



How The DDA Was Started



For many throwers in our town, the Dayton Darting Association has always been there. A constant guiding force, a lightning rod for complaints and suggestions. But would you be surprised to know that the idea of the DDA was really born in the heart of New York City? Or that some of the folks responsible for its formation still play with you and I today?

Our story starts with two men who meet in a N.Y. bar on 3rd Ave near 92nd street in 1968. Bob Brickley was staying with a college roommate and Bob McCloud was there encouraging everyone to throw darts. And why not - he was the founder and chief promoter of the newly formed *United States Darting Association*. McCloud loved the sport and Bob Brickley caught his enthusiasm. So when he returned to his home in Oakwood, Ohio he began searching for other players and places to play.

Following the format given to him by McCloud, Bob Brickley drew up formal papers in the fall of 1970 and officially started the DDA. Through the distribution company he worked at, he became a dealer for Unicorn Darts so there would equipment for everyone. Now all he needed was some people and a place for those people to play. Fate and friendships led him to four other players that would help him achieve that goal. First and foremost was Sandy, a young lady just out of high school and a natural athlete, who fell in love with more than just the sport. She soon became Mrs. Brickley and went on to write her own chapter in dart history. Rounding out this fledgling group was another newlywed, Dave Servis, who learned the sport while stationed overseas, a "chukker" by the name of Steve Kay, and a family man who was first played in his neighbor's garage, Bill Nicoll Sr.



Bob & Sandey Brickley from a 1973 newspaper article

These four played every opportunity they got. They soon met Sam Bowers, another ex-military man who learned darts while stationed in England and who went on to be the 1972 Ohio Singles Champion. Sam taught them all the importance of "knowing their numbers" and how that helped a player keep a rhythm and play with a strategy. Through the Unicorn distributorship, they met top world players from England and got a taste of how good you could be at this sport. And for several weeks, they sat with the phone book and called bars and nightclubs all over the area, asking them to put up boards. Even though darting was taking off across the country, most owners still couldn't see interrupting their established patterns with a new diversion. But a few did respond or had boards up already. *Jimbo's House of Draft* (now McGuffy's), the *Town & Country Club*, *Wolf Creek Rod & Gun Club*, *Benedicts*, *Peff's* in New Lebanon, the *Shroyer Inn* and the *All-American Lounge* in Centerville all were early darting destinations.

The original four players made a bold decision. They split their team up and each went out and each recruited three more players to form four separate new teams. And as they played and recruited, more and more people saw and learned and joined. The level of play grew higher and interest exploded. Max Shook and Jim Francis of *Max's Barber Shop* (next to Katz) became an early focal point for dart related activities. The first couple of tournaments were held in private homes like the large furnished basement of Rick and Mimi Grant, another early couple who had joined the league. And the first Dayton Dart Open tournament was held in 1978 at the *Wolf Creek Rod & Gun Club*, off of Union Road west of town. Bill Nicoll Sr. and his wife Ellie became a hot bed for "all things darting" with their company, *Eagle Darts*, and later their famous *Dart Shoppe* and family of champion players.

Steve Kay was appointed the first President of the DDA and this was followed by Dave Servis serving for the next eight years. An in-house artist for Eagle Darts drew the original logo, which we still use today. In 1980 Bob Hurt, another early member, brought the first computer into the association to help keep track of the growing league and its activities.

And what of Bob and Sandy Brickley? Sandy had won the very first tournament she ever attended (Cleveland Open, 1972) and went on to win many more. She was a member of the first American international team ever to be invited to play in England. Bob traveled the country regularly with friends and fellow players and competed in tournaments from coast to coast. But by 1981 both had quit throwing regularly to tend to family and business. By then the league was growing in leaps and bounds and a long line of successors took over the job of running the association and its many activities. Today it is growing again still remains to serve and promote the sport of darts in Dayton and the surrounding areas. As of this writing, Bob and Sandy still live in Oakwood.