



Trumpauskas and Rose are the Masters

Author: Paul Stimpson

Posted On: October 30, 2015

The Midlands Masters annual veterans table tennis event took place on October 17 and 18 and saw more than 280 competitors making the trip to Tipton Sports Academy to compete in the event.

Players from the top to the bottom of the country attended, with organisers extending the available floor space to accommodate the extra tables needed to host the numbers involved.

40s No 1 seed Lorestas Trumpauskas once again proving his ranking and strength is not an attendance position, as he powered his way through the strong field of competitors. His route to the final saw him take out current Sheffield men's singles champion Stephen Horsefield, who had himself disposed of Dave Robson in the quarter-finals, a player he had lost to a matter of weeks ago in the North East Masters event. Trumpauskas made his mark in the semi-final, beating the Stocksbridge man comfortably 3-1.

The other half of the draw saw Polish powerhouse Tomasz Rzeszotko battling his way through the rounds, meeting the flamboyant Greek, Costas Papantoniou in the other semi-final. The match delivered some of the best table tennis seen throughout the entire competition, with both players giving everything they had in their quest to reach the final. Rzeszotko was the eventual winner in a five set thriller, which had no less than 35 points in the final end alone, seeing an exhausted Papantoniou losing out 18-16.

The final proved to be a less dynamic affair with Rzeszotko looking jaded following his encounter in the previous round, which left the door wide open for reigning champion Trumpauskas to claim his title once again 3-0 (9, 8, 5).



Lorestas Trumpauskas was the men's champion. Picture by Mike Rhodes

Women's 40 competitors included top seed Sanja Clements, Emma Rose and the consistent Sue Collier, with Rose Rainton edging in to try and spoil the eventual champions party, but it was the No 2 seed, Emma Rose that made the heads turn as she crafted her way through to the quarter-final first. Her first victim was Jackie Williams 3-0, then came the semi-final clash against the No 3 seed Sue Collier, who she despatched in a great match 3-1.

The stage was then set for the final against Jane Cohen, who came through the pack like a stealth missile, but sadly the unseeded contender had no answer to Roses's accurate power-play and was beaten 3-1 (8, -8, 12, 7).

The 50s men's event had all top six players in England taking part bar Richie Venner so the title was an open one and depended on who was either the most consistent and or fittest during the long weekend. Adrian Pilgrim was the No 1 seed and looked likely to breeze through his group of Steve Kosmowsky, Steve Brunskill and Steve Davis. The following two hours of table tennis left onlookers looking bemused as the top seed, Pilgrim lost out to the powerful Davis, who then went down to Brunskill, who followed this by losing to Pilgrim!

Final standings were announced after the referee had double checked the count back, with the top seed in the 50s 'scraping' through in second place, Davis dropped into third and Brunskill placing himself nicely into top spot.

The battle to reach the final saw Tomasz Rzeszotko losing in a five set thriller to No 5 seed Robson (8, -8, 6, -12, -12), then Robson losing in another five sets to Papantoniou.

Costas then faced his next challenge, with Ivan Lewis proving he can compete with the best, which he did pushing the Greek to five ends in the semi-finals and narrowly missing out on a place in the final across five ends.

The other half saw Pilgrim, who previously struggled to qualify, taking out Steve Scowcroft and eventually reaching the final.

Tiredness was starting to take its toll and saw the final being a low key affair, with Pilgrim looking fresh and Papantoniou a shadow of his former self, which reflected in the scores (6, 11, 4).

The 50s ladies event had the usual suspects in contention, namely, Jane Vickers, Diane St. Ledger, Teresa Devaney, Jackie Williams and Linda Sanderson, but it was the No 4 seed that shuffled the pack and made her way to the top.

This left the final with two less likely suspects, and the fight was on to gain a victory neither party was

anticipating before the event had started.

Williams who took the first two ends in the four game thriller, winning 12-10 and 11-3 respectively. Cohen found her spirit and took the next 11-8, but it was the No 4 seed who stayed solid, winning out in a 15-13 title winner for the jubilant Northfleet girl.

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