

Week Commencing 27th February 2006

The Leamington Closed Championships were held at Sydenham Sports centre last weekend. The closely contested events were played as far as the semi-finals for the Mens Singles and finals for all other events. These matches will then be staged on Finals night on Saturday 18 March between 2pm and 10pm at Warwickshire County Council Staff Club in Warwick. The Wright Hassall Mens Singles has gone nearly to plan with three of the top four seeds still left in the competition. Top seed and 2004 winner Alan Hewitt (Whitnash) will face Warwickshire Mens singles champion and third seed Ian Packford (St. Georges) in one semi-final. Second seed and 2005 winner Mark Jackson (County Council) will meet Mike Bishop (St. Georges) in the other. In the quarter-finals Earl Sweeney had fallen to Alan Hewitt, Phil Paine to Ian Packford, Alan Jones to Mike Bishop and Michael Wilkins to Mark Jackson. Ian Packford also has the chance of doing the double, the Mens Singles and the Grade 1, something which rarely has happened. He is in the final of the Bombay Tandoori Grade 1 Singles where he will play Ian Randle from Rugby. The graded events are unseeded and therefore the random draw makes it difficult for top players to expect to reach the final. Ian Packford defeated Navinder Matharu (Colebridge) and Ian Randle saw off Mark Jackson in their respective semi-finals. The Frangmere Properties Mens Doubles final will be very different to last year with four new names as none of the seeds made it through. Gary Webb (Free Church) paired up with Phil Paine (County Council) to reach the final, Ian Randle and his 12 year old son Jack the losing semi-finalists in a 5 set battle. On the other side Damon Fenton (Flavels) partnered Alan Hewitt, Ian Packford and Mark Jackson the unlucky losers in the semis. The Wright Hassall Ladies Singles has Samantha Apostol from AP, the 2005 runner-up trying to go one better and pick up the trophy. She has done it before, under her maiden name of Samantha Meredith. Kay Nason (RNA) faces Samantha in her first ladies final. Youngsters Stephanie Hawkins (AP) and Holly Thompson (Free Church) gave opposition in a round robin competition. In the Loveitts Ladies Doubles, 3 of last year's players are in the final but in a different combination. 2005 Winner Samantha Apostol has joined forces with runner-up, Stephanie Hawkins, whilst the other runner-up Jane Dickens is being partnered by Kay Nason. Plucky juniors Charlotte Spencer (Free Church) and Holly Thompson provided some match practice. New names continue in the Frangmere Properties Mixed Doubles where defending champion Jane Dickens accompanied by Jon Williams (Whitnash) will face Earl Sweeney (St. Georges) and Kay Nason (RNA). Scott Delday with Charlotte Spencer and Andrew Meredith with sister Samantha Apostol fell at the knockout stage. Andrew Meredith (AP) however will make a final. He will contest the Grade 2 Singles against Gary Jackson from BGN. Malcolm Macfarlane (BGN) had fallen in their semi-final to Andrew and Alan Chan (Rugby) to Gary. The Grade 3 Singles final will be a Free Church affair, with two Rugby players not progressing past the semis. Luke Hobbins saw off Tom Bradley (Rugby) whilst John Taylor's experience got the better of young Jack Randle. However it will be one of each for the Grade 4 Singles final with Keith Knott from Free Church to meet Rugby's Matthew Outhwaite. Keith defeated Paul Nason (St. Georges) en route and Matthew saw off Phil Blowey (Free Church). The newest or youngest players in the league from the 2-aside league tend to contest the Grade 5 Singles. This year both players are not newcomers, this being their third season in the league and both have fought finals on previous Finals nights but both are still only 11 or 12 years old. Lawrence Sweeney (St. Georges) will play opponent Hannah Saville (Eathorpe). In the group stages, Charlotte Spencer and Jack Hobbins fell to Lawrence, whilst Hannah took out Luke Spencer and Holly Thompson. Daniel Fellowes from Rugby was 16 last Saturday and celebrated his birthday by making sure he made it to Leamington's Finals night in his first season in our league. He beat clubmate Jack Randle in their semi-final of the Piccolino's Pizzeria Youth Singles and will be pitted against Leamington's top junior Navinder Matharu from Colebridge in the final. Daniel has also made it to the final of the Junior Boys Singles, where he will meet last year's runner-up Edward Freeman, also 16. School commitments meant that Navinder Matharu could not defend his Junior title. Edward put out Tom Bradley in the previous round. Rugby boys Jack Randle (12) and Matthew Outhwaite (10) will have to play each other twice, in both the Under 15 Boys Singles and the Under

13 Boys Singles. Jack is the title holder for the Under 15 and was runner-up in the Under 13 then - to Matthew Outhwaite, so the results should be interesting. Lawrence Sweeney, Philip Blowey, Scott Delday, Alastair Nicholson and Jack Hobbins all fell in the respective group stages. Matthew Outhwaite is also defending his Under 11 Mixed championship in a repeat final against Lawrence Sweeney, who was 11 in January. Luke Spencer, Elizabeth Hancock, Jack Englert and Holly Thompson were all out in the groups, but three of them will still be young enough to contest this age group in 2007. Matthew Outhwaite is joining up with Navinder Matharu to contest the Junior Doubles. Their opponents are Daniel Fellowes and Jack Randle. Chris Blowey and Luke Hobbins made it as far as the semi-finals, before falling to the duo from Rugby. A disappointing entry for the Junior Girls Singles mean that both girls go straight to the final. Title holder Charlotte Freeman, now aged 14, will play against 10 year old Holly Thompson on her first Finals night appearance. A trio entered the Girls Under 15 Singles, with Charlotte Freeman progressing to defend her last year's win, this time against Charlotte Spencer, aged 12. Holly Thompson was excluded at that point. The Girls Under 13 Singles round robin led to holder Hannah Saville unlucky to be excluded on countback, leaving last year's runner-up Charlotte Spencer to face Holly Thompson in the final. Elizabeth Hancock also went out at that point. The Handicap Singles for the second year running will feature a player at the top playing one at the bottom of the league. Alan Jones from Free Church plays in Division 1. He saw off Andrew Meredith, then Alan Chan and finally top player Alan Hewitt in the semi-final, where Jones maintained his 5 point start from 24/19 to win at 61/56. At the other end of the draw, Lawrence Sweeney has for the second time running made the final and no doubt will try to make it two wins from two years. Lawrence first saw off Mark Jackson, then Gary Jackson, Gordon Tucker and at the semi stage fellow 2-aside league player Charlotte Spencer, where he translated a small deficit (21/22) to a win at 61/52. In the final Lawrence will start at 55/0 against Alan Jones to reflect their respective difference in rankings. Lawrence Sweeney's dad, Earl, will be attempting to defend his Veteran Singles title, having demolished Michael Wilkins at the semi stage. Earl's opponent will be BGN newcomer Bob Harman, whose semi was against fellow BGN player Dong Wei. Bob has also made it to the final of the Over 50 Singles, where he will meet Pete Dunnett (Wellesbourne) last year's winner. Michael Wilkins and Phil Paine went out in the semis. Alf Chapman (St. Georges) will hope to improve his 2005 runner-up spot in the Over 60 Singles, this year he will face Graham Hoskin (Colebridge). Once again all four players in the Parent/Child Doubles are actually league players, though only one out of each pair must be. Last year's winners, Ian and Jack (aged 12) Randle have again made it to the final. Their opposition this time are Reg and Rob Warnes. No prizes for Reg's age but son Rob played in the over 50 event! The Sweeney's and the Spencer's were defeated in the semi-finals.