

Clacton & District TTL Report (Feb 24th)

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Allen Denyer in action

DETERMINED DENYER GRABS UNEXPECTED GLORY

Allen Denyer was the unlikely star of the Clacton and District League's Handicap Singles Tournament, taking the trophy by defeating Fred Button in the final to uphold his family's table tennis tradition.

Denyer's unconventional technique is not one you'll find in any table tennis coaching manual but his idiosyncratic style, allied to terrier-like qualities of grit and determination, proved too good on the day for the more experienced Button, and earned the self-effacing Brotherhood player his well-merited success.

The final was a fitting end to a profitable Tournament for Denyer with Button, usually the most resilient of players, eventually running out of patience – and energy – to retrieve the required twelve-point-per-set handicap deficit.

It was hard-earned glory for the new champion, his path to the trophy including a number of long, tight matches, none more so than his semi-final where Denyer (+2) had to be at his most dogged to overcome the excellent challenge of John Hatley (-8).

Denyer ran up a two-set lead before Hatley rallied to take the match into a deciding set. But Denyer won it 12-10 in the fifth in the most nail-biting encounter of the Tournament.

To demonstrate the close margins between success and failure, Denyer had only just succeeded in topping his group at the preliminary stage. In his first match, he went down (-8) to Toni Hayhow-Khan (+1) 11-9, 6-11, 11-3, 4-11, 6-11 – his only defeat of the day – before (+1) beating Hazel Blanche (+1) 13-11, 11-8, 12-10 and then (+1) edging out Gerald Batt (-3) 11-6, 11-7, 8-11, 12-14, 12-10.

Runner-up Fred Button enjoyed a memorable day, his more conventional defensive style, allied to his ability to hit forehand winners, proving a potent weapon.



Fred Button's defensive skills took him to the final

He excelled to emerge top of 'The Group of Death' comprising eventual semi-finalist John Hatley, reigning champion Sam Hume, and the top-ranked player in the Tournament, Colin Stallwood.

And, in the knock-out stage, Button showed typical patience in retrieving substantial handicap deficits against three of the League's most promising juniors – Morgan Harvey, Tom Wilkin and Gracie Edwards – before fatigue finally took its toll in the final against Denyer.

John Hatley was another to make an impression, reaching the semi-finals with a fine first round win in five against Annabelle Rodriguez before, in the quarter-finals, quelling his normal aggressive instincts to get the better of arch-defender Derek Willis, playing in his first Clacton League Tournament.

Junior players gave a good account of themselves, with Gracie Edwards surpassing expectations to reach the semi-finals before succumbing to Button, whilst quarter-finalists Kelvin Olano and Tom Wilkin demonstrated marked improvement in their play.

Both Wilkin and Olano topped their respective groups, Wilkin (+1) surprising Colin Dearman (-8) in the first round of the knock-out stage 11-6, 11-6, 10-12, 7-11, 11-5 whilst Olano (-5) had to save four match-points before beating another promising junior, Jonathan Found (+1), 10-12, 0-11, 14-12, 14-12, 11-9.

But spare a thought for veteran Graham Parkes, a player left with thoughts of what-might-have been. Fighting off a heavy cold, Parkes went down 11-9 in the fifth in his first group match played off scratch with Morgan Harvey. Then (at +1) he lost by the same score to Annabelle Rodriguez (-3) before finally going down 12-10 in the fifth to Martin Edwards (-6). These three closest-of-close defeats meant Parkes finished bottom of his group and failed to qualify for the round of the last sixteen.

The entry of thirty-two competitors was spread equally over the League with ten entrants from Division One, and eleven each from Divisions Two and Three. Although it was the lowest entry for some seasons, it did not prevent a day of entertaining and enjoyable table tennis for those taking part.

And, yet again, the Tournament lived up to its reputation of producing surprise winners, Denyer being the twenty-sixth different player to take the title in the Tournament's thirty-two year history.

Main results : Final : Allen Denyer (+2) beat Fred Button (-10) 11-9, 6-11, 11-3, 11-0; Semi-Finals : Denyer (+2) beat John Hatley (-8) 11-3, 11-7, 5-11, 9-11, 12-10; Button (-8) beat Gracie Edwards (+1) 1-11, 11-9, 11-8, 11-6; Quarter-finals : Denyer (+1) beat Kelvin Olano (-5) 11-4, 6-11, 9-11, 11-9, 11-5; Button (-8) beat Tom Wilkin (+1) 11-9, 11-5, 8-11, 11-9; Hatley (+1) beat Derek Willis (-5) 9-11, 11-6, 11-4, 11-8; Edwards (0) beat Barry Allen (0) 9-11, 11-6, 11-5, 11-8.

The sixteen players who qualified for the knock-out stage were –

Group winners : Allen Denyer, Kelvin Olano, Annabelle Rodriguez, Derek Willis, Barry Allen, Gracie Edwards, Fred Button and Tom Wilkin; Group runners-up : Gerald Batt, Ferdy Rodriguez, Morgan Harvey, Colin Dearman, Debra Found, Jonathan Found, John Hatley and Tricia Salter.

* In **Division One** of the League, Walton A were 9-1 winners against Brotherhood D. John Rice took three as did Peter Burrows although Burrows struggled against Shaun Beckham before taking it 11-6, 8-11, 11-8, 10-12, 11-8. Lee Harvey chalked up the Brotherhood point with an 11-9 in the fifth victory against Colin Dearman.

Brotherhood A defeated Nomads Cougars 8-2, Paul Hume and Sam Hume taking a point apiece for the losers with wins over Martyn Green. Alan Burgess and Greg Green took predictable trebles.

Every player picked up a point in the Walton B v Walton C encounter but only Derek Willis stayed unbeaten, his three proving crucial in Walton C's narrow success. Jason Gale contributed a couple for the winners but the closest match of the evening was the doubles, Gavin Price and John Rankin taking it for the 'B' team, 9-11, 11-9, 8-11, 13-11, 12-10 against Willis and Gale.

Ian Fielder was Windsor Hawks' star as they beat Windsor Condors 8-2, his maiden top-flight hat-trick including a fine 11-8 in the decider victory over John Pattrick. The Hawks' Felipe Rodriguez was involved in tight matches, defeating his sister Annabelle 11-7 in the fifth but losing out to Pattrick in a nail-bitingly close 11-13, 13-11, 13-11, 11-13, 9-11.

Mark Smith appeared in the Nomads Lions' colours for the first time and won twice in his team's 7-3 victory over Brotherhood B. John Hatley was unbeaten for the Lions whilst Martin Edwards took two for the losers and, in the process, denying Smith his hat-trick 11-7 in the decider.

In **Division Two** Lawford had an 8-2 victory over Brotherhood C, Richard Spence and Paul Hewitt unbeaten. Lawford skipper Ian Sherwood, who won two, had a tough battle against Kevin Pryor before emerging victorious 11-9, 11-9, 4-11, 13-15, 11-9.

The Lawford men faced tough opposition against second-placed Windsor Ravens, the match ending all-square for a second time this season. Spence and Hewitt took a couple each for Lawford with Windsor's Gary Stallwood undefeated. Unusually for a drawn match between two evenly-matched teams, none of the individual matches was extended to a fifth set.

But it was easier for the Ravens when they later met Brotherhood I, with nine of the matches settled in three-straight, the Windsor side winning 10-0.

Daryl Lott was the Nomads Ocelots' star, staying unbeaten in his side's 6-4 victory over Nomads Jaguars. Doug Green won a couple for the Ocelots as did Harry Hawkes for the Jaguars.

David Sweetland took the opening encounter of the evening for Windsor Magpies but that was his side's only success against Windsor Harriers, Isabel Barton and Jenny Higgins recording hat-tricks in the 9-1 win.

An unbeaten Duncan Dunne starred in **Division Three** for leaders Brotherhood E in the 7-3 victory over Nomads Lynx. Brian Friday's couple for the Lynx included a good 7-11, 15-13, 14-12, 13-11 win over Tony Edmonds. In a tight doubles, Edmonds and Gary Bayliss overcame Friday and Tom Collins 10-12, 17-15, 11-9, 9-11, 11-8.

Brotherhood G maintained their promotion ambitions with a 9-1 success over Nomads Leopards. Harry Beezer took the Nomads' point with a narrow 14-12, 10-12, 8-11, 11-9, 13-11 victory against Alan Fryer.

Graham Parkes was undefeated as Brotherhood H edged past Nomads Pumas 6-4. Gerald Batt won two for the winners as did John Bowers for the losers. Batt's win over Alan Dockerill was a close 12-10, 5-11, 12-10, 11-13, 11-7 but the closest match of the evening was the win for Pumas' captain Lionel Goddard against Brian Baines, 11-4, 11-9, 11-13, 8-11, 11-8.

Nomads Wildcats defeated Walton E 7-3. Walton's Lynette Sparks defeated Martin Cunningham 13-11 in the fifth and Hazel Blanche 11-7 in the fifth but was unable to get the better of old campaigner Harry Barlow who won in

three-straight. Walton's third point came from the doubles, Sparks and Toni Hayhow-Khan defeating Barlow and Blanche 7-11, 12-10, 6-11, 13-11, 11-9.

Finally, Brotherhood L defeated Windsor Kites 8-2, Morgan Harvey unbeaten. In the doubles, Harvey and Jonathan Found struggled before overcoming Carl Hubbard and Chris Simson 11-8 in the decider. The Windsor points came from a Simson win against Debra Found and an 11-8 in the decider victory for Hubbard against Jonathan Found.

RESULTS

Division 1

Windsor Hawks 8 Windsor Condors 2;
Walton C 6 Walton B 4;
Brotherhood A 8 Nomads Cougars 2;
Walton A 9 Brotherhood D 1;
Nomads Lions 7 Brotherhood B 3.

Division 2

Nomads Ocelots 6 Nomads Jaguars 4;
Windsor Ravens 10 Brotherhood I 0;
Lawford 5 Windsor Ravens 5;
Brotherhood C 2 Lawford 8;
Windsor Harriers 9 Windsor Magpies 1.

Division 3

Windsor Kites 2 Brotherhood L 8;
Nomads Pumas 4 Brotherhood H 6;
Nomads Wildcats 7 Walton E 3;
Brotherhood G 9 Nomads Leopards 1;
Brotherhood E 7 Nomads Lynx 3.

Tony Oswick (February 24, 2014)

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