

Derbyshire Squash Rackets Association

Press Release - 18 September 2007

Derbyshire Men's Leagues - 13 September 2007

Please see tables on <http://www.derbyshiresquash.co.uk>

Division 1

The likely top of the table clash between current champions Dragons and Hood park saw Dragons take the early season advantage with a close run 3-2 win. Dragons' no. 5 Mark Tomlinson and no. 2 Eddie Charlton were too good for Ian Duffy and John Freeman each recording 3-0 wins. James Hodson hit back for Hood Park with a tough 3-1 win over Greg Loach. The eagerly awaited clash between Dragons' Joel Hinds and Darren Lewis got underway just before 9.00pm and the match didn't finish until 10.45pm. These two have had some of the hardest and closest matches seen in the Derbyshire Leagues and this epic was no exception. Hinds, England No. 30, was quick out of the blocks taking the first 9-1 and followed it in commanding style by taking the second game 9-2. Hinds then surged ahead in the third and looked good to wrap up the match when he led 8-6, but he failed to convert several match balls. Lewis carried his new found momentum taking a close fourth 9-7, Hinds not getting on terms at any time. Hinds began the fifth more determined and Lewis quickly found himself on the back foot and down 7-1. However, Lewis is at his most dangerous when cornered and dug deep and played some excellent 'nicks' to take the next eight points, the fifth and the win 3-2. Hinds will need to discover a killer instinct to match his talents if he is to move up the England rankings. Meanwhile, Dragons' Karl Murray and Mick Worth were trying to emulate the no. 1s with a similarly swinging match, the Murray proving the fitter winning 3-2.

In what is likely to be a desperate scrap at the bottom of the table, Lumb Farm secured a crucial 3-2 win away from home at Division 1 newcomers Ashbourne. Barry Marshall and Sam Brown secured easy 3-0 wins over Ashbourne's lower order, but skipper Mike Herridge struck back with a 3-1 over Marcus Thomas to get Ashbourne back in the match. Ashbourne's Tom Machell scored a notable win over England O55 International Neil Nightingale, but only after he was 2-0 down. So it was down to Lumb Farm's Tom Gregory to secure the bonus points, but not after going 1-0 down. Gregory pulled his game together and cut out his error count to squeeze through each of the last three games.

Burton got off to a good start with a 3-2 win at home to Brampton Manor. Brampton's seasoned pro Jason Fearn won 3-0 at no. 5 and on the adjoining court Brampton recorded another win 3-1. However, Burton's top order proved too strong for Brampton including Burton's new no.1 James Bowden running out a comfortable 3-0 against Derbyshire County Captain Brendan Hickerman.

Meanwhile Duffield's title challenge stumbled at the first hurdle as they went down 2-3 away to Ilkeston Manor. Paul Hargrave's return to action was short lived as a muscle spasm in his back caused him to retire after winning the 1st game 9-3 against The Manor's young pro Adam Fuller. Jason Foster started his Duffield career with a resounding 3-0 win over The Manor's coach Jason Walsh at No. 2. Duffield's Andy Storer returned from last season's injury nightmare to beat Dave Stone 3-0 and The Manor's John Underhill was too strong for John Slater, 3-0. However, in what proved to be the deciding encounter at 5th string, Millie Tomlinson (Eng U17 No.2) put up a spirited challenge against The Manor's veteran campaigner Nigel Millington 3-1; the 4th game narrowly going to Millington 10-8 for a 3-1 win. Duffield will need to get their best players in action as soon as possible if they are to mount a serious challenge for the Derbyshire Men's League title.

Division 3

In perhaps the closest match of the season so far, Queens Park 1 scored an incredible win over Duffield 3. Queens' were 2-0 down very early, but Charles Noble and John Pearson, nos. 1 and 3, both recorded victories in their fifth games by the narrowest of margins 10-9. Almost as close was Rob Essef's win over England O45 Lesley Sturgess 9-7 in the 5th.

Individual Activity

Laura Hill gained a notable victory at the Wolverhampton Open, beating a much improved Sarah Kippax who, at no. 35, is ranked 19 places higher than Hill in the World. Hill began well hitting a good length to take the first 9-7, but lost her error count was too high and she lost the second 9-3. The third turned into a pitch battle with Kippax first to game ball, but Hill is very difficult to see off and she clawed her way back to 9-9 before Kippax chanced her luck with a couple of unlikely winners to go 2-1 up. In the fourth game, Kippax was again first to game ball, which also meant match ball, but could not capitalise as Hill regained her length and composure to edge through 10-9. The fifth was never in doubt as Hill ran out quickly to 9-1.

Hill's second round clearly showed her lack of match play, and although very fit her error count was far too high at this level. Having beaten Dominique Lloyd-Walter twice last year, Hill knew she was in with a good chance if she could extend the match to at least a fourth game. Lloyd-Walter was also aware of this and pushed very hard in the third to edge out Hill to take the match 9-4, 9-5, 10-8. A better start to the match could have proved too much for Lloyd-Walter and after some further matches in the British Open this week; Hill should be back to last season's consistency. Hill also travels to the Vassar Classic in New York at the end of September in search of more World ranking points.

For more information on the Wolverhampton Open please see
<http://www.squashsite.co.uk/wolverhampton2007.htm>

Joel Hinds (Eng No. 30) also competed in the qualifying rounds of Wolverhampton Open ironically playing and this time beating Darren Lewis 8/11 11/9 11/8 11/5. Hinds then lost out to Jon Harford 13/11 11/5 11/4. In today's qualifying rounds of the British Open, Hinds was knocked-out by World no. 40 and England no. 12 Stacey Ross.

For more information on the British Open please see
<http://www.britishopensquash.com/>

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Derbyshire Squash Rackets Association

Press Release - 02 October 2007

Derbyshire Men's Leagues - Round 2 - 27 September 2007

Please see tables on <http://www.derbyshiresquash.co.uk>

Division 1

Dragons recorded an important 5-0 win over The Manor, Ilkeston. The Manor had caused a major upset in the last match of the 06/07 season when they turned over Dragons 3-2, almost costing them the title. However, Greg Loach defeated a normally resilient Nick Hargreaves 3-0 and with dominant victories for Ryan Loska and Karl Murray, Dragons were then looking for maximum points. Joel Hinds (Eng No. 30) and Eddie Charlton duly obliged with wins over Adam Fuller and Jason Walsh respectively. Dragons now lead the table by 8 points over Brampton Manor.

Despite missing Paul Hargrave and Kevin White, Duffield scored all the points against a depleted Ashbourne side with all matches 3-0. At 1st string Jason Foster was too classy for Ashbourne's Mike Herridge and gives Duffield real strength in depth if they field a full strength side.

Hood Park also received maximum points in their match with Burton. John Freeman and Leon Armston ran out easy 3-0 winners, while Darren Lewis shared the first two games with Burton's No. 1 James Bowden, before asserting his class only conceding 2 more points. Hood's no. 3 James Hodson pulled off a notable 3-1 win over the talented Richard Davis, formerly Repton's No. 1.

Brampton Manor bagged a full 20 points, with a solid victory over early League leaders Lumb Farm. Brampton's No. 2 Phil Scully came from 2 games down against Tom Gregory to cap a good night's work for the Chesterfield club.

Division 3

Hood Park 3 and Queens Park 1 are in joint top spot of Division 3 and their clash later in the season will eagerly anticipated. Hood Park beat Burton 4 in a close 3-2 and were thankful to Jonathan Brooks' fine effort in coming back from 2-1 down to win the 4th 10-8 and then the 5th 9-7. Queens Park beat David Lloyd 4-1 but there were three matches that went to 5 games.

5th string Dave Yallop saved Duffield 3's blushes as Dragons 3 swept aside the top order, all 3-0. Draycott's Tony Rolley held off a late comeback from Rolls-Royce's Clive Lawrence-Forbes winning the 5th 9-6 to secure his team the bonus points.

Ladies League (Round 1)

Duffield and Ashbourne both recorded fine wins in the opening round of league matches. Duffield were comfortable winners against Rolls-Royce, although Tanya Charlton took Hilarie Warner to 5 games. Ashbourne were made to work a little harder by Bradley House's Julia Muzyka and Shiela Gilford pushing their opponents Edwina Edwards and Jane Mumby to 5 games. Burton began their campaign with a 4-1 victory over Trent Vale and with Sue Smith at 5th string could push Duffield and Ashbourne for the title.

Individual Activity

The popular Masters Series moved to Bury St Edmunds for the East of England Open where Derbyshire was well represented. Duffield duo Kevin White and Jason Foster, both looking for England Caps, were seeded 1 and 2 respectively in the O35 category. Both had byes in the first round and easy quarter-final matches. In the semi-finals White (pictured) took on English Open finalist and England regular Glen Ragou (Lancashire). At 5-5 in the first it looked like this was going to be a long night, but White was beginning to apply more pressure and Ragou error count mounted as he was run out of position. White wrapped up the opener 9-5 and the second went to White in a similar score line. White then showed good tournament play by quickly dispatching Ragou in the third.

Foster followed White on court against speed merchant Jamie Goodrich (Norfolk). On a racy, hot court Foster initially struggled to control the pace and went 0-1 down, before rallying to 1-1. Superb touch in the 3rd allowed Foster to ease away to 2-1, but the pace was high and Foster began to tire. Early in the 4th Foster seemed to be having trouble with an adductor muscle and decided to let the 4th slip by as a frantic Goodrich wound the pace up. Foster's tactics appeared to pay off as he calmly built up a 7-4 advantage in the 5th, but a crucial 'tin' on the backhand side gave a glimmer of hope to Goodrich. After a couple of fierce rallies Foster's movement became hampered by his injury and Goodrich took the game 9-7 and match. A little more fitness and Foster will surely secure an England place.



Kevin White

Dragons' Greg Loach got a better draw than in the English and British Opens and was at last able to show his pedigree in the O45s. 3rd seed Loach overcame a strong challenge from Mark Hurd (Dorest), but uncharacteristically squandered a match ball in the 3rd meaning he had to grind out a hard 4th game. Although it was always going to be a tough ask against former top 10 England player, Greg Pearman; not seeing off his earlier opponent quickly cost Loach dear as he went down 9-1, 9-3, 9-6.

Lumb Farm team mates Neil Nightingale and John Beastall have had contrasting starts to the season, with Nightingale reaching the semi-finals of the English and British Opens while Beastall has been recovering from a knee injury. Beastall won through his first round match, but was then up against No. 1 seed Howard Cherlin who proved too strong beating Beastall 3-0. However, it was good to see Beastall in action again and he showed encouraging levels of movement. Nightingale's likes to start at a fast pace and he quickly gained a 2-0 game advantage over Devon's Paul Smith. As the pace slowed, Smith gained the upper hand winning the 3rd 9-4 and just holding on to the 4th 9-7. The match was finely poised at 2-2, 6-6 and could have gone either way, but a late surge from Nightingale saw him home 9-6. Nightingale's quarter-final match took a similar pattern against O55 newcomer Paul Reader, but this time it was Reader who took the 5th, and he went on to take the title.

The Masters Series continues with the West of England Open at Swindon on 2-4th November. Full Master's coverage is on <http://www.englishsquashmasters.com/>

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