



Nottingham Closed Championships report

Author: Paul Stimpson

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The annual Nottingham Closed Championships were played over the weekend of January 11-12 at Sycamore Table Tennis Club. As always the first days play consisted of all the junior events, divisional singles events for Division 2 and 3 players, a handicap competition and a drawn doubles event.

In the Under-12 singles the top 4 seeded players came through to meet in the semi-finals, No 1 seed Fred Jones comfortably beat No 4 seed Zsolt Sebastian and No 2 seed George Goodwin beat No 3 seed Winston Hill. In the final Fred justified his No 1 seeding and won the final 3-0.

The Under-15 singles was a mixed event and had both the No 1 under-15 boy in the country Poww Boonyaprapa and No 1 girl in the country Amy Marriott competing. Once again the top 4 seeds took their place in the semi-finals. Poww beat George Goodwin 3-0, but there was a surprise in the second semi-final as Fred Jones had a great win over Amy Marriott in five sets. Poww proved too strong in the final running out with a 3-0 victory.

Unfortunately due to various reasons all but 2 of the junior girls were not competing in the Junior girls' singles event. The final was Amy Marriott against Nerys Jones. Nerys showed her potential for the future but Amy proved ultimately too strong winning 3-0.

Due to the lower entry in the Junior girls' event, both girls were given the opportunity to play in the boys event as well. Poww came through a good semi-final against Amy Marriott and James Harvey took his place in the final beating Fred Jones also by the 3-0 scoreline. In the final the first set was close and won by Poww 15-13, Poww then asserted his authority and won the next two sets comfortably for a 3-0 victory.

The Junior doubles event had 9 pairs competing for the title. James Harvey and Fred Jones made the final with a victory over Hamish Alexander and George Goodwin and Amy Marriott and Luke Broughton reached the final with victory over Poww and Nerys Jones. The final was won by No 1 seeds James and Fred with a 3-1 victory.

In the oldest age category on the day of the Under-21 singles there were 28 participants. Fred Jones had a good victory over Tom Davey to reach the semi-finals where he would meet favourite Poww. Poww beat Fred 3-0 and

would meet Amy Marriott in the final who also had a good victory over James Harvey to get there. In an entertaining match Poww ran out a 3-1 winner over Amy to win the title.

The Handicap event was 1 game to 31 in each round. It was contested by 43 people. Andrew Barks came through his semi-final with Fred Jones and would meet Amy Marriott in the final who beat Ed Parry to get there. Despite Amy having played over 20 matches through the day she put up a good fight in the last final of the day. Ultimately Andrew's clever play and 18-0 head start were too much for Amy to overturn and Andrew won the final 31-24.

The Division 2 final was contested between the top 2 seeds Tom Foster and Tim Elmer. Tom beating Steve Wong in the first semi-final and Tim beating Andrew in the other. In a battle of the two Sycamore players Tom Foster came out on top beating Tim 3-1.

The Division 3 final was also contested by the top 2 seeds. No 1 seed Peter Raine beat Lynda Blyth in the first semi-final and No 2 seed Angela Brettell beat Betty Godfrey in the second. In the final No 2 seed Angela upset the odds and beat Peter 3-2 in a closely fought final.

The final event of the day was the Drawn Doubles. Each player randomly drawn with a partner on the day. Nearly all players entered the event and after numerous close matches the two finalists were James Harvey and Karen Kerry against Tom Foster and Francis Haber. In a very close game James and Karen beat Tom and Francis 3-1.

Onto the second day and many of Nottingham's best players were there to take part. The 2 main events being the Men's and Ladies Singles events.

The Ladies' singles had 10 players taking part. In the first semi-final Amy Humphries beat Lisa Lewis 3-0 and was joined in the final by No 2 seed Jody Cox who beat Angela Smith also by a 3-0 scoreline. The final was closer than the score suggested but it was No 1 seed Amy Humphries who won the title with a 3-0 scoreline over Jody to win her first ladies singles title.

The men's event had 34 participants vying for the title. To show how strong the men's event was this year we had players the calibre of Tim Sheppard and Trev Kerry not being seeded for the event. In a random draw they actually had to play each other in the only preliminary match of the event to get into the last 32 of the draw. On this occasion Trev came out victorious over Tim.

After the last 16 matches had taken place all the top 8 seeds actually took their place in the quarter finals. No 1 seed Ismailia Akindiya taking on 8th seed Craig Feargrieve, No 2 seed John Taylor against 7th seed Ollie Williamson, No 3 seed Adam Feargrieve against No 7 seed Hon Choy and No 4 seed Poww Booyaprapa playing 5th seed Mark Green. All 4 matches were very entertaining and very close matches. Poww beat Mark 3-1, Adam beat Hon 3-1, John beat Ollie 3-1 and in probably the shock of the tournament Craig Feargrieve beat Ismailia Akindiya 3-2 (13-11, 12-14, 12-10, 7-11, 13-11). Ismailia was the overwhelming favourite for the title winning 46 out of 46 in the Premier division this year and being ranked in the top 15 players in the UK.

The semi-finals were Craig against Poww and John against Adam. Poww overcame Craig in 3 deuce games winning 3-0 and John beat Adam in a topsy-turvy five-set match 3-2. In the final No 4 seed Poww got off to a perfect start winning the first set 11-2, but No 2 seed John turned it around and in a high quality match won the next 3 sets to win 3-1 and win another Men singles title.

The Premier singles competition was as fiercely contested as the main singles events. The top semi-final was between Ismailia Akindiya and Mark Green and in the bottom half of the draw Poww would once again meet John Taylor. Ismailia came through against Mark 3-1 to reach the final and once again John would prove too strong for Poww this time winning 3-0. Again the final was a top quality match but Ismailia this time was not to be denied and beat John by a 3-1 scoreline.

The Division one singles event was very much a family affair. No 1 seed Rob Fearn beat George Tacey in the first semi-final and Brother and No 2 seed Gordon Fearn would join him with victory over Mick Pestka. In what was a very competitive match it was younger brother Rob who would prevail 3-1 over Gordon.

The Veteran singles was also a very strong event, the top 4 seeds moved their way into the semi-finals with No 1

seed Mark Green taking on No 4 seed Trev Kerry and No 2 seed Hon Choy taking on No 3 seed Tim Sheppard. Mark would beat Trev in one of the closest matches of the weekend 11-9 in the fifth and Tim beat Hon also in five sets. In the final it was No 3 seed Tim who would shock Mark with a 3-1 victory to win the title.

The Over 55 singles was played over a best of 3 format. Hon Choy reaching the final with a victory over Gordon Fearn and Trev Kerry joined him by beating Joe Zygadlo. In the final it was Trev who ran out a convincing winner over Hon for his first title in this event.

In the Mens doubles event No 3 seeds James Harvey and Ollie Williamson had a good win over Ismalia Akindiya and Tom Foster in the quarter finals 3-2 and would meet No 2 seeds Trev Kerry and Tim Sheppard in the semi-final. In the other half of the draw No 1 seeds Craig and Adam Feargrieve would meet Hon Choy and Joe Zygadlo. Craig and Adam won 3-0 but Trev and Tim had a much closer game against James and Ollie. Eventually Tim and Trev prevailed winning a close 3-2 match to take their place in the final. In the final Craig and Adam got off to a slow start and never really recovered, going down 3-0 to the experienced Tim and Trev to win another doubles title.

The Ladies doubles only had 4 pairs competing and it was No 1 seeds Amy Humphries and Jody Cox who would play Lisa Lewis and Angela Brettell in the final. The final was a good contest but ultimately Amy and Jody proved too strong and won 3-0.

The Veterans doubles event would again see Tim Sheppard and Trev Kerry make the final, they were however not to be joined by the No 1 seeds Mark Green and Hon Choy as they were shocked in the semi-final by brothers Rob and Gordon Fearn 3-1. This was the second time the pairs had played as they met earlier in the day in the men doubles as well. Tim and Trev once again showed what a good doubles pair they are with a 3-1 victory to pick up their second doubles title of the day.

The Mixed doubles was one of the most open events of the day with no real favourite going into the event. In the top half of the draw No 1 seeds Craig Feargrieve and Amy Humphries beat Trev and Karen Kerry to reach the final and they were joined by Ismalia Akindiya and Lisa Lewis who had a good victory over Adam Feargrieve and Jody Cox in the second semi-final. In the final the first four sets were shared 2-2 and the fifth would be equally as close. Craig and Amy got off to a good start and would hold on to the lead all the way through eventually winning the decider 11-8 to take the title.

The final event of the weekend was the Hard bat singles event with over 40 players taking part. This is an event which always has many entertaining and close matches with it being played over 1 set up to 31. The first semi-final was between No 1 seed Craig Feargrieve and surprise semi-finalist Poww Boonyaprapa. Poww coming through his quarter final against Adam Feargrieve by the closest of margins 31-29. Poww wouldn't be able to continue his run though as he lost to Craig 31-23.

In the second semi-final No 2 seed Trev Kerry would meet No 3 seed Mark Green. After Trev dominated this event for nearly 30 years Mark has had some recent success over Trev. Mark led nearly all the way through but Trev would pip him to line winning 31-28. Craig and Trev would once again meet in this final and it was Trev who got off to the better start opening up an 11-3 lead, Craig pulled it back though and would eventually win 31-26 for his 7th consecutive title.

Thank you to all the volunteers at Sycamore who helped with the opening up of the venue and running the café throughout and thank you to Mark Feargrieve, Trevor Kerry and Phil Lewis for ensuring the event ran smoothly all weekend. Thank you mainly to Adam Feargrieve who does all the work behind the scenes to ensure everything is set up for the tournament from receiving all the entry forms to writing up all the draws for every event and much more. We look forward to next year's event.

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