

# Clacton & District TTL Report (Apr 29)

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## DENYER FULFILS HIS DESTINY



James Denyer

Table tennis star James Denyer has fulfilled his destiny by becoming the Clacton League's Mens Champion, aged just seventeen years.

At the 2014 Closed Championships held last weekend at the Clacton Coastal Academy Sports Hall, Denyer took the **Mens Singles** title by overcoming reigning champion Kevin Gowlett, thus avenging his defeat by the same player in last season's final.

After a sluggish start in which he looked well below-par, Denyer raised his game to produce a succession of unreturnable winners to gain the upper-hand. And although Gowlett, true champion that he is, rallied in the fourth set, Denyer eventually triumphed 3-1 (6-11, 11-4, 11-2, 12-10), a well-merited success for one of the most gifted junior players to emerge from the Clacton League in recent years.

The dropped set against Gowlett in the final was the only one he'd lost in the whole competition, having eliminated John Patrick, Colin Webber and Colin Stallwood in three-straight.

As last year, Colin Stallwood and Greg Green – both talented players in their own right and both ex-champions – fell at the semi-final stage, although this year it was Denyer who beat Stallwood and Gowlett who eliminated Green.



Gary Stallwood

Quarter-finalist Gary Cattermole had two memorable matches, scraping past Felipe Rodriguez 11-7 in the fifth in Round Two before pushing Gowlett all the way before losing by the same score, 11-7 in the fifth, this after being ahead in the final set.

Gary Stallwood enjoyed a good event, topping his Group that included Martin Edwards, and then beating Jason Gale 11-7 in the decider and Mark Gale 11-6 in the decider before losing to Green in the quarter-finals.

Denyer followed his success in the Mens Singles with three more winners' trophies.

The **Mixed Doubles** saw the pairing of Denyer and Gill Locke retain the title they'd taken for the first time in 2013.

In the final they faced second seeds Colin Stallwood and Annabelle Rodriguez who'd won this event in 2009 and who'd been runners-up in 2010 and 2011. But Denyer and Locke would not be denied, winning 3-1 (11-8, 8-11, 11-9, 13-11) in an entertaining match, this after being 10-6 up in the fourth set and squandering four match-points.

It was not surprising that Denyer made a clean sweep of the Junior events but, in the process, he created a small piece of Championships history.

In the absence of Sam Hume, Denyer was the hottest of hot pre-Tournament favourites to take the **Junior Singles** title – which he did despite a committed and bravura performance from second seed Elliott Attrill, a performance which augurs well for his own table tennis future.

In the final Denyer's undoubted class shone through to win 3-1 (11-9, 11-4, 7-11, 11-9). The victory means he becomes the only player in the sixty years of the event to have won it five times.

The losing semi-finalists were the Brotherhood J team-mates Tom Wilkin and Kelvin Olano, Olano another to put up a good show against Denyer before losing 3-0 (11-6, 12-10, 15-13).

Denyer made it a fourth title when, combining with Attrill, he took the honours in the **Junior Doubles**. But once again the runners-up were not out-fought, Kelvin Olano and Morgan Harvey showing unexpected confidence before the favourites took the title 3-1 (11-9, 11-5, 7-11, 11-9). It was a first Clacton Closed title for Attrill.



Elliott Attrill

The best final of the Tournament was the **Mens Doubles** and it so nearly produced a fifth trophy for Denyer.

Denyer and Felipe Rodriguez had been runners-up in 2012 but were winners for the first time last year – and they were determined to retain their crown.

In the final they were matched against the new pairing of Greg Green and Colin Stallwood – and what a classic match it turned out to be, the closest of the Championships. The encounter see-sawed all the way through, with all four players on top of their game and displaying excellent form.

The end was a nerve-jangler but Green and Stallwood, 5-1 down at the change-over in the fifth set, fought back to win the title 3-2 (12-10, 9-11, 11-6, 11-4, 15-13).

The event had produced some excellent matches throughout, Green and Stallwood eliminating second seeds Peter Burrows and Kevin Gowlett 3-2 (11-8, 11-13, 9-11, 11-6, 11-3) in the semi-final whilst Denyer and Rodriguez, in a repeat of last season's final, had defeated Gary Cattermole and John Pattrick 3-2 (11-0, 11-6, 8-11, 7-11, 11-6) in their semi-final.

Paul Hume and Sam Hume also played well and were on the cusp of an upset, testing Burrows and Gowlett in the quarter-final before the more experienced duo won 3-2 (11-8, 7-11, 13-11, 7-11, 11-7).

It was a fourth Mens Doubles title for Green – a winner with Gary Young in 2010, 2011 and 2012 – and a fifth for Stallwood, who'd won it with Iain Vine in 1991, 1993 and 1995, and Martin Hogg in 2008 and 2009. But it was a first title for the two of them playing together as a pair.

The Ladies' events proved a triumph for Gill Locke who added two more trophies to her Mixed Doubles' success.

In a repeat of the 2009 **Ladies Singles** final she beat twice-champion Annabelle Rodriguez 3-0 (11-4, 11-9, 11-7), the younger player never able to get enough consistency or confidence to trouble the experienced Locke. It was a third Ladies Singles title in a row for Locke and her fourth in total.

Sandie Isaac, last year's beaten finalist, again played well, getting through the Group stage at the expense of Isabel Barton before losing to Locke in the semi-final.

Twelve-year old Gracie Edwards showed great promise, heading her group and giving Rodriguez a stern semi-final test before Rodriguez took it 3-2 (11-9, 11-8, 13-15, 11-13, 11-6).

The **Ladies Doubles** looked something of a formality for Gill Locke and Annabelle Rodriguez who'd won the title for the last two years against Sandie Isaac and Sue Welham

This year their final opponents were the scratch partnership of Sandie Isaac and Gracie Edwards but the unfancied pair put up such a show that the favourites showed visible signs of nervousness at five-all in the fifth set. But their experience eventually won the day, Locke and Rodriguez emerging as relieved 3-2 (11-3, 7-11, 12-10, 12-14, 11-7) winners.

It was an excellent performance from Isaac and Edwards, their uninhibited hitting so nearly causing the shock of the Tournament.

Neither of the top two seeds made it to the final of the **Veterans Singles** which was contested between third-equal seed Peter Burrows and the unseeded John Pattrick.

An up-beat Burrows reached the final by defeating Colin Webber 3-0 (11-8, 12-10, 11-5) before eliminating top seed and reigning champion Kevin Gowlett 3-0 (11-8, 11-5, 11-3) in the semi-final.

Patrick, after topping his Group, struggled to get past Dave Martin 3-2 (10-12, 11-2, 9-11, 11-7, 11-9) in Round One of the Knock-Out stage before an inspired performance dismissed second seed Colin Stallwood 3-2 (14-12, 11-7, 7-11, 8-11, 11-8) from the proceedings. And if this was not surprise enough, Patrick went on to defeat third-equal seed John Andrews 3-1 (11-8, 8-11, 11-9, 11-8) in the semi-final.

The final was a see-saw affair and it seemed at one stage as though Patrick might cause yet another surprise. But Burrows prevailed 3-2 (11-5, 7-11, 11-5, 7-11, 11-1) to regain the title he'd previously won in 2008.

Special mentions should go to Colin Dearman who disposed of the fancied Alan Burgess 3-0 (11-8, 11-9, 11-4) in Round One, and also to Mark Gale, who topped a Group that included his Walton C team-mate Derek Willis and then defeated John Hobson in Round One.

The **Super-Veterans Singles** went strictly by the seedings with the top four players – Alan Burgess, Derek Willis, Paul Meikle and Colin Dearman – making it to the semi-finals, the top two seeds – Burgess and Willis – contesting the final, and top seed Burgess taking the crown.

In a final of contrasts, Burgess defeated newcomer Derek Willis 3-0 (11-8, 11-7, 11-7), his canny looping and destructive winners trumping Willis' dogged defence. It was a third success in this event for Burgess, a previous winner in 2008 and 2010.

But Paul Meikle had so nearly spoiled his party, taking the eventual champion all the way in the semi-final before Burgess took it 3-2 (10-12, 11-7, 5-11, 11-7, 11-7).

Gary Stallwood had previously featured in four Division Two Singles finals, losing in 1990 and 1996 but winning in 2006 and 2008.

As favourite this year, he was expected to make it three successes – which he duly did by defeating his Windsor Ravens' team-mate John Harvey in the final. Stallwood began slowly but his aggressive attacking eventually won the day 3-1 (7-11, 11-6, 11-8, 11-6).

Nevertheless, it was a fine performance from Harvey, playing in his second Clacton Closed final having been runner-up in the Division Three Singles six years ago.

Among the unexpected results in this event, Sandie Isaac enjoyed a close 3-2 (11-9, 11-6, 10-12, 7-11, 11-8) victory over her Brotherhood F team-mate and third-equal seed Elliott Attrill before losing to Stallwood in the semi-final, whilst Allen Denyer beat Barry Allen in Round One before a determined performance eliminated second seed Frank Burbidge 3-2 (6-11, 9-11, 11-4, 11-8, 11-7).

Gerald Batt upset the form book in the **Division Three Singles** when he beat top seed Morgan Harvey 3-1 (11-9, 11-13, 11-8, 11-9) in their semi-final but the final proved a bridge too far for the likeable Brotherhood H man.

In another final of team-mates, Batt lost 3-0 (11-5, 11-1, 11-3) to Graham Parkes, a well-deserved success for Parkes who thus repeated his triumph of 1989 in the same event.

The absence of seeds in the **Restricted Singles** adds to its unpredictability and this year's event proved no different.

The final was contested between Paul Hume – a winner over John Barton and Jason Gale in the quarter-final and semi-final respectively – and Gary Stallwood who'd enjoyed good victories over Paul Meikle and Dave Martin at the same stages.

In another final of contrasting styles, the languid Hume proved too good for the left-handed looping Stallwood, Hume winning 3-0 (11-6, 11-4, 11-8).



Paul Hume

Dave Martin was involved in two close matches in the early rounds of this event, defeating John Harvey 3-2 (11-6, 11-6, 8-11, 6-11, 11-9) in Round Two before winning his quarter-final against Mark Gale 3-2 (8-11, 11-6, 14-12, 10-12, 14-12).

For the unassuming Hume, the Restricted Singles was a fourth different Closed Trophy in three years, having won the Division Three Singles and the Junior Doubles in 2012, and the Division Two Singles last year.

Once again the League is indebted to Paul Newbould Planning and Building Design Services who were the main sponsors of the Championships for a twenty-first year.

Thanks also go to the sponsors of the individual events – Ken Green (Mens Singles), the Skelmersdale Centre (Ladies Singles) and John Houghton (Division Three Singles).

#### 2014 CHAMPIONSHIPS RESULTS

**Mens Singles :** J Denyer beat K Gowlett 3-1 (6-11, 11-4, 11-2, 12-10).

**Ladies Singles :** G Locke beat A Rodriguez 3-0 (11-4, 11-9, 11-7).

**Mens Doubles :** G Green/C Stallwood beat J Denyer/F Rodriguez 3-2 (12-10, 9-11, 6-11, 11-4, 15-13).

**Ladies Doubles :** G Locke/A Rodriguez beat G Edwards/S Isaac 3-2 (11-3, 7-11, 12-10, 12-14, 11-7).

**Mixed Doubles :** J Denyer/G Locke beat C Stallwood/A Rodriguez 3-1 (11-8, 8-11, 11-9, 13-11).

**Veterans Singles :** P Burrows beat J Pattrick 3-2 (11-5, 7-11, 11-5, 7-11, 11-1).

**Super-Veterans Singles :** A Burgess beat D Willis 3-0 (11-8, 11-7, 11-7).

**Junior Singles :** J Denyer beat E Attrill 3-1 (11-9, 11-4, 7-11, 11-9).

**Junior Doubles :** J Denyer/E Attrill beat K Olano/M Harvey 3-1 (11-9, 11-5, 7-11, 11-9).

**Division Two Singles :** G Stallwood beat J Harvey 3-1 (7-11, 11-6, 11-8, 11-6).

**Division Three Singles :** G Parkes beat G Batt 3-0 (11-5, 11-1, 11-3).

**Restricted Singles :** P Hume beat G Stallwood 3-0 (11-6, 11-4, 11-8).

\* In **Division One** of the League, Nomads Panthers are already confirmed as champions and this week they easily beat already-relegated Brotherhood D 10-0.

Brotherhood A continued their push for the runners-up spot with an 8-2 victory over Windsor Hawks. With one match to play against Walton B, the Brotherhood side are now seven points ahead of Walton A who have yet to play Windsor Hawks and Nomads Lions.

Should Brotherhood A get all ten points against Walton B, eighteen points for Walton from their least two matches would guarantee them second place.

The relegation clash between Brotherhood B and Nomads Cougars turned into a triumph for the Cougars who won 8-2, Paul Hume and Sam Hume unbeaten.

The result puts the Cougars on eighty-nine points, level with Nomads Lions, one ahead of Walton D, and ten points ahead of Brotherhood B, all four sides having one match to play. By virtue of having won more matches, the Lions cannot be relegated but, to save themselves and condemn either the Cougars or Walton D to relegation, Brotherhood B would need to win their final match with Windsor Condors 10-0 – and hope that neither Walton D nor the Cougars picks up the one point that would make them mathematically safe.

In **Division Two** Windsor Kestrels and Windsor Ravens have already secured the top spots whilst Lawford, 9-1 winners against Brotherhood J this week, will finish third.

At the bottom, Windsor Magpies are already relegated and Brotherhood I are nearly so – only the mathematics is keeping them up at the moment.

To stay up Brotherhood I would need maximum points in their last two matches against Windsor Owls and Nomads Tigers, and hope that Nomads Jaguars fail to get two points from their last match against Brotherhood F.

In **Division Three** Brotherhood E, 7-3 winners over Windsor Swallows, have already sewn up the title but they need six points from their final match against Windsor Penguins to break the 200-point barrier.

But the Penguins will be fighting hard for every point – two points for them would ensure they finished fifth above Nomads Pumas whilst a Penguins' win would mean they ended their season in an even more creditable fourth place ahead of Nomads Lynx.

Meanwhile, the battle for the second promotion spot will go down to the last matches of the season. This week Brotherhood G beat Nomads Wildcats 9-1 whilst Brotherhood H defeated Nomads Lynx 6-4, results which put the 'G' team just a single point ahead of the 'H' side with both teams having one match to play

Should the 'G' side win their final match against Walton E 10-0, they will be guaranteed the runners-up trophy. But should the 'H' team defeat their last-match opponents, Windsor Ospreys, by a better score than the 'G' team beat Walton E, then Brotherhood H will finish second.

It couldn't be much closer!

\* Team Secretaries are reminded that all result cards must be received by Friday 3rd May.

\* The **Knock-Out Handicap Cup Final** between Windsor Hawks and Walton B will be played on Thursday 8th May at the Brotherhood Hall. Play starts at 7.30 pm. All spectators are invited to come and watch what promises to be an entertaining and intriguing encounter.

#### LEAGUE RESULTS

##### Division 1

Nomads Panthers 10 Brotherhood D 0;  
Windsor Hawks 2 Brotherhood A 8;  
Walton B 2 Windsor Condors 8;  
Brotherhood B 2 Nomads Cougars 8.

##### Division 2

Windsor Harriers 6 Brotherhood C 4;  
Windsor Owls 7 Nomads Jaguars 3;  
Brotherhood J 1 Lawford 9.

##### Division 3

Nomads Lynx 8 Windsor Ospreys 2;  
Brotherhood G 9 Nomads Wildcats 1;  
Windsor Swallows 3 Brotherhood E 7;  
Nomads Pumas 10 Windsor Kites 0;  
Brotherhood H 6 Nomads Lynx 4.

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Tony Oswick (April 29, 2014)

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