

Clacton & District TTL Report (Apr 22nd)

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BROTHERHOOD B BATTLE ON

Brotherhood B are fighting hard in their in the mission to avoid relegation from **Division One** of the Clacton and District League.

In a week of mixed fortunes, the Brotherhood side suffered one severe loss – but then made good with a welcome eight-point win.

In their first match, they went down 10-0 to Windsor Eagles, Martin Edwards coming close to snatching a point but Sue Welham prevailing 3-2 (11-7, 11-6, 7-11, 8-11, 11-9) in the final match of the evening.

But the 'B' team were boosted by an 8-2 success against bottom-team Brotherhood D, Edwards and John Owen undefeated. David North took an important point against Shaun Beckham.

So Brotherhood B stay in the second relegation place but they are now a mere four points behind Nomads Cougars, with both teams having two matches to play. And intriguingly, the two sides are scheduled to meet each other in a crunch League fixture next week, an encounter which will go a long way to determining which team will go down with Brotherhood D.

There's also a fascinating picture developing at the top of the Division where, although Nomads Panthers are already confirmed as champions, the question of who will finish second remains an open question.

Brotherhood A fielded a strong side against Nomads Lions and came away with a 10-0 victory. The closest match, and the only one that went the distance, saw Jermain Fearon edge past John Hatley 3-2 (14-12, 5-11, 8-11, 11-9, 12-10).

But Walton A retain second place by just a single point thanks to an 8-2 win against Windsor Condors. Peter Burrows was unbeaten, with John Rice and Colin Dearman each winning two, Burrows' hat-trick including an impressive success over Colin Stallwood.

With both Brotherhood A and Walton A having two matches to play – Walton against Windsor Hawks and Nomads Lions, and Brotherhood against the Hawks and Walton B – the battle for the honour of finishing runners-up looks like going down to the final week of the season.

In a dress rehearsal for the Knock-Out Cup final, Windsor Hawks defeated Walton B 7-3. Every player picked up a point but only Windsor's Andy Vincent took all three. Felipe Rodriguez had a busy evening, losing 11-8 in the decider to Graham Buxton but beating Gavin Price 13-11 in the fifth and Paul Newbould 15-13 in the fifth.

In an all-Walton encounter, the 'C' team were convincing 9-1 victors over a weakened 'D' side. Steve Noble was the sole points-scorer for the losers whilst he was also involved in the only match that went to five, Jason Gale and Mark Gale defeating Noble and Paul Woolnough in the doubles 3-2 (11-3, 5-11, 6-11, 12-10, 11-6).

In **Division Two** Lawford moved up to third in the table after their 9-1 win against already-relegated Windsor Magpies. Richard Spence and Paul Hewitt again took trebles, with Ian Sherwood winning twice. Dan Wright prevented a Lawford whitewash with a narrow 12-10 in the fifth victory over Sherwood.

The match between Brotherhood I and Brotherhood J ended all-square. There were two each for the 'I' team's John Wrigley and reserve Duncan Dunne, and for the 'J' side's Kelvin Olano and Gracie Edwards. Wrigley was involved in three close matches, losing 14-12 in the fifth to Olano, beating Edwards 11-8 in the fifth and, in the doubles with Dunne, defeating Edwards and Tom Wilkin 11-7 in the decider.

In **Division Three** Brotherhood E confirmed their mastery of the Division with a 10-0 victory against the more-than-useful Nomads Pumas.

In the ever-changing battle for the second promotion spot, Brotherhood H enjoyed a 7-3 win over Brotherhood L. Graham Parkes and Gerald Batt took maximum points, both defeating an off-form Morgan Harvey. The 'L' team's Jonathan Found had an 11-7 in the fifth win over David Wilkin in the closest match of the evening.

So, with two matches to play, the 'H' team are just two points ahead of Brotherhood G. But, on paper, the 'G' team have the slightly-easier run-in – they have to play two of the bottom-four sides, Walton E and Nomads Wildcats, whilst Brotherhood H face lowly Windsor Ospreys but have tougher-looking opposition in Nomads Lynx.

Finally, Nomads Leopards improved their position in their personal battle with Windsor Swallows for the honour of finishing in eighth place by defeating Walton E 7-3. There were hat-tricks for Roger McNaughton and Norman Jacobs, his first of the season, whilst Stuart Wilkinson took their seventh point. Lynette Sparks and Toni Hayhow-Khan took a point apiece for Walton and shared a doubles success against McNaughton and Jacobs.

* The **Closed Championships**, once again sponsored by Paul Newbould Planning and Building Design Services, take place next weekend (26th and 27th April) at the Clacton Coastal Academy Sports Hall.

Sixty-six League players will be competing for twelve titles over the two days.

The reigning **Mens Singles** champion Kevin Gowlett will be aiming for a fourth title but he will have to overcome a strong challenge from last year's beaten finalist, James Denyer, and two former title-holders, Greg Green and Colin Stallwood.

The winner seems likely to come from among these top four seeds. But with a quartet of players of the calibre of Peter Burrows, Colin Webber, Gary Cattermole and John Patrick – each one capable of causing an upset – among the thirty-seven competitors, the event defies confident prediction.

Likewise, expect the **Mens Doubles** to be keenly contested but, as in the Mens Singles, the winner should surely come from one of the four seeded pairs.

Title-holders James Denyer and Felipe Rodriguez took many by surprise last year, as did the runners-up, Gary Cattermole and John Patrick. Both pairs are in the mix again this year but both will be aware of the threat of Kevin Gowlett and Peter Burrows – neither of whom has ever won this title – and the Greg Green/Colin Stallwood partnership who between them have won the title seven times, although never playing together.

In contrast to the Mens' events, Gill Locke is a clear favourite to take the **Ladies Singles** crown for a third year running. With no Sue Welham in the field, the only possible challenge will come from Annabelle Rodriguez and, if she can replicate her performance of 2012 when she was a surprise finalist, Sandie Isaac.

Gill Locke and Annabelle Rodriguez are the overwhelming favourites to take the **Ladies Doubles**, with the Sandie Isaac/Gracie Edwards pairing seeded to meet them in the final.

In the last fifteen years, only two pairs have ever successfully defended the **Mixed Doubles** title – which is the challenge that faces holders James Denyer and Gill Locke.

Colin Stallwood and Annabelle Rodriguez will be eager to regain the title they won in 2009 but don't rule out the possibility of a shock from John and Isabel Barton, Paul Hume and Gracie Edwards, or the scratch-pairing of Greg Green and Caroline North.

No player in Championship history has ever won the **Junior Singles** for five consecutive years but, with Sam Hume unavailable, the way looks clear for James Denyer to achieve this feat. Elliott Attrill has been seeded as his likely final opponent.

And for the **Junior Doubles** look no further than the partnership of James Denyer and Elliott Attrill although second seeds Morgan Harvey and Kelvin Olano are both aggressive players who will relish the opportunity to cause a shock of seismic proportions.

There's a competitive cast list in the **Veterans Singles** with Kevin Gowlett and Colin Stallwood seeded to meet in the final as they did last year. But there are no certainties here with strong challenges expected from 2008 champion Peter Burrows, 2011 champion Alan Burgess, twice runner-up Colin Webber, as well as the evergreen John Andrews.

Current **Super-Veterans Singles** champion Fred Button is unable to play this year and so Alan Burgess starts as favourite to repeat his successes of 2008 and 2010. But new-comer Derek Willis has impressed many with his dogged displays and, alongside Colin Dearman and Paul Meikle, will provide strong opposition.

The **Division Two Singles** rarely goes to form or rankings and so Gary Stallwood may be nervous about being made top seed in an event where any one of Frank Burbidge, Elliott Attrill or John Harvey could also emerge top of the pile.

Morgan Harvey and Graham Parkes are the two obvious contenders for the **Division Three Singles** title but a good performance from Gerald Batt or Lee Allen could easily make the seeding committee look foolish.

The absence of seeds always makes the **Restricted Singles** an unpredictable event but, on paper, the likely winner would seem to come from one of Paul Hume, John Hatley or Paul Meikle.

Play starts at 9.30 am on both Saturday and Sunday. The finals of the seven minor events will take place from 2.30 pm onwards on Saturday, with the finals of the five major events scheduled for approximately 3.30 pm on Sunday.

Admission to the Championships is free and all spectators are welcome. Light refreshments will be available.

RESULTS

Division 1

Brotherhood B 0 Windsor Eagles 10;
Brotherhood A 10 Nomads Lions 0;
Brotherhood D 2 Brotherhood B 8;
Walton B 3 Windsor Hawks 7;
Walton A 8 Windsor Condors 2;
Walton D 1 Walton C 9.

Division 2

Brotherhood I 5 Brotherhood J 5;
Lawford 9 Windsor Magpies 1.

Division 3

Brotherhood E 10 Nomads Pumas 0;
Walton E 3 Nomads Leopards 7;
Brotherhood L 3 Brotherhood H 7.

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Tony Oswick (April 22, 2014)

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