

## **Week Commencing 28<sup>th</sup> February 2005**

The Leamington Closed Championships took place last weekend at Sydenham Sports Centre in Leamington Spa and attracted as always a high calibre of entries, even though both the 2004 Ladies and Mens champions were not able to defend their titles. The Mens Singles has been played as far as the semi-final stage and the other events have all reached the finals stage. These will be played out on Finals Night on Saturday 12 March between 2.00pm and 10.30pm at Warwickshire County Council Staff Club in Warwick.

The Wright Hassall Mens Singles has gone to plan with the top four seeds still left in the competition. One half of the draw is a repeat of the 2003 final with top seeded Mark Woolerton (Whitnash) and 2003 winner to face number three seed Mark Jackson (County Council), 2003 runner-up. In the other half of the draw, Jon Williams also from Whitnash, 2002 winner and 2004 runner-up, will play Ian Packford, a new entrant to Leamington league, who plays for St. Georges. In the quarter-finals Mark Woolerton had seen off Gary Webb (Free Church) 11/6, 11/9, 11/6 and Mark Jackson overcame Earl Sweeney (St. Georges) 13/11, 8/11, 9/11, 12/10, 11/7. Jon Williams defeated Pete Dunnett (Wellesbourne) 12/10, 11/9, 16/14 and Ian Packford saw off Phil Paine (County Council) 11/9, 11/3, 11/6.

The Frangmere Properties Mens Doubles final will be a repeat of last year. Mark Jackson and Mark Woolerton took the title last year and in 2002 and will be matched against the 2003 winners and 2004 runners up Earl Sweeney and Jon Williams. Jackson and Woolerton won their semi-final against Phil Paine and Richard Arnold (Whitnash) 8/11, 11/3, 11/8, 11/5 whilst Earl Sweeney and Jon Williams had defeated Ian Packford and Justin Rai (Whitnash) 11/4, 11/9, 8/11, 11/5.

Jane Dickens (Whitnash) took the Ladies Singles title in 2003, was runner-up in 2004 and now is set to be one or the other for 2005. Her opponent in the final is former champion Samantha Apostol, who as Samantha Meredith lifted the trophy some years ago. Samantha has returned to play for AP Sports after a gap away from league play. Janice Rowan and Stephanie Hawkins were the unlucky semi-finalists to go out. In the Loveitts Ladies Doubles, last year's winners Jane Dickens and Stephanie Hawkins (AP Sports) will defend their title against Samantha Apostol and her partner Janice Rowan (BGN).

The familiar names continue in the Frangmere Properties Mixed Doubles where defending champions Jane Dickens and Mark Jackson will face Julie Richardson (Wellesbourne) partnered by Jon Williams. Richardson and Williams rolled over Stephanie Hawkins and Earl Sweeney in their semi-final 12/10, 11/6, 11/8.

Last year's runner-up Earl Sweeney will hope to go one better in The New Bombay Tandoori Grade 1 Singles. He saw off in his semi-final Richard Arnold (Whitnash) 9/11, 11/7, 13/11, 13/11. Earl's opponent will be former holder Jon Williams, who defeated Malcolm Macfarlane (BGN) 11/13, 11/6, 11/8, 15/13 in their semi-final. There are new names for the Grade 2 Singles with two Colebridge players, Navinder Matharu and Chris Burgess, to battle it out. Navinder beat Nilton Green (County Council) 8/11, 11/9, 11/7, 11/9 and Chris beat Sven Rudolph (Wellesbourne) 11/5, 9/11, 11/4, 11/5 to make the final. Edward Freeman (AP) will try to make it two in a row when he defends his Grade 3 Singles title. He overcame Jack Randle (Rugby) 11/3, 11/9, 11/8 and his opponent will be Janice Rowan from BGN, who edged over Barry Hobbins (Free Church) 8/11, 10/12, 11/7, 11/7, 13/11. Two youngsters from Rugby may have only just entered the league, where they are doing extremely well in Division A, but they are also making their mark on the championships. Jack Randle and Stephen Maddison may be team-mates but will battle it out for the Marshall Trophy, the cup awarded to the winner of the Grade 4 Singles. Jack beat Chris Blowey 7/11, 11/8, 11/3, 11/8 to reach the final whilst

Stephen squashed Chris' brother Philip 11/6, 11/6, 11/8. The newest or youngest players in the league from the 2-aside league tend to contest the Grade 5 Singles and this year is no exception with both Jack Hobbins and Tom Hunt from Free Church reaching a final in their first Leamington championships.

The same two have reached the finals of the Piccolino's Pizzeria Youth Singles as last year. Holder Chris Burgess from Colebridge will again face Sam Clarke from BGN. However neither made the final of the Junior Boys Singles where Sam was beaten in the semis by Navinder Matharu 11/4, 13/11, 12/10 and Chris was narrowly overcome by Edward Freeman 11/8, 15/13, 5/11, 6/11, 15/13. Chris Burgess joined up with Navinder Natharu for the Junior Doubles to make the final where they will play the Rugby duo Stephen Maddison and Jack Randle. Stephen (aged 13) and Jack (aged 11) will also play each other for the Under 15 Boys Singles. Jack predictably has made the final of the Under 13 Boys Singles where he will play Rugby clubmate Matthew Outhwaite. Matthew also has another outing - in the final of the Under 11 Singles where he will meet fellow 10 year old Lawrence Sweeney (St. Georges). For the Junior Girls Singles AP's Charlotte Freeman will hope to go better than last year (when runner-up) when she faces Sophie Cooper (Eathorpe). Charlotte will also defend her Under 15 Girls title against Katie Hawker (Eathorpe). Hannah Saville from Eathorpe will again be in for the Under 13 Girls, hoping this time to come out on top. Charlotte Spencer (Free Church) will be her opponent.

The Handicap singles proved in the end to favour players from both ends of the league. Justin Rai from Whitnash and div 1 reached the final at the expense of equally proficient Pete Dasher, where a handicap of 21/22 led to a score of 61/45 to Rai in their semi. In the other half of the draw, two div A players reached the semi-final where Lawrence Sweeney (St. Georges) finished at 61/54 after a 23/20 start over Tom Hunt (Free Church).

The Veteran Singles features Earl Sweeney against Pete Dunnett. Earl (2003 winner) saw off Phil Paine 11/6, 11/8, 11/3 and Pete overcame Malcolm Macfarlane 12/10, 5/11, 11/9, 11/5. Pete will also appear in the Over 50 Singles final where he will play holder Phil Paine. Bert Banks lost in his semi against Pete 11/4, 11/5, 8/11, 11/6. For the first time an Over 60 Singles will be held with Bert Banks and Alf Chapman (both St. Georges) the finalists and Reg Warnes (County Council) and Colin Cooper (Eathorpe) the losing semi-finalists. The Ray Meredith Memorial Parent/Child Doubles is an event inaugurated two years ago. Last year's runners-up Paul and Michael Rowan have again made the final where they will be well matched by the new league Randle family from Rugby, Jack and dad Ian. The Rowan duo saw off the other members of their family, mother and older son, Janice and Daniel in their semi 11/6, 11/9, 11/3 whilst the Randles overcame Colin and Matthew Cooper 11/6, 11/7, 7/11, 11/8.