

# Northumberland Closed: Graeme is best Bar none!

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Graeme Barella became the new Northumberland champion and holder of the Alan Morpeth Memorial Cup when the Closed Tournament was held at Sporting Club, Cramlington.

All eight seeds in the Open Singles won their groups and first round of knockout matches to progress to the quarter-finals. Top seed Andrew Wilkinson then accounted for Steve Penman, University student Chun Yin Yu defeated fellow student Matthew Stephens, Barella had a good win against Dave Robson and the No 2 seed Eddie Smith beat Dale Aitkenhead.

A terrific semi-final saw Wilkinson just get home 11-9 in the fifth end against Yu and Barella beat Smith in four games in the other one.

Barella dominated the first two games of the final before Wilkinson got into his stride to take the third but Barella then ran away with the fourth to take the title.

There were two groups of three in the Women's Singles, which were won by Kit Robinson and Lynne Herrington with Diane Cartmell and Lynsey Storey the runners-up. The semi-finals were both very keenly fought and both needed a fifth game before Storey defeated Robinson and Cartmell edged out the holder Herrington.

Cartmell easily beat Storey in the final to become Women's champion for the first time and take the Philomena Clark Memorial Trophy.

The top graded event, the Band One Singles from which the top ranked players were excluded, produced some closely fought matches. Steve Penman beat Paul Baines and Rob Reed in his group to set up a clash with Matthew Stephens, who had beaten Iain Wood but was runner-up to Dale Aitkenhead in his group before beating Duncan Wraight.

Matthews pushed Penman all the way in the semis before losing out in the fifth end while in the other half of the draw Aitkenhead beat Baines who had won a long five-ender against Mark Christie.

Aitkenhead won the first game of the final but Penman hit back to take the next three and win the event.

Group winners in the Band Two were Jake Helm, Rod Roberts and Ken Lee with Helm and Roberts then progressing to the final, in which Roberts triumphed in four games.

In Band Three group, winners Jamie Dent, Xiao Huang and Dave Swan together with the three runner-up contested the knockout stage, which was eventually won by Dent who beat Huang 11-7 in the fifth.

Neither Mark Patterson nor Pauline Long dropped a game in reaching the semi-finals of the Band Four, but Patterson needed a fifth game to put out Nick Yuen and Long was taken to four by Adrian Barnes. Patterson then won the event in four games over Long.

Six young players from the Northumbria League Fourth Division contested Band Five, with Elliott Dorrington coming out on top. However, he had to make quite a comeback to win his semi-final when he was well behind to Sree Kanakala in the deciding game. He then went on to beat Andrew Matfin in the final.

The Veterans' Singles event saw Smith, Aitkenhead, Penman and Keith Patterson get to the semis, where Smith accounted for Aitkenhead and Penman defeated Patterson. Unfortunately, Penman was unable to play in the final which meant that Smith took the title for the seventh successive year.

The Handicap Singles was won by Xiao Huang, who overcame a four point start to beat Kit Robinson 21-15 21-13 in the final.

There was also a 'Fun' Doubles in which players in the top half of the entries according to their gradings were drawn to partner one of those from the bottom half. From a field of 16 pairs, Steve Coverdale and John Cook got the final along with Ken Lee and Adrian Barnes, it being the third time in four years that Barnes had done so, being a winner on the other two occasions. This time he was a runner-up as Coverdale and Cook came out on top after losing the first game.

## Results

**Open Singles:** Barella beat Wilkinson 3-1 (11-5, 11-9, 6-11, 11-6)

**Women's Singles:** Cartmell beat Storey 3-0 (11-8, 11-8, 11-1)

**Veterans' Singles:** Smith beat Penman w/o

**Band One:** Penman beat Aitkenhead 3-1 (6-11, 11-8, 11-5, 11-8)

**Band Two:** Roberts beat Helm 3-1 (11-2, 11-7, 10-12, 11-7)

**Band Three:** Dent beat Huang 3-2 (10-12, 11-3, 10-12, 11-2, 11-7)

**Band Four:** Patterson beat Long 3-1 (9-11, 11-8, 11-7, 11-5)

**Band Five:** Dorrington beat Matfin 3-0 (11-7, 11-7, 12-10)

**Handicap Singles:** Huang beat Robinson (+4) 21-15, 21-13

**'Fun' Doubles:** Coverdale and Cook beat Lee and Barnes 2-1 (6-11, 11-9, 11-5)

## Aubrey Drapkin

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