

SPORTING LEGENDS: RAYMOND VAN BARNEVELD

SPORT: DARTS

COMPETITIVE ERA: 1990 - PRESENT

Raymond van Barneveld (born 20 April 1967 in The Hague, Netherlands), nickname **Barney** and **The Man**, is a professional darts player. He is a five time World Darts Champion, two time UK Open Champion and the Las Vegas Desert Classic Champion. From January to June 2008, he was the PDC world number one ranked player.



His victory in the 2007 final, added to his four previous BDO Championships brought him level with Eric Bristow as a five-time world champion. He is the most successful Dutch darts player ever, and has a significant effect in putting the game of darts on the map in the Netherlands.

Barneveld's first World Championship appearance came in 1991 playing in the Embassy World Championship at the Lakeside Country Club, but his first round match ended in a 0-3 defeat to Australian Keith Sullivan.

He started to make some progress on the British Darts Organisation circuit, reaching the quarter-finals of the Belgian Open in September 1990 and the German Open in March 1991. His first semi-final came at the Swiss Open in June 1991.

He failed to qualify in 1992, but made it back to Lakeside in 1993, which would be the last time that a unified World Championship would be staged. Barneveld lost in a close match 2-3 to John Lowe, who would go on to win the championship.

SPORTING LEGENDS: RAYMOND VAN BARNEVELD



Barneveld's 2007 World Title success over Phil Taylor was a sweet victory!

Shortly after the 1993 World Final, the top players in the game at the time formed the World Darts Council (WDC, now the PDC) and left the BDO.

Barneveld continued to make progress in the BDO Open events in 1994 after the split, reaching the quarter-finals at the Dutch Open and Berlin Open, the semi-final at the Belgium Open and his first final, at the Finnish Open where he lost to Andy Fordham.

He continued his good run of form into the 1995 World Championship by putting out Les Wallace, Dave Askew, Colin Monk and Martin Adams to reach his first World Final. But it ended in defeat 3-6 to Welshman Richie Burnett.

After second round defeats in 1996 and 1997, the former postman took his first world title in 1998 by beating Burnett in a repeat of the 1995 final. This match however is often listed amongst the greatest of all-time having reached 5-5 in sets, van Barneveld finally took the title by winning the final set 4-2 in legs on double 8.

He successfully defended the trophy one year later by the same winning margin, this time against Ronnie Baxter of England. He is only the second player in the tournament's history to have launched a successful defence of his title; the other being Bristow.

His run of success ended in the first round in 2000, crashing out to Chris Mason, who averaged 100 and ended Barneveld's hopes of a hat-trick of titles. Barneveld lost in the quarter-finals in 2001 (4-5 to Ted Hankey) and 2002 (3-5 to Mervyn King) before returning to the final in 2003. He clinched his third world title by beating Ritchie Davies of Wales 6-3.

SPORTING LEGENDS: RAYMOND VAN BARNEVELD



The trajectory of Barneveld's unique throwing action

His 2004 campaign ended in the semi-finals, when Andy Fordham beat him 5-4 in another memorable match. A fourth title followed in 2005. He never dropped a set in the first three rounds as he beat Gary Anderson, Mike Veitch and Vincent van der Voort. A 5-3 semi-final win over Darryl Fitton and 6-2 triumph over Martin Adams of England in the final brought him that fourth title.

Barneveld reached his sixth final in 2006, and was aiming to equal Bristow's record of five BDO world titles. On this occasion however, his hopes were ended by 21 year-old fellow countryman Jelle Klaasen who prevailed 7-5.

He has also won the prestigious Winmau World Masters title twice: once in 2001 when he recorded a win in the final over Jarkko Komula of Finland and again in 2005 when he beat Goran Klemme in the final. Other major darts tournaments that he has won at least twice include The World Darts Trophy and The International Darts League.

After playing in the BDO for fifteen years, winning four World Championships, van Barneveld announced his move from the BDO to the PDC on 15 February 2006. He cited his reasons as wanting a greater challenge, and regularly playing against players like Phil Taylor. He had an incredible first year in the PDC, having started from scratch in the rankings. Within twelve months he had reached World number two and became World Champion.

His PDC debut came in the 2006 Premier League competition. He won his first match convincingly 8-1 against Baxter. On March 23, he hit his first televised nine dart finish and faced Taylor later in the same night, fighting back for a 7-7 draw. The re-match came on Barneveld's 39th birthday, but this time Taylor won the deciding leg for an 8-6 victory. Van Barneveld suffered a surprise 11-3 semi-final defeat in the Premier League to fellow Dutchman Roland Scholten.

SPORTING LEGENDS: RAYMOND VAN BARNEVELD



Barneveld's famous orange arrows!

Barneveld then started a very successful run with a 13-5 final victory over Colin Lloyd in the final of the International Darts League for his 11th BDO Grand Slam tournament. He won his first major PDC title in June by beating Barrie Bates in the final of the UK Open.

Earlier in the day, he beat Taylor in the quarter-finals, accomplishing one of his dreams which he announced after switching to the PDC. Barneveld beat Taylor again just weeks later in the semi-finals of the 2006 Las Vegas Desert Classic. He lost 6-3 to Canadian John Part in the final the following day.

After losing in the first round of the 2006 Bavaria World Trophy to rising talent Michael van Gerwen, van Barneveld acknowledged that he needed to work on his finishing throws. Although he played well in the Sky Bet World Grand Prix, he lost to Phil Taylor in the second round.

Taylor and van Barneveld met again in the 2007 PDC World Championship final, in a match which Taylor later described as the best final he had been involved in. From three sets down, van Barneveld came back to beat Taylor 7-6 in the sudden death leg in one of the greatest darts matches of all time to match Bristow's record of five world titles. In February 2007, Raymond won the 2007 Masters of Darts tournament by beating Peter Manley 7-0 in sets in the final with a 107 three dart average.

In the 2007 Premier League Darts, he never fared as well as he did in 2006, losing to Taylor twice, Dennis Priestley and Lloyd in the group section. He did however manage to finish second but lost an exciting but error filled encounter 10-11 to Terry Jenkins in the semi-final.

Barneveld made amends by inflicting one of Taylor's heaviest defeats (11-4) in the quarter-final of the 2007 UK Open and went on to successfully defend his title beating Lloyd 11-4 in the semi-final and van der Voort in the final 16-8.

SPORTING LEGENDS: RAYMOND VAN BARNEVELD



Barneveld has always been immensely popular with the fans

A month later, he continued his surge of major titles by beating Jenkins 13 legs to 6 in the final of the 2007 Las Vegas Desert Classic. Barneveld's dream of winning the five major PDC tournament titles in 2007- the World Championship, UK Open, Las Vegas Desert Classic, World Matchplay and the World Grand Prix ended when he was defeated by Adrian Lewis 16 legs to 14 in the quarter finals of the World Matchplay in Blackpool.

His haul of titles in the PDC has continued to grow since his switch. In addition to his four major titles (the World Championship, two UK Open Championships and the Vegas Desert Classic) - he has added eleven non-televised PDC Pro Tour titles (five UK Open Regionals and six Players Championships).

Barneveld threw another televised nine dart finish in the 2009 PDC World Darts Championship in his quarter-final match against fellow Dutchman Klaasen on 2 January 2009. Barneveld hit two maximum 180s before nailing treble 20, treble 19 and double 12 to complete his nine-darter in the second leg of the sixth set.

The feat earned Barneveld £20,000 - the bonus had not been won since Taylor's nine-darter at the UK Open against Jamie Harvey - as he became the first player to throw a perfect leg in the PDC World Championship. Barneveld went on to win the match 5-1, with a three-dart 161 finish, and then won his semi-final against Wade. However, he suffered a heavy 7-1 defeat to Taylor in the final.

Raymond threw his fourth nine dart finish in the Blue Square UK Open West Midlands Regional on 29 March 2009 in the third round against Kirk Shepherd.

SPORTING LEGENDS: RAYMOND VAN BARNEVELD



Scott Burton's Final Thought

Raymond Van Barneveld (RVB) has enjoyed a magnificent darts career thus far, and deserves to be considered as a true sporting legend.

He has pioneered the path for many other aspiring Dutch darts players, and managed to thrive during what is now arguably the toughest era of the professional game.

Always a gentleman, RVB enjoys his victories but is ever gracious in defeat.

His career may be judged in terms of his rivalry with Phil Taylor, but RVB could beat any champion on his day, as he has proved time after time.



Barneveld always knows how to get the crowd going!