

## GROUND HOG DAY?

For those that haven't taken notice (although the Old Dart Coach has) the Premier League on Thursday nights has become darts' version of the movie *Groundhog Day*. For those that haven't seen the movie here's the Cliff Notes...

*It tells the story of a cynical television weatherman covering the annual Groundhog Day event in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania, who becomes trapped in a time loop, forcing him to relive February 2 repeatedly.*

It matters little about six of the eight players in the Premier League - the story is always about the two Lukes. Luke the Elder (Humphries) and Luke the Younger (Littler) hold the spotlight.

Luke the Elder won back-to-back big wins. Last Thursday night in Nottingham his win vaulted him into the top spot in the standings, moving Michel van Gerwen to the second place. Humphries started by taking out a slumping Michael Smith 6-4, averaging 103.51. Next up was Peter Wright with a resounding 6-1 romp. Nathan Aspinall, making his third final this year, was going for his second win. Humphries stopped Aspinall, denying him that second win.

Humphries led from the get-go, winning 6-3. Aspinall got close at 4-3 - close but no cigar. It was Humphries' power as he collected 6 x T80's to just one for The Asp.

Luke the Younger produced a little "pay back" to Michael van Gerwen as he gained a 6-2 victory. Littler lost to MvG 6-5 back in week 4. van Gerwen, playing with a "reported shoulder problem," missed a pair of doubles that could have made the score closer. One of those was the bull for a T70-check, instead getting the baby bull.

While the rest of the world was celebrating St. Patrick's Day, the ODC was dining on Crow (medium well, thank you ) with Fava Beans and a nice Chianti. The ODC committed the ultimate crime by writing and

printing "Fakes News". The fault should ultimately land on Most Honored Editor although he's on the injured list with a broken arm so the blame lands on the ODC like a ton of bricks. Those bricks delivered by a lady named Billie. After surviving his St. Patrick's meal, he most humbly apologizes.

The ODC wrote: "Littler was upset as Pietreczko went to the wrong table to sip water trying to upset him. Really? Pietreczko apparently got upset by something. What that was is a mystery."

It was not Pietreczko who went to the wrong table to sip water trying to upset Littler. It was the Polish Eagle, Krzysztof Ratajski. Shouldn't the ODC get a pass as both names are hard to spell? No way, Jose.

He was right in that Pietreczko got the "RA" - showing that as he was less than gentlemanly after he lost. His "RA" came after Pietreczko was upset when Littler had 147 remaining. The Nuke was leading 3-2 at that point and was on 147 after 12 darts. He tried to check out this score via t19, tops and the bullseye - but threw his second dart off the board. Never has anyone missed tops - sure. Probably Pietreczko was thinking "Littler's trying to show me up". Anyone that follows Littler knows he loves the red bull as much as the ODC loves his Miler Genuine.

Pietreczko claimed that Littler was arrogant. He has a right to be.

This week, the Premier League lands in Dublin, Ireland (not Dublin, California) and as the Irish have want to do will redux St. Patty's Day. The draw could produce a battle of the Lukes as they are each on a separate side of the draw. The Elder, going for his third win on the trot, probably has an easier road facing Peter Wright then either Rob Cross or last week's victim Nathan Aspinall. Luke the Younger will have to defeat Michael Smith then either MvG or Gerwyn Price.

Two Players Championship were held this week (#5 and #6) with £15,000 to each day's winner. Raymond van Barneveld turned back the clock as he won his first Players Championship on the comeback trail.

He did it with a “how about this” trashing of Steven Bunting 8-1.

Barney broke out to a 4-nil lead with checks 86, 71, 61 and 86. Bunting grabbed his only leg of the match only to be answered by Barney in 14 and 15 darts making it 6-1. At 7-1 Barney used his favorite d18 out to clinch the win.

Day Two of the Players Championship had a first-time winner - Dave Chisnall took out Dirk van Duijvenbode 8-6. Chisnall scored well with those nasty doubles sinking van Duijvenbode's ship. In one leg he missed 8 doubles. It's well known that the big Dutchman has been bothered by a bad shoulder for some time. Making it to the finals was an achievement - although it's doubtful he sees the result that away.

Another victim of shoulder problems was Gary Anderson as he had to forfeit his match against Martin Schindler when level at 3. Earlier in the event, Anderson had defeated Haupai Puha 6-5. In the previous day's play, Anderson defeated Daryl Gurney 6-1 averaging 113.97. Wow!

A frequently asked question about the Darts in Paradise tournament in Cancun, Mexico (June 1-8, 2025) is: What does the “All You Can Everything” event package mean? According to the promoters it includes food with six ala carte restaurants. Okay, how about adult beverages? The answer: unlimited (including "non-adult" beverages, whatever they are). Presumably, they include water - as everyone knows, in Mexico you can't drink the water.

It's time to say good-bye to a dear friend of all dart players from the Golden Era...

After a long struggle with health issues, Dennis Hassett has passed away. Dennis was a very good dart player but he also helped many players with his charity. His Marque Lounge annually held a dart shoot just before the North American, drawing the best players in the world. The Marque Lounge also served food. A couple of Dennis' most prominent chefs were Nicky Virachkul and Paul Lim. Neither were

awarded Michelin's Five Stars for food but they were Five Stars in the world of darts.

Dennis was a battler all his life. He never said never and never give up. As he travels to heaven he'll be met with open arms by old friends as a welcome to the Dart World in the Sky. The darting community has lost a great person. God Bless you, Dennis Hassett, and thank you as you've left this world for another. RIP

Tip one for Dennis!