

Knight & Sibley defend mixed title

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Darius Knight and Kelly Sibley successfully defended their Mixed Doubles title from 2011/12 after a comprehensive final victory over the top seeds, Paul Drinkhall and Joanna Parker.

Both pairs lost just one game en route to the final as they dominated proceedings on Saturday morning. The defending champions Knight and Sibley showed they were keen to retain their title while Drinkhall and Parker were hurting from last year's Championships when their run of four successive titles was brought to an end.

In the top half of the draw, the top seeds fiancées Drinkhall and Parker, were ruthless in defeating Matthew Rogers/Annabelle Morle 3-0 (11-5, 11-3, 11-4) and then also Sam Walker/Tressa Armitage 3-0 (11-9, 11-3, 11-8) in the quarter-final.

Meanwhile, in the bottom half of the draw, second seeds Knight and Sibley were also devastating in their victories over George Downing/Yolanda King 3-0 (11-6, 11-5, 11-8) and Lewis Gray/Chloe Whyte 3-0 (11-6, 11-5, 11-9).

Both of the finalists were challenged in their respective semi-finals but qualified with just one game dropped each.

Drinkhall and Parker beat Daniel Reed and Jess Dawson 3-1 (11-5, 6-11, 11-9, 11-9) while Knight and Sibley beat Matt Ware and Karina Le Fevre 3-1 (11-6, 11-4, 11-13, 11-6).

The final itself was due to be full of high-quality table tennis with long rallies and firework forehands but proved to be somewhat one-sided with the combination of Knight and Sibley's right hand/left hand attacking styles proving too much for their opponents.

An 8-3 lead in the first game was converted into an 11-5 win before they also took a 10-6 lead in the second game. A furious treble of brilliant attacking forehands from Drinkhall closed the gap, and gave the four-time champions a game point at 11-10, but the defending champions responded well and held their nerve for a 14-12 game.

The third game was, in the end, a procession as Knight and Sibley comfortably strode home 11-6 and sealed their third mixed doubles title.

Darius Knight/Kelly Sibley bt Paul Drinkhall/Joanna Parker 3-0 (11-5, 14-12, 11-6)

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