



Week commencing 23rd March 2009

The 2009 Leamington Closed Championships were held on 21/22 March at Sydenham Sports Centre, with players competing for the right to play on Finals Night in a fortnight's time and capture a title.

As tradition dictates, the Mens Singles was played up to and including the quarter finals, with the semi finals and final being played on Finals Night. First through to the semi stage was Tristan Gretton (St Georges). Tristan received a bye at the quarter final stage, but he certainly earned that as he came through his group by beating Raj Balasundaram and securing his place by taking out the number one seed, Gary Webb! Tristan will be facing the fleet-footed left hander, Simon Griew (WCC), who came through a competitive group to beat Ron Vose (Free Church) in the quarter.

In the bottom half of the draw, Earl Sweeney (St Georges) faced Phil Paine (WCC) for a place in the semis and duly dispatched him in three straight sets 7, 8, 9. Earl will be facing Jon Hall (Free Church) who emerged from his group to play Edward Lynn (Colebridge), seeded at number two. Jon cruised to a first leg win 11-5, but Edward responded and narrowly missed out on the second leg 11-13. Lynn took the third leg 11-9, before Jon wrapped up a tight match 11-9 in the fourth.

Jon Hall and Earl Sweeney will not only be doing battle in the singles semi, but will be on opposing sides in the Mens Doubles. Jon, with partner Ron Vose, overcame Gary Webb and Andy Hare in the semi. The duo looked comfortable in the opening two legs, but Webb and Hare nicked the third at deuce and came close in the fourth, but ultimately fell 5, 6, -10, 8. Earl had St Georges team mate, Mike Bishop, for company on his journey to the semi. With a bye in the first round, the number one seeds found themselves 2-1 down against Tristan Gretton and Chris van Namen (WCC). Somehow, they managed to overcome a fourth leg deficit to take it to a fifth, then clawed it back yet again thanks to some brave attacking play at the death, finally coming through -8, 4, -7, 9, 9.

Top seeded Tracey Fletcher (St Georges) advanced to the final of the Ladies Singles by topping her group ahead of Lleryn Brocklehurst and Holly Thompson. Charlotte Spencer (St Georges), seeded two, had a comfortable first round against Grace Newman and moved forward to the semi final to face Claire Cram (Free Church) who had beaten Marion Dixon in the first round. The semi was won in three straight but close legs, with Charlotte holding her nerve at the business end to win 9, 8, 11.

Just as it was with the men, the two Ladies Singles finalists will be facing each other in the Ladies doubles too. Charlotte Spencer and Lleryn Brocklehurst (Free Church) will be taking on Tracey Fletcher and Claire Cram, both pairs having finished in the top two of their qualifying group at the expense of former finalists Grace Newman and Marion Dixon.

The Mixed Doubles semi finals resulted in the number one seeds falling away in three straight sets. Deepak Chandrababu (Enigmas) and Holly Thompson (Eathorpe) were 5, 5, 8 winners over Earl Sweeney and Tracey Fletcher. They will face Mike Bishop and Charlotte Spencer who obliterated Tom Brocklehurst and Claire Cram in their semi.

The Veteran Singles had a strong field and one particularly tough group where any one of the three could well have challenged for the title. It was Gary Webb, seeded at one, who came through that group and went on to play Mike Bishop in the semi. The legs were close, but Mike Bishop came through 9, 7, 9. Mike will be playing second seed, Ron Vose, who booked his final spot at the expense of Malcolm Macfarlane.

Same again for the Veteran Over 50s!! Ron and Mike both came through their groups with little drama to set up another final meeting between the pair.

In the Veteran Over 60s, Graham Hoskin (Colebridge) topped the qualifying group, with Malcolm Macfarlane pipping Brian Aston to second place. Graham and Malcolm will contest the final.

The Youth Singles provided just two groups and Tristan Gretton showed his class as top seed by advancing to the final at the expense of Tom Poland. Tristan will be playing Loz Sweeney in what will be the first of six finals for Loz. Loz took out team mate Charlotte Spencer in three straight sets.

Final number two for Loz will be the Junior Boys Singles. In the round-robin group of three, Loz finished in the top spot. Phil Blowey will be his opponent after finishing second above Luke Spencer. The Junior Girls Singles had only two entrants and so will be a straight final at Finals Night between Charlotte Spencer and Holly Thompson. The Junior doubles was another event with only two entries, so the final will be played between St Georges pair, Charlotte Spencer and Loz Sweeney, and Free Church cohorts, Niall Herbert and Roald Myers.

The top two seeds advanced as anticipated in the Under 15 Boys Singles. Loz Sweeney overcame Brandon Tedd, while Luke Spencer topped his group before beating Jordan Cullaine-Liburd in the semi.

In the Under 15 Girls Singles qualifying group there was little surprise to see Holly Thompson and Jessica Champion move into the final at the expense of the inexperienced, but game, Lauren Grant.

The Under 13 Boys Singles had a decent number of entries, with Luke Spencer, the number one seed, progressing through to the final at the expense of Steven Ayers in the semi. Niall Herbert, seeded two, moved through the bottom half of the draw with a good battling performance to put out Adam Cobb in the semi.

Jessica Champion (Free Church) beat Lauren Grant in the semi final of the Under 13 Girls and will play Imogen Evans (Eathorpe) in the final after Imogen beat Georgia Austin.

Free Church's Timmy Cooper will be playing the final of the Under 11 Boys Singles after coming through his group in top spot. He will be playing Peter Armstrong (Eathorpe) after Peter came through in similar fashion.

The Under 11 Girls final will see Billie-Jay Jenkins (Eathorpe) take on Olivia Fletcher (Free Church). Billie-Jay beat Lauren Grant to qualify; Olivia topped a group containing Imogen Evans and Georgia Austin to reach the final.

The Grade 1 Singles will be contested between Deepak Chandrababu and Tristan Gretton. Deepak reached the final by overcoming an 11-1 defeat in the first leg against Edward Lynn to advance in four -1, 8, 10, 9. Tristan had to come back from 2-0 down in his group to avoid going out to Phil Paine and, having done that, might have thought he was in for a comfortable ride against youngster Loz Sweeney in the semi. Not a bit of it. A sharp Loz took Tristan to a fifth set, but ultimately Tristan's extra class and experience told as he came through 5, -6, 5, -6, 6.

In the Grade 2 singles there was a better result at the semi-final stage for Loz, beating Phil Blowey to make the final. His opponent will be last year's Grade 2 runner-up, Steve Proctor (Enigmas) who made it through a tight group then crept past the defensive guile of Lincoln Liburd.

Claire Cram topped her Grade 3 group ahead of Luke Spencer and Holly Thompson to advance to the final. In the bottom half of the draw, Phil Blowey showed excellent patience to inflict a second semi final defeat of the day on Lincoln Liburd.

Holly Thompson had little trouble in advancing to the Grade 4 final, moving through the field to meet Charlie Snelson in the semi final and making no mistakes with a solid straight sets win. In the bottom half of the draw, the merciless Graham Rose (Eathorpe) strode through to the semi final. There he faced Timmy Cooper who put up more of a fight, but it was the impressive Rose who advanced 6, -4, 7, 6.

Troy Pierce booked a spot on Finals night by beating Steven Ayers 5, 6, 8 in the semi final of Grade 5. Sam Poland will be facing him, having won a family affair in his semi final, beating his brother, Tom, 10, 0, -6, 10.

The Handicap Singles final will see two Free Church youngsters battling it out. David Marguerie saw off last year's finalist, Holly Thompson, in the semi final; Luke Spencer came past Loz Sweeney in his. The final will be played up to 61 points, with no deuce, and will see the higher ranked Luke giving David a 41-2 head start which he must claw back.

The Parent/Child Doubles was, as ever, well supported and it was last year's runners-up, Earl and Loz Sweeney who flew through the top half of the draw, beating Russell and Luke Spencer in the semi. They will be facing Andrew and Tristan Gretton who made equally light work of the bottom half, booking their place on the final table at the expense of Lincoln Liburd and Jordan Cullaine-Liburd.

Finals Night will be held at Kenilworth Wardens Cricket Club, Kenilworth, on Saturday 4th April 2009. The event will be opened with the junior events at around 2pm and conclude with the Mens Singles Final at around about 11pm.

Spectators are more than welcome at the show-piece event of the season and players are encouraged to bring their friends and family along to support them and the other finalists.

The schedule for the finals will be posted to all competitors and will be made available on the Leamington & District TTA website at <http://www.ldtta.co.uk> .

Players are reminded that they are expected to dress appropriately, with shorts and no white shirts and to arrive in plenty of time for their match so that a tight schedule can be kept to.

Good luck to all the finalists!