

Kelly Sibley wins third singles title

Author: Russell Moore

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Kelly Sibley won her third Women's Singles title at the English National Championships at Ponds Forge in Sheffield.

Sibley beat her great rival Joanna Parker 4-1 as she won her third title of the 2012 Championships to cap a fine all-round performance. Her singles title adding to her mixed doubles win with Darius Knight and women's doubles triumph with Parker.

Pre-match Parker had practised attacking with under-21 winner Gavin Evans and was frequently attacking early on in rallies and straight after the serve in an attempt to unsettle Sibley. It worked at the start of the first game to lead 4-1 but Sibley's natural attacking game forced Parker to defend which resulted in six consecutive points for the Leamington Spa girl.

This proved crucial with Sibley racing further clear to take the first game 11-6.

Parker's pre-match attacking practice paid dividends in the second game though as she came out fighting to take seven consecutive points at the start of the game. She then relied on counter-attacking play to coast home as she levelled the match 1-1 with an 11-3 game.

The third game began with Sibley moving 3-0 ahead before Parker pulled back to close. The English number two then charged 9-5 ahead before Parker battled back once more to 9-8. The fightback seemed wasted though when she netted an easy shot for 10-8 but she managed to level a final time at 10-10.

In the end Sibley struck the killer blow with a slightly fortunate point on game point but she wouldn't have minded as it meant she took a crucial 2-1 lead following that 12-10 game.

The fourth game proved to be a nail-biting affair with nothing between them for the first few points until Sibley opened up an 8-5 lead. It didn't last as Parker fought back to 8-8 but just at the crucial time, the player from Surrey fell short and pushed wide on the final point to gift Sibley the game 11-9, and more importantly, the 3-1 lead in the match.

In the fifth game Sibley was once more too powerful as she strode into a 6-1 lead which forced Parker to take her time-out. In the end it meant little as Sibley continued her form to seal the 4-1 win and another well-deserved title.

Sibley bt Parker 4-1 (11-6, 3-11, 12-10, 11-9, 11-5)

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