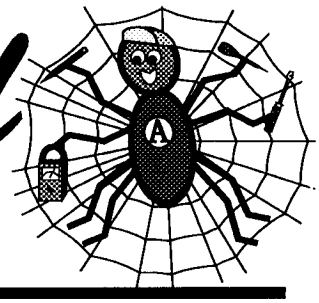
From the Originator of Electronic Darts

Arachnid Tech. Tips



A Publication Especially for Operators and Technicians who service Arachnid Products

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EDITOR
Connie Kronberg: Electrical Tech. Serv.

TECHNICAL ADVISORS
Gene Harlan: Manager, Tech. Serv.
Tony Sab: Software/Galaxy
Pat Rice: Software/Dartman II
Dick Jones: Research & Devel.

This publication is provided as an aid for field technicians and operators who troubleshoot, repair, and maintain Arachnid games. It is a technical tool designed to keep all the latest updates, service bulletins, suggestions, and ideas together in one neat package.

Your input is welcome. If you have a special idea or tip you would like to share, send it to: *It will be reviewed and considered for publication.*

Arachnid Inc. Engineering Div.
Attn. Tech Tips Editor
P.O. Box 2901
Rockford IL 61132-2901

HAVE A TECHNICAL QUESTION OR PROBLEM? Call us at 1-800-435-8319 and ask for Technical Service. We'll be happy to assist you in any way we can.

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Handicapping is here! Dartman III & Galaxy's new Software makes running Leagues more Versatile than Ever

Dartman III, a new league management program from Arachnid, allows the operator many more choices in dart league play. From handicapping to trios, with 11 different league games available, it is fast becoming the system of choice for leagues around the country. Teamed with Galaxy's new Bermuda Triangle/Handicapping software, it provides automated league management technology unmatched in the dart industry today.

Dartman III MUST be used with Galaxy's Bermuda Triangle chip version 5.XX. Older software versions are not compatible!

Dartman III is easy to install over your existing Dartman II software. All league information contained in your computer will be transferred to the new format. If you have any leagues running at the time of transfer, **you must reprogram the team cards** for the teams before they can play again, and you must have Galaxy EPROM version 5.XX installed in all your league games.

If you'd like to order Dartman III or Galaxy EPROMS, contact your Arachnid distributor. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to call Arachnid, Inc. at 1-800-435-8319, and ask for Technical Service.

Special Question & Answer Issue . . . Hints for Running an Effective League With Dartman III and the Galaxy

Dartman III and Duplicate Data

Dartman III has incorporated a new feature; the ability to recognize and eliminate duplicate stats before they even get to the temporary file! In the event that old stats are mistakenly recollected when they aren't needed, Dartman III will remove or "dump" these unwanted stats automatically.

When stats come in, either from cards or by modem collection from a single league, they are held until <Q> is pressed. Then they go into the Temporary Stats area. Before they reach this area, the stats are compared to other stats in the league and any duplicates found are removed.

In the past, if duplicate stats were collected, they had to be removed manually, either in the Temporary file, in the Browse mode. or by removing duplicates only in "Reset Stats". Now, providing only one league is collected at a time, you should never have to worry about duplicates getting in your system ever again. Dartman III will be expanded later to perform this function on multiple league collections. Of course, if you do find stats that you wish to remove, such as an unwanted forfeit match or a practice match that someone may have played, they can still be removed the same ways as before.

What if I collect stats now for multiple leagues at one time? This practice is fine, and encouraged! Dartman III can collect as many leagues at once as you wish to feed it. However, the duplicate dump feature can only work for one league at a time at present, so if you collect from more than one league, only the first league collected will be checked for duplicates. If there are any duplicates in other leagues collected at the same time, they will have to be removed the old fashioned way until the next revision of Dartman III.

Making the Switch to Automated League Play

Some people don't like change. Others thrive on it, and expect miracles. When trying to incorporate a new idea or procedure to a multitude of people, you will run into both types, and they must be dealt with differently. Sometimes one can help the other to see things a little more realistically.

Introducing a new automated league system can produce these reactions in people; from the players, the location owners, and even the operator's own personnel.

Negative Players - Try to emphasize the fact that they won't have to keep score. This gives them the freedom to relax and enjoy themselves more. Tell them about their name appearing on the board when they are up, and tell them that they can use their nicknames if they want to (Melby, Fish, Wheat, Bumper, etc.) Try to appeal to the things they will like about the system, so they will make an effort to learn a little about it.

Overzealous and Positive Players - Provide for discrepencies in your league rules, and provide feat definitions also. These people will learn every aspect of the system, and be the first to point out any flaws or problems they can find, whether valid or not. Remind them that even the most sophisticated systems will occasionally have problems, and welcome their help! Thank them for their suggestions or observations, and ask for their input...their negative comments can turn into positive feedback! Please relay any valid problems or suggestions to Arachnid, so we may all benefit.

Negative Location Owners - Try to emphasize that if leagues are easier for the players, more people may try it, meaning more coin drop and more money for both of you. Also if you can spend less time collecting and calculating stats, you will have more time to spend on your route, and also promote darts more. All they need to do is keep the red light lit on the front of the game at the end of the night for modem collection by shutting off the side switch only; its a minimal expense. If you are doing modem collections, remind them to contact you first instead of the phone company in the event of a phone problem - it may just be a modem problem in the game.

Positive Location Owners - Put them to work! Teach them everything you can about the system, involve them in startup and maintenance of the league. That way, they can help the players to enjoy themselves more, by offering assistance if they have questions. Get them to help with promotions, and encourage them to assemble teams. When the number of teams grows, everyone profits. Accept any input they offer and show them your support.

Negative Personnel - This is a tough one, a long-time technician who has never done work with phone lines or computers can be very resistant to learning a new field. Secretaries who never became involved in the intricate details of dart leagues or had to contact bar owners may not be comfortable with the new system. For this - use us! Arachnid has field representatives who can help your technicians to learn installation and maintenance of phone lines, and can also help your office personnel to learn to use the Dartman III system. Also, remind them that help is just a phone call away. Provide them with the tools they need to do the job right, don't skimp on computers or technical tools. This will show you care and can make a big difference in their attitudes and output.

Positive Personnel - Give them some freedom - listen to their ideas, try to get them what they feel they need, and give them a pat on the back once in a while. Show them that you appreciate their enthusiasm, and they'll help things run smoothly for you and the players.

Divisions and Handicapping

One major improvement of Dartman III over Dartman II is the way in which it handles divisions. Dartman II would separate teams into as many divisions as desired, but it would do it randomly, the operator had no choice as to what teams were placed in what divisions.

Dartman III, on the other hand, allows the operator full control over the dividing of teams, and the placement of "Byes". The secret is a new menu item, called "Division Setup" which lists all the teams that are in the league on one spreadsheet. The operator can then change their division letter (or number), manually add any number of "Byes" to any division, and mold the league into exactly what he wants it to be. Providing all divisions have an **even** number of teams (or "Byes" to make them even), Dartman III will then create a schedule for all the divisions. Playoffs can then be added to the schedule later as necessary.

To accomplish this in Dartman II, the operator had to set up a different league for each division, then set up another league for the playoff finalists.

Dartman III also allows spot dart handicapping. If you are planning to handicap,this must also be taken into consideration when setting up divisions. If you combine a large league of various caliber players into one common league with several divisions, you may run into a spot dart problem with Dartman III's partitioning. In any given league, spot darts are partitioned by choosing a particular feat for all players and applying it to a statistical bell curve to come up with a handicap based on that feat. This partitioning does not take into account different divisions within that league. This can cause lesser players to not have as many spot darts as you would like them to have, because the partitions will be broader. For this reason, you may still wish to separate some of your larger leagues into novice, intermediate, and masters leagues rather than grouping them all together into one big league.

...On the Subject of Substitutes

What do you do when a team is a player short? Put in a sub, of course. Some teams alternate players week by week so that there are actually more than 4 players regularly playing on the team, so there are permanent subs. You can list up to 8 different players (4 regular players, and 4 subs) on a team card. Dartman III allows many types of substituting systems, including subbing between game sets, and it will accept and print stats for anyone.

The new Galaxy software, along with Dartman III, will allow teams to enter a substitute not only at the beginning of league play, but also **between sets** of games. For instance, if you play 4 games of 301, 4 games of Cricket, and 4 games of Wild Card Cricket in a given night, then a sub could come in at the start of any of the 3 game sets.

Please tell your teams to have subs input their full name, and if they shoot more than once in the season, to put their name in the same way each time. Otherwise there is more work for the league coordinator, who has to look up stats and change the name spelling so that their stats come out properly. They will be listed under a team called "Subs", unless they are changed to be on a certain team. This is necessary because many leagues use roaming subs (people who will sub for any team, anytime).

Dartman III also allows you to print all substitutes on a list, which will tell you when they played, and who they played for, even if they are assigned to a team. This way, you can keep an eye on substitute activity.

Dartman III...Questions & Answers

With the new fall season and the release of Dartman III, our phones are ringing off the hook! The following is a collection of questions recently asked by league coordinators concerning Dartman III and handicapping:

I want double bull for Cricket, the game is set up for it , but it doesn't come up during league play - This must be set on the team card, in the Match Options (F3) screen. It will override any game settings during league play. Match options are now saved along with the playing order, so be sure to set them before saving.

When the handicapping is in effect, and players are skipped, will it affect their SPRE or any other ranking or feats? No, the Galaxy uses actual darts thrown to calculate these feats

I collected data, I saw it come across on the screen, but when I go to Temporary Stats, there's nothing there! You collected stats that you already had, and DM3's duplicate dump feature removed them from the temporary file for you. (See article, pg. 1)

My last match player stats didn't come through - You need to check the "Last Match" field in "Leagues" Modify", then recollect or reload those stats BEFORE you do another week's collection!

In the middle of my league schedule, the same teams play back to back. Why? This schedule arrangement has proven to be the best for alternating home and away play. If this isn't important to you, and you don't want the back to back week,you can reverse half the schedule by retyping the week #'s in "Edit Initialized Schedule".

When I add up all the player wins on my report, and compare the number to team wins, they are different. Why? This can be caused by many factors, and in most cases, is correct. If the total player wins is less than the total team wins, then the causes may be:

» Freeze rule was activated (team gets the win, but player doesn't)
» Last match is not being counted in player feats

If you find that there are more player wins than team wins, then there is a problem. Usually this is caused by entering or changing stats using "Update Stats". If you are not careful, you can accidently enter extra player stat lines, especially if trying to modify existing stats in Update. We recommend that you do this in the Browse mode only. Press F5 to view the weekly breakdown, and change your stats there. Extra stats (such as the wins) should also be deleted in this browse screen. You will probably find extra lines of stats for some of the players, rather than extra wins on one line.

Some of my players are showing a 0 SPRE on the report, but they show a SPRE value in the "Browse" mode - This usually happens to subs, because their names are often put in at the dart game. Any time there is a 0 SPRE, there is a spelling problem with one or more weeks of that player. Compare CAREFULLY the spelling on the first browse screen (totals) with the spellings in the weekly breakdowns of the player (the F5 screen). You **will** find a difference. This must be corrected for the SPRE to print properly. If the name was spelled incorrectly in the first screen, then you must make the change in "Players" "Modify", and also change their team card (if they are on one). If the error is in the F5 screen, simply retype the correct spelling everywhere necessary on that screen. **NOTE - This also applies to a player who has missing stats for one or more weeks. Spelling errors at the game or on the team cards will cause stats to not appear on reports.**

I selected ALL for my cricket report, and I am getting no SPRE - You are playing a non-SPRE cricket game as one of your game sets. In order to show SPRE, a game must be able to have one. The only games with SPRE are Reg. Cricket, 301, and 501. If you group a SPRE game with a non-SPRE game in a report, no SPRE will show. Different game types must be printed separately in this case.

Running Dartman II and Dartman III Simultaniously

While not recommended, for some league operaters, it has been necessary to run both versions of Dartman at the same time. If you want to start a Dartman III league on one side of town, for instance, but still have Dartman II leagues going that you don't want to make new cards for, then this would become necessary. Or maybe you just received Dartman III and want to play with it until you are ready to make the switch.

To accomplish this, you must make a complete copy of Dartman II somewhere else, so it can be retrieved later. One suggestion is to copy the whole DM2 and DM2/DATA directories into new directories called DM22 and DM22/DATA, and rename the batch file DM2.BAT found in your root directory to DM22.BAT. Now Dartman III will overwrite your old DM2 directory and batch file, but will leave DM22 alone. When you are finished installing the update, simply make new DM2 and DM2/DATA directories and copy the contents of DM22 and DM22/DATA into them. Then delete the old DM22 and DM22/DATA directories (or use a file manager program such as Windows to rename the directory in one step). Then rename the DM22.BAT file back to DM2.BAT. and you can access each program by typing either DM3 or DM2!

What's New with Reports

The way in which reports are set up has changed for the better in Dartman III. They are now retained league by league, meaning once you set up how you want your reports to print, you never have to do it again! All the report options are contained on one screen for easy setup, and though the reports themselves aren't different, they will be more consistant because you don't have to remember how you did it the time before. Game types can easily be printed seperately or together.

There is a field called "Print Week #" - this should be left at 0 if you want all weeks to print. If you change it to a 2, for example, then you will only print week 2 stats.

You can print all games and feats combined if you like in location stats, by choosing "Combine Stats" in the "Custom Reports" section of "Leagues" "Modify". If this is done, the custom screens will be cleared, and you can choose what order in which to print all the feats . Keep in mind, however, that your printer will be limited to 132 characters across (in condensed mode).

PLEASE!!! Backup Your Data Often

We can't emphasize this enough...if your stats are important to you BACK THEM UP! It's awful when an operater calls us with a bad computer system problem (all machines are suseptable to breaking down), and we are unable to resolve it without reloading everything from scratch, or replacing a hard drive. In these cases, all their stats are lost, and if there are no backups, there's nothing we or anyone can do. This responsibility to the players is up to you.

Use the convenient backup utility at the end of Dartman III every time you exit after updating stats. If this utility won't work on your computer, then use some other means of backing up, such as MSBACKUP, or a tape drive backup. If you don't know how to back up your system, PLEASE get help to learn how from someone who knows about computers. You owe it to yourself and to your players.

The Bermuda Triangle Chip for the Galaxy... Questions & Answers on Game Operation

Here is a list of commonly asked questions regarding the setup and operation of the new Bermuda Triangle chip version 5.XX for the Galaxy. We hope you find it helpful:

I installed the Bermuda chip, and now team cards won't work - If leagues are in session during the change, you MUST upgrade to DM3 and re-program your team cards in DM3 before you resume league play.

Why do the stats now show PPD instead of PPR? PPD (Points Per Dart) is the new NDA standard for player ranking for 1995/96. We have limited space, so it was put in place of PPR (Points Per Round).

I installed the new chip, now the mechanical meter is clicking too much - When the chip is first installed, it goes through some software verifications, resets league variables, and then asks you if you would like to reset to factory defaults. If you say "NO" to this, then YOU must check **all** game parameters yourself, and set them as needed. Many areas may be affected by the chip change, like the Coin Meter Assignments, and may have to be set.

I got a blank screen when I installed the 5.XX chip, but my old chip works fine - If your RAM chip has a bad clock, the new software will recognize it, and let you know. In earlier versions of the new chip, it would react by giving you a blank screen. Check the clock before writing off the new chip as bad.

Just what is League Practice Pricing? To encourage leagues to practice **before or after** league play, you can use this. The team member inserts his team card in casual play, and if it is during the proper time, the price of the selected games will change to reflect what you have specified. When the time period is over or league play starts, the cost for games will return to the standard price. Only league members with a team card can activate this special pricing. It is ideal to set practice pricing for an hour or two before the league starts, to encourage the teams to come early and practice.

Example: Wednesday night league starts at 7:30 p.m. The operator has set League Practice pricing for Wed. from 1700 to 1900 (5 to 7). The team comes in at 5:15, the captain inserts a coin to bring up the games menu. Then he inserts the team card, and watches the price for Cricket change from 3 credits to 2 credits. He then removes the team card, inserts the proper credits for his team to play, and they practice until 7:00. Then the credits required to play cricket changes back to 3, and they take a break, to prepare for the start of league play at 7:30.

If the players load up quarters at the end of Happy Hour or League Practice time, will they get more credit than they should for them after the time expires? NO! League Practice and Happy Hour literally change the credits required to play the games - not the actual value of a credit.

A player that was skipped (4 darts) because of other players' handicaps got to throw all 3 darts in round 2, but then lost his final dart in round 3. Shouldn't he have lost it in round 2? Yes - theoretically, the player should lose all darts in succession. However, if Player Change is pressed before the 3rd dart is thrown on the player prior to the player in question (for instance if he misses the board), then the software won't give the last handicap dart, however, it will recover by the next round. This area is being analyzed so that the game recognizes when the Player Change button is pressed out of sequence in the handicap rounds. Later software releases may include this enhancement.

Can we collect stats by modem if people are playing on the dart board, or if there are credits on the game? Yes, the most the players will see is a short hesitation, and will probably not even notice it at all.

Can I use the same setup card for any version 5 chip? YES! Any version which starts with a 5 can use the same setup card.

***Free binders* are available to keep Tech Tips issues together. Write or call us to request one.**

IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF ARACHNID TECH TIPS: More on Handicapping & Dartman III // Darting in the Winter // Phone line Installation // and Much More !!!

Arachnid INC.
P.O. Box 2901
Rockford, IL 61132-2901
1-800-435-8319

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