

SPORTING LEGENDS: JOHN LOWE

SPORT: DARTS

COMPETITIVE ERA: 1978 - 2008

John Lowe (born 21 July 1945 in New Tupton, Derbyshire) is an English darts player who was one of the main competitors who made darts such a huge spectator sport in the 1970s and 1980s, particularly in the United Kingdom.



Lowe won the World Championship title in three different decades - 1979, 1987 and 1993. He was regarded as the gentleman of the game, but he was very much a bridesmaid figure behind Eric Bristow in the early days of darts' rise to prominence - in terms of results and charisma.

He met Bristow six times in the World Championship in various semi-finals and finals and it wasn't until his fourth attempt (in the 1987 final) that he managed to overcome his great rival. His record against Bristow in majors was three wins and six defeats.

Lowe achieved the ultimate feat in darts on 13 October 1984 during the World Matchplay tournament against Keith Deller when he managed a nine dart finish - the sport's equivalent of a hole-in-one in golf or a 147 break in snooker. This was the first time this had ever been accomplished by any darts player while being televised. For this, Lowe won £102,000. He went on to clinch the tournament.

As well as his three world titles, Lowe also won two World Masters titles, two British Open titles and two British Matchplay championships, two World Cup Singles and three European Cup Singles Titles, as well as countless other titles around the world in a hugely successful career. He played for England over 100 times and was captain for seven years, during which time his team were unbeaten.

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John Lowe's high levels of concentration during a match were a key asset to his game.

He also gained credit for his decorum and sportsmanship at the oche, often in notable contrast to the gifted but arrogant Bristow. He was also probably unique in darts in that he looked after his health, never developing the weight difficulties associated with darts players, though he did consume alcohol onstage with the others when liquor was still permitted in the game.

Nicknames were all the rage in darts, but Lowe never really had one which caught on. A studious, composed performer, he didn't have anything which stood out in his demeanour or personality - until someone decided to use these very traits to come up with a soubriquet of *Old Stoneface*. This is also the title of Lowe's autobiography which was published in 2005.

Lowe enjoyed a longevity at the sport that is currently unmatched. He played in the televised stages of the World Championship for a record 27 consecutive years from the inaugural championship in 1978 to his last appearance in 2004.

Lowe is married to Karen and lives in Chesterfield, from where they both support Sunderland. He was secretary of the World Professional Dart Players Association (later to become the Professional Darts Players Association (PDPA) and in 2005 enjoyed a testimonial year in the sport to commemorate his 30th year as a professional.

He still attempted to qualify for the World Championship each year until 2008, but fell short in the early qualifying rounds. After joining a short-lived venture, the Setanta Sports televised League of Legends in 2008, Lowe became ineligible to compete at the PDC World Championship so could not attempt to qualify for the 2009 event.

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Scott Burton's Final Thought

John Lowe's outstanding darts career is littered with championship titles, awards and accolades.

He competed during an incredibly competitive era of the sport, and was a fine captain for the England darts team.

His professionalism was also excellent, never losing his temper or allowing the crowd's banter to affect his game.

If Eric Bristow had not been on the scene at the same time, it's fair to say that John Lowe could have won many more World Titles.

Nevertheless, he is a true sporting legend, and very few players will be able to match his achievements, especially over a 30-year illustrious career.



The ever-consistent throwing action of John Lowe