

# Williams retains Halifax Vets Open

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Winner Keith Williams with organiser Barry Snowden

## WILLIAMS RETAINS HALIFAX VETERANS OPEN

England number 3 ranked veteran Keith Williams retained the Men's Singles at the 11<sup>th</sup> Halifax Summer Veterans Open Championships played last weekend. In a thrilling final he beat Halifax-based Simon Pugh in perhaps the most exciting title-decider in the last 10 years.

Saturday saw the group stages in the Men's event with seven groups of players all playing each other in their group with the top two qualifying for the main event the following day. They would be joined by the top two women who would also be playing their event on Saturday.

Most of the top seeded players qualified from their groups although there were a number of the more fancied players who dropped the odd sets before emerging through to Sunday's play.

The first group on Sunday saw top seed Williams qualify for the quarter-finals by topping his group undefeated along with Hull player Sean Madden. They were joined by qualifiers from Group two both of whom are Yorkshire County players, Leeds player John Chew and Huddersfield's Tim Dyson.

Group three saw the first major shock of the event as number 2 seed Chris Clinton of Hull bowed out of the singles as the group was headed by Bradford player John Stones and it was unknown player Shariar Masoudi of Leeds, via Iran, who was runner-up in the group. They were joined in the last eight by Pugh and Ivan Lewis of Leeds from group 4.

The first quarter-final saw Williams record a five game win over Lewis 3-2 (5-11, 11-6, 11-4, 9-11, 11-6) to reach the semi-final where he met Dyson who beat Stones 3-0 (11-6, 11-5, 11-7). In the third quarter-final, Pugh beat Madden in four 3-1 (12-10, 11-6, 7-11, 11-8) and he was joined in the semi-final by Masoudi who beat Chew 3-0 (11-7, 11-6, 11-5).

The first semi-final saw Williams beat Dyson 3-1 (11-8, 10-12, 11-7, 11-9) to book his place in the final where he was joined by Pugh who just beat off a determined effort from Iranian born Masoudi 3-2 (4-11, 11-4, 12-10, 9-11, 11-9).

The final was a classic and saw the top seed Williams open up a two game lead 12-10, 11-9. He was looking good for another title but Pugh was in no mood to lie down as he took the third game 11-8 and levelled the match by taking the fourth 13-11.

In an equally thrilling final game, it was Williams who just took his third straight title and fourth in total as he secured the crown with a 13-11 fifth game.



Women's finalists Joanna Roberts and Sue Collier

The ladies singles produced an intriguing match up on Saturday as England No 1 player Sue Collier of Cheshire was going for her fourth straight title but there was a fascinating entry from new veteran Joanna Roberts of Pudsey who was making a comeback after a couple of seasons away from the game. At her peak Roberts had reached number 8 in the senior ladies national rankings.

Collier progressed to the final with ease as expected and was joined by Roberts who did not have things all her own way after losing to Yorkshire number 1 Janet Adams of Huddersfield. However, she still managed to qualify from her group as winner and progressed to the final to meet Collier in what turned out to be a thrilling battle.

Collier opened with a 13-11 win only for Roberts to level by taking the second game 11-5. It was Collier who re-took the lead as she took the third game 11-6 and in a thrilling fourth game it was Roberts who forced the match into a deciding game with a 12-10 success.

She also started the stronger in the decider by quickly establishing an 8-4 lead before running out winner 11-5.

Although not a ranking event, this victory by Roberts will certainly let the more established veteran players know that she is a force to be reckoned with.



Helen Shields, Janet Adams, Barry Snowden (Organiser), Sandra Rider & Sue Collier

The Men's Doubles was won for the third successive year by Clinton and Lewis who beat Pugh and Shaun Bibby of Sheffield 3-1 (11-8, 11-6, 6-11, 11-8) with the Ladies Doubles being retained by Collier and Sandra Rider of Pudsey who took their fourth straight title.

There were two band B events with Rider beating Linda Sanderson in the Ladies final while Ian Denton of Sheffield beat Hon Kau Choy of Nottinghamshire in the Men's event.

Barry Snowden, Halifax and District TTA (August 15, 2013)

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