

The United States World Cup team of Ray Carver, John Kuczynski, Bill Davis, Pat Cook, Stacy Bromberg, and Marilyn Popp endured a 30-hour+ trip to Perth, Australia to compete with the world's best players in an attempt to bring home a World Cup. The Ladies came close, with a Silver Medal finish in the overall competition, and the Ladies Pairs event. The men could not repeat its third place finish of 2003, finishing 8<sup>th</sup> out of 32 countries.

The first day of competition consisted of the Men's Team event where the United States entered the competition as the defending champions, and top seed. The format of this event is a round robin group, with the top two teams from each of eight groups advancing to the top 16, and a knockout bracket. The USA was grouped with Sweden, Republic of Ireland, and India. The opening match was a close one with Sweden, with the US needing a win in the 16<sup>th</sup> leg to force a tie-breaker, but Daniel Larsson completed a perfect 4-0 match with a victory over John Kuczynski giving Sweden the victory. The US then needed to win its next two matches to advance to the top 16. The second match was another nail-biter against the Republic of Ireland. After jumping out to a 5-2 lead, the Irish team came back to tie the match at 5, and then the teams traded wins in the next six legs, leading to a sudden death 17<sup>th</sup> leg, where Ray Carver defeated Martin McClosky giving the US its first victory. A place in the top 16 was cemented by a 9-1 victory over India, competing in its first World Cup. In the top 16, the USA came up against a tough Northern Ireland team. After falling behind 6-3, and then 8-6, the US forced another sudden death 17<sup>th</sup> leg with victories by Ray Carver and John Kuczynski. This time, however, the US did not fare as well in the tiebreaker. Ray Carver faced John Elder, and after winning the cork, Elder proceeded to start with a 180 on his way to a 12 dart finish.

Women's pairs were also on the schedule for Day 1. Team Stacy Bromberg and Marilyn Popp were ready to go! Finishing their round robin flight against Japan, Philippines, and Northern Ireland in first place, they progressed easily to the single elimination competition. Darts flew and so did Team USA...right into the finals to be played on stage on Saturday.

Day Two consisted of the Men's Pairs and Singles and the Women's singles. This was to be a long day with numerous ups and downs for all in attendance. Bill Davis/Pat Cook played in Group A. They cruised through their first two rounds against the Bahamas and Italy winning 4-0 and 4-1 respectively. Their third match was a tough one against eventual pairs champions Raymond vanBarnavelde and Vincent van der Voort. Cook and Davis pushed the eventual champions to a seventh game, but came up short. Ray Carver and Johnny Kuczynski had a tough bracket in Group B but still beat Team Belgium 4-1 in the first round. Second round against Republic of Ireland proved too tough for the US pair as they went down in a tough match 2-4 against Luke Nolan and Aodhagan O'Neill.

Then Ladies Singles were next with Bromberg and Popp still ready to fight on. Bromberg seemed to get the tough draw having World #1 Trina Gulliver and World #2 Francis Hoenselaar in it. Bromberg played well beating Sweden's Paulina Soderstrom 4-2. Then it was another tough match against Scotland's Anne Kirk, winner of the Pacific Masters competition in Perth two days prior. Bromberg won this match 4-2 and went on to play #4 seed from Germany, Heike Ernst. This match went down to the last dart in the 7th game with Ernst squeaking by 4-3.

Popp had an easier draw playing France's Valere Gaudin and winning 4-1. Popp's' second round match was a 'no show' progressing Popp on to play Scotland's Louise Hepburn. This match also went Popp's way by a score of 4-1. The next match was another 'squeaker' for the US with Japan's Mayumi Ouchi getting the victory by a score of 4-3, winning the deciding seventh game with a double bull finish with Marilyn sitting on a double.

Men's singles was absolutely spectacular. In Group A was America's Ray Carver who beat Finland's Marko Pusa 4-0, Republic of Ireland's Martin McCloskey 4-3, and then Norway's Stian Lyngfeldt. Carver was playing well but went out to England's Andy 'the Viking' Fordham in a well-fought match. In Group B it was Johnny K. to carry the Red, White and Blue. Johnny's first 3

rounds went well with Johnny beating Roberto Concepcion of the Philippines 4-2, then beating Martin Phillips of Wales 4-3, and South Africa's Clifford Stradling 4-0. Unfortunately for Johnny, he later met up with a man on a mission from Brazil, Mauricio Maia, who seemed to be having the tournament of his life, as he took Johnny K. out 4-2. Having a player from Brazil get this far after Team Brazil has struggled for many World Cups was good for the game but unlucky for America.

Group C had America's Pat Cook battling for his country. This Southern Gent had opponents rubbing their heads taking outs like 138--Triple 20, Triple 20, Double 9! Any way you do it, it got Cook past his first World Cup round against Norway's Ken-Rune Jorgensen by a score of 4-1. Next was Scotland's Gary Anderson. Cook did it again finishing 105 with a Triple 20, Single 19, Double 13! But Anderson hung tough and won the match 4-2.

Group D had America's Bill Davis contending on behalf of the Stars and Stripes. Besides a tough first round draw against Wales' Phil Evans, Davis had difficulty finding his darts and went down to the Welshman by a score of 4-1.

After two days of competition, the US hopes were for a gold medal were in the hands of the Ladies Pairs team of Stacy Bromberg and Marilyn Popp. The US Ladies would face the top seeded English team of Trina Gulliver and Clare Bywaters on stage. And what a match it turned out to be! After splitting the first 6 games on start the score was 3-3 in a best of 7 game match. England won the start and the game and match came down to, literally, the last dart. Team USA had a shot at 48 with the 3rd dart missing by a wire. England then finished the game and match. It really is a game of millimeters! The Ladies came away with a Silver Medal in the Ladies Pairs, and an overall Silver Medal in the World Cup competition.

The weekend festivities ended with a banquet, where the Men's World Cup was presented to the Netherlands for the first time, and the Ladies World Cup was presented to England. All in attendance would like to thank the Australians, and the WDF for a job well done, and look forward to 2007, when the World Cup will be held in the Netherlands.