

SPORTS REVIEW

GIBRALTAR DARTS OPEN - A SUCCESS

The Gibraltar Open Darts tournament, arguably the biggest event in the Rock's darts calendar, was won by a member of the Welsh national team after a tense final.

Glamorgan's Wayne Davies walked away with the men's open title after having won the Torremolinos Open a week before. Davies beat Steve Robinson who had earlier conquered local champion and Gibraltar's main hope in the event, Dylan Duo.

"I was 2-0 down in the beginning and Steve was playing well," said Davies. "But then I pushed myself to perform and managed to pull it back to 2-2. At that point it was anyone's game and I managed to hit the double ten I needed to go out. I am really happy at the result as it comes at the same time as my recall to play for Wales and after my Torremolinos win over John Farrell."

In the ladies division another dramatic final led to Yorkshire team darter Louise Symonds taking the big prize.

Said Louise: "It went down to the wire. It was a tense finale but I felt comfortable I could win it and did so at the end. I go home happy and over the moon to be going to World Championships."

She urged more to be done about the sport, especially for the women: "We need more money and more recognition if this is going to work."

Background

The Gibraltar Open is an annual event held one week after the Torremolinos Open and which therefore attracts international pros, superleague players and county league player who give some stiff

competition to local darts enthusiasts. The single day of competition registered a record 180 participants, a total of 80 British men and 40 women competing alongside the 50 local men and six women, while there were also 10 Spanish men and 10 Spanish women present.

Both the Costa del Sol tournament and the Gibraltar one hold wildcard entries to the world championship held in November.

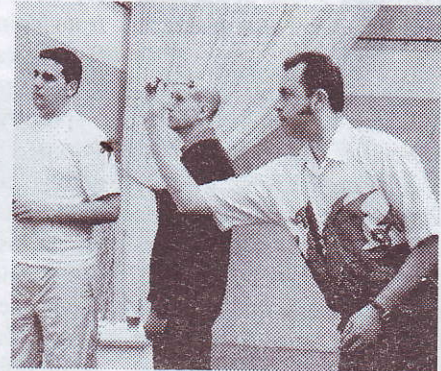
Organisers of the event were pleased with the local and international turn-out in this the 50th Anniversary of the first Gibraltar Open. "There has been a great response and everything has gone very well," said junior coach Harry Parody.

Success

And Gibraltar's strongest representative Dylan Duo could have gone further than his semi-final exit, especially as he was caught unawares by a new rule which meant the matches consisted of five games instead of last year's seven. Duo's dominance this season has been near total only being denied a 100 per cent win record in the four ranking competitions by club secretary Justin Broton who beat him in the last ranking competition final.

This result allowed Justin to qualify for the Mediterranean Cup, where the four top players from the countries of Italy, Greece, France (which this year host the event at a Granville in Normandy), Cyprus, Malta, Luxembourg (at France's invitation) will play four of Gibraltar's best.

As the second oldest sports association in Gibraltar the Darts Association is proud of its roots and its future, its latest world championship team scaling the dizzy



heights of the darts world by coming in at mid-table over countries like Germany.

And organisationally the association is also triumphing, last January 28 hosting the Stan James Professional tournament with PDC ranking, a feat already scheduled for next year.

Effort

For those unsure how darts is played it basically comprises of shooting darts into a dartboard so as to reach a score of 501, with a double needed to complete each game. Sometimes a tie-breaker is played if the scores are even into the last game.

Harry said: "You need a steady throw and a good arithmetic brain because there is a lot of adding and subtracting. You can be standing up for up to eight hours so you also need physical and mental strength and concentration." The association is currently on the lookout for female players and anyone interested can get in touch with Sue Parody through the sports authority.

But despite the massive voluntary effort by people like Justin and Harry and the association's tradition, the yearly clamour for their own premises where they can hone their skills at their leisure has always fallen on deaf ears. "We keep on knocking but the door keep getting it slammed in our faces," said a disappointed Harry.

Maybe it is time those in power gave credit where it was due and opened their arms to an association that has done so much to improve Gibraltar's image among the nations but when it comes back to our small community has nowhere it can call home.



Club Secretary
Justin Broton

