Arachnid Dart Games "Hit" In Bars

. . .Over 7,500 Tournament Players In Green Bay Area Leagues Alone

. . .Creating Big Traffic And Constant Earnings For Locations

In a trade which can well be called unpredictable, the importance of a good strategy can become urgent. With the recent slowdown of video games, many operators are taking second looks at the alternatives, switching to machines that have a proven track record of steady earnings.

Juke boxes and pool tables have always been a good investment, with dependable steady cash flow. It's well known that league-play and pool tables are a hard to beat combination, and pool leagues have been on an international basis in North America for years.

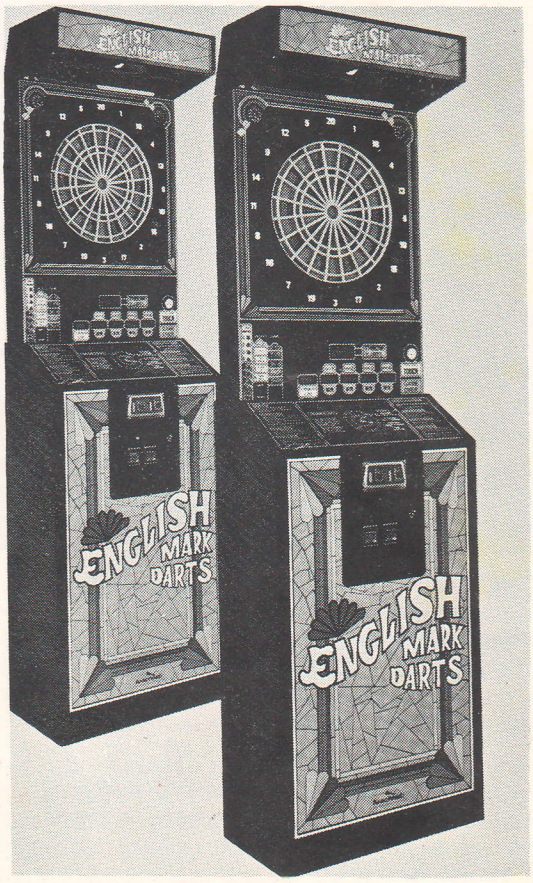
Operators whose video games have slowed down may well be looking this year for something stable, something challenging that will stay on location for a long time with good earning power (i.e., return on investment).

Enter — English Mark Darts. Steel tip darts, a very old game, has been played in about all English and Irish, and many American pubs for decades.

Many location owners have been reluctant to have steel-tip games in their taverns because of the likelihood of injury, and many players are put off by the necessity of manual score keeping.

Arachnid, Inc., based in Rockford, Illinois solved these problems, in 1977 with their English Mark Darts game...

Using safe soft tip darts and a computerized self-scoring system, this company has carved out a new segment in the games market — a segment that quarters are pouring into at a good and steady rate.



Darts Leagues Create Steady Traffic And Offer Entertainment To Onlookers In Bars And Legions

Distributors and operators have started successful English Mark Darts leagues as scattered as Canada, Wisconsin, Oregon, Texas, Washington, Arizona, Minnesota and many other states. Location owners are becoming interested as well as operators report being called by tavern owners asking that English Mark Darts games be placed in their own establishments.

We interviewed operators across America, and found a good many points in common, the most notable being that English Mark Darts leagues are alive and growing, years after they were introduced in their areas.

Over 7,500 Players In Green Bay Area Playing In English Mark Dart Tournaments!

Green Bay, Wisconsin is known as the home of English Mark Darts leagues. The first leagues in the country started here in 1977, with 6 teams operating out of 3 taverns. It caught on very fast, despite doubts from some operators, who saw it as a short-term thing, and from location owners, where were concerned about injuries.

According to one operator in the area, the fears didn't take long to go away. Green Bay now has leagues every

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Arachnid Dart Game "Hits" In Bars Becauce Of Soft Tip Dart Eliminating Injuries, And Computerized Self Scoring System



Sam Zammuto

night of the week except Saturday, with over 7,500 players in the area. Almost every tavern within 100 miles of the city now has at least one darts game, and some have up to six machines.

General Leisure, a games distributor in the Portland, Oregon area put five English Mark Darts games into various locations three years ago, and after a few tournaments had quickly gotten enough interest to form 10 leagues for the first season. Today there are three leagues running during the year, with 3 divisions in each league. This amounts to four nights of league play every week: one for mixed doubles, two for open doubles, and one for ladies' nights. There are over 100 teams in the open double leagues alone, and with "practice nights" figured in, it amounts to a lot of quarters taken in. General Leisure still runs the leagues in the area, not only for themselves but for a growing number of operators in the area — some operators whose business is based solely on English Mark Darts games.

In Humble, Texas, where English Mark Darts leagues are in their 3rd year of existence, practically every location now has a dart game, and the game's popularity is still growing, because the players are now asking for more dart games in the locations.

In Tucson, Arizona, Dave Mackey of Mackey Mania is in his 3rd season, and reports that every season starts with a waiting list for new players. "We've done well", Dave explains. "We didn't start leagues immediately, we ran monthly tournaments alone for the first year. People got interested in leagues then, and we organized them, with elected officers". Mackey does not have to maintain these leagues: the players have done this themselves, with a president, a finance officer and paid dues. Players chip in two dollars every week, which goes into the kitty to pay for trophies, patches, and a picnic at the end of the year.

And so it goes. In South Bend, Indiana an average of 36 teams are involved in three league seasons per year, and there is definite need for more machines in the area. There is even talk about a "pro" league starting up and this is only a little over two years since the first English Mark Darts games were introduced there.

In Chicago, one operator's dart leagues are on their second year of play, having gone from 100 to 400 players in one year. In Rockford, Illinois, another operator has had a growth over 5 years from 6 to 85 teams, with a present level of about 500 players. That's a 1400 per cent increase.

Even more interesting are the positive comments from operators who are just starting up dart leagues in their own areas: After some promotion by the operators, and after holding a tournament or two, there is usually very little trouble finding either players or locations for the machines. This even happens in areas where steel-tip "free" games have long been popular. Once established, most operators find that league play is self-sustaining, requiring minimal effort on his part.

The following are a few remarks from operators and distributors that we interviewed.

"**English Mark Darts are here to stay.**" Once a game is in a location, you simply can't take it out. . . It's a game for every bar and every player, and it's the best-looking machine on the market. I don't see any problems with it: I just see it getting bigger."

Larry Schneider of Bar-Rest, Mason City Iowa

"It's a very inexpensive sport, and at the same time it's a skill you can practice with your friends. Anyone can compete, too. You don't have to be an athlete to win. Bally feels strongly about machines which give appeal and value to the player. We like the player to have fun."

Distributor Bob Rondeau of Bally Midwest, Green Bay Wisconsin

I've had several experiences when guys who've paid $125 for a set of steel tip darts, real purists, have come up to me and said "this (English Mark Darts) is going to take over".

Merlin Sampson of Sty-Del corp., San Diego California

"If I had another 20 machines, I could put them all in tomorrow."

Harry Schwartz, Arizona operator.

We're going to get it moving this year. We're competing with other kinds of leagues in the area for attention, pool and shuffleboard leagues and such, but I've got a good feeling about it and from the success of the other area Dart Tournaments, we'll do it".

Larry Smith, New York operator.

"We're getting phone calls on almost a daily basis, from operators and locations both. If leagues are well promoted,

Arachnid Dart Games

they'll grow and prosper. Our wage-per-machine average share is better on a English Mark darts game than on a video game, and the cost is less."

Distributor Jerry Estes of Northwest Sales, Seattle, Wash.

"Leagues are definitely the key to success in any town. The new model 5000 Dart Game machine is so accurate that we can now say our leagues are running error-free. There's no scoring problem — they're working perfectly for us."

Operator, name witheld by request, Green Bay, Wisconsin.

Steel Tip Darts Dangerous In Most Locations. . .Soft Tip Darts Safe And Give Exciting Play

"Some location owners who've had steel tip games have been a little hesitant to accept us. A place with several steel boards, one that's been in the national associations and such, can put up some resistance. The ones that we have convinced have been a great help to us, though".

Brad Hamma of A&H Amusement, Chicago Illinois

The electronic English Mark Darts games and darts leagues are sweeping the country, and the word is that it's an idea whose time has come, one that is here to·say. Persons interested in starting up with tournaments and leagues in their area may contact:

Arachnid, Inc., P.O. Box 2901
Rockford, Illinois 61132-2901
or call (815) 654-0212

A Proven Formula For Successful Dart Leagues!

How to organize an "English Mark Dart" League from start up to banquet night!

Arachnid Will Supply League Rules • Sign-Up Sheets • Score Sheets • Schedules And Standings

1. Interested teams need to fill out a sign-up sheet and roster sheet (sample enclosed). Teams consist of (4) players and (2) subs. Players will commit themselves to a designated night once a week for approximately 10 to 20 weeks, depending on the type league they are in. Players will alternate each week with a "home" game, then an "away" game.

2. Make sure the sponsor pays an entry fee to cover operating expenses for repair maintenance and operating the league.

3. Give the sponsor and players a league packet which should contain a copy of the schedule and game rules in which the league will operate. Also include blank score sheets (sample enclosed) for the team captains to fill in each week.

4. It might be of some assistance to involve one or two of the players to help govern all rules, changes, and protests which might occur during the season schedule.

5. Our score sheets are made out for a (9) game match. Suggested starting game is open in and open out, which makes the game go faster until the skill level develops. Then double or triple out is played.

6. Once the schedule is made out, and after the first week of play, make sure all sponsors get a standings sheet (sample enclosed) posted at the site of the game to create interest for the next week's play!

7. Collecting the money and score sheets from the bar is the hardest thing to arrange. One of the best ways to collect the money is the night after the (9) game match is over, or the next morning when the bar or tavern opens up for business. Never let the money and score sheet go for more than 2 days, as it can get misplaced or lost!

The team captains are responsible for collecting each players weekly dues; marking the score sheet after each round of play; and making the final decision in the event of a game dispute. Both team captains must then sign each others score sheet and their own, and place the money in a sealed envelope which is to be left at the cash register for collecting.

8. Once again, make sure the standings sheet is immediately made out and sent to all participating sponsors to be posted. Once the leagues get going, players are anxious to see the results of all the teams games.

9. If the league idea catches on, make up a playoff schedule for the top (4) teams like a world series!

10. At the end of the seasons play, try to give a small banquet in which trophies and awards will be given to the top (3) teams and players. Pro darts and accessories such as T-Shirts and jackets also make nice give-away prizes.

11. There are many different types of leagues that can be created. Mens league, Womens league, Mixed Doubles league, and Masters league. The purpose of creating so many different leagues is to get players involved in more than one league each week if they opt to do so.

Arachnid will supply all forms needed to organize your league. If any questions or problems arise, they are as close as your phone. . .Call Sam Zammuto at (815) 654-0212.

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