



Clacton & District: Jason hits heights

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Jason Lloyd took the honours at the Clacton & District League's Handicap Singles Tournament held last weekend to become the Handicap Singles champion for 2018. In the final, experience overcame youth with Lloyd (+1) defeating talented 12-year old Ollie Rampton (-1) 3-1 (11-9, 9-11, 11-9, 11-2).

Lloyd took command of the first set, helped by a goodly share of edges and nets including the point to win the set. And when he was 8-4 up in the second, it looked as though he might make it in a breeze. But young Rampton proved he is a fighter as well as a player of precocious ability and battled back to take the second set 11-9.

For a brief moment, the force was with Rampton as he built up a 9-7 lead in the third but Lloyd dug in and, showing the grit and determination which had got him to the final, took the set 11-9 before running away with the fourth 11-2.

It was a well-deserved reward for Lloyd, taking the Gordon Denton Trophy for the first time, just 12 months after finishing runner-up in the same tournament.

It had been a hard day's work for Lloyd who remained unbeaten throughout. He started by winning all three matches in his group, against tough fellow-Division One opponents Derek Willis and Abhi Peshkar in three-straight, before defeating Barry Allen in five.

Lloyd (0) defeated another top-flight player John Barton (0) in the quarter-finals in three-straight before becoming involved in one of the matches of the tournament against Liam Harris. In a highly-entertaining see-saw match, 12-year old Harris (+1) put on a display of uninhibited forehand hitting, with Lloyd (-6) often having to retrieve from the back of the court. But Lloyd finally emerged victorious 3-2 (8-11, 11-9, 11-6, 5-11, 11-7), a gripping contest where the result was in doubt to the last.

Runner-up Ollie Rampton, in his first Clacton League Tournament, had also gone unbeaten in his group of Pawel Szemro, Mark Ratcliffe and Sandie Krelle, like himself all top Division Two players, defeating Ratcliffe and Szemro

in three-straight in scratch-matches before (on -5) beating Krelle (+1) 3-2 (7-11, 12-14, 11-8, 11-7, 11-7).

Showing remarkable composure as well as ability, Rampton (-5) beat another Division Two player Graham Parkes (+1) in his quarter-final before taking on 16-year Ethan Lloyd in what turned out to be another rousing semi-final. The encounter proved as even as was anticipated, the advantage swaying first one way and then the other, with the players involved in many attacking rallies away from the table. Once again the result went down to the wire and, in a match played off scratch, Rampton prevailed 3-2 (9-11, 11-6, 8-11, 11-6, 11-7) and, in the process, denied Ethan the opportunity to join dad Jason in what would have been a unique final.

If the result was a disappointment for Lloyd junior, he should take pride in competing in – and winning – a series of exacting matches after qualifying second his Group. In the first Round of the Knock-Out stage (on -15) he was given the severest of tests by 14-year old Harley Wood (+2), Lloyd winning by the narrowest of margins 3-2 (0-11, 11-9, 3-11, 11-9, 11-9). And it proved an equally tough assignment against Adam Cuthbert (-1) at the quarter-final stage, Lloyd (+1) emerging a narrow victor in five in an immensely-watchable contest (3-11, 11-4, 11-5, 10-12, 11-8).

An honourable mention should also go to 12-year old Liam Harris who topped his Group before beating Sandie Krelle in Round One and then, in a David-and-Goliath contest, (on +3) defeating Mel Rampton(-13), finally wearing down his opponent to win 3-2 (9-11, 9-11, 11-6, 11-0, 11-2) to make it to the semi-finals – where, encouragingly, three of the four players were juniors.

A special mention, too, for Mel Rampton, father of Ollie, who'd battled all day in matches where he'd had to retrieve heavy handicaps. In his very first Group match (on -11) he scraped past Isabel Barton (+3) 11-9 in the fifth, (on -15) he successfully tackled Debra Found (+3) in the first round of the knock-out stage before the energy finally seemed to drain and he succumbed to Harris in the quarters.

The tournament, held at Windsor's St James' Hall venue, attracted one of the lowest entries for some years which was disappointing, but it did enable the opening rounds to be played in Groups which meant that, with the Consolation Doubles, every player was guaranteed at least four matches.

In winning the Handicap Singles, Jason Lloyd became only the second player in the tournament's 36-year history to win the trophy the year after being a losing finalist, as well as becoming the 29th different player to take the title, emphasising the fact that this tournament defies prediction.

And Jason also takes another unrelated plaudit. During the tournament, sunlight temporarily prevented play on one of the tables. So Lloyd, ably assisted by Andy Cawley, clambered up a 12-foot ladder and, between them, they fixed a faulty set of blinds at a high-level window. Little was anyone to know that Jason would reach the heights in a completely different way later in the day!

Main results – Final : Jason Lloyd (+1) beat Ollie Rampton (+1) 11-8, 9-11, 11-9, 11-2; Semi-finals : J Lloyd (-6) beat Liam Harris (+1) 8-11, 11-9, 11-6, 5-11, 11-7; O Rampton (0) beat Ethan Lloyd (0) 9-11, 11-6, 8-11, 11-6, 11-7; Quarter-finals : J Lloyd (0) beat J Barton (0) 16-14, 11-8, 11-5; O Rampton (-5) beat Graham Parkes (+1) 11-9, 8-11, 11-9, 11-9; L Harris (+3) beat Mel Rampton (-13); E Lloyd (+1) beat Adam Cuthbert (-1) 3-11, 11-4, 11-5, 10-12, 11-8.

In the Consolation Doubles John Plummer and Ferdy Rodriguez (+1) had an early round victory, 11-7 in the fifth, over Pawel Szemro and Andy Cawley (-3). But they then went down in three-straight to the eventual victors, Isabel Barton and Debra Found who (on -1) proved too good for Russell Hillier and Sue Lee (+1) in the final, winning 3-0 (11-9, 11-7, 11-5).

* The match of the week in Division One of the League was at St James' Hall where last-season's runners-up, Windsor Condors, hosted reigning champions and current League leaders, Nomads Panthers. The match lived up to expectations with the Panthers finishing 7-3 winners after an exhilarating, top-class contest.

James Denyer and Sam Hume maintained their unbeaten season's records but not without a struggle. Denyer defeated Clacton champion Colin Stallwood 3-2 (6-11, 11-8, 19-21, 11-8, 11-7) after an epic contest, followed by an equally epic encounter which saw Hume beat the same player in five. Colin Webber picked up a point for the Panthers, as did Stallwood and Greg Green for Windsor, the two Condors' players combining to defeat Denyer and Webber in the doubles.

Three for Gary Young and two for Kevin James, plus a 3-0 (20-18, 11-8, 11-4) doubles win for Young and Gavin Price, saw second-placed Walton A to a 6-4 success against Windsor Eagles. Gary Cattermole won twice for the Eagles, whilst there was one apiece for Phil Smith and John Patrick.

Brotherhood B were too good for a weakened Brotherhood C, winning 8-2. Andy Warner stayed unbeaten, and Gracie Edwards and John Owen each took two each. The closest match was the doubles, Warner and Edwards beating Kevin Pryor and Abhi Peshkar 11-9 in the fifth. Peshkar won a couple for the losers whilst Pryor nearly sneaked a win, just going down 11-7 in the fifth to Owen.

Nomads Lions beat Windsor Hawks 9-1 but the scoreline fails to tell the full story of the match, the Hawks losing all five matches which went the distance. Ian Fielder went down 11-9 in the fifth to both Arran Hutchinson and Jason Lloyd, Elliott Attrill lost in five to both Hutchinson and Adam Cuthbert, whilst John Barton went down 11-6 in the fifth to Cuthbert. Hutchinson and Cuthbert both stayed unbeaten for the winners, with Lloyd taking two. Barton won the Hawks' point.

There was a similar scoreline and a similar story as Walton C defeated Windsor Kestrels 9-1. Peter Burrows and Paul Newbould remained unbeaten and Graham Buxton won two for the victors. But the Kestrels will rue the fact they lost all four matches which went the distance. Buxton beat Graham Bunce 11-5 in the fifth and Dave Martin 11-9 in the fifth, whilst Newbould was taken to five by both Bunce and John Harvey, scraping past Harvey 3-2 (5-11, 12-10, 9-11, 14-12, 14-12). Harvey was the Kestrels' point-winner.

Walton B's David Binns and Derek Willis took trebles in their side's 8-2 success against Brotherhood D. Colin Dearman won one and, although he lost to both Russell Hillier and Scott Campbell, he got a measure of revenge when, with Willis, he shared a close 11-7 in the fifth doubles victory against the two Brotherhood players.

Nomads Tigers kept up the pace in Division Two with a 9-1 victory over Windsor Buzzards. Pawel Szemro and the in-form Eric Lemke took hat-tricks with Daryl Lott winning a couple but losing out to Dan Malinowski. The closest match of the night saw Lemke beat Alan Rutledge 3-2 (6-11, 8-11, 11-8, 21-19, 11-5).

The Buzzards were also on the wrong end of a 7-3 scoreline against Brotherhood F. Lawrence Torr took a maximum for the winners, and Lee Allen and Sandie Krelle two each. Ray Chillingworth and Pete Bloomfield took singles wins for the Buzzards, whilst Bloomfield and Dan Malinowski defeated Allen and Krelle 11-8 in the decider in the doubles.

The all-Brotherhood encounter between the 'H' and 'I' teams ended in an honourable draw. Mark Salter and Mark Ratcliffe with two each, and Woody Fitzpatrick with one were the Brotherhood H scorers, whilst yet another Paul Alden hat-trick, one from Graham Parkes and an Alden-Parkes doubles victory were the points-scorers for the 'I' team.

Jared Chelski with his customary three and Daniel Young with two, plus their doubles win, saw Walton E home 6-4 against Windsor Magpies. For the Magpies, Ollie Rampton won two, including a tense 3-2 (5-11, 11-9, 5-11, 11-9, 11-7) victory over Young, whilst Dave Sweetland and Malcolm Caley both had close victories against Jane Young, Sweetland winning 7-11, 11-8, 11-8, 8-11, 11-8 and Caley having an even closer 9-11, 13-11, 7-11, 12-10, 13-11 success.

Walton D's all-male line-up drew with Brotherhood F in a match where every player picked up a point but no-one stayed unbeaten. In a match of surprise individual results, Rivhu Khan won two for Walton but then lost to Lee Allen – who also won twice, including an 11-7 in the fifth win over John Bonner, but then lost to John Long who took their match 11-7 in the fifth. Lawrence Torr won two but lost to Khan 11-5 in the fifth whilst Sandie Krelle beat Long but lost to Bonner 11-6 in the decider.

In Division Three leaders Brotherhood G were given a stern test by Nomads Pumas before winning 6-4, Paul Metcalf and Mark Beckham both taking two, and John Gallagher one. But none of them could get the better of Andrew Cousins who recorded a fine maximum for the Pumas which included a 12-10 in the decider victory over Beckham. Nomads' John Bowers contributed a hard-fought 3-2 (12-10, 8-11, 12-10, 10-12, 11-9) win over Gallagher whilst Pumas' skipper Lionel Goddard took the same player close before losing 11-7 in the fifth.

There was a hat-trick for Martin Cunningham of Nomads Ocelots, including a win over Dan Still, but Brotherhood

J came out 6-4 winners. Cunningham's hardest match was against Harley Wood, edging it 11-8 in the fifth, the same score by which his team-mate Dominic Joannou defeated Maci Harvey. Wood and Still won two each for Brotherhood, and Harvey one.

It was also 6-4 for Windsor Kites against Windsor Swallows but once again the hat-trick man was on the losing side, Robbie Strutt unbeaten for the Swallows. Chris Simson and Carl Hubbard won a couple each for the Kites, and Mick Simson one, whilst Ashley Ivell, making his League debut for the Swallows, celebrated with a 3-2 (6-11, 10-12, 11-7, 11-9, 11-8) victory over Mick Simson.

Windsor Penguins beat Nomads Leopard 9-1 with Paul Dale and Alan Charman unbeaten. Jackie Bunce won two, including a tight five-set (11-13, 8-11, 11-5, 16-14, 11-7) victory over Roger McNaughton, but she couldn't get the better of Stuart Wilkinson who took the Leopards' point in the final match of the evening.

RESULTS

Division One

Windsor Condors 3 Nomads Panthers 7

Windsor Eagles 4 Walton A 6

Brotherhood C 2 Brotherhood B 8

Nomads Lions 9 Windsor Hawks 1

Walton C 9 Windsor Kestrels 1

Brotherhood D 2 Walton B 8

Division Two

Windsor Buzzards 1 Nomads Tigers 9

Brotherhood F 7 Windsor Buzzards 3

Brotherhood H 5 Brotherhood I 5

Windsor Magpies 4 Walton E 6

Nomads Jaguars 3 Windsor Harriers 7

Walton D 5 Brotherhood F 5

Division Three

Nomads Leopards 1 Windsor Penguins 9

Nomads Caracals 1 Windsor Kites 9

Nomads Pumas 4 Brotherhood G 6

Windsor Kites 6 Windsor Swallows 4

Brotherhood J 6 Nomads Ocelots 4

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