

Derbyshire Squash Rackets Association

Press Release - 12 March 2008

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County Knock-Out Cup - semi-finals and finals at LA Fitness on 11/12 April.

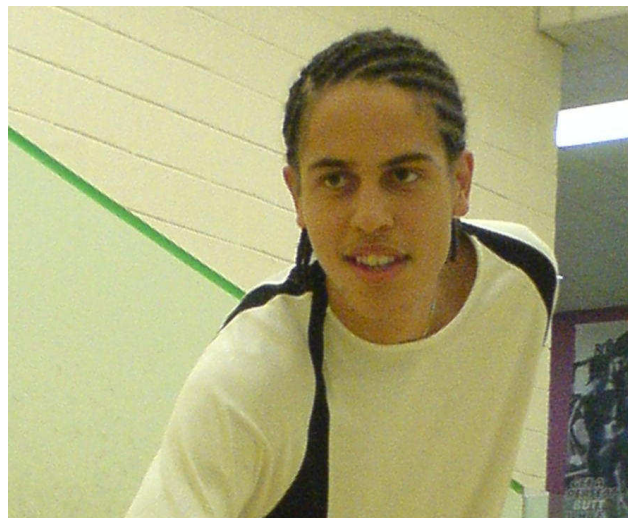
UK Inter-County Matches (Stage 2)

Derbyshire Men (Division One North Relegation Group). Derbyshire were without Joel Hinds and Jason Foster in the Stage 1 weekend last November and came last out of Nottingham, Leinster and Leicester. However, England No. 30 Joel Hinds and England O35 Jason Foster were both present and would more than make up for the absence of Kevin White in this important relegation battle.

Ulster were their first opponents and Derbyshire got off to a great start as Phil Scully won what was to be a decisive 3rd game 10-9 to then go on to win 3-1. Greg Loach made it 2-0 with a commanding 9-6 9-1 9-2 win over Neil Martin. Joel Hinds and Jason Foster were each in excellent touch winning 3-1 and 3-0 respectively. Playing at No. 2, Captain Brendan Hickerman couldn't quite seal a 5-0 victory as he just fell short against Ireland O35 David Ayerst 10-9 6-9 7-9 9-2 5-9.

Derbyshire virtually secured their position in Division 1 North next season with an excellent 4-1 win over Merseyside. Phil Scully once again played exceptionally well beating Nick Mann 9-0 9-1 9-3. Murray Scott took a while to get

going, but won the 4th and 5th with ease as he beat Fraser Eaton 0-9 9-6 5-9 9-2 9-1. Jason Foster and Joel Hinds looked like they were racing each other to win the tie for Derbyshire, Hinds edging Foster out with a dominating 9-1 9-4 9-1 win over Olly Pickering, while Foster beat Ian Thomason in an equally impressive display of racket-work 9-2 9-5 9-0. Again it was the skipper, normally at his best for the County, who was unable to clinch a 5-0 win; going down to Mark Thomason 9-1 3-9 1-9 3-9.



Joel Hinds presence turned Derbyshire into a winning side

Derbyshire were all but mathematically safe, and early on in the Sunday round of matches Ulster were unable to score enough points to overtake Derbyshire. This was just as well as Joel Hinds, Murray Scott and Greg Loach were all

unavailable. Leicestershire proved too strong although Jason Fearn saved two match balls in the 3rd before going down 3-2, Brendan Hickerman led Darren Lewis 2-0 before Lewis got into top gear and Jason Foster was forced to retire when 1-0 and 3-0 up.

Derbyshire's Ladies (Division 1 North Relegation Group). Derbyshire Ladies also had had a tough weekend last November, at Pontefract, in Stage 1 of the Premier Division of the British Inter-County Championships, playing the top teams in England from Yorkshire, Lancashire and Merseyside. However, unavailability of key players meant they were to fight for survival in the relegation group, last weekend.

Again the team struggled with 4 of their top players out through injury and unavailability in the Inter County Premier Relegation event held at Duffield Squash Club. With Laura Hill, Millie Tomlinson, Jenny Knibbs and Hannah Rees all unavailable to play, it was left to the mother and daughter team of Lesley Sturgess and Nicole Walters to hold the fort and battle ahead against strong opposition from Nottinghamshire, Merseyside and Kent.

With Carol Wood and Hannah Blythe, making up the rest of the team, and supporting acts from Naomi Hardy, Donna Jackson and Wendy Lowe, Derbyshire managed to get 5 players out and battled hard.

Lesley pulled out all the stops and win her first match against the number 1 from Kent 3-0 giving Derbyshire some hope and valuable points. However that was to be our only win, as Derbyshire lost to Kent 4-1, and both Merseyside and Nottinghamshire 5-0.



Lesley Sturgess
Grabbed Derbyshire's only win

It was a great effort from all the players who turned out to help out the team and valuable experience for the junior and club players playing at senior county level first time.

Derbyshire's O55s (Division One North Relegation Group). Derbyshire were a little unlucky not to be playing in the promotion group after narrowly losing to Yorkshire 3-2 and Merseyside by the same score, agonisingly so as Tony Robinson was unable to convert two match balls. So, the team travelled to Liverpool to compete against Merseyside, Warwickshire and Leicestershire. The first match turned into a really tough battle against Warwickshire. First on court for Derbyshire were Tony Robinson

and Alan Hagger, who both gave captain John Beastall palpitations as he watched these tight matches unfold. Robinson cruised into the lead winning the first two games in full control only to lose the next two. Fortunately, Robinson was able to regain his focus taking the last game with some ease. Hagger's game also went all the way to 5 games, but this time it was the Warwicks man who breezed through the 5th, reaching 8-1 match ball. However, Hagger refused to lie down and began chipping away at the lead and despite numerous match points brought the scores level first to 8-8, then 9-9 and final edged home 10-9 much to the huge relief and delight of Beastall. England O55 star Neil Nightingale secured the overall win for Derbyshire in a very tense five setter despite Neil picking up a back injury during the game.



Neil Nightingale

The second match on Saturday was against Leicester with a Derbyshire team consisting of Neil Nightingale, John Beastall, Tony Robinson, Adrian Shepherd and Alan Hagger. The Derbyshire boys were far too strong throughout the order

and each player won securing a very welcome 20 points.

With two wins under their belts Derbyshire moved forward to the Sunday morning match against Merseyside who had cruised through their own Saturday matches. Neil, Tony and Alan were unfortunately unavailable for the Sunday morning. Players drafted in to keep the Derbyshire flag flying were Harry Winfield, Ray Patrick and Jonathon Brooks. Derbyshire knew exactly what it had to do to secure a top two position for the weekend with Warwickshire hot on their heels. Under the circumstances a win against Merseyside was unlikely but the captain reminded every player how important it was to go for as many points as possible to hold off Warwickshire's challenge who were playing a fairly weak Leicester side. Everyone played their part, but Adrian Shepherd and Jonathon Brooks, first on court, were in very determined mood and secured sufficient points to keep Warwickshire at bay and take the runners up spot behind Merseyside. Leicestershire were fourth. Derbyshire remain in Division 1 North next season.

Derbyshire Men's Leagues Round 12

Division 1

LA Fitness were once again at their most ruthless as they dispatched Lumb Farm 5-0. This win takes them within just 2 points of the County title with two matches remaining.

Against Lumb Farm, Craig Simpson found a much improved Sam Brown hard to put down and after losing the first game 5-9 was more than happy to win the 2nd 10-8, the 3rd and 4th games also narrowly going his way 9-7 9-6. Lee Watson suppressed a spirited fight-back from John Beastall 9-1 9-6 10-8, but otherwise LA Fitness were untroubled and the top three only conceded 7 points between them.

A four-man Burton 1 just managed to hold off Duffield 1 who were effectively fielding a 2nd team as their top five were all unavailable. At 4th string Jason Harper won the first game against Chris Burn who had called 'set-one' at 8-8; lost the next two games, but won the 4th game after Burn had again 'set-one'. After having a couple of match points in the 4th, Burn was a little shell-shocked and Harper wrapped the match up 9-8 4-9 3-9 9-8 9-0. Carl Timms won through a very close 3-1 with Adam Armiger, both players winning the same number of points. Rich Davis made a game of things with Jack Blythe, who is starting to show signs of improvement, winning 3-2. Blythe's gambling was better executed than Burn's as he won his two games when calling 'set-one'. Davis showed Blythe who's boss in the 5th the final score being

8-9 9-4 9-3 8-9 9-0. Phil Brailsford was on the receiving end of Mitch Cook's welcome return to top form going down 2-9 5-9 2-9 to the Duffield maestro.

Ashbourne put up a spirited fight against Brampton Manor, losing 1-4. Although Neil Cuthbert, David Taylor and Grant Nicholson all lost 3-0 they each had game balls to extend their matches. Tom Machell excelled however, taking a notable scalp of Brampton's pro Jason Fearn in a hard fought 9-6 9-5 7-9 10-8 win. Mike Herridge was unable to make much of an impression against the nimble footed Brendan Hickerman.

The Manor avenged their defeat at Hood Park in the first round with a well earned 3-2 victory further securing at least 3rd place. However, they are unlikely to catch Hood Park being 21 points behind.

Division 3

Draycott were given a scare at David Lloyd as Hanna and Guy Legg gave the home side a great start. Hannah Legg showed her class beating Steve Reeves 3-0, while Guy had to be far more persistent in overcoming Dave Bott 10-9 5-9 6-9 9-7 9-5. Martin Bostock got things back on track for the league leaders beating Matt Stone 3-1. Pete Slowakowski and Martin Rose both recorded 3-0 wins to seal the victory for promotion certainties Draycott.

Duffield 3 had few problems overcoming Burton 4 dropping only 3 games, Clive Watson causing Lesley Sturgess some problems and having a chance of taking

their match to a 5th, until Sturgess put a string of good rallies together to win the 4th 10-9.

Rolls-Royce looked purposeful against LA Fitness 3 as they continue to chase Queens Park for the second promotion spot. Dave Langley took an early 2-0 lead only to see that quickly disappear as Gareth Birtles ramped up his game to force a 5th. Birtles led at 7-6, but Langley dug deep to win the 5th and with Ian Rigby beating Dave Taylor 3-1, RR were off to a good start. Chris Murray found Ian Mackinnon in fine form and was duly dispatched 7-9 1-9 4-9. Cliff Ransom had clearly been watching Dave Langley and his match against Paul Howell was a near replay as the RR man won 9-4 9-3 6-9 4-9 10-8. Fitz Hays was stung into life as Steve Hossent took the second game, Hays powering through the last two games in some style 9-6 3-9 9-1 9-0.

Division 5

The bottom of the table clash saw Belper consigned to the foot of the table by Repton 3 and now have little chance of escape. Repton 3 were given an early lift as Roy Muzyka edging out Donna Jackson 9-5 3-9 9-10 8-10. Alec Cheyne replied for Belper beating Nigel Gill 3-1 and with John Cunningham fighting off several match points in the 4th and 5th games to beat Will Herbert 9-7 7-9 5-9 10-8 10-8, Belper though they were in with a chance of an upset. However, Jeff Smith and Tim Stretton pulled the rug from under Belper's feet each winning 3-0.

Division 1	P	W	L	D	F	A	Pts.
LA Fitness 1	12	12	0	0	222	48	222
Hood Park 1	12	9	3	0	184	79	184
The Manor 1	12	9	3	0	163	108	163
Brampton Manor 1	12	6	6	0	149	125	149
Duffield 1	12	4	8	0	132	142	132
Burton 1	12	5	7	0	127	158	127
Lumb Farm 1	12	3	9	0	79	194	79
Ashbourne	12	0	12	0	28	225	28

Division 3	P	W	L	D	F	A	Pts.
Draycott	12	11	1	0	203	75	203
LA Fitness 3	12	8	4	0	175	114	175
Rolls-Royce 1	12	8	4	0	168	112	168
Queens Park 1	11	7	4	0	154	114	154
Duffield 3	12	6	6	0	145	137	145
David Lloyd	12	3	9	0	115	177	115
Hood Park 3	11	4	7	0	92	168	92
Burton 4	12	0	12	0	62	217	62

Division 5	P	W	L	D	F	A	Pts.
LA Fitness 5	8	8	0	0	154	22	154
Queens Park 2	9	7	2	0	133	74	133
Kimberley Manor	8	3	5	0	89	101	89
Burton 6	8	3	5	0	81	113	81
Repton 3	8	3	5	0	68	116	68
Belper	9	1	8	0	56	155	56

Individual Performances

Millie Tomlinson recorded her best win this season when she clinched the England U17 Grand Prix held at Edgbaston Priory over last weekend. This Grand Prix event will be used in the final selection for England representative honours in the European Junior Championships to be held in Lyon, France in May 2008.

Tomlinson was in excellent form and progressed through the first round beating Pontefract's Grace Smith and then Lancashire's Emma Molyneux in the quarter-finals, both for the loss of only one point. On Sunday Tomlinson faced Julianne Courtice currently at the renowned squash school Wycliffe, Gloucestershire. In the first game, Tomlinson was in a little trouble at 8-6 down after a series of errors, but

she lengthened the rallies, cutting her error count wearing down her opponent eventually taking the first game 10-8. Tomlinson came out in the second with the same game plan and after a lengthy game won 9-5; this was too much for her opponent who then retired. The final later that day saw Tomlinson pitted against Carrie Ramsey, based at top Yorkshire club, Chapel Allerton.

Tomlinson was in particularly determined mood almost completely dominating the match with excellent volleys 9-2 9-3 9-2 to the praise of the England coaches in her near faultless display.

Tomlinson flies out to Norway later this week to gain some valuable experience in the U19 European individual event, being one of five English girls.

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