



Doran and Hicks take Jersey honours

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Chris Doran and Hannah Hicks took the top titles at the Jersey Grand Prix on a day which started with a minute's silence being observed in memory of Steve Welch.

The International Referee and Umpire, who passed away the previous day after a short illness, had officiated at innumerable matches both junior and senior involving Jersey players over many years and was highly respected and much liked by members of the JTTA. Heartfelt condolences are sent to his family.

The top seeds were all in action early in the Men's Singles and as expected there were no real upsets in the five groups. The preliminaries also went to ranking with Ireland's Rory Scott almost causing an upset but finally let a hard earned 2-0 lead slip to fifth seed Jamal Dennison from Essex who closed the match out 3-2. Gregorz Frankowski was last local player standing after a hard fought victory against Paralympian David Wetherill.

The quarter-final slots were filled by defending champion Chris Doran, Darius Knight and Adam Laws from Surrey, Frankowski from Jersey, Josh Stacey from Guernsey, Niall Cameron of Scotland, Jody Bevington from Warwickshire and Jamal Dennison.

Doran eased past Bevington 3-0 with Cameron and Knight recording the same shut out against Dennison and Laws respectively. Frankowski already having defeated Stacey twice over the tournament could not get a clean sweep despite recovering twice from a game down. Guernsey's Stacey was not to be denied as he made the semi 3-2.

There he faced Doran and the reigning champion stormed through to the final 3-0 as expected. The second semi was between the second and third seeds and a closer encounter was expected. Knight was however on imperious form, winning 3-0.

The expected final followed, Doran against Knight. Knight took the first game 11-9 with some booming forehands finally breaking through the seemingly impenetrable defences of Doran. The second game went with serve until at 9-9 Doran forced a big error. Knight then struck back with an Exocet like winner down the line after a brilliant

rally. Deuce. Knight caught the net on what was destined to be a winning smash off serve and Doran closed the game out winning the next point. One game all.

The third game was close as well but a brilliant winner from Knight at 7-5 down forced a Doran timeout. This really worked for the Northamptonshire player as he then took a grip on the rest of the game forcing errors from Knight to close out the game 11-6. The fourth was yet another tight affair with both players serving and returning very tight. Knight clawed his way back after being two down for most of the game to reach 9-9. Doran then produced two excellent serves and following winners off return to land yet another Jersey title and condemning Knight to another runner-up slot.

The Women's Singles played as a round-robin was dominated as expected by top seed Hannah Hicks from Hampshire. She did struggle though against Swetha Khatri from Middlesex for one game but soon took control to get the win. The three Jersey players, Irene Bree, Hannah Silcock and Liliana Andrade were all highly commended for their efforts and learnt a great deal during their matches against quality opposition.

In the end Hicks was crowned 2018 Ladies Champion with Khatri runner-up. Countback had to be used to separate the three local girls with Bree edging home third, Andrade fourth and Silcock fifth.

The Under-21s was run as an Open Singles. Jersey players were to the fore with Luke Greenfield and Tyler and Jacob Gosselin winning their groups. They were joined in the knockout rounds by Darius Xavier from Kent and Leon Pierre and Alfie Sutherland from Jersey.

Greenfield and Pierre met in one semi with Greenfield the top seed racing to a 2-0 lead. However, Junior player of the tournament Pierre was not to be denied as he claimed the third 13-11 and then the next two to book his place in the final.

Jacob Gosselin saw off Xavier and so set up a sibling semi. Jacob raced to a 2-0 lead but elder brother Tyler squeezed out the important points to reach parity. The final game saw the two exhausted players change ends at 5-4 to Tyler who was then fortunate to benefit from a string of unforced errors from his brother thus sealing the title 11-6 in the decider.

So, an all Jersey final. Gosselin took the first 11-9 and the second 11-8. The experience of the Senior player seemed to be telling and the third game proved this as Pierre struggled against a barrage of smashed winners. Eventually it was Gosselin who took the title 3-0.

The Veterans' Singles brought together the canniest players in the tournament. Sadly injuries caused three players to have to withdraw so the title was decided after a five-way round-robin. In the end it was between Ireland's Rory Scott and Northampton's Vidal Graham. Scott came from two down in their match to win and seal the title with Graham runner-up.

The Restricted Singles was as always competed for those aged between 21 and 40. Adam Laws from Surrey and Alan Taylor from Kent emerged from Group 1 and Josh Stacey and Gregorz Frankowski qualified from Group 2. What were the odds on Stacey and Frankowski winning their semis to then face each other for the fifth time in three days? Needless to say this happened and the Jersey player Frankowski won the final 3-0 with some superb and measured play to claim his second title of the three-day tournament.

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