

Blagbrough wins senior Basingstoke Closed title

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Amy Blagbrough en-route to victory, Picture courtesy of John Upham

Amy takes senior ladies title at 13 years old

Amy Blagbrough of Aldworth TTC, currently ranked fourth in England for her age group, took her first senior ladies singles title at the Basingstoke closed championships in a pulsating final.

The championships were held on Saturday 13th April at Aldworth Science College and saw a total of 46 competitors playing almost 250 matches across 14 events. Almost 60 spectators gathered at the Basingstoke Rugby Club to watch the finals of the events that were not played to a finish on the day and they were not disappointed as the standard of the table tennis was very high.

Amy, who was unseeded in the event, dropped the first game to the top seed Fallon Thompson but recovered well to take the next two. She got off to a 5-1 lead in the fourth game and looked to be cruising but Thompson showed great determination in some fantastic attacking table tennis to come back and win the game 11-6 to force a nail-biting decider. The fifth game went all the way to 9-9 before Amy took the vital two points for the title to become the youngest ever winner of the event. It was one of the highest quality ladies singles finals for many, many years. Amy's proud father Guy and sister Zoe were in the crowd taking photos as the trophy was presented by league president Dave Kimberley and were first to congratulate her on a fantastic achievement.

The men's singles title was retained by Alpha's Sander de Riemer in devastating fashion as he swept aside every player in his path to take the final in three straight games. The final had a very European flavour to it as second seed de Riemer of Holland, came up against an unseeded German opponent Marcel Ludwig from Queens Club. Both players had performed exceptionally well to win their semi-finals 3-0 against Ed Slot and Steve Murgatroyd respectively but the Dutchman was just a level above the rest of the field throughout the event and a very worthy winner on the night with his very quick, up to the table attacking game.

The men's doubles title was taken by Sander de Riemer and Steve Murgatroyd who reached the final relatively

untroubled with a 3-0 semi-final win against the defending champions Tony Palaczky and Marcel Ludwig. The runners-up were the top seeds Sean Pickin and Peter Matthews who had played well to defeat the Garlick brothers Alex and Patrick in their semi-final match. The final was won in four games with the champions taking a vital first game 13-11 which helped settle the nerves to see them through.

This year's mixed doubles final was the highest quality match of the event since finals night was introduced several years ago. Top seeds Patrick Garlick and Fallon Thompson took the opener 18-16 against the second seeded Aldworth pair of Alex Garlick and Amy Blagbrough before Alex and Amy hit back with two close games of their own. The second seeds were 9-7 up in the fourth before Patrick upped his game with three vital counter attacking winners to take the fourth game 11-9 and force a decider which he and Fallon took 11-7 after Fallon's forehand drive forced Amy into the net.

Peter Matthews regained the veteran singles title with a 3-0 win over Queens' Tony Palaczky. Matthews of league champions St Peters 'A' had reached the final with a 3-0 win over Sander de Riemer which was undoubtedly the shock of the whole championships and made him a worthy winner of the title.

There was an all-Aldworth final in the 18-40's singles with top seed Ed Slot coming through a four-game match against second seed Alex Garlick. After going out of the men's singles semi-final, Slot was determined not to come away empty handed and his consistent driving back from the table helped him to the four-game victory.

The handicap singles was an all-Aldworth junior affair with 17-year-old Matt Byers giving away a 13-0 head start to 12-year-old Aaron Clark in a one game match up to 31. The 13 point lead never quite looked enough and Byers drew level before Clark had even managed 25 points. Clark forced some late errors from his opponent but it wasn't to be and Byers took the match 31-25. Clark, in his first ever senior final, showed great composure in front of a large crowd. He is definitely a star of the future in the Basingstoke league and his name is sure to come up again soon.

Since the World Championships of Ping Pong in January, shown live on Sky Sports, the sandpaper bats have become increasingly popular due to their lack of spin bringing players of different standards much closer together. The event was included in the Basingstoke Closed Championships for the first time. Sander de Riemer and Patrick Garlick contested an outright attacking final and it was de Riemer who took the title comfortably with a 3-0 victory after Garlick threw away a lead in the opening game.

With the top four players taken out, Aldworth's Alex Garlick won the Division One Restricted final with a four-game win over James Wright of St Peters. The pair shared the opening two games before Garlick took the third and fourth games both 11-9 for the title.

The Division Two event was played to a conclusion on the Saturday and unseeded junior Matt Byers from Aldworth TTC came through a tough field to take out both the first and second seeds in straight games to win the title from Nigel Cooper of Queens Club.

Aldworth made it a hat-trick of divisional titles and completed the clean sweep as 12-year-old William Phoon triumphed in a close four-game final with fellow club-mate Jack Farragher, also a promising junior player.

The ladies doubles was another event contested on the Saturday and Sue Tompsett teamed up with Aldworth B team mate Amy Blagbrough to take the title in straight games from the Queens Club duo of Fallon Thompson and Celia Hooker.

The super veteran's event for over 55's was retained by Peter Matthews who was untroubled until the final where he was taken to a fourth game by Peter Martin.

There was also a 1 point knockout event held on the Saturday where all players paid £1 to enter with 100% of the funds being paid out to the winner. There were many upsets along the way but Alex Garlick came through to take the point in the final over Bill Bavister for the £35 cash prize.

The Basingstoke & District Table Tennis Association chairman George White concluded the presentation ceremony on finals night by thanking the tournament organisers Sue Tompsett and Patrick Garlick and congratulating them on another fantastic job running the competition.

Footage from all matches on finals night will soon be available to view on Youtube and photos from the tournament that were taken by our expert local ETTA photographer John Upham, can be viewed at www.johnupham.smugmug.com

Division 1 (restricted) final

Alex Garlick bt James Wright 3-1 (11-4, 6-11, 11-9, 11-9)

Division 2 final

Matt Byers bt Nigel Cooper 3-0 (11-9, 11-8, 11-7)

Division 3 final

William Phoon bt Jack Farragher 3-1 (9-11, 11-6, 11-9, 13-11)

Handicap final

Matt Byers bt Aaron Clark (+13) 31-25

Ladies singles final

Amy Blagbrough bt Fallon Thompson 3-2 (9-11, 11-5, 11-6, 6-11, 11-9)

Sandpaper final

Sander de Riemer bt Patrick Garlick 3-0 (11-9, 11-5, 11-2)

18-40's final

Ed Slot bt Alex Garlick 3-1 (11-7, 8-11, 12-10, 11-4)

Veterans singles final

Peter Matthews bt Tony Palaczky 3-0 (11-5, 12-10, 12-10)

Super veterans final

Peter Matthews bt Peter Martin 3-1 (11-6, 6-11, 11-4, 11-6)

Mixed doubles final

Patrick Garlick/Fallon Thompson bt Alex Garlick/Amy Blagbrough 3-2 (18-16, 7-11, 11-13, 11-9, 11-7)

Ladies doubles final

Sue Tompsett/Amy Blagbrough bt Fallon Thompson/Celia Hooker 3-0 (13-11, 11-9, 11-9)

Mens doubles final

Sander de Riemer/Steve Murgatroyd bt Sean Pickin/Peter Matthews 3-1 (13-11, 11-7, 9-11, 11-5)

Mens singles final

Sander de Riemer bt Marcel Ludwig 3-0 (11-5, 11-5, 11-6)

1 point knockout event

Winner of the cash prize of £35 – Alex Garlick

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