

# Clacton & District league: Grand Sam takes Handicap title

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Sam Hume receives the trophy from league president Sheila Howe

Fourteen-year old Sam Hume hit the headlines for the second time in as many weeks as he became the Clacton & District League's 2015 Handicap Singles champion at the tournament held last Saturday at Windsor's St James' Hall venue.

Sam did it the hard way, being given the highest grade and having to spend all four tournament matches against Tricia Salter, Debra Found, John Marshall and Graham Parkes retrieving heavy handicaps.

The final pitched a top-class Division One player in Hume against a top-class Division Three player in Graham Parkes – and it produced an enthralling and absorbing match, Hume (-11) eventually getting the better of Parkes (+2) in five sets 11-8, 3-11, 9-11, 11-6, 11-7.

Refusing to sacrifice his customary attacking play in favour of a more cautious style – sometimes favoured by top players in handicap play – Hume bombarded his opponent with a continuous salvo of ferocious forehands. Initially Parkes, like Hume a left-hander, had no answer to such powerful play but he gradually got into the game, resisting Hume's clean striking with stunning counter-attacks of his own which – to the delight of the watching spectators – produced a memorable encounter of many thrilling rallies.

Crucially, Parkes was able to get a good early lead in both the second and third sets and it looked as though an upset could be on the cards. But Hume rallied and, ultimately, his consistency won the day to give him a second Handicap Singles title in his short table tennis career.

Having won the title previously in 2013, Hume now joins an elite band of only six players who, in the tournament's 33-year history, have won the trophy twice. But, at the age of 14, he's certainly the youngest player to have achieved this.

With three players of the original entry unavailable on the day, the entry of 28 players included seven each from Divisions One and Three, and 14 from Division Two – although, paradoxically, only two of the Second Division competitors made it through to the last eight. And whilst four of the seven First Division players made it through to the quarter-finals, Hume was the only one to progress further, with John Hobson, John Hatley and Ian Fielder all falling to lower-Division opponents in the quarter-finals.

In a day of intense, but friendly, competition, John Hatley had one of the more interesting days. In Round One (at -8) he defeated Barry Allen (+1) 3-2 (11-8, 12-10, 7-11, 6-11, 11-9), in Round Two (at +1) he beat Derek Willis (-1) in five (2-11, 11-8, 11-8, 7-11, 11-7) before (at -8) eventually succumbing 3-2 (16-14, 1-11, 12-10, 3-11, 0-11) in the quarter-final to Parkes (+2).

## Main results

**Final:** Sam Hume (-11) beat Graham Parkes (+2) 3-2 (11-8, 3-11, 9-11, 11-6, 11-7).

**Semi-finals:** Hume (-8) beat John Marshall (+2) 3-0 (11-7, 11-6, 11-6); Parkes (+1) beat Lee Allen (-1) 3-0 (11-5, 11-1, 11-6).

**Quarter-finals:** Hume (-18) beat Debra Found (+2) 3-0 (11-8, 11-9, 11-7); Parkes (+2) beat John Hatley (-8) 3-2 (14-16, 11-1, 10-12, 11-3, 11-0); Marshall (+1) beat Ian Fielder (-3) 3-0 (11-7, 11-7, 11-8); Allen (+1) beat John Hobson (-3) 3-1 (11-3, 8-11, 11-4, 11-8).

The Consolation Doubles also witnessed some hard-fought matches. Sandie Isaac and Andy Cawley (+1) edged their semi-final 3-2 (11-6, 6-11, 11-9, 11-13, 13-11) against Ferdy Rodriguez and Jonathan Found (-1), whilst Gary

Stallwood and Rivhu Khan (-1) went the distance in their semi against Paul Woolnough and Caroline North (+1) before emerging 7-11, 12-10, 11-6, 13-15, 11-7 winners.

The final proved equally competitive, Isaac and Cawley (+1) taking a see-saw, nip-and-tuck encounter 3-2 (9-11, 11-8, 11-7, 7-11, 11-9) against Stallwood and Khan (-5).

\* In Round Three of the Handicap Knock-Out Cup Nomads Leopards took the plaudits following their 5-2 defeat of Second Division Nomads Ocelots. John Bonner was unbeaten for the Leopards whilst Harry Beezer contributed two close, but important victories, (at +1) defeating Harry Hawkes (-6) 3-2 (11-7, 11-4, 8-11, 11-13, 11-6) before settling the tie in match seven when (at +2) he squeezed past Brian Parish (-10) 3-2 (8-11, 11-0, 11-7, 4-11, 11-9). The Leopards are now the only Third Division team left in the competition.

Three sides from Division Two made it through to the last eight with pride of place going to Brotherhood D who ousted top-flight high-flyers Nomads Lions 5-2. Russell Hillier remained unbeaten for Brotherhood with the closest match of the evening being the victory of the Lions' Adam Wilkin (-5) who defeated Shaun Beckham (+1) 3-2 (15-13, 5-11, 11-9, 8-11, 11-7).

Windsor Harriers also beat a Division One side and once again the score was 5-2. The tie hinged on the first two matches which the Harriers edged by the narrowest of margins. In the opening doubles, Jenny Higgins and Isabel Barton (+1) defeated Colin Beaumont and Graham Bunce (-3) 13-11 in the decider, and Ferdy Rodriguez (+1) then scraped past Bob Sawyer (-5) 14-12 in the decider in the first of the singles.

Brotherhood E are the third side from Division Two to make it through to the quarter-finals, defeating Division Three side Nomads Wildcats 5-2. Tony Edmonds stayed unbeaten but it was Rodney Betts (-8) who sealed the win in match seven with a 3-2 (11-5, 9-11, 9-11, 11-5, 11-6) victory over Paul Dale (+1).

Division Three Windsor Ospreys made Walton C fight all the way before the Division One outfit finally won through. Walton got off to a nervy start, Paul Meikle and late selection Jason Gale (-13) just edging past Lucy Burton and Woody Fitzpatrick (+2) in five (11-7, 9-11, 10-12, 11-8, 12-10), before stretching into a 3-0 lead. But they were pegged back by an excellent Fitzpatrick (+2) win in four against Meikle (-13) and a Fitzpatrick/Debra Found (+2) doubles victory in five against Gale/Derek Willis (-15). But Walton's class told in the end with the score finishing, yet again, as 5-2.

Division One Windsor Eagles eased past Division Two Windsor Owls 5-1, none of the matches going the distance. And although it was also 5-1 for Walton B against Lawford, it was a somewhat tighter affair. Gavin Price (-1) had to be at his best whilst defeating Richard Spence (+1) 3-2 (14-16, 13-11, 11-9, 0-11, 13-11), whilst Price and Paul Newbould (-3) were narrow 3-2 (4-11, 11-9, 10-12, 11-5, 11-6) doubles winners against Spence and Ian Sherwood (+1).

The only all-Division One clash between Brotherhood B and Windsor Ravens saw Brotherhood take it 5-0. But once again the opening two matches proved crucial, John Owen and David North (0) beating John Harvey and John Long (0) 11-8 in the fifth, and Martin Edwards (-1) beating Woo Dy (+1) by the same score.

So there are three Brotherhood teams left in the competition, two each from the Walton and Windsor clubs, with just the Leopards keeping the Nomads' flag flying. The quarter-finals will be played during week beginning March 2. Details of the draw (to be made on February 11) will be sent to Team Secretaries by February 14 at the latest.

\* The only League match played was in Division Two where Brotherhood I and Brotherhood F met in one of the most keenly-contested encounters of the season – as to be expected from two teams locked on the same number of points in the middle of the table.

The final outcome was a 6-4 win for the 'I' team who were grateful to take four of the five matches that went the distance. Tom Wilkin was the star for the victors, his treble including an 11-8 in the fifth win over Sandie Isaac and an 11-9 in the fifth success against Lee Allen, a victory that denied Allen his own hat-trick. Mark Beckham added a couple and Kelvin Olano one, but there was no success for the 'F' team's Barry Allen who will feel unfortunate to have gone down 11-9 in the decider to Beckham and 11-7 in the decider to Olano.

## **RESULTS**

### **Knock-Out Cup Round 3**

Windsor Eagles 5 Windsor Owls 1

Nomads Lions 2 Brotherhood D 5

Windsor Harriers 5 Windsor Kestrels 2

Brotherhood B 5 Windsor Ravens 0

Brotherhood E 5 Nomads Wildcats 2

Lawford 1 Walton B 5

Windsor Ospreys 2 Walton C 5

Nomads Ocelots 2 Nomads Leopards 5

### **League**

#### **Division 2**

Brotherhood F 4 Brotherhood I 6

**Tony Oswick**

**February 9, 2014**

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