

A road apple in disguise is still a road apple

"A single dance does not make a romance or even a one night stand - it's just a mere oft-remembered memory." That quote comes from the Old Dart Coach's next book that hasn't been written. The quote does about sum up the world of darts in January of the year 2024. There were occasions where there was love at first sight which could morph into a lifetime affair.

The darts world fell in love with 16-year-old Luke Littler as he progressed through the world championships. Now 17, Littler lost only two matches in 2024 - finishing runner up to Luke Humphries in the world championship final and the same to Michael van Gerwen in the Dutch Masters. Littler won the Bahrain Darts Masters beating Michael van Gerwen 8-5. To date this year, the teenage "Nuke" has dispatched five world champions. He got a tinge of revenge when he beat Luke Humphries in the Dutch Masters.

Yes, all good things must come to an end. "We need to see other people," some began to post on Facebook. And so it went - MvG got the best of Littler 8-6 in the final of the Dutch Masters, but only almost. Littler closed to 6-7 then missed the bull to force a decider (Ah yes, Dutch Masters an average cigar).

THEY CAME... THEY SAW... THEY KICKED A DOUBLE SNAKE

Dart players in North America swooned at the ADO's Las Vegas Open (LVO) where "record" numbers, "win and you're in the WDF Lakeside Championships" and an increase in payout was announced while the event was in action. The LVO was a tremendous success by any measure. The number of entries pulled closer to turnouts at some of the late lamented North American (in the 1,650 range). Against last year, the men's entries were up by 161 with ladies improving by 37. This also

had an old North American feel with travelers from the UK and a larger group than usual from “Oh Canada”.

With Fallon Sherrock and Deta Hedman in the house, North America ladies were absent for any of the WDF finals. Sherrock defeated Wendy Reinstadtler (England) in one final 5-1 and Deta Hedman 5-2 in the other. Sherrock wasn't through as she then won the Women's Cricket Singles 3-0 over Sandy Hudson. Like informercials, "Wait, there's more." Sherrock won the mixed doubles with Leonard Gates. In all, she pocketed roughly \$2,400.

Deta Hedman won the cricket doubles with partner Anca Zijlstra over Aaja Jalbert and Sandy Hudson. Let's hear it for Sandy Hudson. The following week “The Queen” would win both WDF singles in Romania.

In the love dance at the Las Vegas some toes were stepped on. More on that later...

SENIOR OPEN

Just down the road from the LVO the first-ever Stacy Bromberg Senior Open took place. Like the words from Home on the Range, "never was heard a discouraging word." No, not a single one unless you count a top player who opined, “They can come play with us” in the Las Vegas Open.

The Senior Open was about much more than winning or losing. It was renewing of old friendships, lying about how good everyone looked in hopes they would return the lie.1 (perhaps in hopes they would take it easy at the line). It was a lovefest of a kind which darts needs more.

Mick Smith (Florida) defeated Ron Beach (California) to capture the Lenny Heard Men's Singles as Julie Nicoll-Jennings (Ohio) bested Linda Endo (California) for the Stacy Bromberg Lady's Singles. But the

real winner was the Make-A-Wish Foundation (see below). Two of the largest auction donors were Terry Parmeter (California) and Gary ‘Catfish’ Davis Sr. (Tennessee).

The event raised \$2,000-plus dollars for Make-A-Wish Foundation, the charity for which Stacy Bromberg worked tirelessly. The Golden Era Dart Players have already begun to work on the next year's event.

ADO THUGGISH BEHAVIOR?

Most of the few complaints about the Las Vegas Open should be forgiven. First time mistakes get Mulligans all around. Lessons learned. After Friday night’s draw doubles, the ADO added money to the Fridays Men’s Cricket.

Readers might recall that former ADO vice president, Matt Stoner, once remarked, “This is our big event (the LVO), and you are trying to injure it.” He was talking about the proposed 2023 Senior Open which the ADO was able to scuddle. No Mulligan for this.

It takes money to run the ADO and a tournament. Players attend “supposedly” for reported prize money. They expect payouts to be what they signed up for. Had the ADO lost money would prize money be reduced on the spot? No. This would set an unacceptable precedent for other tournaments to return money if they exceeded prize money. The ADO represents not only players but the tournaments that fund the ADO via sanctioning fees and surcharges.

Several sources reported that one lady participant posted the following: *"Can someone please tell me how the ADO justifies adding payouts to the men's bracket and not the women's?"* This followed a posted ADO brag about adding money. The ADO's president was not amused by the post and reportedly threatened the lady with being banned from the tournament unless she took down the post.

She didn't.

The ADO then added money to the Ladies' event. The lady who originally brought the matter to light posted, *“Thank you to the ADO for doing the right thing.”*

That should have (so easily could have) been the end of it. It wasn't.

While handing out checks to the ladies, new ADO president, Jim Widmeyer, once again threatened to kick the lady out of the tournament “for causing harm to 'his' tournament”. It was later disclosed by the same lady that prior to her singles match, Widmeyer “decides to come and yell... and threatened to kick (her) out if I didn't take my post down. She continued to report that during and after the doubles Widmeyer "caused a scene.

In the end, the atrociously treated lady posted: *“I just want to put my horrible Las Vegas Open tournament behind me and chalk it up as a victory for getting something added to women's payouts.”*

As with former ADO vice president, Matt Stoner, there is no Mulligan for the behavior of ADO president Jim Widmeyer. It was thuggish, ugly and uncalled for.

Will he be held responsible? No. Mr. Widmeyer was 100% correct that the tournament is "his" (and the ADO board's). Mr. Widmeyer and the board are answerable to only themselves. Dart players have no say and when given the chance it seems most lack the courage to take a stand.

The lady in question should be applauded but she won't be. The reaction of other lady players will probably be, “It didn't hurt me.” Right - it doesn't hurt them until it does.

If you take a road apple and dip it in chocolate the result isn't a chocolate éclair - it's just a road apple covered in chocolate.

The “new” ADO all dressed up in a new package is still the old ADO.

Some things never change.

Never be thirsty.