

## Derbyshire Squash Rackets Association

Press Release - 20 November 2007

### Derbyshire Men's Leagues 2 & 4 - Round 5 - 15 November 2007

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

#### **Division 2**

Dragons 2 maintained their 100% record with another determined display against Burton 2 running out 4-1 winners. Dave Taylor got Dragons off to a good start beating Vince Dolman 3-1, but super-fit Nigel Baker ran his opponent down for Burton's only win. The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> string matches could hardly have been closer. Paul Herrod's heroics against Duffield's 1<sup>st</sup> team last week obviously didn't concern Craig Simpson who recovered from 2-1 down to win the 4<sup>th</sup> 9-1 and then the deciding 5<sup>th</sup> 10-8 after saving a match ball. On the adjoining court, Dragon's Neil Thorpe had to dig deep into his reserves to hold off Tom Comb. The first two games were shared, but as Comb took the third 9-7 he looked to have the fitness advantage. The fourth see-sawed and as the game drew to its conclusion it was Comb who faltered losing it 9-7. Thorpe and Comb were locked point for point in the fifth, equally tired but equally determined. The pair traded match points until Comb was run out of position and Thorpe slotted home the winner to take the 5<sup>th</sup> 10-9. Lee Watson capped a good night's work for Dragons beating Adrian Murphy 3-0.

Repton took advantage of Burton 2 missed chances and moved above them into 4<sup>th</sup> place with a convincing 5-0 victory over The Manor 2. Tony Elder scored The Manor's only point taking the 2<sup>nd</sup> game off Simon Evans in an otherwise one sided encounter. The Manor 2 now slide behind Lumb Farm 2 at the foot of the table. Lumb Farm 2 picked up 4 points against 3<sup>rd</sup> placed Hood Park. Mick Burton and Nigel Storer both won 3-0, but Sam Brown struck back for Lumb Farm with a solid 3-0 defeat of Paul Sumpter. Barry Marshall failed to capitalise after taking the 1<sup>st</sup> 9-7, and had his chances in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> games, before Liam Flood won through to give Hood Park 17 points and keep them in touch just behind Duffield and Dragons. Duffield 2 edged a little closer to Dragons 2 when they took maximum points from Burton 3. Adam Armiger and Kyle McBride each won 3-1 and James Barry and Mitch Cook both 3-0. Burton's Doug Whitfield led Jack Blythe 2-0, until Blythe's pace got him out of trouble and to a handy 3-2 win.

#### **Division 4**

Dragons reinforced their lead at the top of Division 4 with an emphatic 5-0 victory over Burton 5. Garth Birtles, Keith Howard, Rob Sillet, John Holmes and Martin Edwards all won 3-0 to record a 20-0 points tally. Newly promoted Sandiarce are finding their feet well in Division 4 with an important 4-1 over Repton 2 that propels them into 2<sup>nd</sup> place at

the expense of their opponents. Andy Coring, Bill Murray and Bruce Skinner all won 3-0, while Stuart Lee held off Repton's Jeff Smith 3-9 9-4 10-8 5-9 9-1. It was left to Martin Allen to stave off a whitewash as he beat Eric Archibald 3-1. Rolls-Royce 2 was forced to cancel their match against Hood Park 4 due to flooded courts.

### Inter-Counties Championship

See <http://www.englandsquash.com/competitions/evitem.cfm?ID=6355>

#### **Men**

Derbyshire were dealt a double blow when first their No.1 and England No. 30 Joel Hinds pulled out due to a busy schedule and then Jason Foster withdrew through work commitments. The team, comprising the O35 side plus Matt Lowery at 2, knew their hopes of a top two finish for the promotion group was going to be a tough ask.

It was Nottingham first up and they too were also under-strength, but have vast player resources to call on. Charlie Wall did not trouble Jason Walsh losing 3-0, and with Richard Woodroofe also falling by the same scoreline to John Underhill Derbyshire were quickly 2-0 down. Kevin White looked in good form taking the first game off Duncan Walsh 9-4, and looked set to take the second when Walsh retired. White was clearly disappointed to miss out on a win a 1st string. Matt Lowery looked in holiday mode in his first two games until Mark Fuller appeared to pull up lame. Fuller played on as Lowery took the 3<sup>rd</sup> 9-0 then levelled with the 4<sup>th</sup> 9-1, but Fuller was showing signs of recovery. The 5<sup>th</sup> was a real ding-dong battle including the longest rally of the weekend where Lowery had to play 4 consecutive back-wall boasts, before Fuller put the ball away. At 6-6 it looked like it could go either way, but the earlier mammoth rally began to tell as Lowery made some crucial errors; game to Fuller 9-6 and with it Nottingham beat Derbyshire. Brendan Hickerman took on practise partner Matthew Oxley, but the Ox was in no mood to practise and took full advantage of the slow courts to beat Hickerman 3-0. In the other match, Leinster's talent lower order proved too strong for Leicestershire in a 4-1 win, Darren Lewis (WR131) was Leicester's only winner beating Arthur Gaskin (WR139) 3-1.

On Saturday p.m. Derbyshire took on Leicestershire and on paper looked to have a chance to sneak a win. Charlie Wall looked much improved as he fought back from 2-0 down to level with Gary Bagley, but seemed to falter at 5-0 in the 5<sup>th</sup> and Bagley ran out a 9-6 winner. County Captain Brendan Hickerman was really out of sorts against James Hodson on the even slower outside courts, losing 0-9 7-9 0-9. Richard Woodroofe started well taking the 1<sup>st</sup> 9-5, but then fell away badly to Paul Stroud. Kevin White was outplayed by Darren Lewis (WR131), but Matt Lowery had recovered well and was too strong for John

Freeman. It was good to see 8 out of 10 of the players in this tie currently play in the Derbyshire Leagues.

Sunday morning and Derbyshire had only amassed 11 points meaning that there was only a mathematical chance of staving off the relegation group. Greg Loach came in for Charlie Wall, and was unlucky not to take the 1<sup>st</sup> game, was out of the 2<sup>nd</sup> game, fought well to take the 3<sup>rd</sup> 9-6, but couldn't keep the pressure on in the 4<sup>th</sup>. Brendan Hickerman much improved from Saturday's performances to share the first two games and then took the 3<sup>rd</sup> 10-9. The Leinster 3<sup>rd</sup> string began to move Hickerman around the court with some precision boasts, taking the 4<sup>th</sup> 9-2 and the 5<sup>th</sup> 9-4. Kevin White also shared the first two games, both 10-8, with Arthur Gaskin, but White's error count was far too high as the Leinster man stepped up the pace in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> games. Matt Lowery again proved tough to beat, but lost out 3-1.

### Ladies

The Derbyshire Women's team had a tough weekend at Pontefract in the Premier Division of the British Inter-County Championships, playing the top teams in England from Yorkshire, Lancashire and Merseyside. The usual Roses rivalry meant the two teams putting out their full squads. Yorkshire included England No.2 Jenny Duncalf, whilst Lancashire sported Laura Lengthorn-Massaró the England No. 4. Saturday morning saw Derbyshire take on the ominously strong Yorkshire team. A ray of light for Derbyshire was Millie Tomlinson (England U17 No.3) force O35 National Champion Claire Walker to a fifth game where she narrowly lost.

The Saturday afternoon against Lancashire was almost as hard, as the team lost 4-1, the only win coming from another Derbyshire Junior, Nicole Walters (pictured). The rest of the team Laura Hill (Eng No 7), Jenny Knibbs, Millie Tomlinson, and Lesley Sturgess put up a good fight, but struggled with their opponent's strength in depth. However, Derbyshire were certainly not down and completely out as they beat Merseyside 4-1 on Sunday morning to finish 3<sup>rd</sup> overall.



## Racketball

The Manor 2 lead the inaugural Derbyshire Racketball League, but they are closely followed by Brampton Manor and The Manor 1 who each have a game in hand. Racketball is proving a very popular game and is played on a squash court, using shorter rackets and a larger bouncier ball. Derbyshire have rich vein of Racketball talent and already compete in the Inter-Counties Championship and boast Laura Hill and Lesley Sturgess as current National Ladies Champion and O45 Ladies Champion respectively. The Manor's Nigel Millington has also been National O45 Champion and Dragon's Lee Watson was a finalist in the O40s category last year.

The Manor 1 launched their bid to top the table with a very narrow away win over Duffield 2. Duffield Club President Russell Moore was too canny for Paul Oldham and Andy Bird too persistent for Andy Rolston as they each won 3-0. In this 4-a-side format two 3-0 wins usually means certain victory, but Dave Hudson and Jason Walsh struck back for the Manor to equal Duffield's early brace of wins. With the match score 2-2 and the games for and against also equal it was calculators out to see which team had won the most number of rallies - The Manor pipping Duffield 144-138 and scooping the bonus points. Brampton Manor pegged back The Manor 2 in a 4-0 win when Matt Jones and Russell Adams both won through 3-2. Malc Bramley and Sue Nash completed Brampton's 4-0 win. David Lloyd also slithered through on count-back against The Manor 3. At 2-2 Lloyds had managed to win one more game, courtesy of Hanna Legg pinching the second game 12-11 from Chris Charlton. Had there been a points count-back the Manor would have won 120-118.

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