

Friday Summary

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Posted On: March 06, 2010



Paul Drinkhall pushed harder than expected but still in control

Day 1 was a day of title retention, early exits and bat failures.

Titles were retained in the U21's by both Paul Drinkhall and Emma Vickers and in the Veterans by Keith Williams and Sanja Clements, the only new title was in the Veterans Doubles, where Keith Williams/John Hilton claimed the crowns.

With five titles up for grabs, U21 Men's and Women's, Veteran Men's, Veteran Men's Doubles and Veteran Women's, who performed and who buckled under the pressure?

U21 Men's

Matt Ware and Lewis Gray both had bat failures due to rubber thickness, causing Ware to play with a burrowed bat, but unfortunately Gray he missed racket testing before he took to the court, meaning he had to forfeit his career best win, an outstanding 3-0 victory over Damien Nicholls.

Ware's performance on burrowed equipment briefly faltered, until he adjusted to his new weapon, before returning to his usual vocal self. Playing well, Ware went all the way to the semi-finals to face Paul Drinkhall, whom he pushed all the way, at times looking like Drinkhall may not get to his accustomed finals match, but Drinkhall just managed to edge it out in the fifth to take make it 3-2.

Early exits for both Darius Knight and Danny Reed were the shock departures, with Knight being knocked out by Nicholls in the quarters and Reed one round earlier.

Final

Gavin Evans has returned to form, playing some superb games on his journey through to his first U21's final against the defending champion Drinkhall. After Drinkhall took the first 11-0, it looked like a potential white wash, but hitting the second end running, Evans upped his games, immediately going 4-0 and showing Drinkhall he wouldn't go quietly. Taking it all the way to 5 ends Drinkhall eventually won the titanic battle to retain his titles and start his quest for another clean sweep.

Paul Drinkhall bt. Gavin Evans 11-0, 7-11, 8-11, 11-6, 11-8

U21 Women

Early exits in the women's were Hannah Hicks and Mary Fuller, both going out in the quarter-finals, whilst Lucy Davidson fought hard to reach the semi's along with Karina Le Fevre and the eventual finalists Emma Vickers and Emily Bates.

Final

Play was close and after their performances last year and their improvement in form, both sides of the table deserved to fight it out for the title.

After taking the first two ends it looked like Vickers had things all sown up, but Bates dug deep to make it a valiant fight, winning the next two, so at 2-2 there was one end left to play, winner takes all. It was relatively close, but in the end Vickers managed to retain her title, denying the ever improving Bates.

Emma Vickers bt. Emily Bates 11-7, 11-5, 6-11, 6-11, 11-7.

Veteran Men

There were a brace of 3-2 victories in the quarters showing just how close things are at the higher end of the men's veterans game.

The semi-finalists didn't have a clean sweep either, with Trott, who always provides an entertaining story and Taylor taking one game a piece from their opponents before bowing out.

Final

For the second time in two years, Keith Williams has reached the final, but last years runner up Eddie Smith didn't step foot onto the Gerfloor, taking his place in the final fight was Chris Bartram, but he could not depose the 09 champion who kept his title after a great 3-0 win.

Keith Williams bt. Chris Bartram 11-3, 11-6, 11-6.

Veteran Men's Doubles

As always the camaraderie and gamesmanship was high, with many a comment thrown in jest at the opposition.

Final

In the end, it was another final for Keith Williams, who teamed with his Table Toppers showman John Hilton took the title 3-1.

Keith Williams/John Hilton bt. Lawrence Trumpauskas/Andy Trott, 11-7, 3-11, 12-10, 11-8.

Veteran Women

There were increased numbers over last year, with six turning out for the title chase.

Final

In the final it was the two group winners Sanja Clements and Jackie Williams that continued to show that they were a step above their opposition. After dropping the first end to Williams, Clements took the next too after relatively close matches, finally finishing in style 11-3 in the fourth.

Sanja Clements bt. Jackie Williams 9-11, 11-7, 12-10, 11-3.

James Cornford

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