

Windsor Hawks win Clacton Handicap KO Cup

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Cup Champions Ian Fielder, Andy Vincent and Felipe Rodriguez

LET'S HEAR IT FOR THE HAWKS!

Windsor Hawks are the new holders of the Clacton and District Leagues' Handicap Knock-Out Cup.

In the final played at the Clacton's Brotherhood Hall in front of a noisy and enthusiastic band of spectators, Felipe Rodriguez, Andy Vincent and Ian Fielder recovered from losing the first two matches of the evening to defeat fellow-Division One side Walton B 5-2.

Walton's Gavin Price, Paul Newbould and John Rankin fought hard and played their part in an entertaining final of quality table tennis but, ultimately, came up short of the winning line.

The opening doubles proved a knife-edge match which could have gone either way, with Windsor's Vincent and Fielder (-1) at one stage leading 11-7, 8-11, 11-9, 5-1.

But Newbould and Rankin (+1) staged a dramatic come-back to take the fourth 11-7 and race ahead 6-0 in the final set. They eventually took it 11-4, a successful combination of Newbould's aggression and Rankin's stubborn defence.

The situation looked even grimmer for the Hawks when a resolute Price (+1) took the initiative against a nervous Rodriguez (-1) to sweep past his younger opponent 3-0 (11-4, 11-5, 11-6), a victory as comfortable as the scoreline suggests.

Then came the Hawks' resurgence with Vincent (-3), a player enjoying his best-ever League season, leading the way with the first of five Windsor wins, this against the veteran Rankin (+1).

Vincent's initial cautious approach took the first set 11-6 but Rankin gradually gained confidence, his surprise winners allied to superb returning securing the next two sets 11-9, 11-9 before Vincent rallied to take the fourth 11-9.

At 5-all in the fifth the match was anyone's but Vincent's attacking prowess won the day 11-6 to put the Hawks' on the score-sheet at last.

And the Windsor side levelled the scores when, in the match before the interval, Fielder (+1) defeated Walton skipper Newbould (-1) in an intense encounter of spectacular rallies that finished with Fielder winning a nail-biting fourth set 13-11.

The second doubles saw Rodriguez and Fielder (0) pitched against Price and Rankin (0) which, again, produced an evenly-contested encounter of tension and excellent rallies.

In retrospect, the crucial points came at 11-all in the second where the Hawks won the set 13-11 through a lucky net from Fielder and a Price fault-serve.

It was an entertaining watch for the spectators but, more importantly for the Windsor team, they led the final for the first time.



Handicap runners-up John Rankin, Paul Newbound and Gavin Price

The Hawks extended their lead as Vincent (-1) then defeated the left-handed Price (+1), Vincent's booming winners the difference in the first two sets which ended 11-5, 11-5.

And although Price upped his game to lead 5-1 in the third Vincent re-grouped to run out a winner in three-straight.

So it was left to Rodriguez (-3) to show his true form by beating Newbould (+1) 3-1 (11-6, 7-11, 11-4, 11-7), his calmer, steadier play trumping Newbould's erratic hitting, the win sealing the Hawks' Cup victory.

For Walton it was a case of what-might've been and, for Price and Newbould, both Cup runners-up with Walton B in 2010, a second disappointment in five years.

But it was a well-deserved success for the hard-working Hawks. For Andy Vincent, it was a second Cup trophy – he was a winner with the Hawks in 2002 – but a first Cup triumph for both Felipe Rodriguez and Ian Fielder.

And a special mention, too, for the Hawks' skipper and fourth squad member, John Barton – a Cup-winner in 1989 with Thorpe A and the Hawks in 2002 – who'd played a vital role in their Cup run but who'd nobly omitted himself from the side for the final.

Final results (Hawks' players first):

A Vincent/I Fielder (-1) lost to P Newbould/J Rankin (+1) 11-7, 8-11, 11-9, 7-11, 4-11;

F Rodriguez (-1) lost to G Price (+1) 4-11, 5-11, 6-11;

A Vincent (-3) beat J Rankin (+1) 11-6, 9-11, 9-11, 11-9, 11-6;

I Fielder (+1) beat P Newbould (-1) 11-7, 9-11, 11-4, 13-11;

F Rodriguez/I Fielder (0) beat G Price/J Rankin (0) 14-12, 13-11, 11-6;

A Vincent (-1) beat G Price (+1) 11-5, 11-5, 11-9;

F Rodriguez (-3) beat P Newbould (+1) 11-6, 7-11, 11-4, 11-7.

* The League's 'Come and Try' table tennis taster sessions begin next month on Friday 6th June at 7.30 pm at the Nomads' venue at the URC Hall, Carnarvon Road, Clacton-on-Sea. The sessions continue every Friday during June and are free of charge. All equipment will be supplied.

Anyone who would like to take up competitive table tennis is welcome to attend to 'have a go'. For more information, telephone Ferdy Rodriguez on 01255 221259.

Tony Oswick (May 12, 2014)

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