



DRA Chairman's Report 2020

The DRA continues to develop as a modern and professionally run governing body for Darts.

The DRA is an independent not for profit organisation that puts all its income over and above its running costs back into the governance of the sport. This includes attendance at events, running the disciplinary processes by writing and reviewing the rules, providing a Disciplinary Committee to manage and conduct hearings, licensing Players and running the Registered Agents Process. The DRA also runs a drug testing program working with UK Anti-Doping. The DRA have a retained doctor to give advice on drug testing and prohibited substances.

The DRA work closely with the PDC and the PDPA and we are constantly looking at ways to improve our role and to advise our partners on governance issue. The DRA provide sponsorship with UK Borders for players from outside the EU to obtain visas to enter the UK to play on the PDC Tour.

The DRA has worked through a difficult 2020 for the sport. The Covid pandemic has caused disruption to all sport worldwide. Most amateur and professional sport was forced to halt activities due to various lockdowns. The PDC carried out liaison with the authorities and together with snooker was one of the first sports to conduct activity after lockdown. This provided valuable opportunities for Professional Darts Players to earn a living in exceedingly difficult times.

The DRA has continued to operate throughout the pandemic, which has thrown up challenges that have changed working practices. The use of video conference facilities has had to come to the fore and we have been innovative in resolving problems in how we conduct our work. The DRA has largely been unable to attend events, but members have been monitoring Darts competitions through streaming and television.

The DRA continues to grow with amateur organisations signing up to be affiliated with the DRA. This goes towards our aspiration to join up the Darts world under one set of rules and regulations. The DRA now regulates organisations in the UK, Europe, the Nordic and Baltic region, Australia, New Zealand, Asia and the Americas. The DRA are in discussions with the WDF to complete the regulation picture.

It has been a difficult year for amateur Darts and in recognition of this the DRA has suspended the payment of affiliation fees until amateur Darts are able to resume activities. We hope that our affiliates can survive this unprecedented time and resume their activities later in 2021.

It is probably a reflection of the difficult times that we have dealt with two cases of match fixing in Darts and an increase in cases of Players betting on the sport in breach of the rules. There has been an increase in the number of Players reporting corrupt approaches. This problem seems to be increasing in Holland where there is an opening up of the gambling markets. We applaud Players who come forward to report approaches. Prior to 2020 there had only been one case of match fixing prosecuted by the DRA. I believe that the difficult financial times for Players and the betting operators offering a large number of handicap markets on low level events led to Players being

tempted to breach the rules. This mirrors the learning in Tennis where low level events were offered for betting with live scoring that caused fixers to approach Players who were not earning any money, making them susceptible to offers to fix matches.

The cases of Nijman and McKinstry were examples of this. Betting operators were offering odds of up to 14-1 on exact score outcomes of matches in an amateur 'at home' series where the Players were receiving a very low match fee. It is encouraging that both Players accepted their guilt and Wessel Nijman is working with the DRA and PDPA to educate Players on the dangers of match fixing.

This highlights the importance of the relationships that the DRA has with betting operators, betting regulators and betting associations such as the IBIA. The DRA also works with Sportradar who monitor markets for suspicious betting activity and provides assistance in investigations.

The use of technology was important in dealing with cases where Players and witnesses were interviewed using video technology and hearings are now routinely conducted using video conferencing.

In addition to working with Players, the DRA also registers agents who conduct commercial activity on behalf of Players. This registration process has been in place since 2015. To date the DRA has forty-two Registered Agents from all over the world. The registration process ensures that persons with a criminal record for dishonesty or who are insolvent cannot manage Players financial affairs. Players can only use Registered Agents who must pass a 'fit and proper person' test before they can be registered with the DRA. This provides protection for the Player and the Agent. The DRA work closely with the PDPA to mediate and resolve issues between Players and their Registered Agent. The DRA has built up a relationship with the Registered Agents that has helped in its role in governing the sport.

The DRA is recognised as a Schedule 6 of the Gambling Act 2005 sports governing body and work with UK Borders to issue Sportspersons Visas to Players from outside the EU. I sit on the on the Sports Betting Group and the Sports Betting Integrity Forum in the UK where sports, regulators, betting operators and law enforcement engage on sports betting issues. The DRA has information sharing agreements with most betting operators that operate in Europe.

This work is essential to protect the sport and the DRA remain committed to ensure that the sport remains clean and that the viewing public, sponsors and broadcasters can have confidence in the integrity of every match that is played.

The DRA work closely with the PDPA and have supported the PDPA induction Program for all players who qualify for a PDC Tour Card. The DRA present at the Induction session usually at the first event after Q School. All PDC Tour card holders must complete an integrity e-learning package as a condition of playing on the tour.

The annual review of the DRA Rules has been ongoing, and the new version should be released shortly.

Darts is a multi-million pound sport and requires such proper governance to maintain credibility with sponsors and the TV companies who fund the sport as well as to comply with good governance principles put forward by the UK Government. The integrity of the sport is an essential element of this.

All the developments and work of the DRA were delivered within budget for 2020, but the cost of the governance of the sport increases year-on-year. The expansion of the DRA will lead to an increase in caseload and the DRA needs to be flexible to manage governance issues in the sport from around the world.

The DRA continues to be funded by the PDC, PDPA and by a licence fee paid by the Affiliated Organisations and the Players. Registered Agents also pay an annual licence fee. The DRA is a not for profit organisation and any surplus from funding is reinvested in the governance of the sport.

I want to thank the DRA Board members for their hard work and support for the work of the DRA in 2020. Without their dedicated involvement the DRA could not function. As a team we are looking forward to the challenges that 2021 will bring as we come out of the pandemic.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nigel Mawer', written in a cursive style.

Nigel Mawer QPM
Chair of the Darts Regulation Authority
5th February 2021