

Week Commencing 17th March 2008

Saturday night saw the completion of the Leamington Closed Championships, as the annual Finals Night took place at Kenilworth Wardens Cricket Club. A full programme started at 2pm and concluded with the crowning of the Men's Singles champion at around a quarter to eleven.

Earlier in the evening, the four semi-finalists battled to see who would contest the final. First up was Mark Jackson (Flavels), who saw off the challenge of Ian Randle (Rugby) in four tight sets. Ian Ferguson (Colebridge) completed his semi-final win, moving up a gear after two tight, shared sets to advance in four at the expense of Ron Vose (St Georges). Before the Men's final was played, the crowd were given a sneak preview as Ferguson and Jackson squared up for the Bombay Tandoori Grade 1 final. Jackson made a quick, aggressive start and took the first two sets, but Ferguson hit back to win the remaining three and claim the title -6, -7, 6, 6, 7. The Men's final was a different game entirely as Jackson, despite some hard hitting, could find no answer to Ferguson's strong looping from half-distance and the Colebridge ace picked up his first Leamington Men's title 3, 5, 6.

In the Wright Hassall Ladies Singles final, Samantha Meredith (AP Sports) was bidding to win the crown for the third time. She came through the first two tight sets with Charlotte Spencer (Free Church) with some consistently powerful hitting and experienced play at the crucial end. Charlotte's attacking consistency improved in the third set and she took it with room to spare, however Samantha was not to be denied and showed just why she was the number one seed, raising her game, moving a little quicker and making her forehands count to take the fourth, and hence her hat-trick title, 8, 8, -6, 7.

It was not too disappointing an evening for Charlotte though as she, along with Jack Randle (Rugby), demonstrated that there are certainly some youngsters in the League who are improving rapidly. The two youngsters were involved in nine finals over the night, with Jack notching an impressive four wins out of four! In the afternoon, Jack avenged his defeat the previous week by fellow Rugby player, Ben Meakin, by defeating Ben 6, 13, 8 to capture the Under 15 Boys Singles. The pair then joined forces in the Junior Doubles and pulled off an excellent win to beat Free Church duo Luke Hobbins and Tristan Gretton in three straight sets 6, 7, 7. There was a short break for Jack, before he opened the evening session with a four set win over Steve Proctor (Whitnash) to take the Grade 2 Singles -8, 10, 11, 6. Jack sealed his fourth title when he joined forces with dad Ian in the Parent/Child Doubles. They dropped the second set to Earl and Laurence Sweeney (St Georges) but prevailed in four to win 6, -9, 6, 9. Charlotte's record was only marginally less successful than Jack's, the Ladies defeat the only blemish as she won her remaining four finals. Those wins included two doubles titles, first combining with Samantha Meredith to take the Ladies Doubles. The Ladies finalist dropped a marathon second set to Tracey Fletcher (St Georges) and Sue Clarke (WCC), but ultimately overcame a spirited fight to take the title 5, -15, 5, 6. Mark Jackson then entered the fray as he and Charlotte pitted their wits against Samantha and Navinder Matharu (Colebridge) in the Frangmere Properties Mixed Doubles. Charlotte and Mark made a razor sharp start as they raced through the first two sets. The third set was a closer affair, but Samantha and Navinder couldn't quite find a way past and the title went to Charlotte and Mark 5, 4, 8. The last two victories for Charlotte came at the expense of Free Church colleague, Holly Thompson, as she took both the Under 15 Girls (7, 8, 7) and the Junior Girls Singles (5, 8, 2) in straight sets.

Holly did not leave the evening without tasting success though. Way back at the start of proceedings, she opened Finals Night by beating first-time-finalist, Jessica Campion (Free Church), 3, 2, 6 to win the Under 13 Girls Singles. Holly also picked up the Handicap Singles trophy at the expense of younger

brother Simon (Free Church). Holly gave Simon a 12/31 head start and caught him up before sailing past to win 61/51. In the remaining junior events, Laurence Sweeney pulled out an accomplished display of control and power to beat top seed Matthew Outhwaite (Rugby) in three straight sets, winning the Under 13 Boys Singles 5, 9, 7. The Under 11 titles went to Jessica Campion, beating Ruth Mackay (Free Church) 1, 1, 6 to take the Girls trophy, with Niall Herbert (Free Church) beat Simon Thompson 8, 6, -7, 9 to take the Boys. Tristan Gretton overcame a first set mauling by Ben Meakin to take the Junior Boys in four sets, eventually triumphing -2, 8, 4, 7. Tristan then put in a very impressive display in the Youth Singles, giving opponent Sasha Grokhotov (Colebridge) no time to settle and sprinting to a straight sets win 3, 3, 11.

Sasha was back on the table later in the evening, as he and Men's Doubles partner Ian Ferguson put their undefeated doubles record on the line against Earl Sweeney and Mark Jackson. Sweeney and Jackson got on top early and took the first two close sets, leaving the Colebridge pair with it all to do. If they were going to surrender their unbeaten record, they weren't going to do so without a fight and they hit back in style to take the next two sets and send the match into a decider. In that decider, the delicate touch play of Jackson and the legendary Sweeney backhand kicked in to devastating effect as the Leamington pair raced away and took the title 9, 9, -6, -3, 4.

Defeated Men's Semi-finalist, Ron Vose, was dominant in the Veteran events as he picked up both the Veteran and the Veteran Over 50 titles. In the Veteran event, he was taken to four sets by Ian Randle, but came through 8, -4, 9, 8. In the Over 50 match, he faced Mike Bridgman (Free Church) and after edging a tight first set, produced some simply devastating hitting to win 11, 4, 9.

Brian Aston (St Georges) and Derek Harwood (WCC) took to the table for the Over 60 final and were involved in a tough five-set battle. It was Brian who finally emerged victorious, winning 12, 7, -9, -7, 8. In the remaining graded events, Phillip Blowey (Free Church) won the Grade 3 by beating Laurence Sweeney 8, 7, 3. Ryan Lines (Rugby) produced a first set comeback against Holly Thompson, winning the Grade 4 Singles 11, 10, 6. Finally, the Grade 5 title went to Niall Herbert, who beat Jeremy Knott (Free Church) 4, 6, 9.

There are also some league matches to catch up on, with Colebridge A moving ever closer to the Division 1 title after another emphatic display, beating Free Church B 9-1. Ian Ferguson won a comfortable three, Edward Lynn also won three and the evergreen Neil Wheatley contributed with two excellent wins. Mike Bridgman was Church's sole winner. Free Church B also lost to Wellesbourne, going down 7-3 at the hands of Gary Stewart (3), Pete Dunnnett (2) and Alan Cotton (2). The Church points came from Mike Bridgman and Chris Mulligan who both won once, then took the doubles. Free Church A handed out a 10-0 mauling to Colebridge B thanks to Hugh Matthews, Gary Webb and Matthew Carter. WCC A beat Rugby A 6-4 with two from both Phil Paine and Pat McCabe, one from Clive Irwin and the doubles from Phil and Clive. Ian Randle won three for Rugby and Pete Morris one. WCC B had a good win over St Georges B – Simon Griew taking a maximum to lead his side to a 6-4 victory. Martin Hunter added a couple and Nilton Green one, while Saints scored through Ron Vose's brace, a Jimmy Pittaway single and the doubles from the pair. St Georges A rolled Wellesbourne aside 10-0 thanks to Mike Bishop, Earl Sweeney and Matt Squires. Flavels A just about got the better of BGN as Mark Jackson's three, Matt Jordan's brace and the doubles from the pair gave them the 6-4 win. Barry Hook won two for BGN, Jay Allen and Jason Adams one each.

Rugby B beat Rugby C in a Division 2 derby match, running out 6-4 winners. Thomas Jacko won three for B, with Alan Chan adding two, plus the doubles with Thomas. Dave Daniels kept back two for the C side; Dave Cox and Matthew Outhwaite one each. Rugby B came unstuck at the hands of Whitnash A though – Deepak Chandrababu, Andrew Davies and Dong Wei roasting them 10-0. Whitnash B also had a 10-0 win. Their triumphant trio was Mark Woolerton, Dennis Woodhead and Paul Ryman; their opponents, Free Church C. Free Church D racked up a 10-0 win against Eathorpe A with Chris Blowey, Luke Hobbins and Tom Hunt in merciless form, before going down 3-7 to Rugby B, who had Pete Morris winning three, Alan Chan winning two plus the doubles with Pete, and Keith Dixon winning one. Luke Hobbins kept two for Church and Chris Blowey one. Tony Thomas notched a hat-trick as Nomads A beat Copsewood 6-4. Tony also took the doubles with Andy Davies, who added two himself. Gordon Tucker won two for Copsewood; Steve Smith and Roy Joiner one each.

Nomads B made light work of Rugby E in Division 3 as Dick Smith and Steve Poole both took maximums and Ian Stevens two. Jesse Kendrick Hill did well to pick up a single for Rugby, but Nomads 9-1 win was sealed when Richard Miles joined Steve Poole for the doubles. St Georges D and Rugby D drew 5-5. Martin Bennett won three for Saints, with Rob and Luke Bennett adding one each. Tristan Mobbs and Ben Meakin both won twice for Rugby and took the doubles to get the draw.

In Division 4, Eathorpe C beat Free Church G 7-3 thanks to two from each of Ron Coats, Paul Deaval and Michael Rossington, plus the doubles from Ron and Michael. Barry Hobbins was unbeatable for Church and scored an excellent treble. Snitterfield A beat two-man Free Church E 8-2. Dave Starkie won two, and Stuart Ayers and Vince Ford one each, before Stuart and Dave won the doubles.. Pete Rourke saved some pride by taking two.

AP Sports B had a lone challenger in their match Division A match against WCC E in the form of league stalwart, Reg Warnes. Guy Ferguson managed to get a win for AP, but Reg dug in and beat Edward Freeman to limit APs win to 4-1. AP were also 4-1 winners against Rugby G. Pete Moffatt won a single for Rugby, but two from Tony Williams, one from Guy Ferguson and the doubles gave AP the win. WCC E beat Eathorpe D 5-0 through Derek Harwood and Sue Clarke. An excellent performance by Eathorpe E duo Holly Savage and Jack Parry gave them a 5-0 win over Free Church I. St Georges F were far too strong for Eathorpe F and although both players put up a good fight, Gary Edwards and Andy Caine took the match 5-0 without the loss of a set. Saints also beat FISSC B 4-1, with Gary taking two, plus the doubles with Tracey Fletcher, who also won once. George Mudie scored for FISSC. Rugby F beat Free Church H 4-1 – Marion Dixon took two, Jack Koumi one and the doubles. Keith Knott consoled for Church.

In Division B, Anita Whitehouse and Jack Hobbins gave Free Church K a 5-0 win over Snitterfield B. Church M were 4-1 winners over Eathorpe K as Roald Myers won two plus the doubles with the diminutive Niall Herbert who also scored a single. Jonathan Milton fought hard to take a five-set single. Eathorpe K were whitewashed by Rugby H as Daniel Roberts and David Willett put in unbeaten performances. Rugby H also hammered Free Church P by the same score line – Daniel and David again immaculate. Eathorpe I just snuck past Free Church J 3-2. Gary Osbourne won his two and took the doubles with Joshua Osbourne. Scott Delday and Lindy Myers won one each.

Finally, in Division C, LCP Packers pair Simon Walmesley and Steven Deeley beat Free Church R 5-0, while Nic O'Connor and Billy Kyle did the same to Eathorpe J.