

Dan Olson – Another Ontario Legend
By Kip Morrish

I decided to travel back to Ontario this month and talk to Dan Olson. Dart players across the country know Dan as he has represented Ontario on several occasions at the Nationals and has also had some international experience representing this country of ours.

Dan is a young man who is in his early 40's, who with his wife and step-son live in a small town called Mansfield. Dan's stepson - Joey is a special needs boy who has a very rare syndrome. He is only 11 years old but has already had 130 surgeries and has some more to look forward to. It is for that reason that Dan didn't travel to Australia in 2005 as a member of the World Cup Team. In July, 2006 there will be a fundraiser held for the benefit of Joey.

To keep food on the table, Dan works at the Sommerville Nurseries where he drives the truck, does maintenance of their equipment, and a little bit of welding. I guess you would call that a "jack of all trades". His employer is supportive of the time that he needs to travel to major events and they did sponsor him to a certain extent to travel to England and play in the Masters in 2005.

Sue is very supportive of the time he spends away at tournaments and normally likes to travel with him unless Joey is sick or the tournament is too far from home. This lady makes the decision about what tournaments they will attend and who Dan will play with. She also makes sure that he doesn't get too thirsty! This guy has it made!

When I asked Dan what his favorite food was his response was brief and to the point – "anything, as you can tell from my waistline". I am happy as long as I am not called late for supper! He enjoys watching Bruce Willis films and, if after a long day at work he can stay awake he likes watching "Lost" on T.V. unfortunately, he doesn't have much time for reading, with the exception of Bull's Eye News, of course.

Dan started playing darts in 1981 after he received a dart board for Christmas from his father. He started playing at the legion in 1982. He has been involved with darts both at the provincial and national levels on and off for over 20 years, and has represented Ontario about five or six times. He doesn't have a practice routine and only practices about once a week. Prior to a major tournament he would like to practice more but unfortunately he doesn't have the time. I would say that he has been very successful for a person that really doesn't hit the practice board as often as he should.

We don't see much of Dan around the Canadian tournament circuit because, as he said, the airfares far out way the payouts. He is, however, known around the U.S. circuit participating in shoots held in the States that are within an 8 – 10 hour drive for him, as these are certainly more affordable. Dan has won several awards in the States and in 2005 was inducted into the Charity Dart Systems Hall of Fame. This same organization will be holding a fund raising tournament on behalf of Joey in July 2006.

In addition to playing a lot of events in the States, Dan represented Canada at the World Cup in Malaysia in 2001, in England in 1991, at the North American Open and again in England in 2005.

Dan came onto the dart scene before there was a youth program but he would like to mention to our young players that they should take time to practice and have fun!

Dan made an interesting comment about games – not just those organized by the NDFC but at all tournaments. Apparently it is felt by a large number of players that the format is too short as the majority of events are the best of three legs. He feels that the events should be either the best two or three sets or the best of seven legs. No only would the seasoned players enjoy a format like this but it might encourage the newer players to come out and participate and feel as though they were getting their monies worth.

The lack of major sponsorship is obviously a problem, one that has been around for a number of years. Dan suggested that maybe the players should also be trying to obtain sponsors as well and not just leave the whole process to the NDFC. With adequate sponsorship, more of our players could get the international experience that is so badly needed.

This is certainly a very interesting gentleman, one who obviously has a number of personal problems but who always goes around with a smile on his face. I hope you will find his story as interesting as I did in writing it!