

# Derbyshire Squash Rackets Association

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<http://www.derbyshiresquash.co.uk>

## Derbyshire County Championships

The County Championships were held at LA Fitness last weekend despite a low number of entries. It has been reported that both Nottinghamshire and Surrey cancelled their domestic event though lack of entries.

In the **Men's O55** event, Alan Hagger proved he had recovered well from a hamstring injury to beat Ray Patrick in the semi-finals. Hagger took the 1<sup>st</sup> easily and the second 10-8 which looked to be decisive as Patrick was suffering from a virus. However, Patrick wasn't done and began to find a better length, sweeping through the next two 9-3, 9-0. The 5<sup>th</sup> looked a formality for Patrick with momentum on his side, but Hagger seized the initiative early on forcing Patrick to chase down several long rallies. Hagger reached match point at 8-6, but the two exchanged serves several times before Hagger finally secured victory.

No.1 seed, John Beastall was in supreme form, dispatching semi-finalist Jonathan Brooks 9-6 9-4 9-2. In the final, Beastall made his powerful game tell exacting a good length to stretch Hagger front and back. Beastall went on to win 9-2 9-0 9-5.



John Beastall O55 Champion

In the **Men's O45** event England hopeful and LA Fitness stalwart Greg Loach took the title without losing a game. The pick of the matches was the semi-final between LA Fitness team mates Mike Lambert and 2<sup>nd</sup> seed Lee Watson. Lambert imposed his power on the tie taking the 1<sup>st</sup> 9-5 and a tough 2<sup>nd</sup> 9-7 which could have gone either way. In the 3<sup>rd</sup>, Watson's accurate boast began to draw the sting from Lambert and he began to dominate the 'T' winning 9-4. The 4<sup>th</sup> went quickly once Watson had established a lead with Lambert looking to regroup in the 5<sup>th</sup>. Lambert piled on the power early on to get Watson off the T and took an early lead, Watson hung on and the two matched each other to 6-6, but the ball ran Lambert's way as he took the 5<sup>th</sup> 9-6 and the match with it.

In the final, Lambert came fast out of the blocks and took a 6-3 lead before Loach began to read the game and work Lambert around the court. Loach dropped his error count and retrieved some of Lambert's finest shots to take the 1<sup>st</sup> 9-6, before wrapping up the match 9-4 9-1.



Greg Loach Men's O45 Champion

The **Men's Main and O35** events were played as a double-header between Duffield and England's Kevin White and Brampton Manor's Brendan Hickerman, the County Captain.

White had looked a little shaky in the opening round of the O35's when Paul Howell succeeded in ambushing White on an outside court, taking the first game 9-7 with some sparking volleys. White ground this match out 3-1, but again found himself behind in the semi-final of the Main event as shot-maker Tom Gregory anticipated well to take a 6-0 lead in the 1st. White managed to extract some pressure and control just in time to win the opener 9-6, and once in his stride he collected the next two 9-1 9-0.

Meanwhile Hickerman was cutting through his opponents with his express pace losing only 2 points to Kyle McBride and then 5 points to Matt Whitehead in the semi-final.

Hickerman began the final as he had ended the semi, screaming to a 6-2 lead. White was in determined mood in this the 50<sup>th</sup> year of the Men's County Championship and began to dominate the T, picking up Hickerman's tight backhand drop shots. The rallies were long, fast and hard fought with the added incentive of both titles up for grabs. To the casual observer it may have been difficult to pick who was on top, but White was almost error free and once on level terms at 6-6 eased home 9-6. The next two went White's way 9-1 9-0, but again the rallies were close and the serve changed hands frequently, but Hickerman was unable to piece together a run of points which might have applied more pressure.

White had taken his 4<sup>th</sup> Men's and 3<sup>rd</sup> O35 title, not quite emulating his father, John White MBE, who has 13 and 1 titles respectively.

The **Ladies Final** was between the current holder Laura Hill (Eng No. 7) and Millie Tomlinson (Eng U17 No.2) both of Duffield SC. Hill was in generous mood extending the rallies to allow Tomlinson some valuable court time. This was a repeat of last year's final, and clearly Tomlinson has made significant improvement since then. She is beginning to strike the ball more crisply and hitting a better length to support her excellent

movement around the court. Hill cruised through to a 9-5 9-4 9-5 win, picking up her 5<sup>th</sup> title.



Kevin White, Laura Hill & Lee Watson (organiser)

The **Men's Plate Event** turned out to be the closest match with Lumb Farm's Sam Brown coming back from 2-0 down to beat Duffield's Kyle McBride 3-2.

### Derbyshire Men's Leagues 2<sup>nd</sup> Half

#### **Division 2**

Duffield 2 extended their lead over LA Fitness to 7 points with a comprehensive 20-0 defeat of The Manor 2. Don Davis managed a game point against Jack Blythe, but otherwise the Duffield players were too strong for the Manor.

LA Fitness 2 kept in contact with Duffield 2 as they beat Lumb Farm 2 3-2. There were

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two notable wins for Lumb Farm's Sam Brown who beat Neil Thorpe 3-2 and Barry Marshall who rolled back the years with a cracking victory over Lee Watson 3-9 9-4 9-0 2-9 9-4.

Adrian Murphy was the only winner for Burton 2 in their tie with promotion hopefuls Repton. Murphy recorded a 9-2 9-2 9-7 victory over Ben Smith at No. 1. However, Repton's engine room purred with 3-0 wins from Simon Price, Adrian Oldbury, Simon Evans and John Kirtland.

#### **Division 4**

LA Fitness 4 powered to another 20 points over Rolls-Royce to keep ahead of the chasing pack. Clive Lawrence-Forbes let a 2-1 advantage slip as Dave Taylor didn't want to be LA Fitness' only loser.

Sandiacre's promotion push came off the rails as they lost to Duffield 4 3-2. John Ockenden beat Keith Elson 3-2 and Bill Murray beat Paul Harrison by the same score, but Duffield piled on a 18-6 points scoreline.

Burton 5 beat Repton 2 to equal 3<sup>rd</sup> from bottom RR2 and Brampton 2 beat Hood Park 4 by a sizable points margin - 20-3.