



## **DRA Chairman's Report on 2016**

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

The DRA is a not for profit organisation that puts all money 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 run a drug testing program working with UK Anti-Doping (including having a retained doctor to advise on drug testing and prohibited substances). In addition to this the DRA monitor betting on darts with betting operators and betting regulators worldwide and runs investigations into betting irregularities and breaches of the rules. The DRA provide sponsorship for players from outside the EU to obtain visas to enter the UK to play on the PDC Tour and work closely with UK Borders.

In the past year the DRA have refined the DRA Registered Agents Process introduced in January 2016 after a review in July 2016. There are now a total of twenty-two Registered Agents with more applications currently in the registration process. The reason for having such a process is that Darts is now a multi-million pound sport and requires 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. It is important to provide protection for Players and Registered Agents and to give the sport credibility. The registration process carried out by the DRA has discovered people managing players who could not pass the fit and proper person test and in one case a person convicted of match fixing in another sport was managing a player. There have been cases where players have been held by unfair contracts and where payments have not been paid by Managers to Players as well as from Players to Managers. This cannot be allowed to happen in a professional sport. Both Players and Registered Agents are able to make complaints to the DRA for breaches of the DRA Rules and the Agents Regulations. A list of Registered Agents will be posted on the websites of the DRA, PDC and PDPA.

In 2016 the DRA became recognised by UK Borders as a sponsor for Players from outside the EU to obtain Tier 2 Sportsman visas to enter the UK. This enables players from outside the UK to regularly travel to the UK to play in PDC Events.

The DRA work closely with the PDPA and have supported the PDPA induction Program for all players who qualify for a PDC Tour Card. Each year the DRA present at the Induction session at the first event after Q School. Work is continuing to develop an e learning package that will be completed by all players who play in PDC events.

The DRA continues to be vigilant in protecting the sport from the scourge of match manipulation. The DRA has built on its relationships with other sports, the betting industry, the Gambling Commission and betting monitoring Companies. This means that if there were to be suspicious betting on a match, the DRA would be informed immediately. As part of this, the Chairman of the DRA sits on the Sports Betting Group and the Sports Betting Integrity Forum.

The DRA are about to be added to Schedule 6 of the Gambling Act 2005. This means that the DRA is recognised as a Sports Governing Body with whom the Gambling Commission can lawfully share

information. In 2016 the DRA have updated and signed new memoranda of understanding with various betting operators and maintain a good relationship with ESSA and members of the ABB.

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 regulate the PDC Scandinavian and Baltic Darts Tour which will grow in 2017 to include more of the Baltic States. There are a small number of Disciplinary Referrals each year and the DRA provide advice and guidance on the rules and processes.

In 2016 the DRA Disciplinary Committee has dealt with 51 referrals and held 21 disciplinary hearings. This compares with 84 referrals in 2015, 47 in 2014 and 31 in 2013. Since the start of the 2015 season, cases dealt with by the DRA Disciplinary Committee are reported on the DRA website. I am pleased to say that none of these cases have related to corruption.

I believe that it is important that the DRA are visible and accessible to Players and Agents and to this end in 2016 the DRA Board Members spent more time at events than ever before and regularly meet with Officials, Players and their Agents.

Social media continues to be an issue. There have been instances where players have posted offensive or insulting statements on social media that have resulted in disciplinary action. In two cases this led to the player being suspended from playing in events. In 2017 the DRA will be monitoring social media and will deal robustly with players who breach the guidelines.

All of the developments and work of the DRA were delivered within budget for 2016, but the cost of the governance of the sport increases year-on-year. The DRA continues to be funded by the PDC, PDPA and by a licence fee paid by the Players. Licenced Managers and Agents also pay an annual licencing fee. The DRA is a not for profit organisation and any surplus from funding is reinvested in the governance of the sport.

Once again I want to thank the DRA Board members for their hard work and support for the work of the DRA in 2016. I am looking forward to the challenges that the 2017 season will bring.

Nigel Mawer QPM  
Chair of the Darts Regulation Authority  
21<sup>st</sup> February 2017