



Week commencing

24th November 2008

The Warwickshire Closed Championships were held at St Nicholas Park Leisure Centre, Warwick, on Sunday 16th November and, in the mixed doubles, what is believed to be a new record was set. When Helen Turner had to pull out due to injury, the other half of the top-seeded pairing, Ian Ferguson, could have been forgiven for taking his eye off the trophy as twelve year old Holly Thompson stepped forward to fill in. Fortunately for Ian, he forgot to tell Holly. Ian and Holly came through their first round match against Jess Burbeck and Jesse Kendrick-Hill, then despatched the young pairing of Holly Savage and Luke Spencer, which took them to a semi-final match against Samantha Meredith and Tom Brocklehurst. They made an electric start, taking the first two games quickly and by the time their opponents had recovered it was too late and Ian and Holly took a closer third set to make it to the final.

In the bottom half of the draw, second seeds Mickey Browne and Dawn Sagoo somehow recovered from 2-0 down against Lillington pair Chris Mulligan and Claire Cram and fought back. Getting slowly used to their hard-hitting opponents, Mickey and Dawn scraped through 11-9 in the fifth leg. In the semi final, it was an easier task for them, sweeping past Sarah Riach and Karl Manning in straight sets and into the final.

The final started off with the second seeds looking in control and they duly won it 11-7. Ian and Holly then turned it around and took leg two by an identical score. When Mickey and Dawn won the third leg convincingly, it looked like lifting the title may have been a step too far, but with young Holly staying remarkably cool under pressure, a deuce game saw the match go to the decider. The deciding leg saw Ian controlling the points well, which allowed Holly to take on some big forehands, which ultimately saw them home 11-7 in the fifth and, as far as it is known, made Holly the youngest ever person to lift a senior trophy at the Warwickshire Championships. Credit must go to Holly who showed absolutely no fear whatsoever throughout the run and also to Ian, who mentored her superbly.

Ferguson, however, had more on his agenda than the mixed doubles title, as he sought to claim the Mens Singles from his number one seeded position. After successfully negotiating his first round match he got a bye through to the last sixteen, where he faced John Collymore. Collymore had been given a less than easy route to this stage, having to get through Chris Leach in his group and rising junior star, Alan Caffrey in the previous round. John's good form in reaching this stage continued and, with his short-pimpled backhand being used to devastating effect, produced an outstanding performance to knock out the number one seed in straight sets. John progressed through to the semi final, where he faced Steve Bertie in a five set thriller. Ultimately, it was Bertie who prevailed as he moved through to the final 10-12, 11-7, 11-3, 8-11, 11-7.

In the bottom half of the draw, another shock result saw number two seed Mark Jackson fail to progress from his group thanks to an excellent win over him by Dave Grundy. Muhammad Khalid eased himself through to the quarter finals, where a straight sets win over Alan Hewitt gave him a semi final berth. He faced Mickey Browne, who had put out Navinder Matharu in his quarter final, and although he dropped the second leg, it was Muhammad who went through to the final against Bertie.

Muhammad may have eased through to the final, but there was to be no easy win for him against Steve as the left hander from Birmingham raced away with the first leg, then followed up with two solid ones to take the title three-straight 11-4, 11-7, 11-9.

The Ladies Singles event had a larger turnout than in previous years, which was encouraging to see. The withdrawal of the number one seed left a path open for Georgina Credland to reach the semi final, where she faced Sarah Riach. Sarah's spinny backhand, backed up with a powerful forehand, proved too much for Georgina and Sarah moved through to the final 3-0. In the bottom half, second seed Samantha Meredith moved through to the semi final with little trouble. She came up against Dawn Sagoo, who lost the first two ends closely. Dawn then seemed to switch from her largely defensive tactics and began to mix it up a bit more, following up her serve well and pulled it back to 2-2. In a very close final leg, it was Dawn who just managed to squeeze over the winning line, taking it 11-9.

Closeness was the order of the day for the final, too. Sarah Riach took the opening leg 11-9, but once again Dawn proved that she can dig out a result as she took the next three legs, all on deuce, to lift the title 9-11, 12-10, 12-10, 14-12.

In the senior doubles, mens pairing Ian Ferguson and Alan Hewitt made it through, as expected, to the final, where they faced the experienced pair of Mickey Browne and Steve Bertie. Ferguson and Hewitt had beaten Jason Essex and Andy Hare in the semi-final, who had reached that stage with a couple of hard-fought five-set wins. Ferguson and Hewitt were too strong for them, though, and duly moved forward 11-6, 12-10, 11-7.

In Mickey and Steve's semi, it was very much youth versus experience as they tackled the Birmingham juniors Alan Caffrey and Jack Williamson. The youthful exuberance wasn't, on this occasion, enough and Browne and Bertie booked their final berth with an 11-6, 11-8, 11-6 win.

The final was not as close as many might have expected, with Browne and Bertie taking the opening leg to five. Ferguson and Hewitt then picked their game up, but their opponents stayed firm under pressure to take the next two games 15-13 and 12-10 to claim the trophy.

The Ladies Doubles title was one of the few that didn't get taken back to Birmingham, as Samantha Meredith and Charlotte Spencer salvaged some Leamington pride. They dropped the first set in their semi final against Dawn Sagoo and Ann Kolln, but came back to take the next three. At the top of the draw, Sarah Riach and Jess Burbeck eased past Marion Dixon and Jo Outhwaite in their semi.

The final was a similar story to the semi for Sam and Charlotte – they dropped a close first leg, but recovered well, once again, to fire themselves to the title 8-11, 11-8, 11-5, 11-7.

Four restricted singles events were run during the event, which see those players ranked highly on the National ranking list prevented from competing. Holly Savage had a tough battle against club-mate Holly Thompson in the Girls, but won the match 7-11, 11-5, 7-11, 14-12, 11-8. Ian Anson and Lee Holtham resumed their rivalry in the Boys Restricted after Ian had beaten Ryan Lines and Lee had beaten Shane Gales in their respective semi finals. It was Ian who handled the pressure better on the day and won the match 11-4, 11-4, 9-11, 11-4.

Ladies Champion, Dawn Sagoo, moved in to the final of the Ladies Restricted with a comfortable win over Jo Outhwaite, where she faced Charlotte Spencer who had come through her group consisting of Grace Newman and Ann Kolln. Having being knocked out at the group stages of the Ladies Singles by Dawn, Charlotte was determined to set the record straight and after four keenly contested legs, finally overcame Dawn 11-4 in the fifth.

The Mens Restricted title went to main-event runner up Muhammad Khalid. He slipped past Earl Sweeney 11-9 in the fifth in his semi final and then took on Tristan Gretton, who had beaten Simon Griew in five in his own semi. In a match between two players with exceptional control and feel, Muhammad was victorious by a score-line of 11-7, 13-11, 16-18, 11-2.

In the Veterans Singles, John Collymore decided that he'd like to make a habit of taking out the number one seed. After roasting a shell-shocked Phil Paine in his group, he removed title-favourite Mickey Browne at the quarter final stage, before beating Dave Grundy in the semi. In the bottom half, Steve Robinson put out Andy Lebutt in the semi final, but could find no answer to an on-form Collymore. John wrapped up the final in four legs 11-9, 11-5, 9-11, 11-5.

Graham Hosking won a five set final in the Over 50 Veterans, beating Andy Hare 2-11, 12-14, 11-6, 11-6, 11-3. Graham had previously beaten Malc Macfarlane in his semi, with Andy beating John Ludford.

In a six-strong Over 60 event, Bill Fletcher and Neil Wheatley were the two who emerged from the group stages to contest the final. Bill had the edge over his opponent on the day and won in straight sets 11-8, 15-13, 11-6.

Neil had his moment of glory though, getting his own back on Bill in the Over 70 event. In a round-robin event, Neil topped the group of three, with Leamington TTA President John Earles taking the runners-up trophy.

Adrian Pilgrim and Ian Randle were seeded second in the Veterans Doubles and had very little trouble in making it to the final without the loss of a set. They came up against Simon Griew and Nilton Green who had done exceptionally well to put out top-seeded Dave Grundy and Andy Lebutt 12-10 in the fifth in the semi final. In spite of a brave

effort, it was Adrian and Ian who just had that little bit extra and won the final 11-7, 11-8, 8-11, 11-7.

The junior events produced many close matches and showcased some talent which should ensure that Warwickshire's future is in safe hands. In the Junior Boys, it was no surprise to see Alan Caffrey and Jack Williamson from Birmingham in the final. However, both were made to sweat to get there as Rugby duo Matt Outhwaite and Jack Randle pushed them all the way to deciding sets. It was a five-set final too, which Jack won 5-11, 11-5, 3-11, 11-7, 11-9.

The Junior Girls brought about a shock result in the first round as Holly Savage, who played well throughout the entire tournament, knocked out number one seed, Jess Burbeck in four sets. She faced friend and rival, Charlotte Spencer in the final, who had beaten Holly Thompson and Sanika Karandikar in her group. Taking out the number two seed as well was too much to ask and Charlotte won the match in three straight sets.

Matthew Outhwaite looked a class apart in the Cadet Boys as he cruised through to the title. Mitchell Nash had come through a fierce five-set battle with Jesse Kendrick-Hill in his semi final, but found Matthew too strong and bowed out 11-7, 11-6, 11-9.

In a round-robin group of three, Jess Burbeck was the Cadet Girl who came out on top to lift the title. Holly Thompson registered a good win against the lightning-quick Sanika Karandikar to take the runners-up trophy.

Jesse Kendrick-Hill repelled a spirited fight by talented newcomer Jack Styring to book his place in the Under 13 Boys final. Luke Spencer came through his group at the expense of Solomon Hayes and Simon Thompson to meet him. Jesse's consistency won through and he took the title 11-5, 12-10, 11-8.

The Junior Boys doubles went to Jack Randle and Matthew Outhwaite who, after coming through a tough semi final against Alan Caffrey and Perry Nash in five sets, coasted to a straight sets win against Luke Baker and Ian Anson.

The Junior Girls doubles was a straight play-off and Charlotte Spencer and Holly Savage beat Holly Thompson and Jess Burbeck 11-7, 11-9, 11-9.