

Halifax Summer Veterans Open

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WILLIAMS WINS THIRD HALIFAX TITLE

England No 6 veteran Keith Williams won his third mens singles title in the 10th Halifax Summer Veterans Open with a solid performance in which he was the stand out performer and only dropped two games in two rounds of groups and three knockout rounds.

Liverpudlian Williams, the number one seed for the event, came through his initial group untroubled as he dropped just one game from his five matches.

Finishing positions in the initial groups put players in further groups on the following day with the top sixteen players progressing to four elite groups of four players. In group one the top two seeds faced each other as Williams faced Yorkshires' Richard Lightowler in the opening game of the group.

The Yorkshireman started brightly, but it was Williams who emerged victorious with a 3-1 (8-11, 13-11, 11-7, 11-7) win to take control of the group. Lightowler eventually qualified as the group runner-up to reach the quarter-finals.

The first quarter-final saw Williams record a comfortable 3-0 (11-6, 11-7, 11-7) victory over Anthony Jackson of Cheshire. He would then face reigning champion Simon Pugh in the semi-final after Pugh recorded a 3-1 (12-10, 11-0, 8-11, 11-7) victory over Shaun Bibby of South Yorkshire.

The third quarter-final proved unfortunate for former winner Chris Clinton who played out a thrilling match with Lightowler. With the score standing at 10-8 to Lightowler in the decider, Clinton went over on his ankle and, after first aid treatment, completed the game but to no avail as Lightowler completed victory 3-2 (16-14, 11-5, 11-13, 6-11, 11-9).

The fourth quarter-final saw Mark Ramsbottom of Cheshire book his semi-final place after an exciting 3-2 (11-8, 9-11, 9-11, 12-10, 13-11) win over Mark Land of Yorkshire.

The two semi-finals proved to be an anti-climax as Williams eased past Pugh 3-0 (11-9, 11-2, 11-8) and Lightowler comfortably beat Ramsbottom 3-0 (11-8, 11-7, 11-7). This pattern was continued in the final as Williams never allowed Lightowler to get into any sort of rhythm and ran out a 3-0 (11-8, 11-7, 11-4) winner to claim his third Halifax title and the £100 first prize.

The mens doubles were played to a conclusion on Sunday morning and Chris Clinton, partnered by fellow Yorkshire player Ivan Lewis retained the title they won last year by doing it the hard way with a five-game thriller against Williams and Land in the semi where they scraped home 3-2 (11-6, 7-11, 8-11, 11-8, 12-10) and they were involved in another five game in the final as they once more came from behind to beat Pugh and Lightowler 3-2 (8-11, 11-4, 7-11, 17-15, 11-5).



The ladies singles was retained by Sue Collier of Cheshire who won the event for the third straight year as she was victorious in all the matches in her group and both her knockout singles with ease. She beat good friend and doubles partner Sandra Rider in the ladies final.

Collier and Rider eased to the ladies doubles event in a five pairing round robin event without dropping a game with scratch pairing of Krishna Hooton of Lancashire and Derbyshire player Pat Thorley being the surprise

runners-up.

There were band B mens and ladies events which were won by Doug Bartle who beat fellow Yorkshireman Lewis in four games and Pudsey's Linda Sanderson who retained the title she won last year with a three-game final win over Eileen Allison.

Barry Snowden

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