



Darts Championship Goes 3D

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Armchair-bound darts fans will be dodging the arrows over Christmas as the semi-finals and finals of the PDC (Professional Darts Corporation) Championship will be broadcast in 3D for the first time. Sky Sports transmitted the culmination of the World Matchplay tournament stereoscopically in July, but that was when the broadcaster's 3D channel was available only in British and Irish pubs.

This year's event began December 16 at Alexandra Palace in north London and will reach its climax on January 3, with all matches shown live in HD on Sky. Reigning champ Phil "The Power" Taylor is looking to notch up a 16th title but only just managed to edge past Gary Mawson into the second round.

Facilities for the broadcasts are provided by Arena Television. These include the main scanner, OB9, which went on the road in 2007 and features a Sony MVS8000 vision mixer, Riedel intercom, Pro-Bel Sirius Gold router, and a Calrec Sigma audio console with Bluefin processing.

Other units on site are video trucks VT14 and VT6, although the whole production is being run tapeless.

There are 24 cameras around the venue, mostly Sony HDC1500s and HDC1550s, with an Imovix extreme slow motion unit and two HDC3300 tri-motion systems. The 3D rigs are 3ality mounts, which are used by OB company Telegenic for Sky's stereoscopic Premier League football coverage.

A key part of the 3D darts production is the two small cameras - described as being the size of ice cubes - mounted on top of the dartboard. These give the impression that the arrows are heading straight for the viewer and have even caught out seasoned observers of the game.

"At the World Matchplay, I was ducking and diving when those darts were coming at me in 3D," says Sky Sports commentator Sid Waddell.

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