforting yet terrifying feeling when you walk into the room and see that stage!

This year the event seemed to come into its own as the days progressed, crowds increased and the players performed on that infamous Lakeside stage.

As a player, my Lakeside experience was short-lived, losing in straight sets to the amazing Mikuru Suzuki, but it was the most comfortable I've felt on the stage since my debut at the Worlds. There are so many people that help you get to the point of qualifying, you want to do it for them, yourself and I have so much admiration for the players that find their best games under that kind of pressure!

Being the first husband and wife (with Aaron) to qualify for the World Championships at the same time was special although I've also realised playing is far less stressful than watching!

The youth shone through and Lakeside records tumbled; a record number of players, the highest prize fund for the women's tournament, record averages, checkouts and new Champions.

Jarred Cole defeated the three-times World Champion Martin Adams while 15-year-old Luke Littler was only denied a place in the last eight by a record-breaking 104.91 average from 'Flyers' Richard Veenstra. We saw Eleanor Cairns beat Germany's Wibke Riemann in the first-ever Girls World Youth Championships and lift the title in what has been a very difficult year for the Lancashire player and Bradley Roes beat Charlie Large in the boys final.

France's first-ever player to make the World Championships back in 2020, Thibault Tricole, progressed all the way to the final to face Neil Duff, who himself went on to become the first player from Northern Ireland to lift the Men's title.

The Women's title was won in emphatic style by 18-year-old Beau Greaves, who dropped just one leg (one set in the tournament) and hit the highest ever Women's average in a final against Kirsty Hutchinson. Hungary's first-ever representative Veronika Ihasz also set her own record with the highest checkout in the women's tournament, pinning a 164 against Greaves in the last 16.

The event had its critics, as most do; I both watched from home and went along to both play and support - the atmosphere really was brilliant and I thoroughly enjoyed the production when I watched from home. Kudos to the team behind the WDF and I'm looking forward to 2023!

Laura is ranked in the WDF top 16 and is a pundit for SKY Sports. She is supported by Opus Sports management and Cosmo Darts

Barry's superb run at the semi-final stage.

Surely Smith would make it this time and finally bag that elusive missing major?

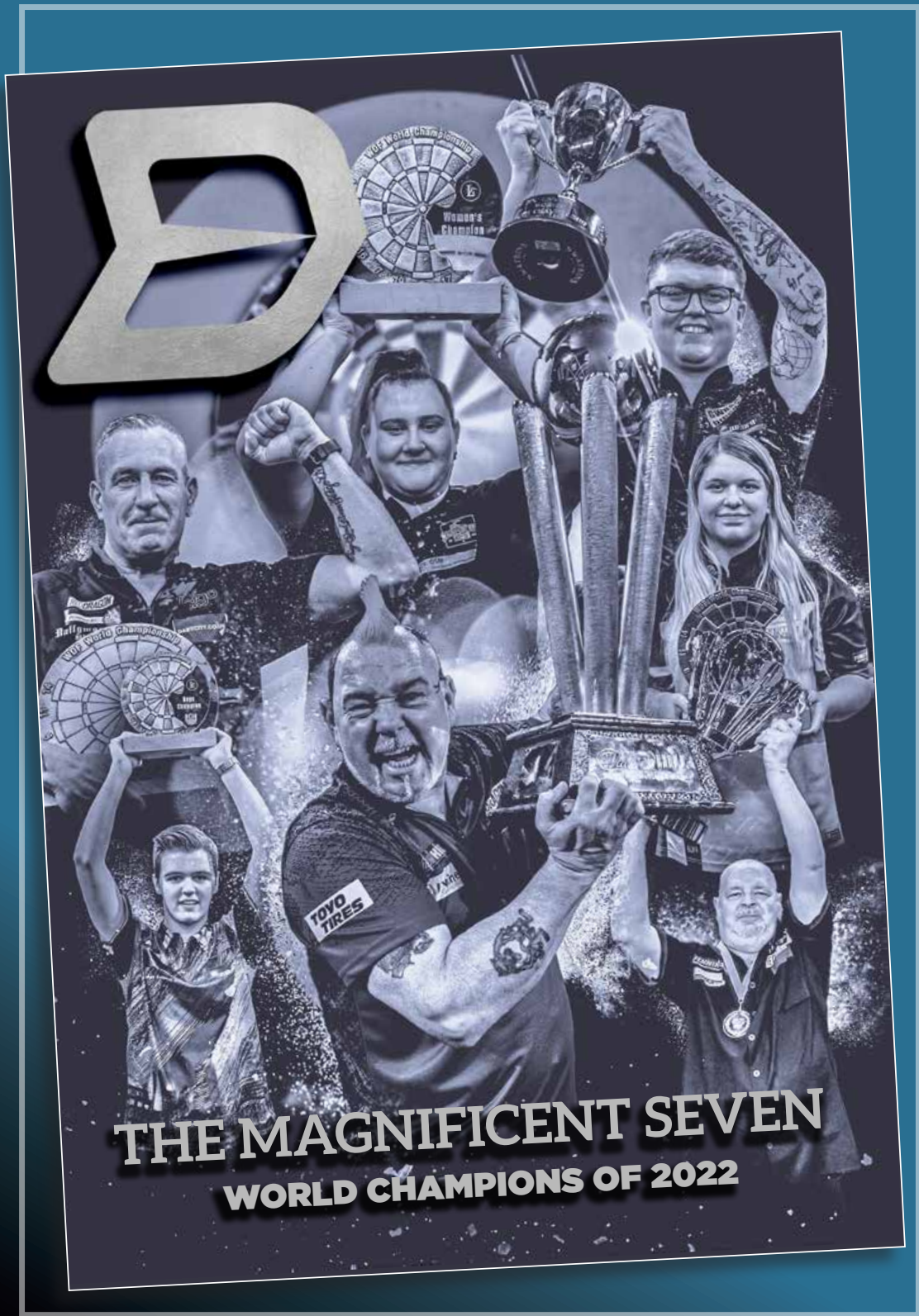
Elsewhere it had been an impressive event for Ireland and mainland European players. In addition to Barry, a resurgent William O' Connor reached the semi-finals, Poland's Sebastian Bialecki fought through to the last eight. The last 16 also saw a Croatian, an Austrian, a Pole, and two Dutchman in amongst the usual complement of UK players and Damon Heta from down under.

The final itself was a low-scoring affair with Smith looking favourite for most of the game but the tension, and Mr. Feeze's refusal to give in, meant Danny slowly overhauled the Englishman and then held his own nerve when it mattered most.

Danny Noppert won his first PDC major tournament (11-10), the coveted trophy and the massive cheque after Smith had a single dart for the title.

Noppertunity Knocked for Danny and he grabbed it!





# THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN

## WORLD CHAMPIONS OF 2022

WORDS: JR LOTT

# New Power Rising

Team 360 Building Toward All-Around Success



**T**he image opposite shows the importance of nurturing the next generation of champions. We're checking back in on Team 360 to see how they are progressing:

One of the most important things in the development of young sportspeople is that they are not overhyped and over-exposed early on. For this reason, I thought we would give Team 360, and their crop of late 2021 recruits, a while to just settle in and enjoy getting to know their new teammates, learning from Steve Brown and Anders of Go Darts Pro, and just simply playing their darts. It seems to have worked!

The joint venture between Winmau and the JDC aided by the online coaching and support program from GDP is looking more and more successful with every passing month.

If we look at the first four months of 2022 there seems to be a pattern of solid achievement emerging. Jurjen Van de Velde for example has produced a series of steady performances on the PDC's Development Tour that see

him sitting in 9th place. Those ahead of him are vastly more experienced, have played in majors and even have Pro Tour Cards! The Former JDC World Champ christened The Bagel Boy by Darts World, is looking more and more settled at this level and has also begun to test the Challenge Tour waters.

Perhaps the most attention-grabbing of the new recruits is Italian Aurora Fochesato. The youngster has had a superb start to the year, rising to 40 in the WDF Ranking and is in the middle of a trip to the UK which will see her compete on the Women's Tour.

Aurora knocked Veronika Ihasz out of the Slovak Open and was only pipped 4-3 in her Qtr final! She has won a plethora of Girls events and is ranked 9th overall and no 1 in the Western Europe table.

Her visit to the UK has already proved successful in that she and her compatriot were runners-up in the pairs marking an important milestone for Italian darts.

Keelan Kay has been a little up and down in 2022 reaching Quarter Finals on the tours but also missing some

opportunities. He has a chance to reboot the year when he returns to the MODUS Live League in late April. Hopefully, he will kick on again. He performed well in last year's visits and the intense quality practice may be just what the doctor ordered.

The attention the Team 360 boys and girls are getting has resulted in several picking up dart sponsorship deals and even management deals. Jurjen and Aurora are just two beneficiaries.

If you know a young player with talent or fancy testing yourself against the crop of tremendous up-and-coming players then nip onto Go Darts Pro and look at the games, programs and tables. Can you or your favoured names knock them off or down the list?

The team also has a new kit for 2022 and is being roundly encouraged by Winmau, Anders of GDP, Steve, and even ourselves every now and again!

**More on Team 360:**

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# THE AMATEUR AWARD TREBLED

*Darts World & Toff Watches Make Up For Lost Time*

WORDS: JR LOTT



**J**ust as our new Amateur Award was getting underway the Darts World team was struck down, first by multiple covid cases and then by a very serious cancer diagnosis. Despite valiant efforts from the team members the Amateur Award summaries could not be completed without certain knowledge and input. We are therefore delighted to acknowledge three superb Amateur players whose excellence stretches from Autumn 2021 and were chosen as the winners for Darts World Magazine issues 577 & 578 as well as this current publication (579).

The inaugural new Amateur Award was presented to **Rob Rickwood** (Issue 575) who was in sensational form early last summer. **DW 576's** award went to **Tommy Sanwell** for an outstanding effort on the UKDA's inaugural weekend; there are therefore three more Amateurs to Award!

**DW 577** - Nominations had been regularly acknowledging the efforts of **Stu Wilson**. He had had a very impressive few months and crossed

our radar often. He claimed a regional MAD belt in dramatic last leg style in a fantastic evening of MAD amateur darts in a botanical garden! He went straight out that weekend and claimed the Cheshire open after a tremendous run against seriously tough opposition including Kai Fan Leung, Lewis Williams, and Joe Murnan. Stu has progressed rapidly since and even claimed a Challenge Tour event recently. ( Nominated by AJ Urmston-Toft)

**DW 578** - The fourth winner of the Amateur Award was **Chris Wickenden**, perhaps better known as 'Pugs'. Leicestershire man Wickenden had a superb spell around the Xmas and New Year period and was nominated by our own Alan Towe who thought his efforts really stood out. Chris won the warwickshire singles (no easy effort) and was the runner up at the Coventry Open (Xmas). Pugs also claimed the Barden PL Knockout and the MIBGrip Live League and won 9 out of 9 County matches as well as topping the averages to that point. An all around amateur darts performance to stand out from the crowd!

**DW 579** - The latest amateur player to be chosen for the award is **Matt Jackson**. Matt has played a large variety of darts over more than a decade but seems to have found his metier in the ADC. A look at the rankings will give you a clue why he claims the latest Toff watch award! 8 titles already in that structure including 128 points for the Gloucester Open (Mecca).

Matt, known as The Action, has been mopping up some of the smaller titles to build his total and supporting Bar501 in Kingswood by doing so. It is always difficult to step down from an elite level and reset and in addition, Matt has had more than his fair share of personal troubles from which darts may act as an escape. We wish him continued success.

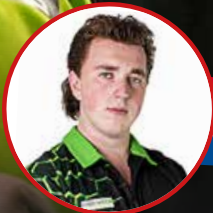
Don't forget to drop us a line [editor@dartsworld.com](mailto:editor@dartsworld.com) or social media) with your nominations for outstanding amateur performances from May until our next issue. It can be a season-long effort, a successful spell or single moment, match or even dart!



# Going Dutch

*The Green Shoots of Dutch Darts Resurgence*

WORLDS: WIM BLACKPOOL  
IMAGES: PDC AND PDC EUROPE / PHOTO: BULL'S



**F**or Dutch Darts, the past few months have been the most successful months in years. Dutch Number One Michael van Gerwen seems to be back in real form. After winning only one ranking event in 2021, 'Mighty Mike' has already picked up 3 ranked titles this year so far: Two Players Championships and the German Darts Championship in Hildesheim, where he picked up his first European Tour title since 2019! Van Gerwen is also still going strong in the Premier League, winning three individual nights and, being well inside the top 4, looking very likely to make the play-offs.

But the biggest achievement from a Dutch player in recent months came from Danny 'The

Freeze' Noppert. Noppert beat Ryan Meikle, Devon Petersen in a high-quality game, and Dirk van Duijvenbode in a Dutch clash to reach the quarter-finals of the UK Open. There he comfortably beat in form Damon Heta, and in the semi-finals, it was a scrappy game but Noppert got through against William O'Connor to make his first PDC Ranking tv final!

In that final, Noppert took on Michael Smith who missed 1 dart at bullseye to win it, as Noppert caused quite an upset by picking up the UK Open title.

In addition, that victory makes it very likely that we will see Noppert partnering up with Van Gerwen at the World Cup of Darts next June. Could the partnership of the quieter style

with MVG's aggression reap rewards for the Dutch team?

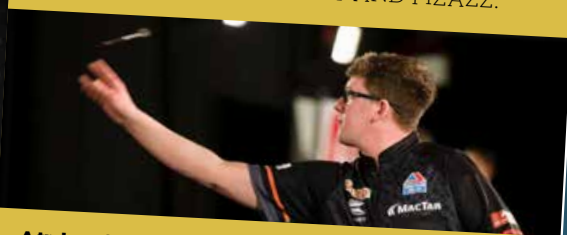
More Dutch success came from Dirk van Duijvenbode who beat Ryan Searle in a last-leg decider in a brilliant final to win his second PDC senior event! But it is not just Van Gerwen, Noppert, and Van Duijvenbode who seem to be in form: 19-year-old new tour card holder Danny Jansen, is not only the player with the best haircut on tour, he also picked up a Players Championship only in his first few months as a tour card holder! Jansen caused a massive surprise after he beat Andrew Gilding in the final.

At Lakeside, there was no Dutch winner in the WDF men's or women's World Championship, although Richard Veenstra was



## KEANE BARRY:

TALENT, TEMPERAMENT AND PIZZAZZ.



**A truism of the sporting universe is that talent is observed in many a potential star at a tender age. Darts hotshot Keane Barry first began galvanising attention when he dispatched Leighton Bennett in the 2020 BDO World Youth Championships Final at just 17.**

The Irishman cultivates such an exhilarating style, it's flamboyantly quick with an edge of audaciousness. He generates a surging energy that is taxing to play against as you're back on throw almost instantly after walking back to the drinks table.

The opportunity for 'Dynamite' is huge in the years ahead of him, coupled with the experience of playing at the Alexandra Palace in the World Championships for three consecutive years already at just 19, to build an experience bank that could make him a darting megastar.

In 2022, the swift Irishman has made further steps to compete with the bigger-hitters, at the recent Interwetten International Darts Open in Riesa, Michael van Gerwen overcame Barry 6-4 in the second round but required a climacteric 160 finish in leg six to level after the Irish hot-shot spurned his chance to open up a 4-2 advantage.

The County Meath man scooped the biggest win of his life at The UK Open with a sensational display reeling off a 100.19 average to easily consign the defending champion James Wade to defeat, finishing in style in the 14th leg with a 146 out-shot.

Duleek teenager Barry, went 4-1 and 6-2 up against world number five Michael Smith in the last four but eventually went down 11-6, showing flashes of brilliance but eventually getting worn down by the superior 'Bully Boy'.

The £20,000 prize money propelled him to 52nd in the order of merit, closing in on the top 32 and entry to the most important events on the PDC tour.

Perhaps the most instructive lesson of his career to date is, while there are only a limited group on the circuit to match Barry's A-game, there are plenty of players able to grind out wins over Keane with their B-game, a quality the Irishman's has yet to exhibit consistently especially away from the cameras.

The often beautifully articulated Barry philosophy nevertheless is a good one to try and follow, in those moments of defeat when everything seems dark, or the moments of glory when everyone wants to be your companion, it's not a negative thing to nourish a sense of perspective.

Neither extreme is healthy but when it's going well try to relish the moment and when it's not, know the clouds will pass. Above all, however long he is in the game, you get the feeling he will try to enjoy it to the fullest.

**Words James Martin  
Images: PDC**



**DANNY NOPPERT  
'THE FREEZE'**

**UK OPEN CHAMPION**

impressive at times, with a record-breaking average (for Lakeside) and nearly checking the 9-darter on double 12 during his run to the semi-finals.

Aileen de Graaf also impressed as she dumped out defending ladies winner Mikuru Suzuki, but then lost in the last 8 to eventual winner Beau Greaves, the same round where debutant Priscilla Steenbergen bowed out.

There was one Dutch winner at the Lakeside though, as 17-year-old Bradly Roes beat Leighton Bennett and Charlie Large to crown himself the WDF Boys World Champion!

After some great months for the Dutch players, the next few months might be even better with three big darting events in The Netherlands in the upcoming months: a European Tour event in Zwolle, the WDF Dutch Open in Assen which is finally back, and a World Series event in the Ziggo Dome in Amsterdam, a massive venue so there must be a brilliant atmosphere there!

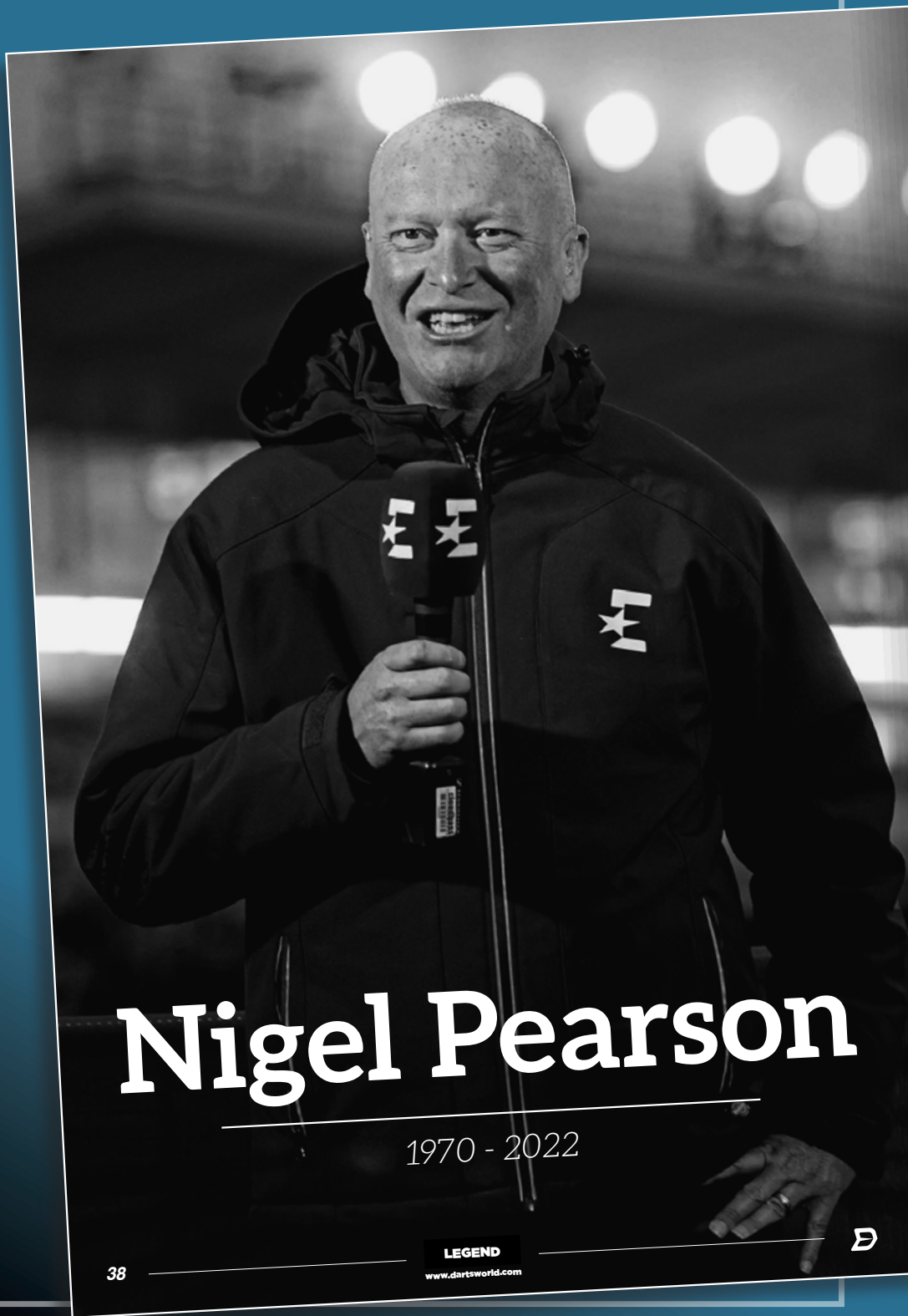
I will be at all of those events, so more about that, from a player's and fan's eye view in the next magazine!



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# Nigel Pearson

1970 - 2022

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LEGEND

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**N**igel Pearson passed away on April the 15th and the outpouring of, initially, shock, grief and disbelief, followed by love, affection and gratitude gives some indication of the esteem in which Nigel was held throughout both the sports and media world.

Although known to the widest audience through his SKY TV work, where he has been both commentator and presenter, Nigel has also combined with BT for football and other activities, was devoted to speedway, and helped TalkSport turn the, at first thought laughable, concept 'darts on the radio' into a huge success.

The outpouring of love and affection was summed up by watching Laura Woods struggle through the shock and pain to pay her tribute on TalkSport. Her moving words and distraught emotions spoke for all.

On a professional level, it says much that when Dave Clark stepped down in the midst of lockdown and the coronavirus pandemic, it was to Nigel SKY turned to lead the coverage of the World Matchplay in the legendary presenters' absence.

During that same period,

Nigel gave an exclusive and rare interview to Darts World where he discussed many of his sporting passions and how he believed darts, football and other sports would emerge from the dark times. His tireless optimism, down-to-earth personality and positive nature shine throughout the 17-minute conversation.

Pressure of work meant that Nigel skipped an issue of his regular Darts World column in December 2021's edition. By way of correction, he sent through easily enough for two columns in our New Year issue (DW578), the second of which included the following paragraph which says much about the man and what he gave to our sport:

"I mentioned the bigger picture aspect earlier. Everyone needs to continue promoting the sport to a wider audience. I gave a talk to an assembly of 14-year-olds at my local school recently and when explaining my work I asked for a show of hands - how many out of the 120 pupils watch the darts on TV? Not one hand went up. We need to promote the sport to new people as much as possible and make it as simple as possible for the younger generation to understand."

Even at the top of his profession Nigel Pearson did not rest on his laurels or take things for granted. Instead, he encouraged and supported those around him, as the testimonies opposite show clearly, and thought about those to come afterward.

Our sport has lost a gentleman and a gem and our thoughts go out to Nigel's family who have lost a great deal more. RIP

"...That ability to make everybody feel welcome was Nigel's greatest gift" .. Paul Nicholson

" Nigel wasn't just a friend, he was such a source of support and a real source of joy" ...Laura Woods

" A wonderful man, a wonderful broadcaster and a wonderful friend. He will be missed by so , so many..." WBA Radio

"The amount Nigel Pearson did for British Speedway most will never know, always trying to take things forward with amazing attention to detail. I'll miss you pal and thanks for everything" Ian Brannan

"Devastated. Nige was one of the first members of the SKY Sports Darts family I met and he couldn't have made me feel more welcome. Love you Nige..." Emma Paton

## PLAYING CATCH-UP

**The UKDA National League completed the L-Style Division One programme with two rearranged fixtures, Derbyshire playing hosts to Gwynedd and Nottinghamshire entertaining Worcestershire.**

In the Derbyshire game the host's ladies were in top form with the 'B' side handing out a 6-0 whitewash to their counterparts and the 'A' winning 4-2. Taking the respective lady of the match awards were Jane Densley with a superb 24.24 average and Jax Sweet who again had an impressive 21.27 average. For Gwynedd Emily Mitchell was their 'A' side's award winner with a 17.76 average.

It was a case of mixed fortunes for the men as the Derbyshire 'B' team lost 8-4 with Paul Bettney (27.83) taking the match award and for the 'A' Pete Burgoyne was their top man with a 28.59 average as they won 7-5 to give Derbyshire an overall 21-15 victory which lifted them up the table into a final third place narrowly missing out on promotion as they finished just three points behind their opponents and divisional runners-up Gwynedd. Taking the match awards for Gwynedd were for the 'A' Deian Roberts (25.32) and for the 'B' Baz Tym (26.93).

Cleveland ended the season as champions with a total of 225 points with Gwynedd on 188 and Derbyshire 185.

In the other fixture played home advantage did not have the desired effect for Nottinghamshire as they slipped to a 21-15 defeat. Both Nottinghamshire ladies teams lost 4-2 with Julie Pitchford (20.67) and Nicola Wing (16.24) in turn taking the 'A' and 'B' match awards and for Worcestershire it was Jenny Shall (19.92) for the 'A' and Koz Beddow (18.11) for the 'B'.

In the men's games Saturdays 'B' encounter finished all square at 6-6 with Connor Beasley (25.18) Nottinghamshire's top man and Mark Smith (24.64) taking the Worcestershire accolade. Sunday's 'A' game produced an 8-4 win for the visitors their man of the match being Ant Butler who had a tremendous 31.74 average while Tom Allies was Nottinghamshire's top player with a 27.78 average.

The win saw Worcestershire move well away from the relegation zone and finish in a respectable mid-table position on 178 points while Nottinghamshire ended their campaign next to bottom of the table with 149 points and as a result will be relegated to division two together with Clywd who finished at the foot of the table on 132 points.



# UKDA's Magic Finale'

## Inaugural Season Comes to a Raucous Climax

WORDS: LAURA TURNER IMAGES: UKDA

**T**he penultimate weekend in April saw the UKDA host their first 'Magic Weekend' where the 24 teams from the Elite Premiership and Aon Contracts Championship Divisions descended on the Magna Centre in Rotherham to play, in the majority, their final fixtures of the 2021/2022 season.

Lancashire confirmed top-spot in the Premiership after beating Cornwall and London 26-10 and 20-16 respectively to finish off their season without losing a single fixture. They were pushed to an 18-18 all draw earlier in the season by Yorkshire who currently sit in second place, but with Warwickshire having a game left to play against Glamorgan, they could still leapfrog their rivals.

Finishing in 11th and 12th position, Devon and Northamptonshire will be heading to the Championship next season.

In the Championship, Kent topped the table and gained promotion to the Premier following wins over Buckinghamshire and Humberside. They will be joined by Staffordshire who produced wins of 24-12 and 23-13 over their opponents to jump four places up the table and deny Dorset promotion by the narrowest of margins.

West Midlands and Buckinghamshire join the L-Style Division One next season as the results this weekend see them at the bottom of the table.

Away from Rotherham, the weekend

also saw the conclusion of Division One, with Cleveland safely heading the table, winning every fixture in the process. Despite losing their final fixture, Gwynedd also secured promotion over third-placed Derbyshire.

Relegation befell Nottinghamshire and Clywd this season, who will look to regain promotion from the Top Gun Promotions Division Two in 2022/23.

Leicestershire will be heading to Division One next season, but the positioning is still to be determined with County Durham facing last-placed Montgomery and Radnor, whose fate is already sealed and will be in the Darts for Windows Division Three from September.

Just 13 points currently separate County Durham and second-placed Cumbria, so there is all to play for in their rearranged fixture to be played later this month.

Middlesex will be joining Montgomery and Radnor, finishing just six-points from safety.

It was a dream debut for The Black Country in Division Three, who topped the table 22 points ahead of Gloucestershire, both of whom will feature in Division Two next season.

The UKDA National Finals will take place on the 24th - 26th June at the Magna Centre, Rotherham.

Laura is ranked in the WDF top 16 and is a pundit for SKY Sports. She is supported by Opus Sports management and Cosmo Darts

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### UKDA National League 2021-2022 - Division One

	County	P	MA	WA	MB	WB	BP	TP	+/-
	Cleveland	9	65	31	70	32	27	225	175
1	Cleveland	9	65	31	70	32	27	188	23
2	Gwynedd	9	48	36	49	35	17	185	39
3	Derbyshire	9	66	28	56	18	16	184	29
4	Suffolk	9	59	29	46	31	13	178	11
5	Worcestershire	9	50	26	59	22	12	169	-23
6	Surrey	9	49	22	56	31	10	168	-25
7	Merseyside	9	50	31	44	30	11	166	-34
8	Somerset	9	38	25	50	29	7	149	-93
9	Nottinghamshire	9	53	17	45	22	1	*132	-102
10	Clwyd	9							

### Top Gun Promotions Division Two

	County	P	MA	WA	MB	WB	BP	TP	+/-
	Leicestershire	9	72	22	60	34	21	209	143
1	Leicestershire	9	72	22	60	34	21	190	94
2	Cumbria	9	58	31	55	33	13	189	11
3	Tyne & Wear	9	56	27	69	19	18	183	25
4	Bedfordshire	9	59	29	55	25	15	177	61
5	County Durham	8	44	29	58	28	18	176	31
6	Norfolk	9	50	35	51	31	13	172	-16
7	Wiltshire	9	46	30	47	36	13	172	3
8	West Of England	9	65	11	54	30	12	166	-24
9	Middlesex	9	52	33	51	19	11	*78	-328
10	Montgomery & Radnor	8	26	17	28	9	0		

### Darts for Windows Division Three

	County	P	MA	WA	MB	WB	BP	TP	DIF
	The Black Country	8	63	31	69	22	22	207	220
1	The Black Country	8	63	31	69	22	22	185	98
2	Gloucestershire	8	54	28	57	29	17	183	69
3	Northumberland	8	51	23	58	32	19	183	123
4	Salopian	8	59	32	57	19	16	152	15
5	Wirral	8	50	26	48	20	8	140	-62
6	Shropshire	8	43	22	48	20	7	*136	-28
7	Breconshire	8	44	23	37	27	7	132	-108
8	Pembrokeshire	8	44	20	37	24	7	79	-327
9	Isle Of Wight	8	24	11	21	23	0		



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# DARTS WORLD

DARTS WORLD MAGAZINE  
NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2022  
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### FREEZE EDITION



*Danny Noppert*

PRO DESIGN



# Inside



WAYNE BAKER takes a look behind the scenes of the Embassy World Professional Championships at Lakeside Country Club, Putney Green, Surrey

*Reflections ...*



## On the OCHE



**FIFTY YEARS. I personally know exactly how special that milestone is after recently celebrating with my wonderful wife Sheila our fiftieth wedding anniversary. Darts World's golden anniversary is an occasion to be celebrated by all who have anything whatsoever to do with our amazing sport.**

Darts World has been and is even more so today the grand leader and promoter of darts with a history now stretching over half a century. AMAZING!!!

Where in the world would players, officials, or supporters turn to discover what is happening in our beloved sport if it was not for Darts World, the most concise, informative, and unique magazine for players, supporters, and enthusiasts alike?

Stretching from grassroots to professional to International level together with coverage of all major darts events and competitions around the World.

Darts World magazine was launched in November / December 1972, instigated by Tony Wood, ably assisted by Michael Beeken. Although Tony's name didn't appear in the opening page list of credits as editor until issue 71 in October 1978 some six years later.

Our first issue and cover picture (which you will soon see again...) shows four London champions resplendent in their Greater London team jackets before their successful match with Western Counties at Tottenham. They are (from left to right) Tony Bell, Johnny Nichols, Willy Etherington and Tommy O'Regan.

The very first individual cover picture came in issue 4 in March 1973 when Dicky Brett had the honour of appearing on the front of the magazine. Dicky Brett had sadly lost his eyesight and both hands during the war and is shown practicing his darts throwing at home.

Throughout the fifty years professional and amateur players alike have graced the cover of the Darts World magazine. Famed players and professional wordsmiths alike (some of whom you will meet again within this special issue) have contributed between the pages also.

A few years after that inaugural issue I found myself playing a lot of darts in various West Midlands leagues, the County A side and other competitions all over the country. I began writing about it for the Birmingham Evening Mail and was convinced that all these events and the players within them deserved to have their achievements noted on a bigger scale and read by as wide an audience as possible.

Tony Wood was impressed with the variety of copy and agreed. In 1984 we agreed for me to write a column and, just like in 'the Mail', it has grown and grown.

I am proud to have been associated with Darts World for many, many years and hopefully will continue to be so for many more to come.

**ALAN TOWE**

Darts  
WORLD



Twitter: @Darts\_World  
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BECOMING responsible for something that is 50 years old and cherished by many, you swiftly learn are not really in charge of it. More like a custodian ensuring that, while moving with the times, the chronicle of our sport continues to satisfy its readers, and attract new ones, before passing on the baton.

Whilst undertaking the task I learned another, no less important, lesson: It's too easy, especially if you have lived through more than one tungsten era, to see darts as two or even three periods or ages. The glory days of Eric, John and Jocky (founded by Olly Croft), the Taylor & SKY era (facilitated

by Barry Hearn), and, perhaps, the post-pandemic plethora of new and revolutionary opportunities.

Instead, try viewing our sport alongside the development of sports golf or tennis. Each had their early foundations, the huge battles over professionalism and commercial opportunities, and then had to cement the structures that see them thriving today.

The 50 Years from the end of 1972 to the same period this year are better seen as a single Golden Age, of rapid and remarkable development of superbly social pub game into a global spectacle that seems destined to go from strength to strength.

# DARTS WORLD - IN THE BEGINNING...

**W**hen Darts World

**appeared in November 1972 it was the first dart magazine to appear in the UK since 1952.**

The editor then, and until 2009, was Tony Wood but, in the beginning, thirty-five years earlier, there was the Darts Weekly News. The DWN had been introduced in 1937 not because the working classes demanded it but because the upper class had taken up the game following HM the Queen Mother and the King had played a single game in a new community centre in Slough, Berkshire in 1936 which was reported widely in both local and national newspapers and the posh folks wanted to learn more. Darts became a 'fad'.

A major contributor to DWN was a man named Rupert Croft-Cooke who, in December 1936, had published a small volume titled Darts, the first book entirely devoted to the game. DWN survived less than two years with Croft-Cooke revealing many years later that when DWN closed suddenly he found himself out of pocket (not unlike I was



which time it was, ironically, bought out by Jim Pike. It was relaunched as Scoreboard but with a title like that it was never going to be noticed or picked up by darts enthusiasts and soon failed.

In 1952, The People Sunday newspaper became involved with the recently-formed National Darts Association of Great Britain (NDAGB) to re-promote its Lord Lonsdale Team Darts Championship. In order to promote its news and rules, with The Dart no longer published, The People introduced Darts News. It is unclear how long this publication existed but it seems to have survived for only a few issues.

From that time, no darts magazines appeared on the newsstands although, of course, the News of the World continued to promote and report on its famous Individual Darts Championship through the columns of its own newspaper until the London-based competition ceased in 1990.

So, effectively, darts was magazine-less for 20 years.

many years later by another failed darts publication).

After the Second World War, in 1945, an entrepreneur, Frank Wolfe, began a small darts newspaper titled The Dart which heralded the work of the St. Dunstan's Four, captained by one of, if not the, top dart players of the time, Joe Hitchcock. Joe was renowned for his rivalry with south Londoner Jim Pike and the News of the World Team of Dart Champions. The Dart ceased publication in 1950 at



Then, in the early 1970s, darts was brought to the attention of major TV when the News of the World Individual Champion Final was televised on World of Sport. Darts was being really noticed and TV was the key. It was not long until the idea of a national darts magazine was mooted and Darts World appeared.

The first issue of Darts World was published dated November/December 1972 and was met by an eager darts public. The editor, Croydon-based Tony Wood (pictured), told his readers that "Even before this issue was off the press the reaction to our arrival had been overwhelming". Indeed, what started as a bi-monthly magazine, in just one month, the announcement was made that it was 'Now on Sale every month.'

Initial topics covered included

the evidence of the growing popularity of darts 'as a competitive sport', the dedicated men and women who organised the game, the fragmentation of the leagues and associations, professionalism versus the amateur game, the ladies' game, the shape and sizes of dartboards and the threat to the game itself from some brewers 'who mistakenly assume that a public house without a dartboard is the only way to make money'. The lead article was written by John Ross, Chairman of the NDAGB, titled 'My ambitions for the future'. No mention of the BDO at that time.

The popularity of Darts World led to numerous other magazines springing up over the following five decades, some national and many others of a local nature, including Shanghai, The

Arrow and Northern Darts News all spreading the gospel of darts but not one having the success of Darts World. All are now lost to history.

Darts World kept its global readers aware of everything happening in darts, with Tony at the helm, until July 2009. After producing 440 issues of the magazine, he had decided to retire and hand on the baton to someone else in the ever-growing digital age.

Of course, we are all aware that later the responsibility fell into the hands of today's Managing Editor, Callum J Harris-Hulme and what an excellent job he and his team are doing.

Long may Darts World, Callum, his team and contributors continue to entertain and inform darts fans across the globe.

**Patrick Chaplin**



# HOOKED

*"I would read every copy multiple times just in case I missed something!"*

WORDS: STEVE BROWN

**F**ifty years, eh? It seems so long ago, but in other ways, it seems like yesterday! I remember when we got the first edition of Darts World, with that fabulous photo of Tony Bell, Johnny Nicholls, Willie Etherington, and Tommy O'Regan on the cover.

Strangely enough, it's also fifty years since I threw my first darts, so it fits in nicely! Back then, I had no idea just how big a role darts would play in my life, and no idea that I would still be involved at sixty.

It was all due to my dad's car not starting on the morning of March 15th, 1971...

I'll cut a long story short. His car wouldn't start, so he took his motorbike to work. Coming home, a car smashed into him, crushing his leg, leaving him in plaster for 18 months. This ended a promising cricket career. He took up darts more seriously, got in the Surrey team for the newly-formed inter-county league in 1973, and on March 15th, 1974 - the third anniversary of his accident - he was the first player on for Great Britain against the USA in New York. He won.

I was hooked.

Bypassing my lengthy playing career, what is it about darts that has kept me involved all these years? I love the competition and



the desire for self-betterment, but it's the people. I have made so many wonderful friends over the years, and that is the key.

I love sports history, and in particular, I love darts history. I know the News of the World had been around for years, and I know we'd had the NDAGB, but for me, the true "competitive" history of the sport started in 1973 with the BDO. The BICC, followed by the aforementioned international match, the World Masters, countless open tournaments, Lakeside, etc.

Of course, Darts World was

the main source of information - certainly before the internet came along - and while I never read much in the way of magazines, I would read every copy multiple times just in case I missed something! I was always a fan of the historical and off-the-wall items, and I still remember a lot of the stuff, almost word for word.

Having been involved from an early age, not just as a player, but as a BDO official, I met EVERYONE. Well, almost... There are a couple of Americans from that first international I wish I'd

met, but other than that, the only ones I never met were Jim Pike and Leo Newstead - because they were way before my time! I grew up with Eric Bristow. I

played pairs with Alan Evans, and local league with Tommy Barrett and Peter Chapman. Charlie Ellix, Leighton Rees, Bill Duddy, Bill Lennard, Dusty Kettel, Lil Coombes, and Val Maytum



were friends. Even with officials, I knew the Croft family, I knew Sam Hawkins, Les France, Sid Dowson, and Ken Osborne. God, how I miss those days - and how I miss those people. They made me who I am today. Every time we lose one of them, it hurts like hell.

Although I don't play anymore, I have some great memories. The great days of county darts, and the trips to Yorkshire, Lancashire, and Glamorgan. The holiday camp tournaments, like the Easter Gala at Barry Island Butlin's, and the Mayday Festival at Pontins at Hemsby. Fun events like the Indoor League, TV Times Pro-Am, and National Darts Show. Playing at the Royal Horticultural Hall and the Rainbow Suite. What fabulous times they were, but sadly, those days are gone. Life moves on.

I love darts, which I why I'm still involved. For those who don't know, I'm the office manager for the American Darts Organization. It's great to see the money there for the players (I wish it had been there while I was playing!), and I'm proud to have been a part of the push for that. Unfortunately, increased money can have a negative effect, and I feel that darts has lost a lot of purity as a result.

I always played because I enjoyed it. I put a lot into it and had a successful career, reaching No. 4 in the PDC rankings, and No. 1 in the WDF. However, I never dedicated myself to it 100%, and that's because I never wanted it to become a "chore". Thankfully, it never did. I feel blessed that I've had 50 years in darts, alongside Dart World!

Finally, in case you're wondering how I got roped into writing for the magazine, my dad did it for many years, and after I moved to the US, they apparently wanted someone to write from t'other side of the pond. So, I got the job...

I still wonder what would have happened if my dad's car had started that day?

# From St Helens To Sydney

## The Journey of Darts' Media Man

Congratulations to Darts World on reaching your 50th anniversary issue!

My time working in darts began in 2004, so I'm still a relative newcomer in comparison to Darts World, which is the only constant presence in the sport during the past half-century.

Since Darts World was launched back in 1972, both the sport and the way media reports on darts have changed immeasurably - and also for the better.

Even when I joined the PDC in 2004, social media had yet to come into force, video streaming was in its infancy and the monthly issue of Darts World was the staple for finding out the "latest" news around the sport away from our events.

The growth of darts has also brought changes to my own role within media at the PDC and the expansion from a one-man band covering "just" a website and press releases at events to working with a digital and social team who can bring our events to life around the clock.

The importance of those roles was highlighted during the challenges of Covid-19, as lockdown halted all sport other than one which can be played in one house against a competitor in another; darts.

If you'd told me back in 2004 that one day we'd be live streaming to a global audience of one player in his kitchen playing against another in their front room, I'd have wondered what vision of the future Barry Hearn had sold me!

But it was a mark of the creativity, adaptability and foresight of those I'm lucky enough to work with at the PDC and the continued support of the players we give a platform to that the PDC Home Tour and our behind-closed-doors events managed to keep professional darts active at such a challenging time globally.

The players have always been the most important part of my job, and in my eyes are "the sport" - regardless of any politics which

have been part of darts since Darts World was introduced, it's always the darts on the oche which has captivated fans and TV viewers worldwide.

Having attended events in the years before joining the PDC, I was then lucky enough to work with some of those I'd admired from afar, notably the great Phil Taylor.

From his epic World Championship wins, the spell-binding Grand Slam semi-final with Adrian Lewis, those two nine-darters in the 2010 Premier League final and his amazing World Matchplay dominance, I've been lucky enough to be side-stage for some of darts' greatest moments.

I'm also fortunate to have seen at close range the successes of players like Colin Lloyd, John Part, Raymond van Barneveld, Adrian Lewis, James Wade, Michael van Gerwen, Gary Anderson, Peter Wright and now Gerwyn Price and continue to love promoting the achievements of these great sportspeople.

For a sports fan from Leeds to end up travelling the world working in darts is still surreal for me and I remind myself often how honoured I am to work with the PDC; I went from being a rugby league reporter travelling to Hull, St Helens and Wigan most weekends to promoting events in places like Las

Vegas, Sydney, China, Japan and South Africa.

There are so many magical memories too, like Michael van Gerwen's 17 perfect darts at Ally Pally a decade ago, Phil Taylor's final World Matchplay win and Barney's incredible World Championship victory at the Circus Tavern - made even more memorable when I look back at working most of the event with my right arm in a sling after dislocating my shoulder!

Phil's achievements mark him as the most successful player ever in darts but he was also the flag-bearer from the media side for over a decade after my arrival with the PDC, and he often went over and above.

The hard work Phil and his contemporaries put in during the PDC's early years has now been surpassed by a structure that gives children first picking up a set of darts or an aspiring amateur around the globe a visible pathway to becoming World Champion.

We're now seeing the green shoots of that investment with the emergence of a new crop of young stars who will take professional darts to a new level in the next decade.

And I'm sure that Darts World will be with us every step of the way!

**DAVE ALLEN**



Our media & commercial team at the 2020 World Darts Championship, showing how much of a team effort our major events now are.

Raymond van Barneveld celebrates his win over Phil Taylor in the 2007 World Championship final - which for me remains darts' greatest game but also a landmark moment in the PDC's history as a launchpad for our expansion in the following years.





# It's The

When Darts World was first published 50 years ago, the game was very different from the one we know today, the BDO was about to be launched and the PDC was not even an idea. In 1978 the magazine reported on the first BDO World Championship, the winner Leighton Rees received a cheque for £3,000 from a £10,500 prize fund.

The tournament was played in a Nottingham nightclub in front of a few hundred people over 5 nights with only recorded highlights televised by the BBC. In stark contrast, this coming PDC World Championship will be played before sell-out crowds over 16 days with the champion receiving £500,000 from a £2.5 million prize fund. Vitally every match is shown live by Sky Sports in the UK and Ireland and throughout the world by various international broadcasters.

The sport has gone through many changes over this period, it has seen growth, decline, and growth again,

much of which can be attributed to television coverage.

Sadly by the end of the 1980s TV's love affair with Darts seemed to be over with the channels either ending or reducing their broadcasting of events. Unrest ensued and in 1992, 16 of the top players disenchanted with the BDO, left to run their own tournaments.

The WDC, as it was known, linked up with the fledgling broadcaster SKY and with its innovative coverage, darts started to reach a new audience. Players came onto the stage with their own theme tune blaring out, fights flashing and fans' participation was encouraged. By the 2000s the WDC had been rebranded as the PDC and it was fast becoming the game's dominant force.

Interest in the game began to grow again, especially with the mainstream media who now regularly reported on events, increasing public

awareness further. The head-to-head showdowns between PDC World Champion Phil Taylor and BDO World Champions Raymond Van Barneveld and Andy Fordham, which were promoted like World Title Boxing matches furthered the growing public and TV appetite for more events.

New tournaments emerged and the PDC spread its unique brand of the game further afield. Little acorns like the Premier League, which launched with around 400 spectators in the Kings Hall, Stoke, or the European Championship first held in a 300-seat auditorium in Frankfurt in 2007, now attract sell-out crowds, often in excess of 10,000 people, in some of the biggest arenas in the UK and Europe.

With the game's resurgence terrestrial stations returned showing UK, European and Worldwide Tournaments throughout the year. Players are again household names and many have become very

# Future

wealthy as they reap the rewards on offer.

It's not all been plain sailing for the sport, the BDO continued its decline, with lack of major TV and sponsorship deals and dwindling crowds at events, and went into liquidation in 2020.

So what of the future, where will darts be in the next 50 years? Along with its affiliated tours around the world - the PDC Challenge, Development Tours, the JDC and the Women's Series - Darts has a fully progression structure like other major sports such as Tennis or Golf.

The significance of Fallon Sherrock's achievements on televised events should not be underestimated and will inspire more women to play and strive for a Tour card where inevitably a woman will win an event.

However, as history has shown, nothing can be taken for granted and the importance of television

coverage on the health of the game cannot be underestimated. Major decisions soon have to be made when the present broadcast rights come up for renewal.

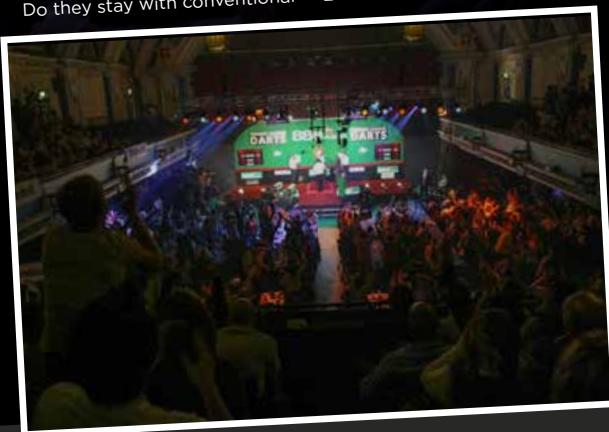
Streaming/subscription services such as DAZN and Viaplay, who already have rights to PDC events in various territories, are likely to show interest in them; those in charge may have to decide what is the right route to take.

Do they stay with conventional

TV broadcasters with a known and reliable audience or go all in with the streaming services, which do not release viewing figures but are not believed to get huge viewership, of course neither did SKY all those years ago.

The future of Darts as a mainstream sport and whether this magazine will have a celebratory centenary edition in 2072, could depend on the decision!!

LAWRENCE LUSTIG



# THE LAST WORD

**FOR many years the final article in Darts World was The Last World. It was written by Dr. Darts himself (Patrick Chaplin) and only ceased in 2020. Patrick has already had his erudite say earlier and so as Alan was saying before being so rudely interrupted:**

The tried and tested successful format of Darts World continued right through from those early issues until ill health stopped Tony Wood from continuing in his role and he relinquished the reigns. The magazine was taken over by Andy Till who struggled valiantly against the multiple foes of increasing costs, greater competition, and the digital age until early in 2020 the impending arrival of Covid-19 was one straw too much.

With new owners, new editors, and a new team the magazine has been completely transformed and turned into not only a more compact and easier-to-store and handle size but also into a more luxurious magazine with upgraded paper to make it more hard-wearing and long-lasting.

There is a new outlook for the magazine with fresh ideas introduced into each edition together with the recent introduction of the digital Darts World Extra which, like its parent publication, is proving very successful.

With the new and extremely enthusiastic people at the helm, I am sure the only way that the top "Voice of Darts" will go is onwards and upwards providing all of what's good in the sport and



Any publication depends upon those who contribute to it. Whether authors, reporters or camera artists our magazine would be nothing without them.

Darts World feels this more keenly than most, as we depend upon volunteers from across the UK and around the globe being willing to send us their reports, news, images or comments.

It's been a genuine pleasure to work with Alan Towe and some of our most illustrious, loyal and long-serving contributors, from the past half-century, on this special supplement.

We thank every single contributor from the bottom of our hearts and hope to maintain and expand our family for the next 50 years. (CJ Harris-Hulme: Managing Editor)

continuing to cover everything from amateur to professional leagues, competitions, exhibitions and of course the top league in the world the UKDA National League with county teams from the length and breadth of the country.

I am full of admiration for the determination and dedication shown, the new format of the magazine, and the huge interest being shown in Darts World Extra. All in all, I can only see the

magazine growing in stature and attracting readers old and young. I all our readers agree and remain as interested and passionate as myself and the DW team have remained.

At the risk of repeating myself I say once more: I am proud to have been associated with Darts World for many, many years and hopefully will continue to do so for many more to come.

**ALAN TOWE**

Ally Pally Review • PDC World Youth Champion • World Seniors

# Darts WORLD EXTRA

The Worlds  
DWE 1 Spring 2022  
£Free  
Integrational Issue

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEWS:  
WDP's Nick Rolis  
Phil Beattie  
Steve Bunting  
Michael van Gerwen

Adrian Raman • Lakeside Preview • Men's & Women's

# Darts WORLD EXTRA

DWE ISSUE 2  
November 2022

INSIDE:

- THE THREE WORLD MATCHPLAYS
- PETER WRIGHT ON DEFENDING HIS TITLE
- JOSHAN BROOKS' TORRID LAKESIDE DEBUT
- IMPROVE YOUR GAME ON OUR PRACTICE BOARD
- PREMIER LEAGUE & WORLD CUP REVIEWS
- WORLD DARTS DIARY

# Darts WORLD EXTRA

DWE ISSUE 3  
16th of December 2022

INSIDE:

- PREMIER LEAGUE
- INTERVIEWS - NICK DOUG & CHRIS WATKINS
- REVIEW: CHOOSE YOUR WEAPONS
- ON TOUR: WDF & PDC TALK EVENTS
- WORLD DARTS DIARY

When there were Four

DEBUTANT GILLEN  
JOHN BERLIN  
BORANCA

On Tour • Thomas Barley • 21 months of love and more...

# Darts WORLD EXTRA

DWE ISSUE 4  
1st of February 2023

## SEARCH FOR THE HERO

# Darts WORLD EXTRA

DWE ISSUE 5

INSIDE:

- REMEMBERING TONY BROWN
- ADAM OGDEN RIPS THE BULLSEYE
- LAURENCE LUSTIG, COLIN OSBORN AND LAURA TURNER
- EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH MURPHY'S BILLY COVILL
- THE WORLD'S OLDEST DARTS OPENING
- MEET THE RAGEL BOY

WORLD DARTS DIARY

# Darts WORLD EXTRA

DWE ISSUE 6

## EURO STAR

BORANCA'S DORMANT DELIGHT

INSIDE:

- ON TOUR FINALE'S
- ADC GRAND FINALS
- BULLSEYES & BOUNCEOUTS
- ROBERT OWEN: ON THE ATTACK
- PRACTICE PARTNER: GO DARTS PRO
- WORLD SUPPLEMENT: MATCH 2
- WDF & EURO REVIEWS

# Darts WORLD EXTRA

DWE ISSUE 7

INSIDE:

- WEBBY'S WORLD
- THE VETERAN'S PARADE
- WOMEN ON THE MARCH
- PALACE BULLSEYES & BOUNCEOUTS
- OUR ALLY PALLY PLAYER GUIDE
- UNIVERSITY CHALLENGE
- THE DARTS WORLD 50

## PALACE PRELUDE

# WE'VE GOT YOU COVERED

Matchday Programmes delivered to your door





Interview by  
JR LOTT with thanks  
to WINMAU

# Not just a Pretty Face

## Beaton's Bounty

If deserved popularity, natural talent and persistence earned World titles Steve Beaton would have had surely claimed his earlier than 1996 and have a hatful by now.

As the World No.1, for a number of years previous, Steve was in possession of all the above, as well as a winning record in many other events including the Winmau World Masters, and yet he had suffered first-round defeats at the biggest event of them all.

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP 2022 • ULTIMATE GUIDE

## Darts DATABASE

Steve Beaton is the ideal person to link the variety of World Championships within this publication. As the WDF Lakeside Champion in 1996, he has competed in more than 30 World Championships for the two main codes over four decades. Without being indelicate it's fair to say that Steve now qualifies for World Senior Darts and may well make it a hat-trick of World Championship codes when he chooses to step off the PDC treadmill.

**1984**  
Steve makes his TV Debut in Double Diamond Masters

**1993**  
1st Major Trophies - British Pentathlon, World Cup (Team) and World Masters!

**1996**  
World Champion!

**2002**  
Steve joins the PDC and hits 9 Darter

**2009**  
Final of the European Championships and wins 1st Pro Tour title

**2010**  
Defeats Phil Taylor in thriller to reach Grand Slam Semi-Final

**2013**  
Wins German Darts Masters to claim his 1st European Tour title

**2017**  
Celebrates 15 years in the PDC with a broadcast 9 Darter and a Pro Tour win

It's for this reason he claims his toughest match to have been the first round in '96. Co Stompe was yet to really make his name but was no pushover, Steve added:

"After the disappointment of the previous years, it was after winning that game that I really believed I could go on and win it"

The Adonis is renowned for having the fluidity of quicksilver, as well as the looks of the Greek gods, yet by the time he lifted the famous BDO Trophy it is relief that he recalls:

"My best memory was defeating Ritchie Burnett and finally winning the title, after three or four years of being number one and heavily favoured to win it, that was a major relief to me"

The ever-bronzed figure jests that he "celebrated in a jacuzzi with 8 women", certain YouTube clips might lend support to this, but, in reality, Steve enjoyed the



after-event dinner at the Lakeside with friends and family.

"It was great fun, with all the toasts and the champagne, you begin to realise exactly what you've won..."

"Being the World Champion was an absolute pleasure, I enjoyed every minute up until Marshall James got the best of a decider in the 1997 semifinal"

Steve will hope to bid for another World title tilt this December, now well into his fourth decade of appearances he recalls his other favourite champion, Eric Bristow:

"I recall watching him as a youngster. He was just so confident, he would say things like: 'I just going to polish the trophy for when I get it home and sit it on my mantelpiece'"

"That kind of confidence just blew me away"

It would be no surprise if a player of the future paid Steve a similarly warm and generous compliment.

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP 2022 • ULTIMATE GUIDE

● Legacy

# Seniors serve up a Feast

Magical mix of "Quality, Entertainment and Nostalgia"



Words: PAUL WOODAGE  
Images: WSDT AND CHRIS SARGEANT

**F**ebruary witnessed Scotland's Robert Thornton crowned the inaugural World Senior Darts Champion, defeating Martin Adams in a final for the purists.

Leading up to the event, the excitement levels had been colossal. With a line-up reading like a who's who amongst legends of the game, history beckoned for one to further carve their legacy into darting folklore.

Once again, fans packed the iconic



Circus Tavern where, for four thrilling days, they were treated to a memorable trip down the oche of yesteryear.

Naturally, most eyes were on the greatest of all time, Phil Taylor as he made his hugely anticipated return to the ring.

Despite not producing the astronomical averages of his glory days, The Power did enough to motor past former sparring partner Peter Manley in his opening match - recovering from dropping the first set to run out a 3-1 winner.

DARTS WORLD EXTRA • 2022

● Legacy

Tantalisingly waiting for the Stoke ace next was a certain Kevin Painter. A man whom Taylor famously defeated in the 2004 PDC World Championship final, a game he almost lost.

With the Artist still out for revenge, he managed to heal a few remaining scars by completing a comprehensive straight-sets victory over his nemesis.

However, in the semi-final, Painter suffered the same fate as many before him in major tournaments - beating Phil Taylor and then losing in the next round. On this occasion, it was eventual champ, Robert Thornton who did the damage, sealing a 4-2 win.

The other final four match saw Terry Jenkins pitted against Martin Adams for amazingly, the very first time. A bull versus a wolf would indeed make a fascinating contest and this certainly proved to be the case.

Eventually, it was the magnificent Adams who prevailed 4-2 in sets. At the tender age of 65-years old, Wolfie is still producing some quite brilliant darts.

Viewers were then treated to a much-welcomed appearance by John Gwynne, sharing the commentary box in the final with Mark Webster and Chris Murphy.



Legends in darts don't come much bigger than the much revered Gwynnie. The great man's evocative tones seemed to capture the essence of the tournament perfectly.

As the final began, the Scot immediately became a thorn in the side of Wolfie, racing into a 4-0 set lead and one

away from the title.

Adams did manage to pinch a set back but the damage had been done as Thornton wrapped the game up shortly after, registering a 5-1 win and the honour of becoming the first-ever World Senior Darts Champion.



## The Steady Mix of Seniors Darts with JR Lott

World Senior Darts are off and running! In the run-up to, and the immediate aftermath of, the initial World Championship, WSDT have already announced World Seniors Masters and World Seniors Matchplay as well as a series of over 50s opens where qualifications and other prizes can be claimed.

There were those who were skeptical of the senior's project, and still more who thought it may be a one-hit-wonder driven by a certain Stoke on Trent legend. As often in life, it appears that the 'Debbie Downers' were wrong and the mix of ingredients offered by World Seniors Darts proved a critical and audience success (both live & TV).

The level of play was strong throughout with the more active players leading the way, but other stepping up to the

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Legacy

plate in a way that bodes well for the future. Robert Thornton, Martin Adams, Kevin Painter and Larry Butler all put in performances averaging in the 90s and overall the standard was comparable with most Lakeside World Championships.

Equally impressive was that no player embarrassed themselves, regardless of their generation or time out of the game and one or two of the golden generation performed very well indeed. Both Bob Anderson and Keith Deller could count themselves unlucky in the draw.

As well as quality an event such as this needs an element of entertainment value or style not perhaps expected at the PDC world championships where the performance level is often at the very highest possible. This was available in spades. The qualifiers both performed strongly and Richie Howson had huge support (he lives minutes away from the Circus Tavern) who helped to level the playing field for him. Peter Manley understood that he would be the pantomime villain, especially after defeating Deta Hedman, and did not mind one bit. Adams laughed his way through as always and Hedman, Gulliver and



Lisa Ashton represented Women's darts strongly.

The final ingredient is a dangerous one. Nostalgia can be a poor dish if served solo but if it is sprinkled over a potentially tasty concoction it can make all the difference. It did here. Bob Anderson's final three darts were a 180, the entire house rose to him as we were treated to the gun-slinging 'finger point' that helped define an era. Paul Lim is simply a folk icon and John Lowe, the elder statesman of the field, received a remarkable reception with no little affection thrown in.

There were many other moments

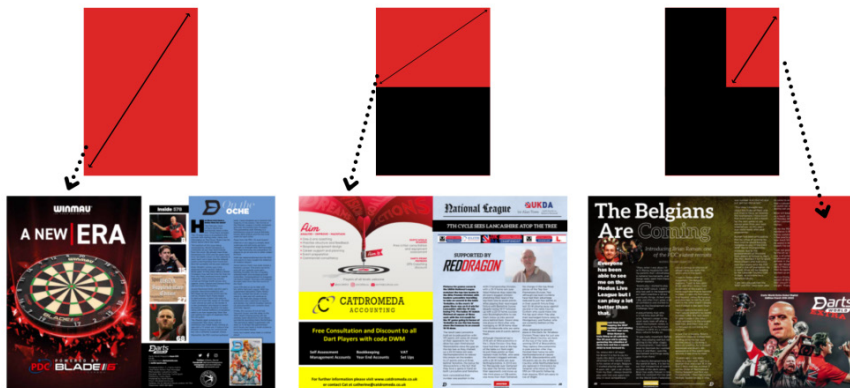
provided by the rich cast of characters that reminded you with every match what had gone into making our sport what it is today.

All the above happened without a mention of The Power! When Phil did arrive there was huge reception and perhaps it was as well that the Stoke man was not his usual imperious self. A slightly lacklustre Taylor allowed all the others to shine and all the ingredients of this fantastic new recipe to contribute to the start of something... JR Lott (@JRLott2)

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ON TOUR

# Euro Bonus

THE INFLUENCE OF THE EUROPEAN TOUR IS VARIED AND GROWING RAPIDLY

May is a bumper month for the PDC's tier four players. Since the publication of our last issue (April 29th) opportunities stretch from a quartet of European Tour events that have places for non-tour cardholders, the second batch of the Women's Series for 2022 and a whole handful (yes 5!) events on the Development Tour.

So far the European Tour (ET) has been a mix of the eminently predictable – with MVG getting back to his habit of harvesting these trophies – and the career-boosting leap of Luke Humphries. Indeed, it was MVG who kicked off May by defeating Danny Noppert in Graz to claim the Austrian Open.

After claiming a hatrick of events including a back-to-back pair in mid-May, Cool Hand Luke skipped the Dutch Darts Championship for a long-standing engagement and to give the others, especially Rob Cross, a chance to win one! In addition to the headliners, these events often provide a clue as to who is breaking through, getting used to the crowd, cameras or

Words: JR LOTT  
Photos: PDC

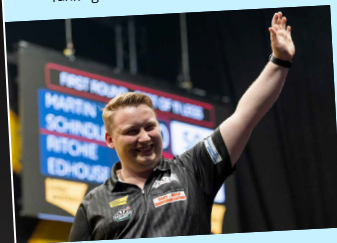
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ON TOUR

stage, and may be overdue a career leap in the coming weeks or months.

Martin Lukeman, aka *Smash*, produced a tremendous run to the final of the Munich ET and then backed it up by handing the brush to MVG in Stuttgart. His 6-0 victory prompted many variations of the headline 'Smashed'.

Rob Cross has been able to use the ET to rebuild his winning habit and to collect ranking £££s in areas where he is not



defending a great deal. Ricky Evans also seems to be 'Rapidly' following this example.

Martin Schindler is regularly performing strongly and has recently been as far as the last four. *The Wall*, as Schindler is known, could be the final piece in the German darts jigsaw.

For more than a decade German players have flirted with the elite and then shrunk



from the final step. Some, including Max Hopp and Gabriel Clemens, are still playing well and could rise again but Schindler's slower and rock steady progress bodes well. He also seems engaging with a smile and demeanour that should attract the sports commercial elements.

Wesley Plaisier is another who could have been seen coming if qualifying for, and winning games in, these events is a good sign. The big Dutchman has been lurking around the edges of elite darts for a few years, never quite seeming to get the break he needed. The tide of fortunes, if taken at the flood, may be about to carry Wesley forth to glory.

Another who is clearly benefiting from repeated runs in front of bigger crowds and on TV is Damon Heta. Now Heta has already done the business on stage/TV but his best efforts were unranked. Since they have counted for PDC rankings and toward his overall career the Aussie has been a little underwhelming. Two recent European Tour semi-finals, including the European darts GP, suggest this *The Heat* may be turning this around.

This season's ET has seen valuable board time for Nathan Aspinall, a route back to winning ways for Michael Van Gerwen, and tremendously popular runs for Sedlacek, Gawlas, and the youngster Josh Rock.

May again demonstrated that the PDC Europe Tour's habit of providing a launchpad/springboard/parachute or even a last chance saloon is likely to continue. The summer will be slower but this Autumn



will feature another hat full of ET events from Belgium, Hungary, Germany and Gibraltar.

Can you spot the next breakthrough star or progress maker?

Check out *Darts World's Super 8s* (on Pages 36 & 37) to see who is rocking the ET.

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 DARTS Doing Good



Words: ADAM WHITING

# Meso... what?

## TEARS, BEERS, HOPE AND DARTS

*"Mesothelioma? I'd never heard of it, I thought that it was a place somewhere in the Middle East..."*

We often hear about darts being a fantastic social activity, Adams gives us an example of just how important that can be:

It's been just over a year, February 2nd, 2021 to be exact, when I received one of the worst phone calls I have ever had to answer, from my mate of nearly 30 years, Dave.

So my phone rings and it flashes up "Little Dave" as he is known to everyone. The call we had all been dreading... (deep breath)

There was a fire alarm at his home and he had to take the stairs, living on the 12th floor this was no mean feat for a fully fit man and let's just say Dave loves a beer. He thought nothing of it, putting it

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down to age, having a bit of excess timber, and just being a bit lazy.

As the breathlessness seemed to continue over the next few days, to be sure it was nothing serious, Dave took himself off to the doctor for a check-up. The doctor advised him to go to the hospital, and they discovered that he had fluid on his lungs and they would have to drain the fluid before they could do any more explorative checks.

A week later, he got a call from the doctor asking if anyone was at home with him. The doctor confirmed our worst fears that it was actually lung cancer and it was very serious!

The next day on the 3rd of February, he got another devastating call to tell him that his cancer was terminal.

Dave calls me and comes out with it, choking back the tears, telling me he had Mesothelioma? I'd never heard of it, I thought that was a place somewhere in the Middle East, I vaguely remember learning about at school. (That would be Mesopotamia).

The doctors gave him 2 years to live if he had a major operation to remove things, followed by chemotherapy. Wow! What do you say to that?

Stunned choked up and holding back the tears, I say, you will beat this! (Not really knowing the true severity or what this horrible disease really is all about).

I speak to our other mutual friends, my wife, and family in disbelief that this is even happening...

Googled it, searched Facebook and researched as much as I could about the subject (Mesothelioma, Asbestos, lung cancer) I came across mesothelioma.uk.com which was a great source of help and information.

Exposure to asbestos is responsible for up to 9 out of 10 mesothelioma cases. There are thought to be other rare causes of the disease but none are fully understood at this time.

Mesothelioma also seems to be a disease that affects people in a much older age bracket so how can a reasonably fit person, who has never knowingly worked with or around asbestos, at 47 be given 2 years to live?

13 months on I can say I'm still not comfortable talking to him about bucket lists and what he wants at his funeral but it's not about me.

We have been meeting up for drinks and playing darts ever since lockdown but

now it's for a different purpose. I set shed darts up during lockdown to support all our mental health. For our group of mates to meet up online, and where possible in person, to have a game of arrows and speak about whatever they want in a relaxed atmosphere. It has become even more important for us now to be able to forget about things for a while throwing a few arrows.

Fifteen months on, Dave was able to attend my wedding, we've been on a fantastic holiday and weekends away including one on a yacht! Dave has flown a plane, done an indoor skydive, is playing in a darts team, and is currently planning his own wedding after proposing to his fantastic girlfriend.

He still has one wish though, he's yet to fulfil...and that's to beat me at darts.

I will be trying to raise as much money as possible for @Mesouk who supports people through this journey and research this particular cancer. (You can donate here)

### UPDATE:

Over a year on from his operation/chemo Dave has had scans and a check-up and was told he is doing really well and at this time, there is no need for any further treatment.



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# The Practice Board

## GO DARTS PRO JOIN YOUR TEAM



Words: ANDERS ÖSTMAN

**D**arts World is delighted to Welcome Anders Östman to 'The Practice Board'. Anders founded Go Darts Pro and despite being struck by tragedy he has developed the go-to online platform for structuring and improving your practice.

The Go Darts Pro platform features many games and drills to assist in improving all areas of your game and is used by fast developers including the members of Team 360. Over to Anders:

When I started to play darts in the 90's I'd been a basketball player and coach for several years.

As a basketball coach, I always tried to create fun and challenging drills and training routines for the players to work on specific tasks. When it came to practice shooting, for example, I varied the training with focused high volume shooting drills from different angles of the basket to practicing shooting under pressure.

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So when I took up darts it was natural for me to find ways to improve faster.

**The Problem:**

One of the things I struggled with the most was hitting the doubles. Especially in a game of 501 and when my opponent was on a finish

I practiced a lot of doubles around the board but I felt it lacked pressure. So I added a little twist:

**The Game - Doubles Lock**

Start throwing 3 darts at D20. If you hit one double your next double is D19 down to D1.

Here's where I added the pressure aspect to it. If you miss the double with all three darts you need to start over at D20 again.

But there's also a twist to it. You can lock a double by getting 2 or 3 hits.

So if you're on D16 for example and hit 2 D16's, that double is now locked and D15 is

your new starting double. If you then hit one D15 with your next throw, one D14 but miss D13 with all three darts, you start over at D15.

If you only hit 1 double on each D20 to D10 for example, you will feel massive pressure at the last dart, needing to hit D9 to avoid starting over again. That's the pressure you'll feel in a game of 501 when you need to hit the double with your last dart...

When you manage to hit the D1 the game is finished and you'll see how many darts you needed to finish the game. When you play this game on a regular basis on GoDartsPro.com you can compare the stats and see how you're improving but you will also see which doubles you need to practice more. The game is easy to use and even got support for autotracking the darts using a Scolla device to make it even easier.

**Conclusions**

By playing only 501's you will of course improve but if you're interested in trying to improve faster you really should adopt specific practice routines to your daily training.

There are so many aspects that make up a great practice routine, but adding pressure to the training is one of the key elements for efficient practice. That's also why I believe there's a need for many different games to choose from.

During my years as a basketball player, my

absolute power skill was my shooting. I got that after years of training, shooting from all kinds of angles, distances, under pressure, while moving etc.

Do you want to improve your doubles? You know what to do... and make it count!



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# Masterful

## NEW YORK EVENT PROVES PERFECT SHOP WINDOW

*Most sports with global ambitions bump into twin difficulties at one stage or another.*

How to present your sports superstars, and their elite products, across the globe and throughout the year without them burning out horribly and then how to crack certain very large but notoriously difficult markets and bring them into the fold.

Whether you think of it as World Series Darts or The Masters Series the PDC have built a formula and a presentation that has solved the first puzzle and may well have cracked the second as well.

Every Summer, and at other convenient times, the PDC ventures forth with a selection of its top stars. It then invites the

Words: CJ HARRIS-HULME  
Images: MULHOLLAND/PDC

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local talent via its affiliates, or friends in those destinations, and presents a glitzy few days of top-class darts with all the PDC panache on show. It even manages to manufacture a season/year-end finale from these which doubles as another TV event featuring the best of the best but with dark horses and breakthrough stars.

Elements of Kerry Packer's World Series



Cricket can be seen in the concept of the best players being brought together to face each other in different formats with all the razzmatazz and also of ATP Tennis's Masters series and its, oft London-based, finals event.

The globe-trotting series has been a slow burn or a stop-start affair, with some

elements proving an instant success and others taking tweaks and changes before breaking through. But those watching carefully would cite the breakthrough of Damon Heta as a major moment.

The Australian World Cup Champion had first shown his implacable nature and superb skills by winning the Brisbane Masters in 2019. To stroll onto the stage as a local qualifier and walk off with the trophy was unheard of. But suddenly these events were more than just glorified displays or exhibitions. Of course, we almost saw the ultimate fairytale with Fallon's Nordic masters run in 2021.

2022 may not quite have had the impact of last year but Dimitri Van Den Bergh's popular win, Gary Anderson reaching the final, and Fallon's early victory ensured the event is well and truly anchored in the calendar.

**Now they had the formula and the fairy tales sorted, could the PDC crack that difficult darts nut known as North America?**

**Superstar Exports? Check!** The PDC had little trouble in persuading its marquee

names to head to the USA for a leg of the Masters series. World champion Peter Wright, arguably the game's biggest name in MWG, the other recent big event champions and, of course, the Queen of the Palace herself.

**The Cream of Home Nation Talent?**

**Check!** Thanks to the concentrating effect of the Championship Darts Circuit (CDC)



the last few years have seen a dramatic uptick in the numbers of highly competitive players emanating from those shores. In addition, they seem to have discovered a number of distinctive and interesting players that the audience is warming too. Danny Baggish, for example, has huge talent but a presence and story to

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match. The hosting of the North American Championship over the same weekend and in the same venue surely cemented this relationship.

**Iconic Venue? Check!** Darts and North America share a love of a venue that can hold the history of their sport whilst also being one of its characters. As with darts' most cherished venues, 'The Garden' has a long history and is the host to many different types of events both sports and cultural. Add in its eye-catching surroundings and other local landmarks and surely it's a match made in heaven.

After a two-year covid delay and many other stalled efforts to show steel tip, PDC darts at its very best it was finally time for the New York Masters to take to the MSG oche!

Peter Wright gave the event the full Snakebite routine, special shirts, walk-ons and a huge amount of pre-event media. The World Champion is darts' most colourful salesman and surely ideal for the North American market. He

also played rather well!

Leonard Gates risked a party pooper reputation by KOing Fallon Sherrock early. But, also made sure there was local representation, in the second phase, during what proved a fabulous weekend for the Army veteran dubbed The Soldier. Gates went on to claim the North American event defeating Bagghish in the final.

Unsurprisingly, given the current form, it was Michael Smith who wrote his name in the history books. Becoming the first professional darts event winner in the esteemed venue.

Almost every comment to be heard in the hours and days after seemed to emphasise that this time the PDC had "got America right...." Jeff Smith, the popular Canadian thrower, Peter Citera (no not the Chicago singer) CEO of the CDC and many others waxed lyrical and promised to return. So did the PDC.

Within 24hrs the 2023 staging of both events was confirmed as returning: "...staged the bet365 US Darts Masters and North American Championship on Friday and Saturday, with over 7,000 fans attending across the three sessions"

"The bet365 US Darts Masters and North American Championship have been a huge success and we've enjoyed two great days in the Hulu Theatre at Madison Square Garden," said PDC Chief Executive Matt Porter.

It has now been confirmed that the tournaments will return to New York on June 2-3 2023, giving fans another chance to see the sport's best players taking on the cream of North American darts on the big stage.

Porter finished: "We'd had to wait four years to finally get to New York, but we're already setting our sights on returning bigger and better in 2023."

Masters of all they survey?



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Amateur OPEN ROAD

# We are the Champions



Words: HARRY MASTERSON AND JR LOTT  
Images: HARRY MASTERSON

## MODERN NEWS OF THE WORLD RETURNS WITH SMALL MIRACLE

*"What's great about this event is it's best of three, that's a killer and even if you go 1-0 up you must have your wits about you..." (Colin Lloyd)*

**A**lec Small joined an exclusive and illustrious list of Worthington's Champion of Champions winners, including Gerwyn Price and Jonny Clayton, last weekend. The Welshman beat a gallant Scott Bayliss 2-0 in the Grand Final at the Depot in Cardiff to win £10,000.

Small's triumph concluded a tumultuous climax to the hugely popular quick-fire competition as it returned after a three-year absence.

The day was certainly an eventful one, loud music accompanied the welcome and warm-up period with players comparing the atmosphere to that of "a banging nightclub party". Colin Lloyd and Bobby George were on hand for a Q and A just before the Semis. Credit must be given to Red Dragon for

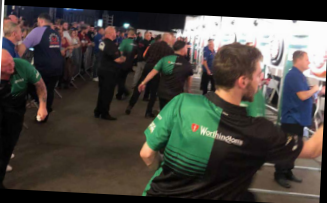


DARTS WORLD EXTRA • 2022

Amateur OPEN ROAD

organising a fantastic event in the Welsh capital.

The players on show certainly had the quality with the likes of Martin Lukeman, and Connor Scutt - two players on the PDC Pro Tour circuit involved in the action trying to win their first crowns - former Winmau World Master Adam Smith Neale and Jim Williams trying to become the first player to appear twice on the giant dart trophy.



Small would have been initially pleased simply to have come through as the winner of a very tough board overcoming a group of players that included the likes of Nick Kenny and Chris Willard.

The former Development tour star then stepped up again providing some quality performances to dispatch Red Dragon star David Evans in the Quarter Finals before claiming victory over Rob Owen 2-0 in the Semis.

Stack Attack has played superbly in the Live League and on the PDC and WDF tours already this year and had himself played the role of a party pooper in the previous round.

Marshall James, 51, the mercurial Welsh legend, World finalist, and World Cup winner had reached the quarter-finals in an effort to record a significant win for the first time this century! What a story was brewing here. However, dart doesn't have much room for sentiment and Owen snuffed out James' spirited challenge 2-0 to advance.

This year's eventual Champion of Champions qualified for the event having won at The Oak earlier this year, with the passage through to the competition being you must win at one of the selected 256 arenas to qualify.

Runner-up Scott Bayliss may have fallen at the Final hurdle but can certainly hold his head high, especially in his victory over Lukeman, in the Quarter Finals, knowing that his opponent hadn't dropped a leg all through the competition after coming out the winner of Board 16.

Scott had qualified through the Quakers Yard for the competition and despite not going all the way, the run can be described as fairy-tale after walking away from the Depot £2,500 richer.

A fantastic atmosphere and a cracking tournament so it's safe to say the return



was a huge success. Many congratulations to Alec Small on being crowned Champion of Champions!

We'll leave Lloyd with the last word (not a huge surprise!), following on from his earlier thoughts the former World No.1 added:

*"It's great to have it back, it's one of them events where it's not all about the pros, it comes from the pubs and people have to qualify through their own area."  
"...who's game is on will always be crowned the champion. Red Dragon have worked really hard with Worthington's to put on this event, it's a shame we missed it the last couple of years but it's great to have it back."*

And so say all of us, see you next year!

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DARTS WORLD EXTRA • 2022

One shot

## The iconic images that captured darts

It may be an old cliché, but, in sport, a picture truly can reveal what words cannot adequately describe. One Shot is our regular series that showcases some of our sports most iconic and memorable single images. Some encapsulate an era, or in the case of the opening edition the closing of one, while others preserve a single moment or even a piece of humour. Modern darts has had six decades of such moments for us to choose from and reveal the stories behind.

Your guide, Lawrence Lustig, has a deep and abiding affection for our sport and is responsible for many such images during his decades as the PDC's official photographer.

“The Winter Gardens, that beautiful iconic Victorian building in Blackpool that has hosted such stars as Charlie Chaplin, Laurel and Hardy, Judy Garland, Frank Sinatra, The Beatles and a who's who of showbiz glitterati but none have owned the famous stage as much as a lad from Stoke named Philip Douglas Taylor.

Phil “The Power” Taylor, the most successful darts player of all time,

had announced his decision to retire from the PDC but unlike “Old Blue Eyes” this was a farewell tour where there would be no comebacks and 2017 would be his last appearance in the venue where he had previously won 15 world matchplay championships.

My job as a photographer is always to try to capture that moment, that image that as the saying goes, is worth “a thousand words”. Sometimes the opportunity happens in front of you, like the winning goal or the punch that wins the title, other times you have to work and plan for that special moment that you know is going to happen and making sure you are in the right place at the right time.

I knew this time that the photo needed these key components, Phil, The Stage, and The Winter Gardens, to tell the story of this remarkable “love affair” that was coming to a close, for weeks it had been going through my mind, years of covering this tournament, years of photographing Phil, I knew what I wanted, I knew what the ingredients were but how to get it.

Phil standing on the Oche in the Winter Gardens was a photo I had taken a thousand times, this was not what was required, I wanted that special moment,

in a special player's special career. I decided the walk-on would offer the best chance of achieving my goal.

I had always noticed that when the strobes went off to his music “The Power” by Snap! the whole venue would light up for a fraction of a second, just like in a real lightning storm. Now it was to find the right angle for the shot. A couple of attempts in rounds 1 and 2 did not produce what I wanted, thankfully the maestro was still in and a quarter-final clash with Michael Van Gerwen beckoned and I realised where the perfect position was to get the frame that frankly had become an obsession.

I wedged myself between the stage and the steps with my chin rubbing the carpet as at 8.57 on July 28th, 2017 Phil Taylor strode toward the Oche with the strobes going off surrounding his body and illuminating the whole of the ornate historic building. I had cracked it, but so had Phil as he beat Michael and went on to win his 16th World Matchplay Title.

For the technically minded, I used a Canon 1DXMk11, iso 3200 at 500th of a second with a 15mm fisheye lens at f3.2.”

Image and words: LAWRENCE LUSTIG

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Interview / THE BOARDROOM

# MODUS GO SUPER SIZED

Words: HARRY MASTERSON  
Images: MODUS

## £1 MILLION OPPORTUNITY IN NEW PLAYING FACILITY

*From player's understairs hallways to a £1m opportunity for amateur players, within 2 years, is super stuff indeed. Super Series Boss Billy Lovell reveals more:*

Starting during the Covid 19 pandemic where players were attaching cameras to their rooms to continue playing darts, Modus Sports have taken the next step evolving the popular Live League to a new competition called the **Modus Super Series** where up to £20,000 will be on offer to whoever comes out of Champions Week on top.

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So far players such as ADC Number 2 Steve Brown, 2012 PDC World Championship Finalist Andy Hamilton and Lisa Ashton, the first lady to win a PDC Tour Card, have taken part in the revamped competition. Graham Usher and Conan Whitehead are the two winners so far with week 3 seeing Red Dragon Champion of Champions Alec Small debuting amongst the field.

Billy Lovell the Super Series Head of Operations spoke on the new format excited at this new competition which you can access either on the telly (via Sporty Stuff TV) or through the Super Series YouTube channel.

*"The move from players' houses to our studio*

*in Southampton was ground-breaking for the then Online Darts Live League. The studio was a step up with a purpose-built playing area and production studio. The success of the Southampton studio allowed us to develop the new MODUS LIVE LOUNGE and launch the £1m per year MODUS Super Series"*

Players such as Neil Duff who won the WDF World Championship when darts returned to Lakeside and Runner Up Thibault Tricole have both played the Live League and with many players coming through the Amateur Darts Circuit, the opportunity surely presents itself for many grassroots players to take the next step into developing their careers.

*"There is a selection panel. It's the panel's job to scout players, based on current form from all available stats and tournaments. We also receive many applications by email which are also put before the board. We have a good relationship with the ADC and are looking to explore opportunities with them."*

*"The format allows players to play five matches per day so over a course of a week that's 25 matches under professional conditions, along with the chance of a final night on a Saturday, so they're gaining invaluable experience. And the format delivers top-class amateur darts for the viewers and stakeholders."*

The feedback received from players like former World Champion Martin Adams and

the trailblazer for Women's darts Fallon Sherrock has been great, with Wolfie amongst the field of players in the first week to grace the new setup in Southampton.

*"The feedback from all the players that have now played in the MODUS LIVE LOUNGE has been very positive. All of them have said they much prefer playing on a stage under TV conditions. You would think this favours the more experienced players but in turn it gives the up-and-coming players the experience they need to hopefully make the next step to becoming a PDC Tour Card Holder. This is one of our main goals."*

When asked whether the Super Series would be looking to shake up the formats they are currently using as well as introduce walk-ons to give players that full experience players in the PDC get when they go on stage for a television broadcast tournament with an audience, Billy said:

*"Yes, there are plans to look at special weeks and special formats along with the overall presentation of the event. The MODUS Super Series is in its embryonic stage, and we will look to develop it in all areas as we grow."*

The Modus Super Series continues this week with Sebastian Bialecki, Danny Lauby and Alec Small amongst the players involved in week three which kicked off yesterday in Southampton.

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Interview / THE BOARDROOM

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Amateur (ADC)

# ADC'S Super 8<sup>S</sup>

## CHAMPIONSHIP TOUR'S DEBUT SEASON IMPRESSES ALL



Words: **CHARRIS-HULME**  
Images: ADC

Here at Darts World, we are rather fond of a 'Super 8'. Our regular stats feature shows the importance of the last 8 and of reaching it regularly. The nascent Amateur Darts Circuit has had its own '8' this year.

The Winmau-backed Championship Tour has featured four double-header weekends with a brand new setup and operations team that is as good as you will find outside of the PDC's Pro Tour.

Bristol, Manchester and the North East have hosted at least one weekend each, with the full ADC setup being transported to spacious and modern venues in each location. More than 100 players have paid to play each event via the Darts Atlas system and it looked for all the world as if we were going to have 8 different winners as well, more of that in a moment.

In addition to each day's main event, there have been shorter format 'plate' events to ensure that a decent day's darts could be had by those unfortunate enough to go out early. The feedback online from players of all standards, regardless of success on tour, has been remarkably positive.

The mix of entrants on the tour gives a strong clue as to its success. There is a group of well-known names and title

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Amateur (ADC)

winners, previously world-ranked or tour card holders, including Adam Smith Neale, Steve Brown himself and our own Colin Osborne. Then there are a group of rising talents including the only double winner Adam Atkinson, Stu Wilson, Kevin Garcia and Adam Warner.

Two other groups are notable; one is the 'second chancers', a group of older players who are grabbing the chances that the current surge in opportunity after, perhaps, missing out in their first flush. The two Tonys, Wood and Newell, spring to mind.

The final weekend of this year's Tour took place over the weekend of September 24 & 25th and saw the tour return to Bristol. Much had been made, by us media types at least, of the fact that six different winners had claimed the half dozen events previously held. Adam Atkinson soon ruined the possibility of a perfect 8!

The first event of the final weekend

concluded with a battle of the Adams. Both Smith-Neale and Atkinson stood to become the first multiple tour winners but it was the North Easterner who came out on top with an emphatic 6-1 win. Atkinson, known as The Poolie, had claimed the

very first event and booked his efforts with a fine run here.

The final event saw the first international winner and perhaps the most impressive overall run of the entire 2022 tour. Danny Lauby Jr had been on our screens after midnight on Saturday night, playing the finals of Week 9 of the MODUS Super Series. Despite falling in the semi-finals he was next sighted in the practice area of the Championship tour

before 11 am on Sunday!

In addition to his taxing schedule, the USA player was immediately hit with a nightmare early draw. As if playing the Muffin man, Steve Hine, in round one was not enough he would then have to



### ADC Championship Tour Finals Weekend Qualifiers 2022

Rank	Name	Wins	Points
1	Lee Budgen	1	37
2	ADAM Smith-neale	1	34
3	Adam Atkinson	2	34
4	Kevin Garcia	0	34
5	Adam Warner	0	32
6	Steve Brown	1	31
7	Gary Blades	0	30
8	James Richardson	0	30
9	Tony Wood	0	28
10	Dan Read	1	27
11	Matt Gallett	0	27
12	Michael Huntley	0	26
13	Tony Newell	1	25
14	Stu Wilson	0	23
15	Liam Maughan	0	23
16	Colin Osborne	0	22
17	Chris Wickenden	0	20
18	Sam Cromwell	0	20
19	Darren Williams	0	20
20	Craig Nixon	0	20
21	Raymond Marshall	0	19
22	Simon Preston	0	19
23	Ryan Anderson	0	19
24	James Young	0	19
25	Scott Taylor	0	18
26	Terry Winfield	0	18
27	Shaun Matthews	0	18
28	Eddie Mordica	0	18
29	Tom Cromwell	0	18
30	Brandon Pearson	0	18
31	Adam Mould	0	17
32	Andy Parks	0	17

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Amateur (ADC)

get past multiple tour semifinalist James Richardson. Having accomplished both of these victories with relative ease Lauby then dealt with fellow Live League/Super Series man Rob Collins before making his way through to the final encounter without seeming to be troubled at all.

Awaiting the American was another man having a superb day. Lee Evans, who has had regular PDC success, blitzed his way his half of the draw in almost as smooth a style, including three successive whitewashes, as Lauby had managed.

The final saw Evans start well and lead 2-1, Danny was not about to let his long day's effort go to waste however and he responded by winning 5 of the next 6 legs to claim the 8th and final Championship Tour event of 2022.

October's finals event in Reading with feature events centred around the ADC-sanctioned singles league qualifiers and the top 64 from this season's Championship league. Darts World looks forward to witnessing the climax to such a debut year.

ADC Championship Tour  
Finals Weekend Qualifiers 2022

Rank	Name	Wins	Points
33	Bradley Coltman	0	17
34	Jack Vincent	0	17
35	Louis Lucas-carter	0	16
36	Dave Prins	0	15
37	Tom Garfield	0	15
38	Phil Borthwick	0	15
39	Samuel Price	0	15
40	A.J. Urmston-Toft	0	15
41	Ryan Palmer	0	14
42	Dafydd Edwards	0	14
43	Tom Smith	0	14
44	George Ripley	0	14
45	Steven Jamieson	0	14
46	Steven Edwards	0	14
47	Mark Kidman	0	14
48	Johnny Haines	0	13
49	Lloyd Pennell	0	13
50	Nathan Care	0	13
51	Alan Bell	0	13
52	Steve Hine	0	13
53	Darren Melderis	0	13
54	Craig Birt	0	13
55	Kieran Cresser	0	13
56	David Doughty	0	13
57	Lee Hunter	0	13
58	Andrew Dougan	0	13
59	Tom Lonsdale	0	12
60	Ricky Palmer	0	12
61	Adam Jenkinson	0	12
62	Dom Taylor	0	12
63	Jimmy Bristow	0	12
64	Karl Coleman	0	12

Event winners

- 1 Adam Atkinson
- 2 Tony Newell
- 3 Steve Brown
- 4 Dan Read
- 5 Adam Smith Neale
- 6 Lee Budgen
- 7 Adam Atkinson
- 8 Danny Lauby Jnr



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# BLOKPOEL & THE BAGEL BOY

Words: WIM BLACKPOOL

When to promote the talent and achievements of young players, and when to leave them alone to develop without pressure? It's a delicate balancing act. Especially when Covid has wreaked havoc with the development of so many. Team 360's Jurjen Van de Velde, however, can simply no longer be ignored.

Darts World's JR Lott has followed the development of the prodigies of Winmau, Steve Brown, the JDC and Go Darts Pro since Team 360's founding. He figured that 'The Bagel Boy' might be more comfortable being interviewed in his own tongue, hence we asked Win Blokpoel to get to know this remarkable 'Next Gen' talent exclusively for our 50th-anniversary print edition in November. Here is a taster of their conversation:

**DW:** You're playing darts on a national level since a young age, how did you start playing darts?

**JVLV:** "It just started with watching darts on television, and eventually I decided to take part in a local event in Sneek. That went well, and the tournament director came to me and said, 'you've got talent, you should play on a national level.' I then

played the rest of four local events but after that I started playing on a national level and eventually an international level."

In 2018 you've won the WDF Europe Cup with Team The Netherlands, how was that experience?

"Yeah, that was amazing, to win in my first year in 2018! Successful boys like Wessel (Nijman) and Justin (van Tergouwe) became 18 years old and weren't allowed to play anymore, so it was nice that immediately there was a new successful group of boys."

Your sister Roos also plays darts, and is quite successful. She won the girl's Dutch Open this year, do you think it's more nervous to watch her play than to play your own games?

"Roos and me often play at the same time so then I can't watch her play, she did play the Women's series in August. But I'm not very nervous when she plays to be honest, although that Girl's Dutch Open final obviously was nervy!"

Read loads more from Jurjen (and Wim), including a surprising hint/opinion on the difficulty of the Development vs Challenge Tours in our upcoming print magazine.







Words: JR LOTT  
Images: PDC & CHRIS SARGEANT / WDF

# 8th Wonder

## Greaves will play at The Palace

IMAGINE if a teenager had crossed over from the BDO, after winning their Lakeside, title in about 2012 or so. Then again a field packed with current champions, the two best players of all time and, arguably, the toughest fields ever assembled, won eight, yes eight, Pro Tours in a row.

Beau Greaves has done the equivalent in the PDC Women's Series over her last two appearances. After missing the first 12 events of this season, Beau 'n' Arrow has attended the final two weekends and not lost a single match!

Winning Saturday's events 17 & 18 set up a nerve-jangling finale in the race for World Championship qualification, Greaves trailed Fallon Sherrock by only £250 ahead of the year's final two competitions.

Under mounting pressure, the 18-year-old maintained her unstoppable form to seal an Alexandra Palace debut, prevailing in both Sunday's to qualify alongside Order of Merit leader Lisa Ashton.

Perhaps, the highlight of the current WDF World Champion's weekend may well have been posting the highest average by a female player to defeat Sherrock in a

spectacular final (event 19).

The teenage sensation averaged 107.86 to close out a thrilling 5-3 victory, extending her winning run to an astonishing 45 games in the process and ensuring an Ally Pally place was still up for grabs.

Event 19 success gave her a £150 cushion over Sherrock - with Ashton, who succumbed to Sherrock in the last four, already assured of her place at Alexandra Palace.

The final event saw Greaves then produce her second ton-plus average of the afternoon in a 4-1 victory over Ashton, averaging 102 and landing five 180s in as many legs to cap off another sublime display.

Greaves' five-leg demolition of Ireland's Robyn Byrne in the semi-finals set up another showdown against Suzuki - the fifth time they've contested a final in the last eight events.

The result was the same as on the previous four occasions. Only this time Beau 'n' Arrow claimed an 8th title in a row, second spot on the order of merit, and a place at the PDC's annual darting jamboree at Alexandra palace.

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### Much Missed

**T**he current accelerated development of Women's darts has much in common with the professional games original 1970s development and possibly even more with the initial phase of the PDC (WDC originally). One thing is missing, a strong presence from North America.

From Nicky Virachku's 3rd place in the 1978 World Championship (and his victory in the World Cup singles the following year) to John Part being the first non UK BDO World Champion and Larry Butler claiming the first PDC (WDC) World Matchplay via Sandy Reitan claiming the Women's World Masters in 1991, North America has played a vital role in our sports most important moments.

Darts World is reminded of just how much Stacey Bromberg could and would have contributed. This remarkable champion is, despite her untimely death in 2017, technically the holder of the PDC's Women's World title having claimed the crown in 2010. Bromberg appeared at the Grand Slam later that same year



and gained many fans with her talent and charitable fundraising.

The Wish Granter also won the Women's Las Vegas Classic in 2003, WDF Women's World Cup and was runner up in the 1995 World Masters.

But, it was not merely Bromberg's record that would have suited her to today's moment. Her Walk-On (Tom Petty's American Girl), her principles - she refused to bend them to the political will of the ADO -, her courage displayed in competition and in battling cancer, and her colourful backstory (she was a former private eye!) would have made a fabulous North American counterpart to the European branch of Fallon, Lisa, Aileen De Graaf et al.

Much missed indeed. ”

## Talking Points



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WINMAU  
CHALLENGE  
TOUR

SECOND-TIER  
CHAMPIONS COULD  
KICK ON

CHALLENGERS  
READY TO  
MAKE THEIR  
MARK

Words: JOE WILLIAMS  
Images: PDC

When Winmau became the new board and equipment sponsor of the PDC in early 2022 part of the package was the supply of equipment and support of the 'tier tours'. They have looked superb value for money so far in 2022.

The Winmau Challenge Tour came to an end with events 21-24 in early October. As ever there were a variety of event winners, this time four different names, and some tense moments as we awaited the outcome of the season's overall orders of merit which also carried Tour cards and places at Ally Pally. French Duo Thibault Tricole and Jacques Labre were victorious on Saturday, winning Challenge Tour Events 21 & 22 respectively at the Morningside Arena, Leicester. Lakeside runner-up Tricole, who also lost in the final of Event 20 last month, went a step further this time, as he reached the final to

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set up a clash with Gian Van Veen.

The final began with Tricole racing into a 4-0 lead, with winning legs coming in 16,17,15 and 14 darts respectively. The Dutchman did pull three legs back before Tricole sealed the victory in leg eight with a 16 darter to take the title and pick up a maiden PDC crown.

In Event 22, Tricole's fellow countryman, Jacques Labre was victorious, as he reached the final clash with Lee Evans.



Labre raced into a 2-0 lead, with the Frenchman's winning legs coming in a total of 36 darts. The tie then saw six consecutive holds of throw, which ended in Labre sealing the victory in leg eight with a 14 darter to take the title and pick up a 1st within the PDC, on a landmark day for French darts.

Sunday saw the final two Challenge Tour events of the year take place, with Justin Smith and Andy Hamilton each picking up a £2,000 1st prize title.



Event 23 saw Justin Smith victorious after a final battle with Matthew Dennant. After four straight holds of throw, before the first break came from Smith in Leg 5 with a 15 darter to move 3-2 ahead. The Welsh thrower then won the following two legs, which saw him seal victory with a 13 darter to pick up the 1st Challenge Tour crown of his career.

In Event 24, Andy Hamilton reigned supreme as the Former World Championship Finalist dropped just 12 legs en route to the final, by recording six victories to set up a clash with Scott Taylor.

The final began with the pair holding throw in the opening two legs, before Hamilton produced the first break in Leg 3 with a 12 darter. The tie then saw three straight breaks of throw, ending with Taylor pinning a 16 darter to move 4-3 up and within one of victory. Hamilton showed his experience by winning the remaining two legs, finishing off with a 14-darter and picking up his 1st PDC

title for over eight years.

Overall, the day also saw Scott Williams win the Challenge Tour Order of Merit and seal his place at next month's Grand Slam of Darts in Wolverhampton. Due to Williams' already sitting inside the Top 64 of the PDC Order of Merit, Robert Owen and Danny Van Trijp provisionally have secured Two-Year PDC Tour Cards for 2023/24, and also a place at the 2022/23 PDC World Darts Championship. Van Trijp would only secure a Tour Card, should Williams be sat inside the World's Top 64 come the end of the World Championship in January.

The eye-catching form of all three men suggests that more may yet be heard from them before the curtain comes down on the 2022 season. Don't rule out more fairytale born out of the Winmau Challenge Tour?

The Challenge Tour Super 8

- 1 Scott Williams £9,850
- 2 Robert Owen £6,200
- 3 Danny van Trijp £5,950
- 4 Stephen Burton £5,300
- 5 Jurjen van der Velde £5,150
- 6 Thibault Tricole £5,100
- 7 Karel Sedlacek £4,900
- 8 David Pallett £4,700

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Practice Partner

# Pearl of Wisdom

## INTRODUCING EVEN FLOW

ONE of the most important ways to improve your game is to practice groupings. If you're a beginner it should be the main skill to focus on initially.

By grouping I mean the ability to follow up the first dart with one or two more darts close to the first one. Grouping is somewhat of an issue for many players. You may get a nice first dart at 20 but the next darts goes a bit left into number 5. For the 3rd dart, you overcompensate and it ends up in number 1. And that dreaded 26 is a fact...

I've added a few great grouping games on GoDartsPro over the years.

The popular A1 game and the tougher one, Milkos Megatrain, for more experienced players for example.



Words: ANDERS ÖSTMAN  
Images: GO DARTS PRO

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### The Game

I felt we needed a fun grouping game for everyone to get some scorings.

But also a game that once you manage to get your grouping issues sorted, you'll be able to reach some great scores.

So I came up with the game **EVEN FLOW**.

The game idea of course is to try to get your darts close to each other and to get a nice flow in your throws. But I also wanted to give the game an added twist to be able to try different strategies for the scorings.

### The Rules

With the standard option, you score by hitting at least 2 darts in the same field on the board. Once you've scored on a field, that field is closed and you need to find new fields to score in for the next throw.

So let's say you hit the first dart in big single 20, the second dart in big single 5, and the third dart again in big single 20.

You now scored 40 and the big single field of 20 is now locked and marked red in the interactive dartboard in the game.

So for the next throw, you need to try to hit at least 2 darts in some other field to score. Trying to aim at 20 can be risky since you've already locked one of the fields...but treble 20 is always tempting of course...

Let's say you now aim at T19 but your 1st dart slips into the big single 7.

You now need to decide if you'll try to go for the T19 again or - play safe, and aim



for a big single 7 again to at least score something with this throw.

You can try different strategies this way and it's all about your goal for the session and how good you are (or think you are).

As always, focus on your throwing motion and practice only if you're fully focused.

Btw, as a side note... I named it to honour one of my all-time favourite bands PEARL JAM and their great song... EVEN FLOW

Take care and enjoy your darts. *Anders*

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# ROCK START

## LANDMARK WEEKEND ON THE PRO TOUR



Interviews: JOE WILLIAMS & HARRY MASTERSON  
Images: PDC

**T**WENTY-one-year-old claims his first ranking title during a weekend of astonishing performance level.

In the eleven or so years since the launch of the Tour card, and cementing of the current Pro Tour system, there have been several 'landmark' tournament blocks that could be said to mark breakthroughs of individual players or a changing of the guard. October 20-23 may well prove to be another.

**Dave Chisnall** picked up his 2nd title in a matter of weeks on Thursday, with victory at Players Championship 25, after defeating Josh Rock 8-4 in the final, as the four-day header of Pro Tour Events began at the Barnsley Metrodome.

Chisnall, who ended a three-year title drought last month with his success at the Belgian Darts Open, eased through to his first final on the floor in 2022 and set up a clash with Josh Rock.

Rock's impressive debut season in the PDC continued as he reached his first ranking final by recording six victories, and multiple 100+ averages, before being denied

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a first-ranking title by Chisnall.

The final had begun with Chisnall racing into a 4-0 lead, with his winning legs coming in a total of 54 darts, before Rock picked up his first leg of the tie with a 14 darter. Chisnall then won the following two legs in 17 and 14 darts respectively to move 6-1 ahead and within two of victory.

Rock mounted a comeback by winning three straight legs before Chisnall won back-to-back games sealing victory in Leg 12 to pick up his first floor title in over three years.



**Damon Heta** came from behind to defeat Dirk Van Duivenbode 8-4 in the final of event 26, as the four-day header of Pro Tour Events continued.

The Heat, who had picked up his maiden European Tour title shortly before, reached the final on Friday, he would clash with an inspired Van Duivenbode.

**Aubergienius** raced into a 2-0 lead, before a run of five straight holds of throw between the pair, ending with Heta breaking the Dutchman's throw in Leg 8 to level the tie at 4-4. The Aussie star then won four on the spin and picked up a 4th title of the year.



**Rob Cross** picked up his 2nd title of the year on Saturday, Cross, who had lost in the opening round at both Thursday and Friday's events, reached the final of event 27 on Saturday, a clash where he would meet Peter Wright.

The final began with the pair breaking each other's throw in the opening four legs of the tie, before the run was ended by *Snakebite* holding throw.

*Voltage* then won five legs in succession, which saw him move within one of victory, leaving Wright needing to win five straight legs himself to keep his title hopes alive. Red Dragon's Scotsman did pull one leg back before Cross sealed the victory to pick up his 2nd title in just four events.



**Josh Rock** picked up his 1st PDC ranking title (PC28) defeating Luke Humphries 8-5 in the final of Players Championship 28, as the Pro Tour weekend came to a close at Barnsley Metrodome.

Rocky, who lost out in the final of Thursday's PC25, went a step further on Sunday, as he reached the final by recording victories and 100+ averages over Adrian Lewis and Damon Heta, to set up a clash with Luke Humphries.

The final began with Rock racing into a 2-0 lead, winning legs in 14 and 13 darts respectively, before Humphries fought back to level the tie at 2-2.

Rock finally broke Humphries' throw in Leg 8. Four straight breaks of throw ended with Rock sealing victory with a 14 darter to pick up his 1st ranking title, ahead of making his mainstream TV debut at next week's European Championship.

The youngster seemed close to being overwhelmed as he commented: "My life has been massively transformed," admitted Rock.

"In the last two weeks, I've probably been the happiest I have been since I've been playing darts. I have been very relaxed all weekend."

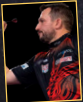
The PDC Pro Tour action returns on November 4-5th, with spots up for grabs at the Players Championship Finals and the World Championship.

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# POST POWER PALACE

Since The Power began to fade about ten years ago the PDC World Championship Trophy has been held aloft by a selection box of the modern game's finest talent. Five men have divided the titles since then; MFG, Ando, Cross, Snakebite and Gezzy, could we see a sixth for 2023?

Words: HARRY MASTERSON  
Images: PDC

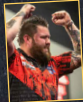


**Jonny Clayton** comes into the World Championship on the back of a mixed year, with the Welshman shining brightest during the Premier League back in the early stages of the PDC Darts calendar.

The *Ferret* won four Premier League nights after a new format involving a mini-tournament every week, was introduced. Clayton, as defending champion, finished top of the league.

By Clayton's standard something of a blip followed with the Welshman simply not firing on all cylinders at the biggest events through to the Autumn. However, strong runs in the later majors indicate things may be turning once more.

The Red Dragon star could face former World Champion Steve Beaton in the Second Round, but that's only for certain if the Bronzed Adonis can make it past his First-Round match with Danny van Trijp.



**Michael Smith** ended his long wait for a PDC Major televised title having lost in many major Finals, including last year's World Final despite averaging more as Snakebite claimed a 7-5 win at the Ally Pally.

*Bully Boy* went on to lose in the Finals of both the UK Open and the European Championship Finals, with Danny Noppert and Ross Smith gaining their first PDC Majors titles. The Englishman though will have a lot more confidence in his game after getting over the line in Wolverhampton, with a return to a venue he thrives at only around the corner.

Could 2023 be the year for Michael Smith with his darting dream to get his hands on the Sid Waddell Trophy on January 3rd, a year on from his second defeat? Smith goes into the competition as the Number 4 Seed with the St Helens having won at almost every level in 2022.

The new Grand Slam champion will face either Jermaine Wattimena or Nathan Aspinall in the First Round on the second night of action.



**Luke Humphries** has enjoyed what has been the best year in his darting life, becoming the most successful player on the European Tour and the only man to win four different events. The success has led the Red Dragon star to come into North London as the Number 5 seed after already appearing in three World Quarter Finals.

The Englishman is yet to win a televised major title, appearing in just one Final when he lost the 2021 UK Open to James Wade at Butlin's Minehead Resort.

*Cool Hand* included a 7-0 win over Michael van Gerwen in the Semi-Finals of the 2022 German Darts Grand Prix (averaging 107) before going on to beat Martin Lukeman in the Final. The Newbury-born darting star also won the Czech Darts Open, European Darts Grand Prix and the European Darts Matchplay.

The 27-year-old will face either Keegan Brown or recent Winmau signing Florian Hempel, who knocked out last year's fifth seed Dimitri van den Bergh before the Christmas break.

**Palace** PREVIEW



**Nathan Aspinall** has recovered from injury to claim two Players Championship titles and reach the Final of both the Grand Prix and Grand Slam of Darts. *The Asp* returns to the World's top ten ahead of the World Championship and will want to improve on being whitewashed by a hot Callan Rydz in the 2022 event.

The Stockport man has reached the Semi-Finals at the Alexandra Palace on two separate occasions, beating Gerwyn Price in the opening round of the 2019 competition before going on to lose to Michael Smith in the Semi-Finals 6-3 despite averaging above a ton.

Aspinall will hope for a deep run this year but could run into Jonny Clayton in the Last 16 if both players can make it past their other opponents. The former UK Open champion will face either Toru Suzuki or big Croatian Boris Krckmar who can cause problems for the big names on the main stage.

A slight stamina asterisk must be placed next to Aspinall after his return from injury left him struggling to play consecutive long-format games in the Grand Slam.



**Dave Chisnall** arguably is a contender for the best performance ever seen on the Alexandra Palace stage, having beat Michael van Gerwen 5-0 in the Quarter

Finals of the 2021 Worlds. *Chizzy* has reached the Semi-Finals on just that one occasion, losing to former back-to-back champion Gary Anderson

The Englishman has achieved success on the Pro Tour, beating Northern Irish youngster Josh Rock to win Players Championship 25 whilst also winning the Belgian Darts Trophy, having beat Andrew Gilding 8-6 towards the end of September in Wieze.

Chisnall could well face Goldfinger again in the opening round at the Ally Pally, with the popular Suffolk man needing to beat a resurgent Robert Owen to set up the encounter.



**James Wade**, it is hard to believe that a player of *The Machine's* quality has not yet reached a World Championship final.

The multiple major winner could have counted himself majorly unlucky in his defeat to Adrian Lewis in the 2012 World Championship Semi-Finals, having led 5-1 before losing 6-5 to the man who would eventually lift the trophy. The World trophy is the one missing on Wade's roll of honour and would instantly elevate him to one of the best to have played the game.

The Aldershot man grabbed another major trophy in 2021 and seems a more relaxed and contemplative soul these days. Wade enters the Palace as the number 8 seed and will face either Sebastian Bialecki or former BDO World Finalist Jim Williams.

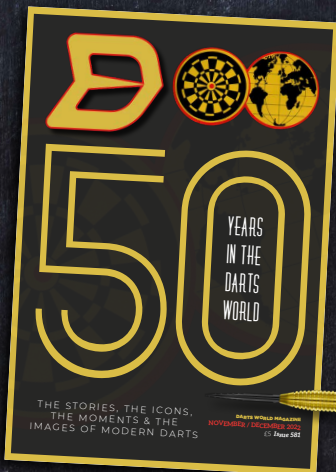
**The action kicks off on the 15th of December for what's going to be another exciting festive period, filled with the very best tungsten drama all the way until the Final on January 3rd could one of our 6 of The Best still be there?**

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TALKING POINTS

# Bullseyes & Bounce-Outs!

ALLY PALLY SPECIAL

Our regular lighthearted look at who's hot, and who's not, in world darts. Small incidents can have big consequences. Players and even companies and codes come from nowhere, suddenly move up a level or even dramatically collapse. The signs were there if you'd known where to look.

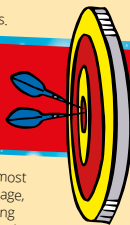


**Peter Wright** – The PDC's showpiece venue provided *Snakebite* with a breakthrough that had appeared far away. Before the triumphs of 2020 and 2022, Peter surprised many with his run to the final in 2014. Using a Tayloresque dart he went down 4-7 to MVG. Less than a decade later the Scotsman reversed the result and improved the score with his 7-3 triumph over the Dutchman to claim the first of two titles in three years.

**Gary Anderson** – *The Flying Scotsman's* Palace record contrasts his famed Lakeside struggles. After taking 2010 to settle in Ando kick-started in 2011 reaching the final against an inspired Adrian Lewis. Although he has had ups and downs, his Back-to-Back wins (in 2015 & 16) and other spots in the semis and finals, even last year, ensure red bit rep for Gary at the Pally.

**Adrian Lewis** – Two wins, back-to-back, and another final during perhaps the most difficult era of our sport's history, along with a perfect 9 dart on that massive stage, simply cannot be denied. *Jackpot* may have had a barren few years but the feeling that he is a handful of wins away from a triumphant comeback never quite leaves his many admirers.

**Michael Smith** – Don't let his failure to win the crown fool you, *Bullyboy* has had some tremendous days and nights here. His defeat of Phil Taylor back in 2013 could be said to be his coming of age. His 2 runners-up spots and other superb runs, often taking out event favourites, mean that World title or not Mr. Smith still stands tall here.



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TALKING POINTS

# Bounce-Outs!

**Colin Lloyd** – A former World No.1, and still well within the top ten when the event moved to the People's Palace, you could be forgiven for thinking that *Jaws* didn't like the grand old venue. The Matchplay winner famously punched the board in an early 2010 match (before being eliminated by debutant Mark Hylton) Lloyd suffered a string of shock exits to lower-ranked players such as Beau Anderson.

**James Wade** – It is not easy to fathom quite why a multiple major champion, across all formats, has never even reached a final here. Our coach suggests it's due to *The Machine's* game being built around a predictable consistency that doesn't suit long format set-play, against those capable of tremendous bursts. Regardless of why, James may be running out of years to make that final leap into immortality.

**Steve Beaton** – The legendary *Adonis* may be making his 32nd straight World Championship appearance, but the PDC event's most recent home is not a comfy fit for the 1996 World Champion. L16, and even that rarely, has seemed his limit here. Could we see a turnaround this time?

**Phil Taylor** – Winning the title three times and two more finals doesn't seem like much of a bounce out does it? But, for *The Power*, at a World Championship venue, it could be described as such. Played 11, won 3 (and only two more finals) pales into insignificance next to his Circus Tavern record. Phil's first 11 *Tavern tournaments* resulted in 9 wins with him being defeated in the final on the other two occasions. Next to that anything looks like a *bounce-out!*



MORE BULLSEYES & BOUNCE-OUTS IN EVERY ISSUE!

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Numbers

# DARTING BY NUMBERS

Info: Dartsdatabase/PDC

As we approach the latest edition of PDC's World Championship to be held at the most illustrious N22 address our friends at Dartsdatabase reminded us that sometimes a story can be illustrated most effectively in numbers and stats so here are a few:

**30,827,916**

Points scored in the history of the PDC World Darts Championship

**1,024,113**

Darts thrown in the history of the event up to December 15th 2022



**110.94**

Highest Final Average - Phil Taylor 2009 vs Raymond van Barneveld

**383**

Highest score remaining in a leg (x2)

**19**

Consecutive 100+ averages by Michael van Gerwen (2015/16 to 2018/19)

**90.31**

Overall three-dart average for every match played in every tournament



**Darts**  
DATABASE

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**42**

Most 180s in a match (2017) between Michael van Gerwen, 20 and Gary Anderson, 22



**58**

Oldest player this year (Steve Beaton)

**33**

Shortest set (33 darts) thrown by Gerwyn Price in 2021 final legs of 11, 12 & 10 darts

**1,695**

Matches played since the 1994 inaugural Championships

# THE WIZARD



Colin Osborne is a multiple Pro Tour title winner, Championship of Darts winner (2009), and a UK Open finalist. @colozzy180

I suppose you might call this extra 'Wizard's Worldly Wisdom'. Strangely, I have mixed memories of the PDC World Championships. I suppose you could say that my first appearance at them was a career highlight, but then...

Reaching the QF final while overcoming players of the calibre of Wes Newton, Kevin Painter, and Roland Scholten, before being edged out by a prime Andy Jenkins (4-5), was hugely satisfying at the time.

The Circus Tavern was iconic and it was fantastic to play there, the crowd was brilliant and it had a very low ceiling amplifying the noise. No bad points at all. Sad to have only played there once. But the game had to move on, it was growing fast and 'the Tavern' was simply outgrown.

For the next couple of years, the boot was on the other foot. In 2009 it was Vincent van de Voort who ran riot, but a Free Copy (Signed) of DW 581 goes to the first person on mine or Darts World social media to name the player who had dumped me out the previous year!

2010's Battle of the Wizards (actually originally fought in the Grand Slam) saw a very hot Simon Whitlock remove me and a whole host of other names, before being brought up sharp by Mr. Taylor. The following year was a different story but, in some ways, summed up Ally Pally for me.

It is a massive venue and superb in a different way. The stage is also enormous, both of these two things often caught out new players and it could be very daunting for them.

I had a first-round encounter with Chris Thompson who I did not allow to fully settle. Round two was one of the awkward encounters with a friend and neighbour in Jabba Caven. Jamie didn't fire at all and I was in good shape going through convincingly. Next was Raymond Van Barneveld.

Some games ebb and flow, some go past in a rush and others kind of creep away from you.

I led often but somehow I never quite got on top enough and RVB had been around too long to stay cowed. Losing 4-3 was painful and could be seen as the start of what turned out to be a creeping decline.

But, at the time it seemed like a solid tournament performance, a few EEEs in the bank and a decent boost to the rankings. One bit of Wizard to pass on the current crop of contenders. Relish every moment of it, prepare properly, and don't let any of it pass you by.

For this year the new generation's flag will be flown by Josh Rock, but if you want a 'One to Watch' then Raymond Smith might be your man. In superb shape at the MODUS Super Series, last week and is more experienced at the top level now.

I could see Cullen going very deep whilst Smith, Price and Snakebite will have to get past MVG who is edging back to his best and has some of that fear factor back.

*Wishing you all a fantastic festive season and a happy, healthy and successful 2023!*

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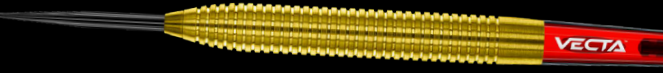
CHOOSE YOUR *Weapons*



*"...a truly outstanding piece of tungsten finery."*

# The Darts World 50

A Golden Piece of Darts Memorabilia



**W**HEN you're a darts magazine what do you do to mark your 50th birthday? Well, amongst other things, surely a unique set of darts is the most appropriate souvenir? But DW wasn't happy to whip up any old barrel and slap our name on it. Instead, Darts World wanted a truly outstanding piece of tungsten finery. In combination with a unique team of experts and colleagues we have produced a singular piece of darting memorabilia, technology, and history all in one: The Darts World 50 is available to order (Here) with release and delivery expected in early December

**50 Years in the Making:**  
First, we asked our analyst and coach to design a dart that learned the lessons of the last 50 years as well as looking towards the next half-century. *"The tungsten revolution of the 1970s helped to kickstart modern darts. Over the decades' tungsten content increased until the vast majority of players' darts are 80% or more. A little more research however shows that since around 1988 it's been 90% or more, that have really stood out from the crowd. So we selected a 90% tungsten billet to create the DW50."* ▶

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CHOOSE YOUR *Weapons*



▶ **Proven Precision Performance:**

*"A narrowing nose of some type has been in the ascendancy in recent times. Currently, Clayton, Price, and sometimes Wright all use an elliptical nose or a short taper. Hence we have a seamless 6mm taper from barrel to collar/point."*  
*"Consistency of grip. To appeal to as wide a cross-section of players as possible we have chosen a grip style that is consistent throughout the barrel and has been used by multiple world champions across the ages."*  
*"Length and width dimensions are the subject of heated debate. However, very few players cannot use a 48.5mm dart that is 6mm wide. Many of the game's icons including Eric, Phil and MVG have used a similar length, whereas a significantly longer dart cannot be used by those who struggle to get their 'wrist around it."*

- Product: Darts (Steel-Tip) 21g
- Material: 90% Tungsten
- Dimensions: 48.5mm x 6mm
- Finish: Golden Nitride Coating
- Edition/Variation: DW50 (Anniversary Edition) 50 Sets only
- Accessories: 3 x Winmau Vectra Stems (Red & Blk) x 2 Sets DW flights)

**A Golden moment**

*"Another major benchmark was the addition of coating to darts. 1990s players were delighted with the feel and look of the original titanium nitride coatings and they have been a constant source of development ever since. Obviously being your 50th anniversary the original Golden coating seemed unarguable. Many also prefer it to any other."*  
We were ready to see how it looked and how it threw!

*"Once a prototype (no coating) had been made we set about testing and refining the dart with a major-winning professional and as many other players as possible. After a few tweaks, our pro was happy and the other test throwers highly impressed, now it was time for the final flourish."*

**Mr. Olivander's view**

Next, we visited Winmau and presented Darts' very own 'Master Wandmaker', Lee Huxtable, with our ideas, specs, and prototype. Lee and our pro went to work on producing the perfect production version of our creation. Along with grip refinement, it was Lee who suggested a grooved collared point as this would include the most recent technological advancements in the overall design. Although we have decided to leave this to personal choice. At this point all was complete, we awaited the final DW50 barrel set.

The setup had been being worked on by all our testers and players but again it was the Winmau team that added the final flourishes to complete our special 50th Souvenir Pack. The supplied preference set-up was the special edition Vectra stems with Std Flights (Special Edition Gold and Red). For the braver amongst you, the Jonny Clayton-inspired Red Dragon Kite Flights and Prism Set Up is superb but requires confidence and belief.

**Tungsten Anniversary Perfection**

It's fair to say that the DW50 has impressed all that have come into contact with it. Designed by a successful coach, engineered by the best in the business, and manufactured to the highest professional standard. Much to our delight the DW50 prototype was used in a live 9-dart leg in the MODUS Live League and pronounced perfect by our major winning professional. With the special tweaks and unique presentation put together by our friends at Winmau and Red Dragon, we believe the DW50 could still be celebrated when Darts World marks its century in 2021!

**The DW50 is available to pre-order (Here) for £50. Delivery is expected in early December. Only 50 of these special sets will be sold and they are disappearing fast!**



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DARTS WORLD MAGAZINE  
NEW YEAR 2022  
£3.99 Issue 578



# THE WRIGHT STUFF

FEATURING: ALLY PALLY, THE MASTERS, WORLD SENIORS, THE PREMIER LEAGUE, THE ADC & UK OPEN PREVIEW / PLUS: UKDA NATIONAL LEAGUE - RESULTS AND REPORTS INC. MATCH 7



IMAGES: PDC

# MASTERS MAGIC

**A**N emotionally fuelled Joe Cullen finally claimed that all elusive PDC TV major title, defeating Dave Chisnall 11-9 in Milton Keynes to become the 2022 Ladbrokes Masters Champion.

Despite an abundance of talent, it's been a frustrating catalogue of near misses for the Rockstar with the avid Manchester United fan hitting the post more times than he'd of liked.

But under the bright lights of the Marshall Arena at Stadium MK, Cullen scored a blinder before proudly lifting the

Masters trophy aloft.

Citing a line from his iconic Oasis walk-on song, "so Sally can wait", for Joe, that wait is thankfully over. Sally on the other-hand, may have to hang on a little longer.

St Helens star, Dave Chisnall also deserves enormous praise for his part in an exhilarating and pulsating final.

Last year, both Joe and Dave tragically lost their mothers. And perhaps in a fitting tribute, the friends duelled on what would have been the late Mrs Chisnall's birthday.

After a thrilling contest which went all the way to the wire, it was Cullen who eventually

prevailed ending Chizzy's own ambitions of a maiden TV title.

Upon realising a lifelong dream, Joe instantly looked over to his Dad, Frank in the crowd before exiting the stage, eyes filled with tears.

Beautifully captured, it was a poignant moment as father and son embraced. Still very much united in their grief, they could also be joyous in celebration, creating a touching image they firmly believed was visible to an absent loved one above.

The weekend road to glory began for Cullen with victory over a resurgent Daryl Gurney who, once again, showed the form that won him a brace of TV titles.



## NIGEL PEARSON



**F**IRSTLY I'd like to extend my personal congratulations to Joe Cullen on a magnificent PDC Ladbrokes Masters victory.

I've always been a big fan of Joe and it's great for the PDC to see another major winner's name added to the board.

His development has been excellent and this maiden PDC major title is thoroughly deserved.

In recent months, it's been incredibly tough emotionally on Joe. Losing his mother in October was heartbreaking but those moments with his Dad at the end of the match brought a tear to my eye.

And that brings me nicely onto the subject of the Premier League!

Cullen thoroughly deserves his spot. It was great to see his reaction when Michael Bridge officially broke the news the following morning.

I have to say though, I feel incredibly sorry for Rob Cross as he also warranted a place.

When the field was reduced from ten to just eight players, there was always going to be disappointment amongst a few who missed out.

Dimitri [Van den Bergh] and Jose [De Sousa] can also feel a little unfortunate not to be chosen but for Rob, I think he is the unluckiest of them all. That said, I was very happy to see him back playing well again at the back end of last year.

So back to the Premier League and it's a wonderful line-up with an exciting new format.

I'm naturally looking forward to my broadcasting duties during the Premier League campaign. My first night in the comms box will be in Belfast I so can't wait for that. I'm always delighted to be part of this brilliant Sky Sports team. They're an extremely talented group.

Finally, I would like to wish a dear friend the very best for the future.

Lawrence Lustig is an absolute gentleman, an incredibly talented photographer, and a thoroughly decent bloke too. Sadly he is no longer the official PDC photographer.

When I first began working on the darts in 2006, I was a nervous outsider coming into an established team. Immediately there were certain people who calmed my nerves and made me feel at ease - Sid Waddell and Rod Harrington to name a couple - and Lawrence himself.

Lawrence is always fantastic company and we have shared so many laughs over the years. He will be sorely missed by so many but we will definitely keep in touch.

**Nigel Pearson is a Sky Sports presenter and a Talk Sport and BT Sport commentator.**

After demolishing twice World Champion, Gary Anderson in round two, Cullen proceeded to take the scalp of a man who'd won it three times, producing a scintillating display in overcoming mighty Michael van Gerwen 10-7.

The Rockstar then fashioned another superb performance to end the hopes of a revitalised Jose de Sousa, registering a 11-8 win over the Portuguese and subsequently, a place in his first TV final.

Meanwhile, in the bottom half of the draw, Chizzy began proceedings by dismantling good friend Stephen Bunting 6-0 before powering past James Wade with a ton-plus average.

The quarter-final witnessed a fascinating battle of the boys from St Helens, Chisnall versus Michael Smith. In another close encounter, it was the man dressed in bright yellow who edged it 10-8.

Chizzy then impressively saw off reigning Masters champion, Jonny Clayton to reach a seventh major television final of a fine darting career.

Since the conclusion of the World Championships, the identity of the remaining four Premier League spots had been shrouded in mystery.

Famously, at the 2021 Masters, it was Clayton who grabbed that last golden ticket with victory over Mervyn King in the final. And the Ferret didn't too badly after that.

So heading into this tournament, a sizeable question mark loomed and speculation grew as to whether the winner of this event got the call.

Mercifully for Cullen, that transpired to be the case with Michael Bridge breaking the news to the ecstatic Yorkshireman shortly after the final whistle.

Could this be the springboard for the Bradford man to start filling up his trophy cabinet? Well it certainly was for his close Welsh friend. No pressure then Joe!



# HELLS BELLS RING AGAIN

*Popular presenter reveals the extent of her passion for darts and its characters*

WORDS: PAUL WOODAGE IMAGES: WSDT AND CHRIS SERGEANT

**A**n integral part of the heady mix which assured the success of the inaugural (World Seniors Darts Tour) World Championship was the familiar, assured, passionate and fresh presenting of Helen Chamberlain. Here she reveals the depth of her enthusiasm for the sport:

"Even now, when Dennis Priestley walks in and shouts hello to me, I could burst. And I've known him for 15 years!

"Trina Gulliver is another. I first met her about 6 or 7 years ago when she tapped me on the shoulder at Lakeside. I spun around and just went wide-eyed like a child, I was starstruck and dumbstruck, I think I just muttered some nonsense and shuffled back to my seat.

"So when I saw Trina at the Circus Tavern at the Seniors I really really tried to be cool this time, but I wasn't. I ended up shouting an enthusiastic hello in her face, then gave her a big bear hug which she probably just thought was weird"

Ah we have all done that Helen! Probably more times than we care to remember or admit to. My equivalent moment was ringing you!

But one person who genuinely does not like being interviewed is Robert





Thornton. Quite the problem when you keep winning and people want to speak to you. But for Helen, she had this down to a fine art.

Laughing, she said: "Oh I know he isn't a fan of them! So what I try and do with him is keep it light hearted.

"In our first chat, I mentioned how much he hates it. That's how I approach it with someone like Robert - he sees me and knows that I know he's going to be uncomfortable. So in an odd way, that seems to put him at ease a bit more.

"When he won the final, I had my opening line planned. Something I hoped would amuse him and remove his nerves of the live camera advancing towards him.

"I knew he'd be ecstatic about his win and wasn't going to want to talk about averages or breaks of throw. So I told him that he meant business and he'd delivered his business all over the board.

"He laughed and immediately had something to say back - that his wife had told him if he he didn't return with the trophy she was going to lock him out.

"It was great, I love getting the little bits of personality out of the players.

"What I always do during games when planning an interview is to sit at the side

and carefully observe the non-throwing player. It's amazing how much you will pick up by watching the one who isn't at the oche.

"For example, in his semi-final, as Martin Adams wandered back to his table, he looked up to the crowd and just started laughing at a parrot he'd noticed.

"After the match, it gave me a different angle, I said it's not often you see a darts player in a world semi-final break concentration to laugh at a parrot. Of course that set him off chuckling again, which made the crowd cheer - and the bloke dressed as the parrot went mad flapping about which got a huge cheer too.

"Oh and finally, I have to say what a special moment it was to sit down and chat with Ray Fordham, son of the late great Andy.

"The Viking was one of the first invited to the event so would have been competing alongside the other world champions that weekend. It was important for all of us there to speak with Ray and ask how the family are doing.

"It was a brilliant tournament. So good to see all of those legends back under one roof, competing with each other again - and to have the winners of both major governing bodies on a level playing field playing for the same trophy.

"I also loved the crowd. They were all proper darts fans giving the players the best of order.

"It was a privileged to be involved and I loved every minute of it.

"Roll on Lakeside!"

# CHOOSE YOUR WEAPONS

PAUL NICHOLSON'S LATEST TUNGSTEN 'ASSET'



**W**hilst lately he may be more active in the commentary box than at the oche, the passion for playing has not been lost on 'The Asset'.

A change in style for Paul could very well signify a fresh start within his playing career - something many fans have been eagerly anticipating since his last televised appearance back in December 2018, in the 2019 PDC World Championship.

I was lucky enough to catch a

<p>PAUL NICHOLSON BARREL DIMENSIONS</p> <p>LENGTH: 50.30mm</p> <p>DIAMETER: 6.50mm</p> <p>WEIGHT: 22g</p> <p>CODE: 1474</p>	<p><b>Breakdown and Specifications</b></p> <p>(Steel Tip - 22g)</p> <p><b>Length:</b> 50.30mm</p> <p><b>Width:</b> 6.50mm</p> <p><b>Tungsten Percentage:</b> 90%</p>	<p><b>Points:</b> Winmau 32mm Black</p> <p><b>Stems:</b> Winmau Vecta Short</p> <p><b>Flights:</b> Winmau Prism Alpha</p> <p><b>Price: £49.95</b></p>
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quick word with Paul just after Winmau's recent launch, to gain an insight into the barrels designed and used by the man himself, and how they differ from previous designs.

**First Impressions:**

My first question for Paul was a simple one - what was the thought process behind the change in grip? Both the style, and position of grip has undergone a complete transformation over the years, likening his newer design more to his older barrels. The grip itself, described by Winmau as a milled grip with a buttress effect, feels very aggressive to touch.

**Paul explains:**

"Was a natural step from my previous Winmau dart. The thing that was most important with the new grip pattern was having the grip in place for yet another grip change".

This change in grip was prompted by "constant problems with wrist injuries", which have plagued Paul's playing career. "I have now changed my grip in my career 4 times, which is something a lot of people don't know."

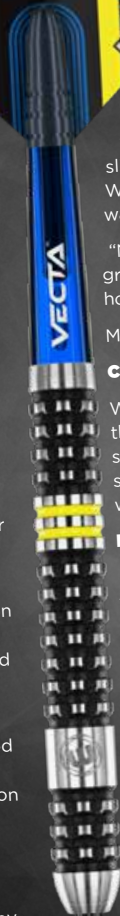
I was intrigued to find out why it had been extended further towards the stem, as opposed to the centralized focus featured on many of Paul's prior designs:

"Any place that is now smooth is to do with weight distribution, and I didn't need grooving at that spot anymore, so that gives the dart a little more personalisation towards my newer grips."

**A New Nose?**

The grip wasn't the only aspect of the barrel to be put under the microscope by Paul, Lee Huxtable and the Winmau team. Paul's darts previously featured a 'James Wade' style bull-nose, his new darts are far more rounded, allowing for a smoother transition from barrel to point.

"Lee has, since 2014, tried to tell me that this would be the best option for me", explained Paul.



"For years I stuck to what I knew, but with the added weight, better weight distribution and slick look, I thought after a period of testing that they could work for the grip I have now, as the bullnose was starting to flick against my interior middle fingertip. I have gotten used to this development and it will maximise scoring potential when I am match fit."

Paul's newer darts measure up 0.2mm thicker. While to non-players, this change seems insignificant, the slightest change can make all the difference. When questioned on whether the change was noticeable to him, Paul replied:

"Not really, because I knew I was jumping 2 grams in weight so I was mentally ready to hold something that had a little more girth."

Moving swiftly on.....

**Colour Me Surprised**

When you think of a 'Paul Nicholson' dart, the distinct green, black and white colour scheme quickly springs to mind. I was very surprised to see the colour palette changed with the release of his new darts.

**Paul added:**

"It was a very difficult choice to make", I was told. "Having that Green, black and white was synonymous with me and my upbringing in Blyth, Northumberland. Time moves on though, and these days I am very much inspired by The Pittsburgh Steelers and The Pittsburgh Penguins and I wanted this steel tip dart to reflect a bit of Steel city about it."

I'm always intrigued by the 'other side' of the barrel, and Paul has further shown me just how much can go on behind the scenes in perfecting the darts the professionals use. A big thank you to Paul for his incredible insight into the development and production of his new darts.

Let's hope to see them in high profile action very soon.

**An extended version of this piece is available at [dartsworld50.com/performance](http://dartsworld50.com/performance)**

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# Denton Open Returns



The Rt. Honourable Andrew Gwynne pictured (Right) with the John Gwynne Cup presents replica trophies to 2022 Winner Scott Taylor (centre) and Runner-Up Adam Warner

WORDS: JR LOTT

## John Gwynne's Favourite Event Under Restoration

**F**OLLOWING an absence of 4 years, The Denton Open was back and at its traditional home, Denton Cricket Club. The event had been previously staged by a legendary voice of darts and a former Darts World columnist John Gwynne. Sadly, Covid and Gwynne's battle with illness resulted in an extended hiatus.

Thanks are due to a group of enthusiasts and sponsors (inc. the events Blade 6 board manufacturer Winmau) who, following John's sad death earlier this year, have begun to restore the event to its former glory.

The 2022 staging produced a quality field that included: ADC England Terriers Regional Champion - Adam Warner, Winmau Tour Runner-up Scott Taylor, ADC Red Dragon National League Semi-Finalist AJ Urmston-Toft, and PDC Tour card holder - David Evans, to name but just a few.

With such players, there were certainly no easy games, and the quarterfinals were packed full of talent including Adam Warner and Callum Goffin, who have been in superb 2022 form.

In the final in-form, Scott Taylor hit 8 x 140s and a maximum whilst averaging over 86. Warner hit 16 100+ scores and averaged over 85. In the end, it was Taylor who claimed the coveted title edging out Warner 7-5.

In a very touching moment John Gwynne's son - the Right honourable Andrew Gwynne MP - was on hand to hand the trophies out to the runner-up and winner.

It was a great day for all Tiernan McCorkell lead sponsor of the event said:

"The Denton Open was a great Competition held

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by John for many years, I'm really happy to help bring it back with the help of John Reyes. We can bring more events in the near future"

Andrew was delighted that his father's love of the game has been an inspiration for others in the area. Players will be happy to know that the Denton Open will return to the Calendar and be developed further over the coming year.

Darts World was pleased to play a small supporting role and we look forward to seeing the 2023 event and all those yet to come.





# EMMA PATON

*Wright reigns!*

**W**hat a World Championship!! How incredible was that?! I was definitely feeling the post-Worlds blues for a good few weeks after the final. Luckily I didn't have to wait long before the Masters was back on the tele and I was driving over to Cardiff for the Premier League (more on that to come). What a worthy champion and fitting really that we ended the tournament with the two best players over the course of those three weeks going toe-to-toe.

It was heartbreaking to watch Michael Smith on the stage after, not bearing to look out at the crowd and his family, his time will come I have absolutely no doubt about that. We had some absolute belters didn't we - Smith v Clayton, Smith v Gezzy, Wright v Rydz, Wright v Anderson, Borland's 9-darter..the list goes on..we could be here all day! But for now...it's all hail, Peter Wright!

**Yes Joe!**

Surely there's not one person out there who wasn't happy to see Joe Cullen win a first TV title at the Masters. Well, maybe Chizzy, but you know what I mean! I was so delighted for him and had tears in my eyes watching him and his dad at the end (ok, fine, I was in floods of tears!). I just wanted to give him a hug! Hopefully, that's a spark now and a catalyst for Joe who's done well in recent seasons but now

he has a tv title under his belt his confidence should be sky-high. He was pretty flawless really and no one could say he didn't deserve the trophy after wins over Gary Anderson, MvG, Jose and a comeback win over Dave Chisnall. Here's to the rest of the season, Joe! Oh and a place in the Premier League as well...

**The Premier League back with a BANG...**

...And some! I'm putting pen to paper on this column having just arrived home from Cardiff and what an opening night! I thought the new format was brilliant, what a super concept from the PDC to have a mini-tournament every week. Cardiff was LOUD!! The night was entertaining and competitive, adding jeopardy and incentive for the players and well done to Peter Wright who showed he means business on his quest for a first Premier League title. In terms of the line-up, going down to eight players meant some players were going to miss out. It's not easy to take if you're Rob Cross - having won the European Championship just a matter of months ago - but with no set criteria there will always be some people unhappy about not being included! Next stop..Liverpool.. and if Cardiff is anything to go by it should be a cracker.

Here's to the next 16 nights!!

Emma Paton is a presenter with Sky Sports and Sky Sports Darts



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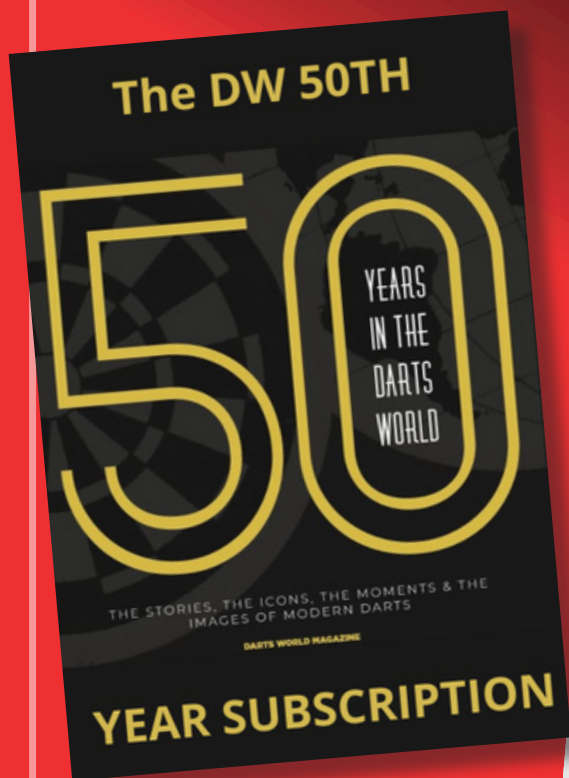
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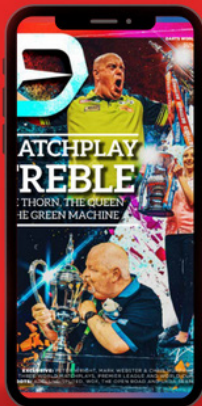
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**F**or Darts fans, Christmas means just one thing. The amusing sight of Batman giving Robin a piggyback up Muswell Hill, bananas in pyjamas clambering out of taxis and lager swilling Teletubbies.

Once again, the Alexandra Palace was bathed with fans dressed in colourful costumes, wildly exhibiting exuberance and buoyancy as they returned in force to the 2022 PDC William Hill World Championships.

With crowd restrictions lifted and the party atmosphere

restored, it was the flamboyant and magnificent Peter Wright who claimed the second World Championship title of his illustrious career.

Snakebite was undoubtedly the player of the tournament and proudly takes his place alongside the legendary Jocky Wilson and Gary Anderson as only the third Scot to win two World titles.

Wright, 51, certainly didn't have it all his own way in the final. But for a scintillating comeback against the naturally gifted Michael Smith, the trophy would have gone to the St Helens man.

Trailing 5-4 in sets and 2-0 in legs to an inspired Bullyboy who was performing wondrously, the Scot produced a dazzling spell of tungsten brilliance.

It was a Wright master-class as he soared to victory from the jaws of defeat, dropping just one further leg and leaving his opponent in tears on the stage.

For Smith, it was heartbreaking as he once again watched his boyhood dream shattered in front of his very eyes. However, this is a new resurgent and mentally reinvigorated version of Michael Smith who is surely destined to one day become a World Champion.

# RINGMASTER WRIGHT'S ALLY PALLY PARTY

## Two Out of Three Ain't Bad

WORDS: PAUL WOODAGE

IMAGES: LAWRENCE LUSTIG (PDC)

Sadly the tournament was also shrouded with the COVID curse. With the worry of the dreaded double red stripe hanging over the players heads like an axe, each game day was an anxious one.

First to fall victim of the virus was Vincent van Der Voort, forced to pull out of the event giving his opponent James Wade safe passage through to the next round.

Then the world was stunned when news of Michael van Gerwen returning a positive test reverberated across planet darts.

When the same fate hit Dave

Chisnall the following day, it was feared more dominoes could fall. Mercifully, he was the last but the tournament had lost three excellent players too many.

Reigning World Champion Gerwyn Price was looking to become the first Welshman to retain the crown. But in an absorbing quarter-final match against Michael Smith, Bullyboy melted the Iceman.

It wasn't the first Red Dragon that he'd slayed. In another captivating classic, Smith and Jonny Clayton served up an absolute treat in their last sixteen tie before the St Helens man got over the line to set up

his match with Price.

The Ally Pally crowd were also treated to a record breaking THREE nine darters. Young Scot Willie Borland made history by becoming the first player in a World Championship to win a match with the perfect leg at the end of his enthralling match against Bradley Brooks.

Darius Labanaukas and Gerywn Price also achieved the rare feat to send the audience into raptures.

Australia's Raymond Smith and son Ty had already rewritten the record books as they became the first father and son

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duo to compete at the same PDC World Championships.

Both players had taken their nation's allocated pair of qualifying spots but neither was expected to go deep in the tournament. However, no one had passed Raymond that script and he overcame Jamie Hughes, Devon Petersen and Florian Hempel to write his own fairytale.

Eventually, it was the wily Mervyn King who put an end to the Brisbane man's dreams in the last sixteen but only just.

Match of the tournament certainly wasn't short contenders. Rob Cross and Daryl Gurney served up a treat for their round three clash with Voltage prevailing in a last set decider.

But for many, the semi-final all Scottish battle was a huge favourite. Gary Anderson and Peter Wright stood toe to toe on the oche and battered one another like two tartan heavyweights slugging it out in a boxing ring.

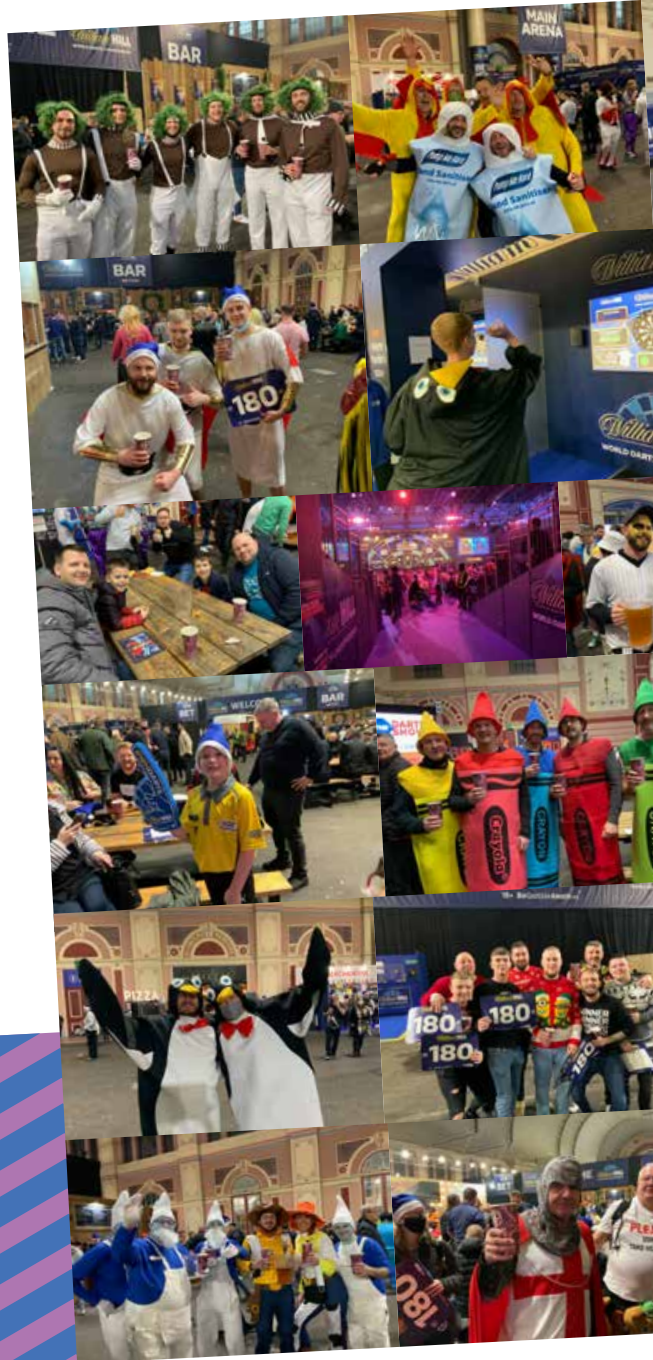
With astronomical averages and a world record breaking twenty-four maximums from the mohawked magician, it was a contest for the ages between two old foes, compatriots and close friends.

But the night and the tournament certainly belonged to Peter Wright who cherished the crowing moment on stage alongside proud wife Jo.

Well .... he did predict it!



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