

Derbyshire Squash Rackets Association

Press Release - 19 February 2008

For more details about Squash in Derbyshire see: <http://www.derbyshiresquash.co.uk>

Men's O35 Inter County Finals 2007/8 - 23/24 February at Duffield SC. Semi-final 11:00 Sat vs Middlesex; Finals 11:00 Sun Kent/Durham. Spectators welcome

Racketball National Championships 23-25th May 2008 at Edgbaston Priory, B'ham.

Derbyshire Men's Leagues Round 10

Division 2

The top of the table clash saw youth prevail over experience as **Duffield 2's** young guns out shot **LA Fitness 2** in a hard fought duel. Millie Tomlinson's good run of results in the 1st team didn't put LA's Craig Simpson off as he exploited his long reach winning 3-9 7-9 6-9. Adam Armiger replied for Duffield beating Mike Lambert 3-2. Armiger looked too quick for Lambert in the first game 9-3, but Lambert steadied his game and found a good width to negate Armiger's speed and took the next two 5-9 5-9. Armiger upped the pace and drove Lambert in to the back corners and forcing mistakes, game 9-6. The final game saw Lambert take an early lead, but he was clearly tiring. Armiger sensed the opportunity and forced his way ahead, Lambert held on bravely at 8-7 and has his chance to level, but a mistake let Armiger through 9-7.

Jack Blythe wasn't to know that his match would decide the tie and his recent good form and some 1st team experience were certainly fully utilised. LA's Neil Thorpe took the 1st game 9-2 with ease as he moved Blythe out of position numerous times.

Blythe seemed oblivious to the importance of the 2nd game pulling off several risky, but lucrative shots to sneak through 10-9. The tables were turned in the 3rd as Thorpe this time took the extended game 8-10. Blythe then put together some impressive squash as took the next two 9-5 9-5, giving Duffield the lead 2-1. LA's Lee Watson had just the required game to control the rallies against Kyle McBride, who could only loosen the 3rd game going down 6-9 7-9 9-6 2-9 to Watson. With the match at 2-2 LA had to hope Mark Tomlinson long lay-off hadn't caused too much rust. However, Mitchell Cook's booming drives and excellent eye for the ball proved far too good for Tomlinson in a straightforward 9-1 9-2 9-3 victory for the Duffield man. Duffield now lead LA Fitness by 11 points.

Home side **Hood Park 2** fielded a full strength team and although they secured 18 points it was far from easy against a **Repton** side still with an outside chance of promotion. Repton's John Kirtland continued his fine form this season with gritty 3-2 win over Pete Wood. Wood had taken a 2-1 lead, but Kirtland's much improved fitness saw him slither through the next two 7-9 7-9. Mick Burton levelled

for Hood Park beating Simon Evans 9-6 9-5 9-1 and then Paul Sumpter overcame Adrian Oldbury 9-6 9-5 9-5. Repton's Simon Price also continued to show improvement with a good 3-2 win over Ian Duffy and perhaps he should have closed the match out in the 3rd rather than waiting until the 5th, the final score being 5-9 3-9 9-6 9-5 2-9.

Burton 3 moved further away from the relegation drop zone as they defeated **The Manor 2** 4-1 who are rooted to the foot of the table. Paul Morris, Doug Whitfield, Colin Morris and Greg Watkins all recorded 3-0 wins. Andy Hardy struck back for The Manor beating Matthew Maclachlan 5-9 2-9 7-9.

Burton 2 did their 3rd team a big favour as they beat 2nd from bottom team **Lumb Farm 2** 4-1. Dave Elliot had a match ball in the 4th game against Paul Brown, but gathered himself to take the 5th and get Burton 2 off to a good start. Aide Elks hit back for Lumb Farm 2 beating Jason Toogood 3-1, but Vince Dolman clung on to his first match point to take the setted 5th game against Steve Grainger. Sid College fought hard for Lumb Farm, but Jason Harper was too strong in the 5th running out a 9-5 2-9 2-9 9-5 1-9 winner. Tom Comb wrapped up the evening for Burton beating Barry Marshall 3-0.

Division 4

LA Fitness 4 won the top of the table clash with **Duffield 4** 3-2 and appear to have taken an unassailable lead 28 point lead. Martin Allen and Dave Yallop were Duffield's winner and Rob Sillett and Martin Edwards equalled the score for LA. The

crunch match was the no.3 between LA's John Holmes and Simon Law. Law lost the first 10-9, but powered through the next two 4-9 5-9 to take the advantage. Holmes managed to hold off Law in the early part of the 4th game and had begun to make Law work the corners. Holmes took the 4th 9-6 and with Law tiring he was able to breeze through the 5th 9-2 to seal the bonus points for LA Fitness.

Sandiacre still hold a slim chance of promotion after beating **Brampton Manor 2** but are 23 points behind Duffield 4. Andy Coring opened Sandiacre's account beating Andy Wilson 3-2 and John Ockenden took them 2-0 up. Stuart Lee beat John Plummer 3-1 to give the bonus points to Sandiacre, but then Jono Lovegrove bravely setted 1, giving Eric Archibald a match point, but bravely won the key point to take the match 9-6,9-5,7-9,6-9,8-9. David Harrison was 2-0 up against to Brampton's Steve Barker, but the Chesterfield man pulled the 3rd back 9-7 saved a couple of match balls winning the 4th 10-9 and finally punished his opponent taking the 5th game 9-0.

Division 2	P	W	L	D	F	A	Pts.
<u>Duffield 2</u>	10	9	1	0	176	61	176
<u>LA Fitness 2</u>	10	8	2	0	165	77	165
<u>Hood Park 2</u>	10	8	2	0	145	98	145
<u>Repton 1</u>	10	5	5	0	123	110	123
<u>Burton 2</u>	10	4	6	0	112	136	112
<u>Burton 3</u>	10	2	8	0	103	153	103
<u>Lumb Farm 2</u>	10	3	7	0	87	155	87
<u>The Manor 2</u>	10	1	9	0	55	176	55

Division 4	P	W	L	D	F	A	Pts.
<u>LA Fitness) 4</u>	10	9	1	0	180	38	180
<u>Duffield 4</u>	10	8	2	0	152	88	152
<u>Sandiacre</u>	10	6	4	0	129	109	129
<u>Rolls-Royce 2</u>	10	4	6	0	105	132	105
<u>Repton 2</u>	9	4	5	0	104	107	104
<u>Brampton M'r 2</u>	10	3	7	0	105	137	105
<u>Burton 5</u>	10	3	7	0	78	158	78
<u>Hood Park 4</u>	9	2	7	0	63	147	63

National Championships 10-17 February
<http://www.nationalsquashchamps.co.uk/>

Ladies

Laura Hill (Eng No.8) was looking forward to playing defending champion Jenny Duncalf (Eng No.3 WR9) in the opening round, however, the withdrawal of No.3 seed Vicky Botright meant a redraw and Hill found herself playing Alison Waters the World No. 11. Undeterred and recovering from a virus, Hill got off to a slow start and was 2-0 down in the first game before she started hitting her trademark lengths. Point-a-rally to 11 scoring was being tried for the ladies for the first time and in a game like this one the score soon got around the crucial points. Hill was first to 10 leading her opponent by a point. A miss directed serve gave parity to the under pressure Waters, but Hill forced an error off a tight drive and then punished a loose drive from Waters to take the first game. News of a possible upset swelled the crowds. The England coaches gathered round their protégé and she seemed more relaxed in the 2nd and once ahead began to play some impressive cross-

court kills. The 3rd game was nip-n-tuck and with Hill serving at 7-8 had Waters' again looking tight, but a mistake from Hill and two brave winners landed Waters the game. Hill looked drained and Waters capitalised quickly taking the 4th to win the match 10-12 11-4 11-7 11-4. Waters was in good form and a the two time finalist went on to beat Jenny Duncalf in the semi-finals and then Laura Lengthorn-Massaró in the final to give her a first National Championship.



Laura Hill (WR 45) v Alison Waters (WR 11)
 (Photo courtesy of www.squashsite.co.uk)

(Previously reported) Millie Tomlinson (Eng U17 No.2) had a tough time in the top flight and her tournament was cut short in the qualifying round by Durham's Katie Burgin, but showed plenty of spirit and seriously troubled her more experienced opponent. Tomlinson just missed out in the first and fourth games, but managed to take the 3rd to extend the match; the eventual score 10-12 11-4 7-11 9-11.

Men

(Previously reported) The Men's Qualifying event has finished and Derbyshire have their first entrant to the main draw for almost a decade as Joel Hinds first beat Sam Wileman 11/5, 11/5, 11/4 in 21 minutes and went on to beat one of the top England U19s, Joe Lee, 14/12, 11/5, 5/11, 9/11, 11/6 in 81 minutes.

Hinds then had the rather stiff task of playing 8 times finalist and No.2 seed Lee Beachill from Pontefract in Yorkshire. Hinds seemed to be in most of the rallies, but it only takes one loose shot for Beachill to find an impeccable line and length winner. Hinds rallied well in the third and made Beachill work for the third game, but the Yorkshire man limpet like drives and decisive shot play proved too good as he went through 11/3, 11/3, 11/7.

Masters

O35s - Kevin White's first opponent was Masters Tournament regular Darren Gray and on paper shouldn't have been too much trouble for the England Captain. However, Gray leapt to a 6-1 lead in the 1st game and was undeterred as White forced his way to game points, as Gray hitting some sparking winners to take the 1st 10-9. White then began to find his range and the pressure told on Gray as the next he ran through the next three games 9-4 9-2 9-1. White's next opponent was title holder and former World top 10 star Nick Taylor. White was in good form and full of running, but Taylor's ultra-precise shot making and home courts made points very hard to come by. The match lasted 40 minutes, but White could only

winkle 6 points from his erstwhile opponent; the final score 9-4 9-1 9-1.

Jason Foster was seeded to play Alex Gough the No. 1 seed and still in the World's top 20, however, Oxford's Jason Martin stood in the way. Martin meant business and looked sharp as he took the opener in some style. Foster already looked tired, but tightened his game to take the 2nd. Martin piled on the pressure with some delicate drops and excellent retrieving to take a 2-1 lead. In a see-saw 4th game both players had the lead several times, but at last Martin held match point, in fact 4, but each time Foster put in some a gutsy rally and eventually levelled at 8-8. Foster's serve found a dead nick and then Martin ploughed the ball into the tin for the match to go into the 5th. As the hour mark passed the 5th game edged along and was deadlocked at 7-7, both players exhausted, when the ball burst. The new ball was much livelier and Martin took full advantage winning the first two rallies of the restart. The squash wasn't pretty but there was some seriously hard rallies, Martin winning out 9-1 4-9 9-5 8-10 9-7.

However, the right to represent England is a season long quest and one that Foster fully deserved as he joins his club team mate Kevin White. The O35 Home Internationals will be played on 16/17th May in Scotland.

O45s - Greg Loach had an excellent National Championships reaching the semi-finals. Loach got his eye in on the difficult Manchester Squash Academy courts with an easy win over Mark Brennan (Surrey) (-3 9-

0 9-0. Avon's Mark Taylor was also blown away 9-5 9-2 9-2 as Loach began to concentrate on his next round match against the 3/4 seed James Ockwell in the quarters.

During the Master's Series of Tournaments Loach had won one and lost one to Ockwell and so this encounter had some extra meaning. Loach started very impressively keeping the ball tight and running down Ockwell's best shots. Loach took the 1st game 9-4, played impeccable squash in the 2nd to take that 9-1 and then surged ahead first to 8-4 match ball. Ockwell is a fighter and denied Loach his first match ball and slowly managed to wrest the initiative away from Loach. Loach had three more match balls in the third, but couldn't put Ockwell away. Ockwell won the nail-biting 3rd 10-9 and quickly went 7-2 ahead. Loach didn't like the idea of a 5th game and from somewhere got a second wind. Back to tight length and with some inch perfect boasts Loach levelled at 7-7 and then retrieving all manner of good shots finally clinched the game 9-7 and match.

Loach's next opponent was Phil Whitlock who won the Main Men's event some 15 years earlier and has subsequently picked up both O35 and O40 category titles. Whitlock's great speed and accuracy belied an O45 and he would not have looked out of place in the O35s. Whitlock was simply too good for Loach (9-1 9-2 9-2) and went on to win the title beating Greg Pearman 10-9 9-0 9-1.

A great effort from Greg Loach and one that has ensured his first England O45 cap.



Greg Loach

O55s - Neil Nightingale was also happy to receive his second England call up, but has had a relatively poor run of results in the last few tournaments including the Nationals. Nightingale fought hard for just over an hour but eventually lost out Yorkshire's Mark Thompson 9-6 5-9 10-8 6-9 9-2. John Beastall also exited the Championship at the same stage losing to Cheshire's Mick Broomhall 10-8 9-2 9-3.

O70s - John White MBE made a brief return to the court after an 8 year absence, but he incurred several injuries in practise and was unable to trouble defending champion and this years losing finalist John Woodliffe.

Ladies O45s - Defending champion Lesley Sturgess had a poor draw, having a first round match against no.1 seed Victoria King. Sturgess post match comment "that wasn't a bad final" probably summed up her tournament as she went down 9-6 0-9 9-7 9-7.

Kevin White DSRA Chairman
Kevin@derbyshiresquash.co.uk