

DR. DARTS' NEWSLETTER

Issue 114

September 2019



GAMESMANSHIP HAS IT ANY PLACE IN PROFESSIONAL DARTS?

It's a while now since darts hit the headlines in some of the national newspapers and on-line when an escape of 'gas' disrupted the match between Scotland's Gary Anderson and the Netherlands' Wesley Harms. (Image, left, © Lawrence Lustig/PDC. Used with permission.) Sad really that it takes a professional darts player passing wind on the oche to attract the



attention of newspapers, other than occasionally the tabloid press, to darts.

'Fartgate' aside, it is acknowledged that top darters need to be on their best behaviour both on and off the oche at all times. They have far too much to lose, both in terms of money and reputation, especially in the PDC where disciplinary action through the DRA can see a player side-lined for 'x' number of matches for bringing the sport into disrepute. "Fair enough", I say.

Whether 'Fartgate' can truly be regarded as gamesmanship, I'm not sure. Certainly the sudden passing of foul wind *was* a distraction and presumably therefore 'gamesmanship'. But gamesmanship is nothing new and, I would suggest, in decline for the reasons mentioned above. Players are watched more closely these days than ever before.

The dictionary definition of 'gamesmanship' is, 'skill in using ploys to gain a victory or advantage over another person': basically, in sport, the art of putting your opponent off. English author Stephen Potter subtitled his book *Gamesmanship* (1947) 'The art of winning games without actually cheating.' Surprisingly perhaps, Potter applied his 'art' to darts, his advice including that you 'Question your darts opponent closely on the exact area of the dart where he deems it wisest to exert maximum thumb-and-finger pressure.'

Back in the supposedly 'good old days', when smoking was allowed during darts matches at all levels of play, those who smoked were sometimes tempted to (or actually did) puff smoke across the sightline of their opponent, the purpose being of course to merely distract him or her or, more likely, to impair their vision – or both.

Amongst the tactics employed in the past by such darting ne'er do wells are, as you are about to throw, standing behind you and clicking their darts together, talking to themselves (but within earshot), talking to you ("Oh. Good shot!"), shuffling their feet, clinking their water jug and glass, playing with small change in their pocket, clearing the throat at opportune

moments (that is usually when you are about to throw), coughing and whistling. It might also be achieved simply by making silly faces behind a player's back which would result in an unexpected reaction from the crowd, which would distract and possibly confuse the player, as witness the accompanying photo of Stefan Lord and Bobby George in 1982. (Image, below right, PC Darts Archive. Used with permission.)

However, in today's modern game, an incursion by an opponent into, in the case of the PDC, the exclusion zone around the throw area constitutes a serious offence.

Then there is the simple disruption of a game by an opponent or both players which results in an argument, for example back in 2012 when England's Adrian Lewis and Wales' Ritchie Burnett were involved in an



altercation which was eventually smoothed out by referee Russ Bray. (Image, left, © Tip Top Pics. Used with permission.)



In any darts tournament at any level the referee's or official's attention should be drawn to any incident of this kind if he or she has not already realised what is going on. But over and above any of these wily manoeuvres of gamesmanship there is one that is allowed as it is not breaking any specific rule: the art of slowing down the speed of the game.

This is achieved primarily by one of the players throwing their darts at a slower speed than would normally be expected and then taking just a little more time to remove their darts from the dartboard before returning to their position standing the approved distance behind their opponent. Slowing down a game can directly affect the opponent's rhythm and concentration which then leads to them making mistakes which is, of course, the sole aim of gamesmanship. The opposite, naturally, is speeding the game up by throwing your darts faster than your opponent in a bid to unsettle him or her by pressing them to throw quicker than they would normally do.

But incidences of gamesmanship on the PDC and BDO circuits have reduced over the years. What is the real point of it anyway? Some years ago when Phil Taylor was asked about acts of gamesmanship in the professional sport of darts he replied, "If you are practising gamesmanship, you cannot be fully concentrating on your own game."

Good point. Absolutely right.

With so much more prize money available in the professional game today and with the referee(s) and the DRA on their case who, in their right minds, would indulge in something

that could result in them being banned from the lucrative PDC circuit for 'x' amount of weeks or matches?

So today it seems that, in the main, gamesmanship is confined to the pub/club oche. In friendly games rather than organised league matches, gamesmanship is often seen as part of the fun of playing casual darts. In such cases each player is expected to give as good as he or she gets.

What memories do you have of gamesmanship either serious or hilarious? Let me know at patrick.chaplin@btinternet.com.

WHY 'DOUBLE BULL'?

I've featured darts language in *DDN* in the past but mainly in relation to UK darts terminology. However, I recently received an enquiry about the derivation of US darts lingo. He wrote:

Hi Dr Darts! I have a question regarding the bullseye.

Here in the States the players refer to the bullseye as the "double bull" and it irks me to death. In the professional ranks it's simply called the bullseye. What gets me is that when American players are playing 501 they still refer to it as the "double bull". We all know the bullseye is worth 50 points as well as being the largest double on the board. But if you were to double the bullseye when playing 501 that would mean it's worth 100 points. For example, if a player needed 132 and they did the exhibition shot they would say "double bull, double bull, double 16". Imo it just sounds so wrong.

I think the term was added when the Americans started playing cricket but I have no idea. My question to you is this... Do you have any idea why or when the Americans started calling the bullseye the "double bull"?

I replied

I agree!

I have collected examples of darts language (or 'lingo') for years and have always wondered why American darts writers and some players have always regarded what we call the bullseye (that is the centre of the dartboard) as the 'double bullseye'. It simply doesn't make any sense. (Until now. See below.)

Over here in the UK early dartboards only had the bullseye (as per an archery target) which had a value of 50 points but when an area around the bull was added it was called, logically in my view, the 'outer bull' and had a value of 25 points.

When I co-authored UK darts player Bobby George's book of Darts Lingo back in 2011 under 'Double Bull' we merely entered 'US expression for bullseye' and that was it. Your e-mail has me thinking more about 'double bull'.

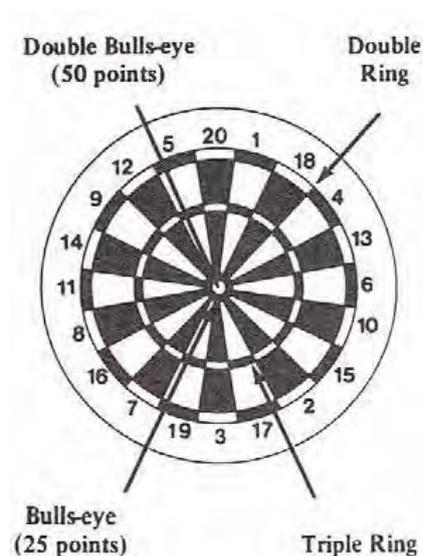
I am certain that the phrase is not connected in any way to the soft-tip/electronic game.

However, I believe the answer lies in one of the earliest darts books published in the USA (*Darts Unlimited - The First Complete Handbook of Darting* written by Robert T. McLeod (then President of the United States Darting Association) and Jay D. Cohen (then USDA Vice President and Tournament Director) published in 1977 (a while before the soft-tip boom). The authors state (page 23)

At the center of the board are two small circles called the bulls-eye, or cork. The bulls-eye also has two zones; the outer zone is worth 25 points and **the inner zone is worth double that amount, or 50 points.**

So is the answer something as simple as that?

It's called the 'double bull' because that 'zone' is worth double the outer zone!



The authors then spoil this theory (a little) by way of a drawing of the dartboard on page 24 where the outer zone is described as 'Bulls-eye (25 points)' and the inner zone 'Double bulls-eye (50 points)' but I think the words in **bold** above provide the answer. (Drawing © Robert T. McLeod and Jay D. Cohen.)

My other theory was to be that the inner bull has always been regarded as a double (double 25) and thus can be an outshot but I've gone off that now.

So, I'm hoping that I've solved your problem for you and that you are no longer 'irked to death'.

To all intents and purposes I think the derivation of 'double bull' has been explained but I would like to know if anyone agrees/ disagrees with me, can offer up or know of an alternative, perhaps the official solution, then please contact me.

DDN IN UGANDA

As Dr. Eddie Norman continues on his final 'Sage of World Darts' tour, the African section of his visits has resulted in DDN's first subscriber from Uganda. From Kampala, Ben Kazooka writes

We have recently once again had the pleasure of having Dr Eddie Norman visiting the Africa continent on his 'Out of Africa Darts Lecture Tour' and his final visit before he retires in January 2020. I was privileged to organise the Uganda leg of his tour here in Kampala.

Eddie extended and delayed his 'Out of Africa Tour' tour by popular demand to include visits to Tanzania, Zanzibar, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia and Mozambique.

Eddie first visited the African continent in 1974 when he organised the very first 'South Africa Darts Masters' in Durban, that featured Leighton Rees, Cyril Hayes and Steve Rollings amongst others: Steve Rollings being the first South African Masters Champion.

I have recently retired from business here in Kampala, where I have had an import / export business for over thirty years. One of the products that my business imported and sold from The United Kingdom was Darts which I sold and distributed throughout the many countries of Africa.

I started trading with The House of Darts International in the City of Bristol, and Eddie Norman the owner helped me considerably to get supplies organised for my business. Eddie has visited us on several occasions to promote darts on the African continent.

I do not think that we can ever repay him for his kindness and generosity in helping the sport of darts develop in Africa.



Eddie has promoted your publication Dr Darts Newsletter on his visit here to us in Uganda and I wonder if I could please ask if I could be included on your mailing list to receive the magazine.

Like many of his ilk Eddie is a dreamer who through his ability, enthusiasm, commitment and hard work has succeeded in making many of his dreams in the sport of darts a reality and spreading the growth of the sport of darts in Africa is one of his many dreams becoming true.

[The above photo shows the current Uganda Darts Team. Left to right Patrick Ochieng, Isaac Tasi, James Otim, David Tabaro (captain), Ronald Kalete, Robert Okalanyi. Maria Namuganyi.]

Eddie has been a good man and friend to us all in Africa in every sense of the word - loyal, incredibly hard working, a team player and with a moral sense of right and wrong. Eddie has truly inspired us here in Africa to live our dreams and to succeed in the sport. He possesses a huge brain and is a creative genius who has devoted most of his life to the sport of darts.

We here in Africa will be sorry when he retires and will certainly miss his jovial tours to educate us on the great sport he promotes. He is a true ambassador for the United Kingdom and the UK and USA companies he represents on his tours.

Finally from his Darting friends in Africa we say 'Hats off and a Thousand Hosannas' and a great big thank you to Dr Eddie Norman for being such a great friend to the Darting nations of Africa - no one will ever take his place in our hearts- the sport will miss him.

I look forward, Sir, to receiving your magazines.

NO MORE WINMAU WORLD MASTERS



It was with a tinge of sadness that I learned recently that, after 43 years, the WINMAU Dartboard Company's sponsorship of the World Masters, one of the most prestigious events on the world darts calendar, had ceased.

WINMAU first became the title sponsor of the World Masters in 1976. The original sponsor was Phonogram records (1974 and 1975). However, I understand that WINMAU provided the dartboards in those first two years and were, it seemed, a natural replacement when Phonogram did not renew. (The photo left shows the badge available at that inaugural Masters something nowadays

very much sought after by collectors.) When the first WINMAU World Masters was

reported in *Darts World* in January 1977 it was a prime example of under-reporting: just half a page. That half-page was more about the winner, John Lowe 'joining the growing band of professional players on the world exhibition circuit' than anything else. There were no match details but there was a photograph (below) of John (far right) with runner-up Phil Obbard (Wales) (far left) and losing semi-finalists Kevin White (Australia) and Javier Gopar (USA). (Images courtesy of PC/DW Archive.)



Things improved after that. So popular was the event that for the 1977 Masters the tournament was moved to the Wembley Conference Centre which had a seating capacity of 2,700. It is my belief that WINMAU's sponsorship of the World Masters is one of the, if not *the* longest continuous sponsorship in any sport by a company directly involved in that sport.



This is certainly true of darts. (The *News of the World* doesn't count as that was not a 'world' title until much later.)

I have personally been sponsored by WINMAU for more than a decade and have, over the years, with my wife Maureen, enjoyed the Masters at a number of venues up and down the country courtesy of the company and, of course, the hospitality afforded to us by my sponsor. The tournament has always produced excellent darts and some incredible champions especially when everyone started on a level playing field. To

win the WINMAU World Masters from a standing start was proof positive that the winner was in a class of his (and later her) own.

(The photo here shows my wife Maureen sharing a tender moment (and a bar of ‘Scotty Dog’ chocolate) at the 2010 Masters. Image © 2010 Chipsnapz. Used with permission.)

That all changed in 2007 when a rule change meant that the top eight seeds progressed automatically through to the last sixteen. This was changed again in 2012 when the top sixteen seeds progressed through to the stage finals. Many traditionalists saw these rules as the BDO selling out to the TV companies and that it removed the truly competitive element from the tournament: which, of course, it did.

The great news is that, after over a decade, the BDO is going back to the level playing field for the 2019 World Masters. I wish the BDO and their new sponsors good luck whilst hoping that the high standards maintained for so long by WINMAU will continue as the Masters enters a new and exciting stage of its development.

IS SIZE IMPORTANT? - BIG DARTS FEEDBACK

Referring back to the ‘Is size important?’ articles in recent DDNs I am grateful to Scotland’s darts historian Jim MacNeil for sending me this image of the large Unicorn travelling dart.



It shows Bill Lennard presenting the trophy for League Singles Champion John Hyder at the Catford and District Whitbread Clubs League in South East London. Jim discovered this story and image in the 12th August 1977 edition of *Darts News* a sister publication to *Darts World*.

Bill won the *News of the World* title in 1976 when he beat Welsh legend Leighton Rees 2-0 in the final. Subsequently Bill was sponsored by Unicorn for a while.

JOCKY WILSON SAID – RAB SMITH REMEMBERS

Like me, former Scotland No. 1. Darts player Rab Smith (pictured right) was asked to contribute and be interviewed for the BBC Scotland documentary ‘Jocky Wilson Said’ back in February, the result being released in April and now available to view on YouTube.

Subsequently I received an e-mail from Eddie Reid, a good friend of Rab’s who was a guest of the BBC at the Gunner Club in Kirkcaldy, when they filmed the tribute to Jocky.



Eddie told me

I returned to Scotland in 2007 and met up with Rab. We live on the same estate in Dumfries and quickly became very good friends. Rab has told me that you have approached him with regard to any more stories he has about Jocky. They travelled the world together and he has many stories to tell.

Eddie, a freelance journalist added

[Rab's] mind and memory are both as sharp as a tack and he is keen to help you with your work. To this end, he has asked me if I could help him relay the stories to you, Patrick.

I will jot down his stories in short-hand then transfer them into email format. I will let Rab check every word for his approval before I send you anything. I am just introducing myself to you Patrick and I look forward to hearing from you directly.

The first of Rab's stories will appear in the next issue of *DDN*.

AND FINALLY...

I have been contacted by Paul Watts from Rotherham who is seeking help in tracking down what appears to me to be a unique style of darts trophy. Paul writes

In the 1960s my dad worked for a company called G K Beulah in Hull. They were, and still are, a trophy, shield, etc. production company. My dad hand carved the die that was used to cast the lead figures. It's a standing darts figure with one hand holding a dart and oddly, the other hand in his pocket, because that's how the company owner posed for the figure.

Do you recognise this unusual trophy from that brief description? Perhaps some of the older Hull-based *DDN* readers can assist. If you can help then please contact me at patrick.chaplin@btinternet.com.

MY DARTS RESEARCH IS SPONSORED BY

WINMAU®
T H E F O R C E B E H I N D D A R T S™

Winmau.com

NOTE: Text © 2019 Patrick Chaplin or as shown. Images © Patrick Chaplin or as stated or sourced. Neither text nor images can be reproduced without prior permission of the copyright holder(s).