



Clacton & District: Tournament has new-Found champion

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Nineteen-year old Jonathan Found came of table tennis age as he produced a series of top-class performances to become the Clacton & District League's Handicap Singles Tournament champion for 2017.

In the final, Found (+1) defeated Jason Lloyd (-5) 3-2 (11-8, 15-13, 4-11, 8-11, 11-8) in a highly-competitive and entertaining encounter, Found more than holding his own against his older opponent. The tension continued to the final point where Found, leading 10-2 in the decider, set the nerves jangling as he conceded six cheap points – until Lloyd netted a return to give Found the precious point he needed to take a well-deserved first senior League title.

It capped an excellent day for the often under-rated Found (+1) who began his quest by disposing of the experienced Graham Parkes (-3) 3-1 (11-9, 11-4, 11-13, 13-11) in a nip-and-tuck encounter.

This was followed by a first-ever on-the-table tournament confrontation with mother Debra Found (+1) who, in her first match, had enjoyed a notable win over top-flight player Paul Woolnough (-8) 11-9 in the fifth. But Jonathan (-1) showed no filial mercy when it came to their Round Two meeting, beating Debra (+3) 3-1 (3-11, 11-7, 11-9, 11-9).

In the quarter-finals, Jonathan chalked up yet another four-set victory, this time (+1) defeating Division One's Jason Gale (-6) 9-11, 11-7, 11-6, 11-9.

So to the semi-final where he came up against another talented youngster, 16-year old Scott Campbell, the 2016 Handicap Singles runner-up and a fast-improving player. And the spectators were not to be disappointed as the two teenagers produced arguably the best match of the tournament, both displaying uninhibited aggression in a match of quality and entertainment, Found (+1) eventually edging it 3-1 (12-10, 12-14, 12-10, 11-7).

By way of contrast, runner-up Jason Lloyd's journey to the final had seen him dispose of three Division One

opponents, including two former Handicap Singles champions. He started (+1) with the narrowest of victories over Colin Dearman (-3), a winner of this tournament back in 1988 and always a durable competitor. After sacrificing an early two-set lead, Lloyd eventually came through 3-2 (11-0, 11-4, 11-13, 7-11, 11-8).

Lloyd (-17) then went to the other extreme where he came up against Third Division player Sue Lee (+2) and, despite having to concede a hatful of points each set, his patience ensured an 11-5, 11-6, 11-5 match victory.

And patience in the extreme is what Lloyd required in his next match, the quarter-final against Derek Willis, a player renowned for his determination and doggedness. But Lloyd (+1), forsaking his normal positive play, matched his opponent defensive stroke for defensive stroke and, through sheer persistence and self-discipline, wore down the patience of veteran Willis (-6) to take a semi-final place 3-1 (6-11, 11-5, 11-6, 14-12). Of its kind, it was a classic marathon match!

And so to the semi-final where he faced Kevin James, the 2002 Handicap Singles winner and a tough tournament cookie who'd earlier enjoyed a nail-biting 11-9 in the fifth victory over Paul Hume, the highest-ranked entrant on the day. But James (-6) was surprisingly off-key in the semi-final and, making more mistakes than usual, allowed Lloyd (+1) to take his place in the final 3-0 (11-8, 11-7, 11-5) somewhat more easily than he may have anticipated.

The tournament, held again at Windsor's St James' Hall venue, attracted an entry of 32 players. For the record, neither the winner Jonathan Found or runner-up Jason Lloyd had ever before reached even the semi-final stages of this event which again lived up to its reputation of providing an unexpected winner, Found being the 28th different player to take the title in the tournament's 35 years of existence.

Main results – Final : Jonathan Found (+1) beat Jason Lloyd (-5) 11-8, 15-13, 4-11, 8-11, 11-8; Semi-finals: Found (+1) beat Scott Campbell (-3) 12-10, 12-14, 12-10, 11-7; Lloyd (+1) beat Kevin James (-6) 11-8, 11-7, 11-5; Quarter-finals: Found (+1) beat Jason Gale (-6) 9-11, 11-7, 11-6, 11-9; Lloyd (+1) beat Derek Willis (-6) 6-11, 11-5, 11-6, 14-12; Campbell (+1) beat Martin Edwards (-6) 11-0, 11-6, 11-4; James (-5) beat Russell Hillier (+1) 11-9, 13-11, 5-11, 11-7.

In the Consolation Doubles the closest match saw Fred Button and Ferdy Rodriguez (-3) edge out Colin Dearman and Paul Metcalf (+1) 3-2 (12-14, 5-11, 11-8, 11-9, 11-9). But they couldn't extend their luck a further match, Paul Hume and Graham Parkes (-3) taking the honours in the final 3-0 (11-5, 11-9, 11-5) against the Button/Rodriguez (+1) combination.

* In Round Three of the Handicap Knock-Out Cup the only all-Division One clash was a battle between 2014 Cup-winners Windsor Hawks and 2015 holders Brotherhood B. And it was the Hawks who came out on top, Andy Vincent staying unbeaten in his side's 5-2 success. The Hawks led all the way, winning the first three matches of the tie, the third of which was a crucial 3-2 (11-13, 12-10, 9-11, 11-8, 14-12) victory for John Barton over John Owen in a match played off-scratch. To cap a good all-round team performance, Elliott Attrill won both his doubles with Vincent and Barton in three-straight.

Three other top-flight teams made it through to the next round by overcoming lower-division opposition.

In the first of two all-Nomads' clashes, the Panthers were given the fright of their lives by the Bobcats, trailing 3-1 before coming out on top 5-4 against the Division Two outfit. The Panthers were indebted to the good form of Sam Hume who stayed unbeaten on the night. Jason Lloyd took two singles and one doubles for the losers, picking up a crucial win in match eight to take the tie to a decider, Lloyd (+1) beating John Hatley (-6) 3-2 (11-4, 13-15, 12-14, 11-4, 11-8).

In the second all-Nomads' encounter, the Lions beat Second Division Pumas 5-2. Paul Hume and Roger Hance were the Lions' unbeaten heroes, with Hance and Adam Wilkin (-10) involved in the closest match of the contest, defeating Andrew Cousins and John Bowers (+2) 3-2 (13-11, 0-11, 0-11, 11-7, 11-7). Bowers and Eric Lemke both enjoyed singles wins over Wilkin.

It was a simpler task for Windsor Condors who faced Division Three promotion-challengers Nomads Wildcats, ending as straightforward 5-0 winners with only two of the matches extended to a fourth set.

But Division One side Lawford came a cropper against Nomads Jaguars of the Second Division who made full

use of their handicap advantage to record an unexpected 5-2 success. Both Kevin Hume and Allen Denyer remained unbeaten on the night although Hume required the full five sets to overcome both Ian Sherwood and Paul Hewitt.

In a second surprise result, Division Three Nomads Lynx recorded a 5-0 victory against Division Two Windsor Magpies. The closest match saw Dave Harris (+1) edge out Magpies' reserve Jordan Webb (-3) 3-2 (11-8, 11-9, 7-11, 11-13, 12-10).

Two teams from Division Two, Brotherhood D and Walton C, were involved in a ultra-tight scrap with Brotherhood D, who at one time led 4-1, eventually scraping through 5-4. Crucially, the Brotherhood trio of Russell Hillier, Paul Alden and Lee Harvey won all three doubles including a hard-fought match five, Hillier and Harvey (-8) taking it 3-2 (11-8, 7-11, 11-7, 8-11, 11-9) against John Long and Lynette Sparks (+1). Long won both his singles for Walton.

In the eighth tie of the round, there was a win for Division Two over Division Three, although Windsor Harriers were pushed all the way by a determined Nomads Ocelots' team before winning 5-1. In the opening doubles, Isabel Barton and Jenny Higgins (-13) eventually got the better of Sue Lee and Barbara Rogers (+2) 3-2 (0-11, 2-11, 11-8, 11-8, 11-6), whilst Lee (+2) had an encouraging 3-2 (11-6, 9-11, 6-11, 11-2, 12-10) singles win against Higgins (-11).

So, in the quarter-finals, there will be four teams from Division One – including the League's two top teams Nomads Panthers and Windsor Condors – three from Division Two and one from the Third Division. The Nomads Club has four teams left in the competition, with Windsor having three and Brotherhood one.

* In Division Three of the League, Brotherhood G enjoyed a 9-1 success over Nomads Leopards, Paul Metcalf and Rob Bright staying unbeaten. But it was a closer match than the scoreline suggest with Brotherhood winning three of the four matches that went to a decider. The narrowest wins saw Bright defeat Tom Collins 11-8 in the fifth and David Hunt beat Norman Jacobs 11-7 in the fifth – whilst Bright also had a battle-royal against Dave Wright before winning a tight four-setter 7-11, 11-6, 15-13, 19-17. Wright picked up the Leopards' consolation point with an 11-8 in the decider victory over Hunt.

Nomads Caracals were 8-2 victors over a Windsor Penguins' side which fielded a guest but who, nevertheless, might feel a trifle unfortunate not to have got a share of the spoils. Both Denise Thompson and Chris Jones took trebles for the Caracals although it was 11-7 in the fifth for Thompson against Alan Charman, and 11-4 in the fifth for Jones against the same player, whilst the two Nomads' players took the doubles 11-6 in the decider against Charman and Jackie Bunce.

* The Windsor Club is organising a Quiz Evening for teams of up to six people on Saturday March 11 at St James Hall, 7pm for a 7.30pm start. Tickets are £5 per person which includes supper, bring your own drink. For more details or to enter a team telephone Jenny Higgins on 01255 432397 or 07790240566, or e-mail mahiggins@talktalk.net

RESULTS

Knock-Out Cup: Round 3

Lawford 2 Nomads Jaguars 5
Windsor Hawks 5 Brotherhood B 2
Nomads Lions 5 Nomads Pumas 2
Nomads Wildcats 0 Windsor Condors 5
Nomads Lynx 5 Windsor Magpies 0
Brotherhood D 5 Walton C 4
Nomads Ocelots 1 Windsor Harriers 5
Nomads Panthers 5 Nomads Bobcats 4

League

Division 3

Nomads Leopards 1 Brotherhood G 9
Nomads Caracals 8 Windsor Penguins 2

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